

## EXPLORING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFL SPEAKING CLASSES: INSIGHTS FROM SIX DIMENSIONS IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** This study explores undergraduate students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes across six key dimensions: general perceptions, anxiety, engagement and motivation, instructional strategies, peer and teacher interactions, and assessment. These dimensions are essential for evaluating speaking instruction as they encompass cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning experiences. A mixed-methods approach was used, collecting data from a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire, analyzed through descriptive statistics and qualitative thematic analysis. Participants included 40 undergraduate students from the English Education Department, Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, during the 2024/2025 academic year. Findings indicate generally positive perceptions, particularly of instructional strategies like role plays and group discussions. However, anxiety due to fear of judgment and low self-confidence remains a challenge. Moderate engagement and motivation were observed, with real-world activities and goal setting being crucial. The integration of technology-based tools, such as self-recorded videos and topic-specific vlogs, effectively accommodated diverse learner needs. Peer and teacher interactions played a significant role in reducing anxiety and encouraging communication, while peer and collaborative assessments were valued for self-reflection and critical thinking. By linking these dimensions, the study highlights the interplay between pedagogy, affective factors, and classroom environments. It emphasizes the need for innovative instructional strategies, a supportive learning atmosphere, and meaningful assessment methods to enhance speaking skills. Future research should examine the long-term impact of these strategies across diverse cultural settings to refine EFL pedagogy and address gaps in current teaching practices.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate students; EFL speaking classes; perceptions; instructional strategies; assessment; motivation

### INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, English proficiency is a crucial skill for academic and professional success, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries such as Indonesia. Speaking, as a fundamental language skill, plays a key role in communication, collaboration, and knowledge dissemination. In the Indonesian higher education context, developing English-speaking skills is essential for students to participate in international academic discourse, research presentations, and cross-cultural interactions. Despite its importance, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners struggle with speaking proficiency, largely due to limited exposure to authentic

English conversations, anxiety, and instructional challenges (Burhanuddin et al., 2023).

To address these challenges, Indonesian universities have integrated various instructional strategies into EFL speaking classes, such as role plays, debates, and presentations. These methods aim to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical communication skills (Grieve et al., 2021). However, despite such interventions, students often exhibit hesitation and reluctance to speak in English, influenced by psychological barriers, cultural norms, and instructional approaches. Thus, exploring students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes becomes critical to understanding the

effectiveness of current teaching methods and identifying areas for improvement.

Speaking is a core skill in language learning, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where learners have limited exposure to authentic English communication. Mastering speaking skills enables students to engage in academic discussions, professional communication, and international collaboration (Burhanuddin et al., 2023). Research shows that students who actively develop their speaking skills gain confidence in expressing their ideas, which improves their academic performance and career prospects (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020).

Students' general perceptions of EFL speaking classes depend on teaching methods, classroom environment, and opportunities for practice. Studies indicate that interactive activities such as group discussions, debates, and role-plays enhance students' engagement and confidence (Gürbüz & Cabaroğlu, 2021). However, lack of real-world exposure and fear of making mistakes often diminish students' willingness to speak in classroom settings (Almira et al., 2018).

Anxiety is one of the most frequent psychological barriers affecting EFL learners' speaking performance. Research by Grieve et al. (2021) found that students often feel nervous and self-conscious during oral presentations due to fear of judgment and low self-confidence. Similarly, Almira et al. (2018) reported that students, particularly females, experience higher levels of anxiety when speaking in front of peers. These anxieties lead to avoidance behaviors, where students withdraw from speaking activities, ultimately limiting their language development.

Several pedagogical strategies have been proposed to reduce speaking anxiety and encourage participation. Studies suggest that creating a supportive, nonjudgmental environment helps students feel more comfortable expressing themselves (Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel, 2013). Moreover, peer discussions, scaffolding activities, and progressive exposure to speaking tasks have been effective in gradually reducing anxiety levels (Pratama, 2018).

Motivation plays a critical role in students' willingness to engage in speaking activities. Research shows that students are more likely to participate in speaking tasks when they see relevance to their personal goals and future careers (Dewi & Wilany, 2023). Extrinsic motivators such as grades and rewards encourage participation, while intrinsic motivation—driven by interest and confidence—leads to sustained

engagement (Agnes & Marlina, 2021). Task-Based Learning (TBL) is widely recognized as an effective approach for engaging students in meaningful speaking practice. Li (2015) found that real-world tasks such as simulations and project-based learning improve students' ability to use English naturally and fluently. Similarly, Tuyen & Phuong (2022) found that students considered role-playing and collaborative tasks highly beneficial for fluency development.

