



An Investigation of Students' Barriers, Hopes, and Short-Term Plan toward Their Speaking Skill Improvements

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Abstract. Students have a great desire to communicate in English. For 6 to 9 years, they study English at school, but their mastery of the language does not improve as they expect. This study investigated the students' barriers, hopes, and short-term plans for their speaking skill improvement. This study involved 70 participants who were learning English in the context of English for specific purposes. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires, observations, and interviews. The findings indicated that the barriers encountered by the students in developing their speaking skills fall into three categories, namely barriers from within them, barriers from the environment, and the lack of precise learning methods used by teachers in schools. They hope to improve their English skills by at least mastering daily communication so that they can interact using everyday English. This research is then directed to raise awareness and expectations of their limitations through the internal and external obstacles they face. This study also presents short-term plans to use technology in learning English, such as videos, songs, and podcasts. They prioritize speaking mastery and improve their grammar at the same time.

Keywords: Students' Barriers, Hopes and Short-Term Plan, Speaking Skill Improvements

1 Introduction

There is a contradiction when the students assume that English is important for them, but at the same time, they also avoid the subject. Mainly when the students apply English to communicate outside the classroom, on the other hand, teachers also believe that English is essential for their students to share and have more value when they can speak English fluently. Another fact that the researchers refer to [1] is that the main obstacle for students in speaking English is affective factors such as anxiety and their lack of motivation to learn English.

For the students who use English as a foreign language, the above obstacles dominate psychologically. Especially in several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, with their own culture. Students in this country still consider English as a foreign language. Due to the large number of languages, the leading local languages are used

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to communicate inside and outside the classroom. This is certainly a big enough obstacle and is one of the reasons why students find it very difficult to learn English, especially speaking. Not to mention when we talk about the limited vocabulary they have, it will add to the complexity of the existing problems.

Learning English at schools is taught as a subject [2]. The teacher enters the class with previously prepared material and then leads according to the learning steps in the lesson plan. However, English should be taught as a language. Students feel that the time given in one subject is insufficient to improve their speaking skills. Teachers must prepare a conducive learning environment and increase students' learning awareness [3]. In addition, there are considerations about self-motivation, regulation of the learning environment, regulation of the classroom environment, and regulation of effect [4].

Apart from the technical aspects and the readiness of teachers and learning facilities, the psychological aspects of the students are also very important. Students must be emotionally driven and psychologically trained to improve their speaking skills independently [5]. The teacher holds the full role in the learning process. This is important because there is dissatisfaction among students in learning language, and teachers are less sensitive in responding to linguistic problems found by students in learning [6]. The large gap is due to a lack of understanding between each other. Students demand more competent teachers; on the other hand, the teacher has given maximum effort by preparing learning as well as possible.

Teachers and students sometimes still have some problems with teaching and learning English in the classroom [7]. This classic problem continues today when English is still a compulsory university subject. Incomplete mastery of basic English at school results in lecturers and students being overwhelmed in teaching English [8] at universities which should have been directed at English for specific purposes. This fact was found when making initial observations in civil engineering student classes in the early semester. Students who should have been taught specific English in English for construction but have to return to general English due to students' lack of understanding of English, such as motivation, vocabulary and speaking [9].

An investigation was conducted in this study to look at the student's point of view. What is happening internally to them is the same as what others perceive. Are students aware of their limitations and know where the problem lies? This study aims to find out what obstacles students face in relation to their mastery of English. In addition, this study also seeks to assist students in preparing short-term study plans based on their hopes of using English for the purposes they want in the future. The solution offered in this study is how students who experience barriers to learning English are directed to first understand the weaknesses, then look for the causes; after that, this research will require them to determine the use of English for them in the future and how to develop short-term learning plans to achieve that purpose.

1.1 Barriers to learning speaking

English proficiency is currently a universal language used as an international means of communication. In various fields of life, the role of the English language is always

needed. Therefore, in the development of the Globalization and modernization era, students are strongly required to have good English skills [10]. However, in the learning process, they usually face some barriers.

The lack of student motivation is considered one of the main problems of learning English [9]. Student motivation can come from outside, such as association with friends, family background and a less supportive environment. The student has not found a moment where they have to take this international language well and thoughtfully. Many graduates who have worked have regretted that they did not learn English properly and correctly. Because in some jobs, the interviewer must ensure that the applicant can speak English [11]. As a result, their careers have to be stopped or delayed because they do not master this foreign language.

The second barrier is the large number of students who consider English a problematic lesson [12]. This is probably because the student's previous knowledge of English was minimal, and the differences between English and Indonesian, especially in pronouncing the vocabulary and sentence patterns used. As a result, they tend to be passive, hesitant and remain silent in the classroom [13]. This is exacerbated when they lack an understanding of the lesson during the teaching and learning process. They tend to chat with their classmates and do other activities such as doodling, studying subjects, and some even sleeping.

