

Analysis of Speaking Problems for English Subject in Islamic Education Department at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the problems faced by students of the Islamic Education Department in the English Subject, particularly in their English Speaking skills. The research method used in this study was a qualitative descriptive approach. This study aimed to analyze the problems faced by students in speaking skills during English courses in the Islamic Education Department at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep. Research data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews with students and course lecturers, as well as documentation of grades and Speaking learning activities. The conclusion of this study revealed that students in the Islamic Education Department at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep encounter various challenges in developing their English Speaking skills. The main obstacles include a lack of self-confidence, limited vocabulary and grammar, less interactive teaching methods, and a learning environment that do not support active language practice.

1. Introduction

Speaking skills in English are one of the essential competencies that students must possess in the era of globalization, including those enrolled in the Islamic Education Department. Mastery of speaking is needed not only in academic contexts but also in social and professional settings, especially when students are expected to express ideas, deliver sermons (da'wah), or convey religious material in an international language (Albadri & Halimah, 2022).



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At STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep, English is one of the subjects taught to equip students with basic foreign language skills. However, in practice, many students still face various difficulties in speaking English (Kamal et al., 2025). These problems include limited vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, incorrect pronunciation, and challenges in constructing sentences spontaneously.

The factors influencing these speaking problems are quite diverse, ranging from internal aspects such as learning motivation, self-confidence, and study habits, to external aspects such as teaching methods, learning environment, and the availability of supporting facilities. Students in the Islamic Religious Education Study Program also tend to focus more on religious subjects, which often leads to foreign language proficiency being treated as a secondary priority (Fenyi et al., 2023).

Considering this reality, it is important to conduct an in-depth study on the types of speaking problems faced by students as well as the factors that influence them. The speaking difficulties experienced by students are not limited to pronunciation issues or lack of vocabulary but also involve various psychological, pedagogical, and social aspects. For example, many students feel insecure when speaking English in public due to fear of making mistakes or embarrassment if mocked by their peers. This indicates that speaking is not merely a linguistic skill but is also strongly influenced by students' mental and social conditions.

In addition, limitations within the learning environment that do not support active English practice also serve as a significant factor. Students tend to use English only inside the classroom and rarely apply it in daily conversations, which greatly limits their opportunities to practice speaking skills. Teaching methods that are not communicative or are overly focused on theoretical aspects can further worsen this condition, as students do not receive sufficient practice in meaningful and contextual speaking activities.

Students in the Islamic Education Department face unique challenges. Their primary focus is on Islamic studies, which often leads to English being viewed as a supplementary subject rather than a main priority. As a result, their motivation to master English tends to be lower compared to students from other study programs that have a stronger international or professional orientation toward foreign language proficiency. In fact, amidst the rise of digital da'wah and global Islamic discourse, the ability to speak English has become an important asset for Islamic education students to effectively engage in international da'wah and contribute to global academic forums.

Several researchers have examined the issue of speaking difficulties. Wahyuningsih, for instance, explored the challenges faced by students in the English Language Education Department at the State Islamic Institute of Kudus, along with the implications for improving the speaking curriculum in that department. Her study adopted a descriptive qualitative method, gathering data through semi-structured interviews, observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The findings indicated that the students struggled with various aspects of English speaking, including limited vocabulary, insufficient grammar knowledge, incorrect pronunciation, minimal exposure to English outside the classroom, low self-confidence, and an underdeveloped speaking curriculum (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020).

Meli Arya Susilawati conducted a study on the speaking difficulties encountered by sixth-semester students during presentations in the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tanjungpura University, in the 2015/2016 academic year. The research focused on both linguistic and non-linguistic challenges. The aim was to identify the most and least frequent issues faced by these students during their presentations. Employing a descriptive research method, the study targeted sixth-semester students from classes A and B, with a sample of 38 students selected from class A. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The results revealed that the most common problem faced by the students was limited vocabulary

(18.94%), while the least common issue was fear of making mistakes (15%). Other difficulties included lack of confidence (17.23%), grammatical issues (16.57%), and pronunciation problems (15.52%) (Susilawati et al., 2017).