Hybrid learning, which combines face-to-face instruction with digital tools, has emerged as a powerful strategy for improving speaking proficiency. Studies show that self-recorded video assignments, online discussion forums, and digital role-plays allow students to practice speaking in a controlled yet flexible environment (Prasodjo, 2023). However, challenges such as lack of interaction and technical limitations need to be addressed (Islah et al., 2022).

Technology has revolutionized language learning by providing interactive and multimodal learning experiences. Koesoemah (2019) found that self-recorded videos help students build fluency and self-confidence. Additionally, digital storytelling and topic-based vlogs (TBV) have been found to enhance engagement and pronunciation skills (Prasodjo, 2023). However, students require guidance and structured implementation to maximize the benefits of these tools.

Research suggests that peer interactions significantly enhance speaking confidence. Munirah et al. (2023) found that students who engage in peer discussions tend to perform better in oral assessments. Peer evaluations and collaborative feedback sessions help students become more comfortable with speaking, as they receive constructive criticism in a low-pressure environment (Sa'adah, 2019).

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes toward speaking activities. Studies indicate that instructors who provide positive reinforcement, structured feedback, and opportunities for practice contribute to higher student confidence and participation (Tâm, 2022). However, traditional teacher-centered approaches often lead to passive learning and low engagement, necessitating a shift toward student-centered instruction. Assessment plays a pivotal role in measuring speaking proficiency, yet traditional assessment methods often induce stress and anxiety. Studies suggest that standard oral exams do not always reflect students' true speaking abilities, as anxiety can impact their

performance (Taufiqulloh et al., 2024). Consequently, alternative assessment strategies such as peer assessment, self-reflection, and project-based evaluations have gained attention (Hidayah et al., 2021).

Recent research advocates for authentic and technology-enhanced assessments, such as digital portfolios, video submissions, and real-world speaking tasks (Alshalan, 2024). These approaches allow students to track their progress over time and develop confidence (Chou, 2021). Additionally, interactive assessments using AI-powered tools and speech recognition software are gaining popularity for providing real-time feedback on pronunciation and fluency. Cultural factors significantly influence students' speaking behaviors and perceptions. Burhanuddin et al. (2023) emphasize that culturally responsive teaching methods can reduce anxiety and improve engagement. When students relate speaking activities to their cultural experiences, they feel more comfortable and confident in expressing their ideas (Munirah et al., 2023).

Students often struggle with transitioning from academic speaking contexts to real-world communication. Studies indicate that practical speaking exercises such as mock interviews, business presentations, and professional dialogues improve students' workplace readiness (Fitria, 2023). However, many EFL courses still focus on scripted or artificial speech activities that do not prepare students for spontaneous conversations (Nithideechaiwarachok et al., 2022).

Existing literature highlights the interconnected nature of psychological, instructional, and technological factors in shaping students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes. While various innovative strategies have been explored, challenges such as speaking anxiety, assessment limitations, and lack of real-world exposure remain prevalent. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates engaging pedagogy, supportive peer-teacher interactions, and technology-driven assessments to foster an inclusive and effective learning environment.

## METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining statistical measurement and descriptive analysis to investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes. The research was conducted at the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, during

the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. A total of 40 undergraduate students participated in the study.

The speaking course, which serves as the context of this study, aims to enhance students' ability to comprehend and respond appropriately in various everyday situations, academic settings, and professional contexts. By assessing students' perceptions across six key dimensions, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how instructional strategies, engagement, anxiety, peer and teacher interactions, and assessment shape their learning experiences in EFL speaking classes.

The instrument used in this study is a survey questionnaire designed to measure students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes. The questionnaire consists of 30 items, distributed across six dimensions: general perceptions of speaking classes, anxiety, engagement and motivation, instructional strategies, peer and teacher interaction, and assessment, with five items for each dimension. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) to capture students' attitudes toward speaking instruction.

To ensure construct and content validity, factor analysis was conducted using SPSS. Factor analysis is a statistical technique that assesses whether questionnaire items align with the intended dimensions, ensuring that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The results showed that all 30 items had factor loadings between 0.6 and 0.9, indicating strong validity. For criterion validity, correlation coefficients were categorized into three levels: small (0.10–0.29), medium (0.30–0.49), and high (0.50–1.00). The analysis confirmed that the validity of the questionnaire ranged from 0.32 to 1.00, making it a reliable tool for measuring students' perceptions.