The third obstacle is insufficient time for practice [14]. Their chances to practice English are only present in English lessons. After that, they are faced with an environment that does not support the use of English. Meanwhile, the practice time in class is often very short, just about twice a week. If this situation occurs constantly, the student will fail to achieve the goals that they set before.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

This study involved 70 participants who were learning English in the context of English for specific purposes. The student comes from the Civil Engineering department and has six years of experience in learning English. The total participants in this study were taken from three different classes in the same department.

2.2 Instrument and Data Collection

The instruments used in this study were questionnaires, observations and interviews. Questionnaires were distributed as surveys to get an initial picture of the quality, obstacles, expectations and plans for developing speaking. The observation was used to observe how student participation in class during the learning process is carried out. Observation activities also looked at the learning steps by teaching lecturers and how students showed enthusiasm and motivation in learning English. Interviews were used to explore the answers given by students from the results of filling out questionnaires. Interviews were also conducted to see how motivated, prepared and optimistic they were in learning English.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data from the survey results were grouped based on the responses given by the respondents. This data was analyzed based on the tendency of the grouping percentage of several reactions obtained. Data from the questionnaire provided an overview of the quality, obstacles, expectations, and short-term plans in learning to speak, followed by interviews. The data from the interviews were analyzed first by reducing data, namely sorting the data obtained in the field. Required data were taken, and data that do not conform with the research will be ignored. Next is the process of displaying data by grouping the data according to the type and type of data. The last is the process of drawing conclusions based on the data that has been grouped and analyzed then the researcher continues with the process of concluding [15].

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

The questions were given through open-ended and closed-ended questions to the respondents involved in this study.

Duration of English learning experience. Based on the answers collected, 78% of the respondents studied English for 6 years and the remaining 22% studied English in school for four years. This shows that they already have relatively long experience of learning foreign languages. This is supported by a national curriculum that establishes English as a compulsory lesson that must exist at a certain level in schools such as junior and senior high schools.

Speaking quality. The next question suggests their English language skills, albeit from a more injective perspective. Respondents were directed to give general recognition of the quality of English they had. The quality shown by the students will direct to the next items of the following questions. The answer to this item is shown in Table 1. The data shows that they are dissatisfied with their English-speaking quality. In fact, more than half of them stated that they have inadequate English quality.

Table 1. Students' speaking quality

Level	Percentage (%)
Average	12.8
Poor	30.8
Very Poor	56.4

The goal of learning English. In this section, the respondents were given questions about their goals in learning English. Based on its function (function of speaking), it is divided into three: talk as interaction and transaction performance (Table 2) [16]. The

previous questions become the source of these questions because they will have a relation between the students' goals and their willingness to learn.

Table 2. Students learning goal

Function	Percentage (%)
Talk as interaction	64.1
Talk as transaction	23.1
Talk as performance	12.8

Which part is your mastery of speaking?. This question has begun to be directed to see the respondents' mastery of speaking components. The members consist of daily expression to public speaking. Some of the components provide these items starting with the easy components such as daily expressions until as complex as public speaking. This question next comes from the fact that most of the students want to be able to talk as interaction. The response describes in the Table 3.

Table 3. Students' speaking mastery

Components	Percentage (%)
Daily Expression	19.2
Speaking in a formal condition	1.3
Presentation	1.3
Public speaking	5.1
None of them	70.5

Satisfaction with speaking quality. From some of the previous questions, we asked if they were satisfied with the quality of speaking they have today. The answer was that 98.7% of respondents said they were unsatisfied with their achievements. However, they consciously understand that they have studied for six years in school. This question becomes lighter to bring up the next question.

Students' barriers. After seeing the satisfaction with the quality of their speaking, the next question is about what factors are the obstacles to improving the quality of their speaking, whether it is a factor of oneself, a method, or an environment. The lack of English mastery must be caused by some factors. This part provides the students with the barriers that probably face during the journey of learning English. The provided barriers represent the possibilities is that from inside or even comes from outside (Table 4).

Table 4. Students' barriers to speaking improvement

Factors	Percentage (%)
Internal Barriers	45
Environmental barriers	35
Learning barriers	20

Where to start?. The previous question has given an idea of dissatisfaction with respondents' speaking quality. Furthermore, the questions are directed to rebuild their motivation to learn to talk. After knowing their lack or weaknesses and also barriers, the students are then directed to choose some factors that will directly impact their speaking quality. They are required to do what they must first do to improve the quality of their speaking. They must be able to understand what is actually their need of learning speaking (Table 5).

