

**AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHING SPEAKING DIFFICULTIES
FACED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS IN SMAN 1 LARANTUKA
ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2024/2025**

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A B S T R A C T

This research analyzes the difficulties faced by English teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka in teaching speaking skills and the strategies they used to overcome these difficulties during the academic year 2024/2025. While the ability to speak English is highly important in the globalization era, its teaching often encounters various difficulties. This study aimed to identify the specific difficulties experienced by the teachers and the strategies applied to address these issues. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, this research involved seven English teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka as subjects. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observation, structured interviews, and document analysis, such as lesson plans. The findings identified the main difficulties experienced by the English teachers, including: Less Varied Teaching Methods, Suboptimal Use of Learning Media, Limited Learning Time, Curriculum, Unsupportive School Environment, Students' Fear and Shyness, Lack of Student Self-Confidence, Lack of Motivation Among Students, Students' Limited Vocabulary, Problem in Students' Pronunciation, Limited Lesson Plans (RPPs) made by the Teachers. To address these difficulties, the teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka implemented various strategies, such as: Providing Motivation to Students, Preparing Various Teaching Methods to be Adapted in Class, Pronunciation Practice For Students, Using the In Pairs Method, Providing Opportunities for Students to Speak in Front of the Class, Giving Extra Points as Speaking Motivation, Providing Comprehensive Feedback and Improvement Suggestions, Grouping for Special Guidance, Collaboration of English Teachers in Advanced Level Teaching, Giving Role Play Technique. This research is expected to contribute significantly to the development of more effective and focused learning strategies, as well as provide practical recommendations for teachers and the school to improve the quality of English language teaching, especially in speaking skills, at SMAN 1 Larantuka.

INTRODUCTION

- The globalized era demands proficient cross-cultural communication skills, with English serving as the vital international language across various fields, including global communication, education, and business (Sari, Maulida, & Salmawati, 2024). According to these researchers, strong English proficiency, particularly speaking ability, is key to individual success.
- This research aimed to analyze the difficulties faced by English teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka in teaching speaking skills, as well as the strategies they utilized to overcome those difficulties.
- SMAN 1 Larantuka, a prominent school in Larantuka with 36 classes and over 100 teachers and staff, possesses significant potential to produce graduates competent in English. However, difficulties in teaching English, especially speaking skills, require identification and resolution.
- This research is expected to make a practical contribution towards improving the spoken English proficiency of students at SMAN 1 Larantuka, while also providing insights into the difficulties of English language teaching in a leading regional school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- The Importance of English Speaking Skills: Speaking skills are crucial in various aspects of life, including education, careers, and social interactions (Ahmad, 2016; Rao, 2019; Clement & Murugavel, 2018).
- The Importance of Teaching Speaking: Effective speaking instruction requires a thorough understanding of speaking skill acquisition, a clear definition of fluency, and the application of relevant learning theories in classroom practice (Pakula, 2019).
- Components in Teaching Speaking: Effective speaking instruction involves linguistic, cognitive, communicative, and learning context components (Burns, 2019; Tomak, 2021; Sritulanon, Chaturongakul, & Thammetar, 2018).
- The Teacher's Role in Teaching Speaking: Teacher success depends on their ability to help students develop strong communication strategies, resulting in improved fluency, accuracy, and confidence (Nurimova, 2024).
- The Difficulties in Teaching Speaking Faced by English Teachers: These difficulties are related not only to student limitations (such as low vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, or a lack of confidence) but also to the teachers' ability to design and implement effective teaching strategies (Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016; Desta, 2019; Putri, Amri, & Ahmad, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design to thoroughly understand the difficulties faced by English teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka in teaching speaking skills, as well as the strategies they used to address these difficulties. This design was chosen because it allows for a holistic and contextual exploration of the phenomenon, as well as delving into the meaning of the research subjects' experiences (Creswell, 2014).
- The research subjects were seven English teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka, chosen because they have experience teaching speaking skills at various grade levels and possess relevant educational backgrounds.