To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Cronbach's alpha measures internal consistency, determining how well the questionnaire items correlate with each other. A reliability coefficient closer to 1.00 indicates stronger consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.95 in this study demonstrates high reliability, confirming that the instrument consistently captures students' perceptions.

Beyond statistical validation, qualitative data was collected through open-ended responses and participant feedback, complementing the numerical findings. This qualitative component

provided deeper insights into students' experiences, challenges, and suggestions, allowing for a more comprehensive interpretation of the results. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative analyses ensures a holistic understanding of undergraduate students' perceptions in EFL speaking classes.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Using SPSS, descriptive statistics were conducted to analyze students' responses across the six dimensions of EFL speaking classes. This

analysis included measuring central tendency (mean, median, and mode), dispersion (standard deviation), and frequency distribution to understand how students' responses were distributed across the Likert scale. Each dimension was examined separately to provide detailed insights into students' perceptions, supported by relevant theoretical perspectives such as Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. The results are fugged out below.

*Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the general perceptions of speaking classes dimension*

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
I improve my communication skill through speaking classes	40	1	4	2.00	.751
Attending speaking classes is very enjoyable.	40	1	3	1.90	.545
Speaking classes enhance my confidence to communicate in everyday life	40	1	3	1.83	.636
The topics in speaking classes are interesting	40	1	3	2.03	.530
Overall, the quality of the speaking classes is good.	40	1	3	1.90	.379

The respondents' perceptions of their speaking classes are displayed in Table 1. With moderate agreement on the majority of the topics, the results generally show a favorable opinion of the classes. With a mean score of 2.00 (on a scale of 1 to 4) and a standard deviation of 0.751, the statement, "I improve my communication skills through speaking classes," indicated moderate agreement with some response variability. On a scale of 1 to 3, the statement, "Attending speaking classes is very enjoyable," also obtained a mean score of 1.90 and a standard deviation of 0.545, indicating that respondents' opinions about the classes are generally consistent and that they find them enjoyable. A mean score of 1.83 and a standard deviation of 0.636 were found for the item, "Speaking classes enhance my confidence to communicate in everyday life," suggesting moderate agreement with somewhat more

variable responses. Surprisingly, the statement, "The topics in speaking classes are interesting," had the lowest standard deviation (0.530) and the highest mean score (2.03) on a scale of 1 to 3, indicating substantial agreement on the topics' engaging character with little variation. Lastly, with the lowest standard deviation of 0.379 and a mean score of 1.90, the statement, "Overall, the quality of the speaking classes is good," demonstrated moderate agreement and very consistent opinions about the classes' quality. In summary, most responders think the speaking sessions are beneficial, emphasizing the interesting subjects in particular. However, more work may be done in areas like boosting confidence in everyday communication. Responses are consistent, reflecting common viewpoints and offering a solid foundation for program improvement.

*Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the anxiety dimension*

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
Speaking English in front of my classmates makes me nervous	40	1	3	2.05	.552
I feel worried of making mistakes when speaking in classes.	40	1	3	2.17	.549
I feel anxious when I have to answer questions in English spontaneously.	40	1	3	1.93	.526
Speaking during classes makes me feel uncomfortable	40	1	4	2.13	.563

I hesitate to take part in class discussions	40	1	4	2.00	.716
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Participants in speaking classes report a moderate level of anxiety, according to Table 2's statistical analysis of the anxiety dimension, which also shows significant trends across settings. The statement "Speaking English in front of my classmates makes me nervous" has a standard deviation of 0.552 and an average score of 2.05 on a scale of 1 to 3. This implies that the majority of participants concur with the statement and that there is not much difference in their answers. Similarly, the mean score of 2.17 and standard deviation of 0.549 for the item "I feel worried about making mistakes when speaking in classes" are marginally higher. This suggests that participants' concerns about making mistakes are widespread, as evidenced by their consistent answers. With a standard deviation of 0.526 and a mean score of 1.93, the statement "I feel anxious when I have to answer questions in English spontaneously" achieved the lowest score. This finding implies that although participants experience some anxiety in this setting, it is somewhat less severe than in other circumstances. With an average score of 2.13 (on a scale of 1 to 4) and a standard deviation of 0.563, the statement "Speaking during classes makes me feel uncomfortable" indicates moderate discomfort with some variation in participants' answers. Last but not least, the item "I hesitate to take part in class discussions" had the biggest standard deviation (0.716) and a mean score of 2.00. This result indicates that while participants frequently experience hesitation, there are notable differences in the level of hesitation. Overall, these results show that participants experience fear in a variety of ways, with intensity and consistency varying according to the speaking activity's particular context.