Corry Ester investigated the challenges students face in speaking English, aiming to develop strategies to improve their speaking skills in the future. The study involved thirty second-semester students from the English Department at the University of Darma Agung Medan. Data on students' English-speaking abilities were gathered through questionnaires and speaking tests. The results indicated that the students encountered difficulties in speaking English. The main issues were attributed to the ineffective application of knowledge into practice, which stemmed from limited foundational English skills and the influence of their first language. Other contributing factors included low socioeconomic status, the use of non-English instruction in classrooms, and anxiety related to speaking English (Susilawati et al., 2017).

Therefore, analyzing these speaking problems is not only important from an academic perspective but also has strategic implications for the development of graduate competencies at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep. Through this research, it is expected that the most dominant types of speaking difficulties faced by students, their underlying causes, and appropriate recommendations to overcome these challenges can be identified. The results of this study can serve as a foundation for developing more effective and adaptive English language learning strategies that meet students' needs, including innovations in teaching methods, more communicative learning approaches, and the creation of a learning environment that encourages students to be more active in speaking English. In this way, students' speaking abilities at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep can not only improve but also positively contribute to their readiness to face the demands of the professional world and international da'wah in the global era.

2. Methods

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach. This study aims to analyze the problems faced by students in speaking skills during English courses in the Islamic Education Department at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep (Berlianti et al., 2024). Research data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews with students and course lecturers, as well as documentation of grades and speaking learning activities. The data analysis techniques employed were data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to describe in detail and systematically the issues arising in the speaking learning process (Kamal et al., 2024). Through this approach, it is expected to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors causing students' difficulties in speaking and identify appropriate solutions to address them.

3. Result

The research results indicate that there are several major problems faced by students of the Islamic Education Department at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep in their English speaking skills.

One of the most dominant problems of students' speaking skills is the lack of confidence when they have to speak in front of the class. Many students feel nervous and anxious, even afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, or word choice. This fear causes them to be reluctant to express their opinions freely and instead choose to remain silent or give very brief and limited answers. This condition not only hinders the communication process but also reduces their opportunities to practice and improve their speaking abilities more effectively.

Low self-confidence is usually triggered by previous negative experiences, such as receiving corrections perceived as unconstructive from lecturers or classmates, as well as social pressure when speaking in front of many people. Students also often compare their abilities with peers who

are considered more skilled, which leads to feelings of inferiority. As a result, they tend to avoid speaking actively and prefer to be passive during speaking activities.

The impact of this lack of confidence is very significant because speaking is not only about linguistic ability but also about the courage and motivation to communicate. Without self-confidence, students find it difficult to explore the language and experiment with new vocabulary and sentence structures. Therefore, this issue becomes a major obstacle in the development of their speaking skills, making it necessary for instructors to implement special strategies to create a supportive learning environment and gradually build students' confidence.

In addition, the research also found that a lack of vocabulary and mastery of grammar are significant obstacles faced by students in developing their English-Speaking skills. Students often have difficulty constructing correct sentences and expressing ideas clearly and coherently. A limited vocabulary restricts their ability to choose appropriate words to convey messages, while insufficient grammar proficiency results in sentences that are less effective and sometimes hard to understand.

This obstacle is influenced by several factors, one of which is the limited time allocated for learning English in the existing curriculum. The short duration of English instruction results in students having fewer opportunities to deepen their vocabulary and thoroughly learn grammar rules. In addition, the lack of regular speaking practice in the learning process is also a significant factor. Many students focus mainly on theoretical aspects and written exercises, so their practical speaking skills are not developed optimally.

As a result of this condition, students' speaking abilities tend to remain at an inadequate level and are often static, meaning they do not show significant improvement over time. This also affects their motivation to actively communicate in English, as they feel their skills are not sufficient to speak fluently and confidently. Therefore, efforts to improve the quality of learning are needed by providing more speaking practice and vocabulary enrichment so that students can develop their speaking skills more effectively.

Another factor that contributes to students' speaking problems is the lack of variety and interactivity in teaching methods. In the learning process, lecturers tend to rely heavily on the lecture method as the primary approach, accompanied by very limited speaking practice. This results in minimal opportunities for students to practice speaking directly in the classroom. Speaking is a skill that requires consistent practice to develop effectively.