- Data were collected through three main techniques:
 1. Non-Participant Classroom Observation: The researcher observed the learning process in classrooms without direct involvement in activities. The focus of the observation was on teacher-student interactions, the teaching methods used, strategies applied by teachers to overcome difficulties, and student responses to learning activities. Detailed field notes were created to record all important events during the observations. Specifically, the researcher noted how teachers addressed students' difficulties in speaking, alternative methods used, and interactions that built student confidence.
 2. Structured Interviews: Interviews were conducted using an interview guide containing open-ended questions regarding the difficulties faced by teachers, the strategies they utilized to address those difficulties, the reasons for choosing those strategies, and the effectiveness of the strategies that were applied, as well as factors influencing the teaching of speaking skills. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis.
 3. Document Analysis: Documents such as lesson plans (RPP), syllabi, and teaching materials were analyzed to determine how speaking skills were integrated into the curriculum, what strategies were written in the RPP to address speaking learning problems, and how teachers planned learning activities.
- The data was analyzed thematically, using the following steps:
 1. Transcription and Data Reduction: Interview data was transcribed verbatim, and then the researcher read and reduced the data by discarding information that was not relevant to the research questions.
 2. Data Coding: The data was coded using codes that were relevant to the research questions. These codes were developed based on a review of the literature and initial findings from field observations. These codes covered both the difficulties faced by the teachers and the strategies they employed to overcome those difficulties.
 3. Theme Identification: Codes with similar meanings were grouped into larger themes. These themes represented significant patterns in the data. These themes represented the main difficulties faced by the teachers, and the strategies that were most frequently used.
 4. Data Interpretation: The identified themes were interpreted in the context of relevant theories and the researcher's experiences in the field.
- To maintain the validity and reliability of the research, the researcher used data triangulation, comparing and combining data from various sources (observations, interviews, and documents) to obtain a more comprehensive and consistent understanding.
- This research has some limitations. The small sample size (seven teachers) limits the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. In addition, the interpretation of the data may have been influenced by researcher bias. Therefore, the findings of this research should be interpreted carefully and in consideration of the SMAN 1 Larantuka context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Difficulties Faced by English Teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka in Teaching Speaking

1. Less Varied Teaching Methods:

- Teachers tend to predominantly use presentation, lecture, and question-and-answer methods that are considered practical but do not fully accommodate the diverse learning styles of students.
- Interactive methods such as group discussions, role-playing, debates, and simulations are rarely implemented because they are considered to require more complex preparation and more intensive classroom management.
- This results in decreased student motivation and participation, especially for students with shy and unconfident characteristics.
- Example: One teacher stated, "I usually use presentations because that's the easiest. But I see that some students are enthusiastic, and some are lazy."

2. Suboptimal Use of Learning Media:

- The utilization of learning media is dominated by texts, textbooks, and static images that are less relevant to the interests of students in the digital era.
- Limitations in facilities such as projectors, speakers, and stable internet access hinder the use of interactive audio-visual media (videos, audio, applications).
- Teachers realize the importance of digital media, but difficulties in procuring and maintaining facilities are a major obstacle.
- Example: The researcher noted, "The teacher showed pictures in the textbook, but the students looked less interested. There was no effort to use more interesting media such as videos or interactive applications."

3. Limited Learning Time:

- The number of English lessons allocated in the curriculum is considered inadequate to provide optimal speaking practice opportunities.
- Teachers are often pressured to complete the dense curriculum material, so the time for speaking activities is forced to be reduced.
- The large number of students per class (32-36 students) further exacerbates the problem because teachers find it difficult to provide individual attention and adequate feedback.
- Example: One teacher stated, "The time is very short. If you want to focus on speaking, other materials will be left behind."

4. Curriculum:

- The curriculum and teaching materials are more oriented toward text comprehension (reading comprehension) and grammar mastery, while speaking skills receive less explicit emphasis.
- The teaching materials are often not relevant to the life context of students, thus reducing their interest and motivation to practice speaking.
- Assessment is more focused on written tests, so teachers tend to ignore the development and evaluation of speaking skills.
- Example: One teacher stated, "The curriculum is more focused on reading and writing. So, it's a bit lacking for speaking."

