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# SPEAKING ACCURACY, FLUENCY, AND BEYOND: INDONESIAN VOCATIONAL STUDENTS' VOICES

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## Abstract
Speaking mastery has been known as the benchmark of language learning, yet many students still find it difficult to speak with great accuracy and fluency. To widen the knowledge and fill the gaps in the existing research, this present qualitative-descriptive research is to investigate how vocational students see accuracy, fluency, and other psychological-related aspects in speaking as well as collecting some suggestions to create a better speaking class. By distributing questionnaires and conducting semi-structured interviews, the present research revealed that the participants were slightly more inclined towards accuracy compared to fluency, which may result in the inhibition of risk-taking. Moreover, some psychological-related challenges such as feeling nervous, unconfident, and afraid to make mistakes were prevalent among the participants which affected their speaking performance negatively. Finally, the participants yielded some suggestions for a better speaking class, which include assisting students in four stages of speaking and providing appropriate feedback.

Keywords: accuracy, fluency, psychological-related challenges, speaking

## Introduction
In the realm of learning English as a foreign language, speaking skills – among other skills – become one of the most important skills to master. It is the skill that allows the learners to initiate and maintain a conversation with other people (Firman, 2012). In Roosdianna, Munir, & Anam's (2018) work, speaking skill is even considered the benchmark of whether or not language learning is successful. A language learner will also most likely be judged upon the mastery of speaking skills as it will give a glimpse of their language ability in a real-world situation (Brown & Yule, 1983). Similarly, the learners themselves will also evaluate whether they have been successful in mastering the language based on how they perform in speaking (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

The complexity of speaking as a skill to be mastered when learning any foreign language has been greatly researched and well-documented. In their work Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, (2019) described speaking as a "mind-boggling" procedure because the speakers have to both send and receive information using verbal cues while at the same time paying attention to the non-verbal cues. Shumin

(2002) noted that speaking is a complex process as it comprises many aspects such as verbal communication which is related to linguistic ability, non-linguistic elements such as body language and gesture, and other paralinguistic aspects, such as word stress and sentence intonation when they are communicating orally.

***Accuracy and Fluency, and Beyond***

When talking about speaking competence, the terms accuracy and fluency come to the surface (Firman, 2012; Karimy & Pishkar, 2017; Roosdianna et al., 2018; Vigoya, 2000; Wang, 2014). In short, the former refers to the ability of the learner to use correct grammar, intelligible pronunciation, and appropriate diction, whereas the latter refers to the ability of the speakers to smoothly and continuously (Firman, 2012). In general, language learners are considered to have adequate speaking competence if they can speak both accurately and fluently (Roosdianna et al., 2018). This means that they should be able to construct grammatically correct sentences and utterances, select appropriate word choices following the context of the speech or utterances, and use intelligible pronunciation while also maintaining the smoothness, speed, and rhythm when speaking.

In particular, accuracy in terms of speaking deals with "the extent to which the language produced conforms to the target language norms" (Yuan & Ellis, 2003). Therefore, accuracy deals with many linguistic-related factors, such as good pronunciation, diction, and grammar of the target language. Vigoya (2000) suggests that students with good speaking accuracy should be able to pronounce words correctly with appropriate intonation and stress patterns, use vocabulary to respond to the stimulus appropriately depending on the context, and conform to the morphological and syntactical patterns.

Fluency, on the other hand, is a little harder to define. Lennon (1990) suggests that there are two meanings for the term fluency. In a broader context, fluency refers to the overall language proficiency. Fluency brings a huge contribution to the image of successful language learners (Karimy & Pishkar, 2017) – when they are fluent, they are most likely proficient. However, in a narrower sense, fluency appears to be related to speaking flowingly, or even at the speed of the native speakers of that target language without too many pauses, hesitations, self-corrections, language fillers, and so on (Lennon, 1990). In this case, fluency deals with more the mechanical skills, such as the use of pauses, the speed, rhythm; the language use, such as being coherent and reasoned; as well as the judgment skills, which is the ability to speak appropriately depending on the contexts (Vigoya, 2000).