Table 5. Students' short time plan to improve their speaking

Items	Percentage (%)
Self Confidence	14.1
Speaking Anxiety	33.3
Memorizing Vocabulary	33.3
Learn grammar and structure	26.9
Fix pronunciation	19.2
Learn through technology (digital)	52.6

*Respondents can choose more than one option

Grammar or fluency first?. The next question tends to be to see how the learning patterns they prioritize in learning to speak. There are two options given. First, I will learn how to talk fluently and then learn the rules of language, structure, and tenses (53.8%), and second, I will learn grammar, structure, and tenses first and then learn how to speak fluently (46.2%).

Belief in speaking booster. The students always limit themselves by being stagnant on one condition and hoping that things will go well. The previous questions show us that they are lacking, they know it very well, but there is no real action or plan to get better. Do they have something that could be motivation or at least they believe that their speaking skill will improve after doing something they believe? This part provides them with some helpful activities they can list as short-term plans for speaking improvement. The result shows as Table 6.

Table 6. Activities that students believe improve their speaking

Activity	Percentage (%)
Monologue	15,4
Speak with friend	47.4
Listening to the English song, Podcasts, and conversation	61.5
Watching English videos and movies	43.6
Reading English books and novel	17.9

*Respondents may choose two options

Optimism on short time improvement. The questions start by asking about the students' lack of speaking. After that, we direct the questions to know what is the barriers

and provide them with some choices on how to improve their speaking. The final question after defining their short time plan is asking about their optimism. This part is the key because their optimism will lead them to step into the process. It is not enough to just know their weaknesses and have a plan. They need to believe with optimism that it will give short time improvement. The result of this part is shown in the Table 7.

Table 7. Students' optimism related to their speaking improvement

Level	Percentage (%)
Very optimistic	20.5
Quite optimistic	32.1
Optimistic	32.1
Less optimistic	14.1

3.2 Discussion

This study examines students' self-awareness, barriers, hopes, and short-term plans for improving their speaking skills. In addition, this study also intends to look at the quality of early speaking that they have. The results show that they have been learning English for quite a long time. [17], suggest that birth through age 10 is the best time to introduce new languages to a young child. The child will learn the language faster, retain it better, and most often speak it with near-native pronunciation. Recent research indicates a young child up through age five can understand and process up to five languages. Theoretically, they should already have adequate abilities in learning English in that period. The facts found referring to the study results showed that they realized that the quality of their speaking was still lacking and even very lacking. This indicates no guarantee between the time they learn English and their speaking quality. Therefore, it is essential to study what factors (internal and external) affect the respondents' speaking quality.

The findings of this study also show that they have different goals in learning English, especially speaking. In general, they reveal that the main goal is to learn English to interact with others to express some kinds of feelings[18]. Some of them also hope that through mastery of speaking, they will be able to make transactions. In addition to the two last things, some of the respondents had a desire to speak. They were able to use their language skills to appear in public. More dominantly, the purpose of them learning English is to interact with others using English, but they still need so much effort to do that[19], [20]. [21]stated that perfect communication is not possible for people without using a language. Moreover, people cannot achieve their aims, objectives, and goals without using proper language to communicate. Therefore, there is a need for a language to share with others who live all around the globe. As English is considered the international language spoken worldwide, it serves the purpose of communicating with people who live in different regions, states, countries, and continents. This corresponds to the primary purpose of a language as a means to interact with others.

A somewhat contradictory fact of their learning objectives is that most respondents have not been able to identify the components of speaking mastery they have. From the above research findings, it can be seen that they cannot even recognize the quality of

their speaking. This relates to the previous question regarding their speaking mastery, which is still very low. Although they aim to learn English to interact, they still do not or have not implemented the steps in that direction. The purpose of learning English that they have is still limited to desire. There are no concepts or plans to make it happen yet.

The gap between goals and implementation resulted in their dissatisfaction with their current speaking quality. This is shown from the findings that almost all respondents have not been satisfied with the achievement of their speaking quality. Some obstacles they experience include internal barriers, the environment and learning. In general, they realize that the dissatisfaction is due to laziness "I am lazy to practice English" and lack of attention in learning English; "I am less focused on learning English". [22] have investigated the attitudes and motivation level of ESL learners towards ESL learning. They have discovered that different students have different perspectives and motivations for learning and acquiring English. In addition, they have no place to practice English other than in schools "What affects the quality of my English is the environment, where people around me rarely or even don't use English, so I rarely practice English." Uninteresting speaking activity is also one of the problems that prevent students from speaking. It made the class to be monotonous during the teaching and learning process. As asserted by [23] "This can be seen in the speaking activities, which consist of drilling materials in the textbook, practising the material, and finally producing the task based on the text in the worksheet. There are no variations of learning English speaking which could engage students to be more involved to the speaking activities". This is even more difficult because they think the English learning method is not quite right "We are too much write and rarely interaction as well". Less exposure to speaking activity can cause students to struggle to express ideas, choose correct structures, and produce appropriate vocabulary and proper pronunciation [24]. These obstacles accumulatively affect the quality of their speaking, so they must have a plan and a target to move on.