5. Unsupportive School Environment:

- The use of Indonesian or local languages is dominant in daily communication in the school environment (outside of English classes).

- There are no programs or extracurricular activities that specifically promote the use of English (English Day, debates, English clubs).
 - Support from the school in providing facilities and resources for English teaching is still limited.
 - Example: The researcher noted, "Students speak in the local language during recess. There are no signs of English use."
6. Students' Fear and Shyness:
- Students are afraid of making mistakes, afraid of being laughed at by friends, or afraid of being negatively judged by teachers.
 - Negative experiences in the past (for example, having been harshly criticized) can trigger anxiety and hinder active participation in speaking activities.
 - Lack of self-esteem and feelings of insecurity due to social comparisons with friends who are more fluent in English.
 - Example: One teacher stated, "The children are afraid of being wrong. Afraid of being laughed at by their friends."
7. Lack of Student Self-Confidence:
- Example: Students feel reluctant because they feel the want to say might be wrong.
8. Lack of Motivation Among Students:
- Students consider English unimportant or irrelevant to their lives, especially if they have no plans to continue their education or work in fields that require English skills.
 - Monotonous teaching methods and less interesting teaching materials can reduce student interest and motivation.
 - The negative influence of the family environment or peers who are less supportive of English learning.
 - Example: One teacher revealed: "Most students feel that English isn't their language."
9. Students' Limited Vocabulary:
- Students have limitations in the amount of vocabulary they have mastered, making it difficult to construct sentences and convey ideas fluently.
 - Poor mastery of grammar causes errors that disrupt understanding and reduce student confidence.
 - The influence of the first language (first language interference) causes errors in pronunciation and sentence structure.
10. Problem in Students' Pronunciation:
- Students have difficulty pronouncing English sounds that are not found in Indonesian or local languages.
 - There is a lack of structured and systematic pronunciation practice, as well as a lack of exposure to correct pronunciation models (native speakers or quality audio recordings).
 - The influence of the first language causes pronunciation errors that often disrupt understanding.
 - Example: One teacher stated: "Pronunciation is also still not good. Sometimes we have to try to figure out the answer ourselves, what they mean to convey. Because indeed, their pronunciation is unclear."

11. Limited Lesson Plan (RPP) Made by The Teachers:

- Some teachers did not create their own lesson plans but rather used lesson plans from other teachers.
- Existing lesson plans lacked innovation.
- Example: Teachers who used other people's lesson plans were unable to explore and develop innovative teaching methods.

Strategies Used by English Teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka to Overcome the Difficulties

1. Providing Motivation to Students:

- Creating students to not give up easily.
- Creating encouragement to students who are not yet able to perform.
- Creating positive reinforcement
- Example: One teacher stated, " For students to be able to perform in front, we must embrace them, and for those who are not yet able, we must give them encouragement."

2. Preparing Various Teaching Methods to be Adapted in Class:

- Teachers prepare several teaching methods, such as dialogues, presentations, interviews, discussions, debates, question-and-answer sessions, quizzes, and games.
- The choice of method is adjusted to the class level and student characteristics
- Example: One teacher stated: "I use many methods when teaching. When the students first came in, I tried to enter every class, so I started to see, 'Oh, it turns out each of these classes is different.' So I started choosing which methods I could use in which class.

3. Pronunciation Practice For Students:

- Guiding students on pronunciation.
- Having students listen to the correct pronunciation through Google Voice.
- Showing students how to spell and pronounce words.
- Example: One teacher stated "The solution I recommend to them is to find out how to pronounce it, write down the pronunciation. And do it repeatedly while also looking at the spelling. And it seems this method is somewhat successful for some shy and fearful children."

4. Using the In Pairs Method:

- If generally or in class, students are shy to speak in front, then using the "in pairs" method.
- Example: One teacher stated: "If generally or in class, students are shy to speak in front, then I use the 'in pairs' method."