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics of the engagement and motivation dimension*

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
I am actively engaged in classroom discussions.	40	2	4	2.60	.591
Speaking English outside of class makes me well motivated	40	1	4	2.00	.784
I keep engaged and interested in the speaking activities in class.	40	1	4	2.13	.563
I set personal goals to improve my speaking skills in English.	40	1	4	2.00	.716
I feel enjoyable learning speaking and look forward to speaking class activities.	40	1	3	2.13	.648

The engagement and motivation component, which is derived from table 3, emphasizes how involved, interested, and enthusiastic participants are in speaking activities. With a mean score of 2.60 (on a scale of 2–4) and a standard deviation of 0.591, "I am actively engaged in classroom discussions" stands out among the measured items. With comparatively little variation in responses, this result suggests that participants generally view themselves as actively participating in class discussions. "Speaking English outside of class makes me well motivated" has a standard deviation of 0.784 and a mean score of 2.00 on a scale of 1 to 4. This indicates that participants are moderately motivated, but the greater variability points to variations in their motivation levels when speaking English outside of the classroom. With a mean score of 2.13 and a standard deviation of 0.563, the item "I keep engaged and interested in

the speaking activities in class" indicates a moderate degree of participation in class activities and somewhat consistent responses. Similar to this, the statement "I set personal goals to improve my speaking skills in English" had a higher standard deviation of 0.716 but a mean score of 2.00, suggesting that while some participants are dedicated to setting personal goals, others are not. With a mean score of 2.13 and a standard deviation of 0.648, the item "I enjoy learning to speak and look forward to speaking class activities" is the last one. This suggests that, although their excitement fluctuates a little more than in other areas, participants generally find speaking activities enjoyable and look forward to them. All things considered, the evidence indicates modest levels of drive and involvement, with differing degrees of consistency among speaking activities.

**Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the Instructional strategies dimension**

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
My English fluency is improved due to the instructional strategies of speaking class	40	1	3	2.05	.552
Various class activities such as role plays and group discussions are effective for learning	40	1	5	2.05	.714
The materials of the speaking classes support my learning process	40	1	3	1.93	.526
The teacher applies a variety of techniques to make learning speaking interesting.	40	1	4	2.00	.641
The flow of lessons in speaking classes matches my learning needs	40	1	4	2.05	.597

The descriptive statistics for instructional strategies, which are shown in table 4, offer important insights into how participants see teaching approaches and how they affect speaking skill development. A mean score of 2.05 (on a scale of 1 to 3) and a standard deviation of 0.552 indicate that participants moderately agreed that the instructional tactics utilized in their speaking class enhanced their English fluency. Similarly, with the same mean score of 2.05 but a higher standard deviation of 0.714, class activities including role plays and group discussions were deemed beneficial for learning. This indicates that although the majority of participants found these activities helpful, their perspectives vary more. With the lowest mean score of 1.93 out of all the items, the speaking class materials were only marginally regarded as aiding in the learning

process. With a standard deviation of 0.526, the responses were the most constant, nonetheless. Regarding instructional strategies, participants somewhat agreed that teachers used a range of approaches to engage students. With a mean score of 2.00 and a standard deviation of 0.641, this item showed some variation in participant answers. Finally, with a mean score of 2.05 and a standard deviation of 0.597, participants felt that the speaking classes' lesson flow somewhat matched their learning goals. This indicates that responses about how the lectures are structured are often consistent. Although their opinions differed depending on particular elements like class activities and instructional materials, participants generally thought that instructional tactics were moderately effective.

**Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the peer and teacher evaluation dimension**

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
My English fluency is improved due to the instructional strategies of speaking class	40	1	3	2.10	.591
Various class activities such as role plays and group discussions are effective for learning	40	1	3	2.05	.552
The materials of the speaking classes support my learning process	40	1	2	1.75	.439
The teacher applies a variety of techniques to make learning speaking interesting.	40	1	5	2.05	.714
The flow of lessons in speaking classes matches my learning needs	40	1	3	2.10	.591

The descriptive statistics for teacher and peer evaluation are shown in Table 5 and offer important insights into how participants see feedback and teaching methods in speaking lessons. With a mean score of 2.10 (on a scale of 1–3) and a standard deviation of 0.591, participants largely agreed that the teaching tactics utilized in speaking sessions improved their English fluency. This indicates a moderate level of agreement with dependable answers. Similarly, with a mean score of 2.05 and a

somewhat lower standard deviation of 0.552, which indicates little diversity in participants' opinions, activities like role plays and group discussions were viewed as beneficial for learning. The speaking class materials, on the other hand, had the lowest mean score (1.75 with a standard deviation of 0.439). The limited range of replies and reduced degree of agreement indicate that participants felt the materials did not enhance their learning process as much. Although the range of instructional strategies used by

teachers received a mean score of 2.05, the questions' largest standard deviation of 0.714 suggested that participants' judgments were more diverse. Finally, with a standard deviation of 0.591 and a mean score of 2.10, the statement about how the lectures flowed in accordance with the participants' learning needs tied for the highest score. Regarding the appropriateness of the instructional framework, this indicates a moderate

level of agreement and consistent responses. Even though participants thought that class activities and instructional strategies were generally effective, the results show that there may be room for improvement, especially in improving the caliber of the materials and addressing the variation in teaching methods to better support learning outcomes.

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics of the assessment dimension*

Item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
My English fluency is improved due to the instructional strategies of speaking class	40	1	3	2.17	.549
Various class activities such as role plays and group discussions are effective for learning	40	1	3	2.10	.591
The materials of the speaking classes support my learning process	40	1	3	2.10	.441
The teacher applies a variety of techniques to make learning speaking interesting.	40	1	4	2.02	.800
The flow of lessons in speaking classes matches my learning needs	40	1	3	1.93	.526

The statistical analysis for the assessment dimension, which shows participants' opinions on evaluation procedures and teaching methods in speaking lessons, is shown in Table 6. Important insights into their perceptions and experiences are revealed by the data. With a mean score of 2.17 (on a scale of 1–3) and a standard deviation of 0.549, the item "My English fluency is improved due to the instructional strategies of speaking class" indicated moderate agreement among participants and consistent responses overall. Comparably, the statement "Various class activities such as role plays and group discussions are effective for learning" received a mean score of 2.10 and a standard deviation of 0.591, indicating that participants generally agreed that these activities were beneficial, albeit with somewhat different perspectives. Furthermore, with a mean score of 2.10 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.441, the statement "The materials of the speaking classes support my learning process" also demonstrated a high and constant agreement regarding the efficacy of the learning materials. However, with a mean of 2.02 and the largest standard deviation of 0.800, the item "The teacher applies a variety of techniques to make learning speaking interesting" indicated moderate agreement with more diversity in participant responses. Finally, with a mean score of 1.93 and a standard deviation of 0.526, the statement "The flow of lessons in speaking classes matches my learning needs" had the lowest score. This finding implies that, in comparison to the other factors

assessed, participants were less satisfied with how well the lesson flow met their learning needs.

This study examines undergraduate students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes by examining their experiences in six important dimensions: general perspectives, anxiety, motivation and engagement, instructional tactics, interactions with teachers and peers, and assessment. Even though most students view these classes favorably, there are several obstacles that prevent the best possible learning results.

Regarding *general perceptions*, students find speaking classes moderately effective, appreciating interactive activities and engaging topics. This finding supports Grieve et al. (2021) who emphasize the significance of dynamic classrooms for enhancing participation and learning. Students find speaking classes relevant and enjoyable, as seen by the high scores given to statements like "I improve my communication skills through speaking classes" and "The topics in speaking classes are interesting." Lower confidence-building scores, however, indicate the necessity of focused techniques to improve students' communication self-confidence.

*Anxiety* emerges as a major obstacle, with students worrying about making mistakes or speaking before peers. This aligns with Burhanuddin et al. (2023) who identified anxiety as a disruptor of engagement in speaking tasks, and echoes Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel (2013) regarding fear of negative judgment. Practices like mindfulness and reframing errors as learning

opportunities (Pratama, 2018) could alleviate these concerns and foster more active participation.

The survey also identifies modest levels of motivation and involvement. Active engagement was demonstrated by the highest marks given to statements like "I am actively engaged in classroom discussions." However, motivation fluctuated, especially concerning using English beyond the classroom. Dewi & Wilany (2023) stress the importance of learner autonomy in sustaining motivation, suggesting that fostering student ownership of learning could improve outcomes. Incorporating real-world contexts, as Basri & Rahayu (2022) suggest, might further boost motivation.