The lack of variety in teaching methods makes the learning environment less engaging and less motivating for students to actively participate. Students tend to feel bored and insufficiently challenged to improve their speaking skills. Moreover, the minimal use of interactive learning approaches such as group discussions, role plays, or real-life simulations results in students being less accustomed to using English in authentic communication contexts.

In addition, students also stated that the learning media used so far have not adequately supported the development of their speaking skills. The use of audio-visual tools such as videos, voice recordings, or technology-based applications that can help train pronunciation and vocabulary comprehension is rarely utilized. Such media can enhance learning interest and provide richer stimulation in the English learning process. Therefore, the ineffectiveness of teaching methods and the lack of use of modern learning media have become major obstacles in optimally improving students' speaking abilities.

Finally, the learning environment and the lack of speaking practice outside the classroom also affect students' speaking abilities. Students rarely use English in daily communication, both on and off campus, making it difficult for their speaking skills to develop optimally. This condition

highlights the need for encouragement and facilities that support the active use of English so that students can continuously improve their speaking proficiency.

4. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that students of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep face various challenges in English speaking skills, such as a lack of self-confidence, limited vocabulary, grammar knowledge, less interactive teaching methods, and an unsupportive learning environment. These findings are in line with theories previously proposed by experts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language.

One of the key factors in the success of speaking skills is affective factors, such as self-confidence and anxiety. Students who feel anxious and fear making mistakes tend to be reluctant to speak, which ultimately hinders the development of their speaking skills. This aligns with the findings of this study, where students admitted to feeling nervous, and afraid of making mistakes, and eventually chose to remain silent or give limited responses (Lander & Brown, 1995).

Furthermore, in the theory proposed by Harmer, mastery of vocabulary and grammar is an important foundation for speaking skills. A lack of mastery in these areas causes students to struggle in forming correct sentences and conveying ideas coherently. This study found that limited study time and minimal practice significantly contributed to the weak mastery of these two aspects (Trialoka et al., 2017).

From the perspective of teaching methods, explain that a communicative approach and interactive activities are very important for developing speaking skills. However, the results of this study show that the teaching methods in the classroom tend to be lecture-based, with very limited speaking practice. The lack of variety in teaching strategies causes students to miss opportunities to practice the language in real and contextual situations (Jaya et al., 2022).

The learning environment is also an important factor as explained by Krashen in the Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input and a low affective filter in the language acquisition process. In the context of this study, the lack of practice outside the classroom and the absence of a supportive environment that encourages the active use of English resulted in very limited language input, which was insufficient to support the development of speaking skills (Luo, 2024).

This study is also supported by previous research, such as is the study by Tuan and Mai, which showed that psychological factors, monotonous teaching techniques, and lack of speaking practice are the main causes of low speaking skills among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. Similarly, the findings of Wahyuni (2018) stated that students tend to be passive in speaking lessons because the teaching methods do not provide enough opportunities for maximum language exploration (Chen & Kim, 2023).

Overall, the results of this study confirm previous theories and research findings that speaking skills are influenced not only by linguistic aspects but also heavily depending on students' psychological conditions, the teaching methods used, and a supportive learning environment. Therefore, improving speaking skills among Islamic Religious Education students requires a holistic approach that focuses not only on the material but also on affective aspects and more communicative and practical learning strategies.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study shows that students of the Islamic Education Department at STIT Aqidah Usymuni Sumenep face various challenges in their English Speaking skills. The main obstacles include a lack of self-confidence, limited vocabulary and grammar, less interactive

teaching methods, and a learning environment that does not support active language practice. Psychological factors such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes also hinder students' speaking abilities. Furthermore, limited study time and minimal practice worsen their mastery of linguistic aspects. Teaching methods dominated by lectures and a lack of variety in learning strategies cause students to miss opportunities for effective practice. The absence of a supportive environment that encourages the use of English outside the classroom restricts the language input students receive. Therefore, a more holistic, communicative, and practical learning approach is needed to comprehensively improve students' speaking skills.

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