Dissatisfaction regarding their mastery of English should have hope for improvement. They had to know what their learning needs were, so other findings in the study showed that they had expectations regarding the needs of their dissatisfaction.

"I need seriousness in studying, reading and listening more often and having friends to learn together."

"In my opinion, to improve my speaking, I need an English-speaking environment more because I think we can speak a language more fluently if we are in the right environment".

"I need regular guidance to study, memorize more vocabulary and learn pronunciation."

They generally understand that the basic needs of mastering English are mainly speaking. They hope to study more seriously, memorize a lot of vocabulary, improve pronunciation and have a supportive learning environment. Some literature does show that mastery of English will be able to improve the quality of their speaking. The reflection on the absence of knowledge of speaking skills gave an accurate picture that almost all respondents said they are still dissatisfied with their current speaking quality.

It is not enough to hope; they must have a short-term plan and specific goals to improve. Findings This study further presents data on where they will start the improve-

ment step. The results show that Most (52.6%) will begin by utilizing learning application technology and social media. [25] asserted that social media facilitates active learning by developing (virtual) communities of learners. Learners work in virtual groups through their interactions, collaboration and cooperation.

In addition, they also start by trying to improve self-confidence and eliminate anxiety when speaking. [26] also suggests self-confidence as one of the twelve principles of language teaching. He states that the students' belief in being able to accomplish the work will be a factor that determines their success in language learning. He further argues that the heart of all learning is students' belief in their ability to complete the tasks. If they first believe they can do the tasks, their self-confidence will appear to motivate them to achieve and finish their studies. That is one of the keys to becoming successful in language learning. Some even start from a commitment to memorizing a lot of vocabulary. As stated by [27, limited vocabulary can cause a problem for students to express themselves in spoken English. They then learn tenses and practice pronunciation. Dominantly, they place more hope on using technology to improve their speaking skills. This is in line with the age of those who interact more often using technology, especially social media.

The findings also indicate that they prefer to train their hearing using English songs, podcasts and conversations. This is in line with [24]. The result of their study showed that there was a significant improvement of the students' speaking skills performance by using podcast media. It can be used as one of the alternative media in teaching English, mainly speaking skills in EFL classes. Another activity in this study was their speaking ability by inviting friends to have English conversations. Of course, this will positively impact their confidence to talk to others. Self-confidence appears when people are not shy, anxious and fearful in any circumstances [28]. Therefore, self-confidence could affect one's success since performance is much enhanced [29].

The following finding is to take advantage of the application of audio-visual facilities, namely watching videos and movies in English. Involving the two senses of sight and hearing will maximize their vocabulary absorption. [30], [31] states that by using English Movies in the English classroom, students can enhance their vocabulary awareness and even improve their pronunciation and intonation. Because of these opinions, movies are significant teaching materials to motivate learners to learn English and develop their language skills efficiently [32], [33]. Next, they will learn English by getting used to interacting and then learning grammar. "I will learn how to speak fluently, then learn grammar, structure, the tenses". The short-term plan activities they expressed will increase their optimism in improving their speaking ability [34].

4 Conclusion

All students had studied English for at least six years before they entered college. They admit that the quality of their speech is still lacking, and they are not satisfied with the achievement. Their goal in learning English is to be able to interact with others and hope to be able to communicate with foreigners directly. The obstacles they encounter in developing their speaking skills fall into three categories: barriers from within them, obstacles from the environment and the lack of precise learning methods teachers use

in schools. They hope to improve their English skills at least mastering daily communication so that they can interact using everyday English. Soon, they will plan to improve their speaking skills is to start improving their self-confidence, memorizing a lot of vocabulary and mastering grammar. They will realize this plan by utilizing digital technology facilities to learn English. Some of them believe that using technology will help improve their speaking skills. Listening to English songs and podcasts and watching English-language movies and English-learning videos will significantly help them. The learning pattern they will apply is to learn how to get used to speaking and then gradually organize the grammar. This research provides information about their plans to develop their English in the future. Because learning requires measurable goals and targets[35] so that progress can be seen that increases regularly. The results of this study also provide helpful information for carrying out further research related to learning methods that suit the needs of students.

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