*Teaching strategies* were moderately effective, with role-plays and group discussions receiving favorable feedback. These findings align with Dimastoro & Anggani Linggar Bharati (2022) who noted the effectiveness of these methods in building fluency and confidence. However, the varied perceptions of teaching materials and methods point to the need for more tailored and innovative approaches. Using tools like topic-specific vlogs and self-recorded videos (Koesoemah, 2019; Prasodjo, 2023) could connect classroom learning to real-world scenarios, enhancing engagement and skills.

*Interactions with peers and teachers* significantly impact students' speaking experiences. Positive teacher feedback and supportive peer relationships, highlighted by Sa'adah (2019) and Chen et al. (2023) help reduce anxiety and encourage willingness to communicate (WTC). According to the study, these encounters are helpful, but their efficacy varies, which emphasizes the necessity of systematic and regular feedback procedures. It is possible to enhance classroom dynamics and learning results by fostering a culture of cooperation and constructive criticism.

Speaking class assessment procedures were generally viewed favorably, with peer and collaborative evaluations receiving special recognition. These methods, as emphasized by Taufiqulloh et al. (2024) promote critical thinking and self-awareness. However, aligning assessment criteria with students' needs and providing detailed feedback remain challenges. Using digital tools for assessment, as recommended by Hidayah et al. (2021) can improve accessibility and provide immediate, inclusive feedback.

The results highlight how these aspects are interrelated and how they all affect students'

impressions. For example, anxiety impairs motivation and engagement, while helpful interactions and efficient teaching techniques lessen these difficulties. Adopting a student-centered approach, as emphasized by Nurlaela & Mangendre (2023) can address these interdependencies. Tailored teaching methods, incorporating both global and local contexts, can create an inclusive and dynamic learning environment, as suggested by Munirah et al. (2023). Moreover, integrating technology into speaking classes can revolutionize language instruction. Tools like virtual reality (Chen et al., 2023) and blended learning platforms (Tohamba et al., 2022) offer innovative solutions to traditional challenges, fostering engagement and adaptability. However, addressing technological disparities and ensuring equitable access are necessary to maximize their potential benefits.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a comprehensive examination of undergraduate students' perceptions of EFL speaking courses, emphasizing both their benefits and challenges. Students acknowledge that these courses encourage active engagement through dynamic and interactive learning activities, yet persistent issues such as speech anxiety, fluctuating motivation, and variations in teaching methods often hinder their participation and overall learning experience.

A holistic understanding of these challenges requires analyzing the interplay between anxiety, engagement, and instructional strategies. Speaking anxiety remains a major barrier, as students fear making mistakes and receiving negative judgment, leading to avoidance behaviors. However, engagement can be enhanced through instructional strategies that incorporate real-world scenarios, integrate technology-driven learning tools, and foster teacher-student and peer interactions. For instance, blended learning approaches that combine face-to-face discussions with digital platforms like self-recorded videos, virtual debates, and AI-assisted pronunciation tools have been found to reduce anxiety and build speaking confidence. Additionally, using culturally relevant materials—such as local case studies, role-plays based on familiar social contexts, and discussions on region-specific issues—can increase students' sense of belonging and motivation in speaking courses.

Assessment strategies must also evolve to align with student-centered learning approaches.



Incorporating peer and collaborative assessments, providing individualized feedback, and utilizing self-assessment tools help students develop self-reflection and critical thinking skills, ultimately fostering a more engaging and supportive classroom environment.

Moving forward, future research should explore the long-term impact of hybrid learning models on speaking proficiency, particularly in Indonesian higher education contexts. Additionally, studies on how cultural adaptations influence students' engagement and speaking confidence would provide valuable insights into designing inclusive and contextually relevant EFL programs. Research could also examine how personalized learning pathways—tailored to students' proficiency levels and learning preferences—can optimize speaking skill development over time.

By addressing these factors, EFL speaking classes can be more effective, inclusive, and aligned with students' learning needs. Teachers play a pivotal role in implementing these strategies, creating a supportive environment that reduces anxiety, fosters motivation, and enhances instructional effectiveness. Ultimately, prioritizing student-centered teaching methodologies will ensure that graduates develop the confidence and communication skills necessary for academic, professional, and real-world success in a globalized world.

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