5. Providing Opportunities for Students to Speak in Front of the Class:

- Using speaking practice to allow for teachers to assess student's progress in speaking
- Providing assignments to help students feel responsible
- Encouraging students' ability to convey their ideas.
- Example: One teacher explained this "The technique is sometimes to give them a dialogue text, and the children are given the opportunity to perform the dialogue in front. Although sometimes they read more than truly understand it, they are already brave enough to perform."

6. Giving Extra Points as Speaking Motivation:
 - Encourage student participation in speaking activities.
 - Example: One teacher added point to their students to create motivation in the classroom.
7. Providing Comprehensive Feedback and Improvement Suggestions:
 - Providing comprehensive feedback to students to show improvements they can do.
 - The teacher will help students understand their mistakes, such as providing practical tips
 - Teachers providing teaching students good posture, the importance of eye contact with the audience, and how to deliver messages confidently in public.
 - Example: Teachers help show students' area of improvement.
8. Grouping for Special Guidance:
 - Dividing students according to their abilities
 - Students who are more advanced or proficient in English are asked to study outside the classroom with independent assignments.
 - Students whose abilities are still "average" remain in the classroom to receive intensive guidance.
 - Example: One teacher stated, "These children can actually do it. That's why sometimes the technique is that we separate the capable children from those with average abilities. Among friends with average abilities, they don't seem to be shy. So I usually give assignments to the capable students. They work on their assignments outside the room. While inside the room, we guide those with average abilities."
9. Collaboration of English Teachers in Advanced Level Teaching:
 - Collaborative efforts, for example, several teachers teaching one class together.
 - Example: Some teachers prepared students for specific purposes through teacher collaboration.
10. Giving Role Play Technique:
 - One strategy for teachers in improving students' speaking skills
11. Developing More Innovative and Adaptive Lesson Plans (RPP):
 - Including various teaching methods and models.
 - Making learning more structured.
 - Example: Some teachers did not create their own lesson plans but used lesson plans from other teachers.

CONCLUSION

- This research identified various difficulties faced by English teachers at SMAN 1 Larantuka in teaching speaking skills, which include Less Varied Teaching Methods, Suboptimal Use of Learning Media, Limited Learning Time, Curriculum, Unsupportive School Environment, Students' Fear and Shyness, Lack of Student Self-Confidence, Lack of Motivation Among Students, Students' Limited Vocabulary, Problem in Students' Pronunciation, Scarcity of Lesson Plans (RPPs).
- Teachers have implemented various strategies to overcome these difficulties, including Providing Motivation to Students, Preparing Various Teaching Methods to be Adapted in Class, Pronunciation Practice For Students, Using the In Pairs Method, Providing Opportunities for Students to Speak in Front of the Class, Giving Extra Points as Speaking Motivation, Providing Comprehensive Feedback and

Improvement Suggestions, Grouping for Special Guidance, Collaboration of English Teachers in Advanced Level Teaching, Giving Role Play Technique, and Developing More Innovative and Adaptive Lesson Plans (RPP).

- Based on the research findings, the following suggestions can be considered:
- For Teachers: Teachers need to continue to develop themselves and innovate in teaching methods, as well as develop more innovative and adaptive RPPs, for example, by attending training or workshops on teaching speaking skills. In addition, teachers need to be more creative in utilizing available technology and resources to create engaging and relevant learning activities for students.
- For Students: Students need to increase their motivation and confidence in learning English. They can seek out study partners, participate in English extracurricular activities, or utilize online learning resources to enrich their vocabulary and improve their speaking skills.
- For the School: The school needs to provide greater support to teachers, for example, by providing adequate facilities and resources, as well as providing opportunities for teachers to attend training and professional development. In addition, the school needs to create an environment that is conducive to English language learning, for example, by holding regular English activities and promoting English usage in the school environment.
- For the English Education Department (Institut Keguruan dan Teknologi Larantuka): The department is advised to strengthen its curriculum to focus more on developing practical and contextual speaking teaching skills for teachers in training. Encouraging further regional research is also important to gain a deeper understanding and develop more specific solutions for English language teaching.
- For Further Researchers: This research can serve as a reference for further researchers who wish to continue this research using the existing variables or conducting similar studies.

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