Beyond the technical aspects of speaking that define speaking mastery, psychological aspects also play important role in one's performance in speaking English. Students who see speaking English with a positive attitude tend to show better strategy use compared to those who have a negative attitude (Toomnan & Intaraprasert, 2015). Specifically, research has shown that psychological aspects such as a lack of motivation and self-confidence, anxiety, and inhibition (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021) are commonly found in language learners. Furthermore, Trinh & Pham (2021) pointed out that "pressure to perform well, being overpowered by better students, fear of making mistakes in front of the class, and fear of criticism or losing face" can also influence learners' performance in speaking (p. 42).

Interestingly, research has shown that despite having decent linguistic skills, students face psychological challenges when speaking, such as "low self-esteem,

higher anxiety, and low motivation" which display significant difficulties when asked to speak and vice versa (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). This finding corresponds with Park & Lee's (2005) study that reported a negative relationship between anxiety and learners' speaking performance; the higher the anxiety level they have, the lower score they get.

### *Teaching Speaking*

Many language learners often find speaking difficult or even daunting to master. This is especially true for ELF learners who generally have limited exposure to the target language outside of the classroom (Navidinia, Mobaraki, & Malekzadeh, 2019). Moreover, other various factors can also inhibit students speaking mastery. Roosdianna et al., (2018) reported three factors that can inhibit students' speaking competence, namely lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and too much topic to talk about.

Because of its complexity, it becomes a responsibility for educators to help students navigate themselves in the stream of these challenges. They should "investigate the factors, conditions, and components that form the basis of effective speaking" (Derakhshan, Khalili, & Beheshti, 2016, p. 183). A case in point, Nasri et al., (2019) suggest using more spoken languages inside the classroom while also providing ample opportunities for the learners to develop their speaking skills while Roosdianna et al., (2018) recommend using more fun activities to assist students in developing their speaking skills. Furthermore, Karimy & Pishkar (2017) suggested considering the learners' level when deciding to focus on accuracy or fluency first as generally more advanced learners will need to focus more on the accuracy, yet the fluency should not also be ignored.

To holistically improve students' accuracy and fluency relatively at the same time, however, Wang (2014) recommends four step-pedagogical methods that can help language learners to speak better: before – while – after – and extension practice. Before learners speak, the educators should prepare the learners to have sufficient knowledge and vocabulary to speak as well as some strategies to lessen their nervousness. While the learners speak, they should be given appropriate time and space to develop their fluency. The accuracy focus should be done after speaking – they should be offered opportunities to notice and correct the language use. Then, learners should be encouraged to practice extensively to speak more fluently and accurately.

Furthermore, to help ease participants' psychological challenges, educators should also make sure to create a safe learning experience for students to speak. When the environment is safe, "non-threatening and non-anxiety frightening" (Pratolo, Habibie, & Setiawan, 2019, p. 32), the learners will likely feel more comfortable speaking. In particular, Aziz & Kashinathan (2021) emphasize that educators build positive rapport with the learners to encourage them to speak. They should also give praise to students, remind them not to be stressed, and make them feel happy in class (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). The educators also need to be aware of how students react when making mistakes in speaking in front of their classmates (Pratolo et al., 2019)

The corrective feedback given to students' errors also has to be put into consideration when teaching speaking. While research has shown that corrective feedback positively affects learners' speaking mastery (e.g. Gamlo, 2019; Shariq,

2020), there is still a possibility that learners can feel embarrassed (Atma & Widiati, 2015). Furthermore, the educators should also be aware of the when and how of giving the feedback to avoid learners being worried about making mistakes (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

Tasdemir & Arslan, (2018) reminded educators to be mindful of varied preferences when it comes to the types and timing of the corrective feedback. Regarding the timing, research has pointed out diverse findings. On one hand, a number of studies (e.g. Ananda, Febriyanti, Yamin, & Mu'in, 2017; Gamlo, 2019) reported that students preferred that the feedback should be immediate to ensure that the learners do not forget and reinforce the correct form; whereas other studies (Ölmezer-Öztürk & Öztürk, 2016; Papangkorn, 2015; Tomczyk, 2013) reported that students in their research preferred the corrective feedback be given after the speaking performance to both avoid any interruption which can lead to learner's demotivation and prevent a disruption to the speaking flow. Regarding the types, Mengke (2016) has found that indirect or implicit feedback (such as repeating the error or interaction modification) might trigger their consciousness when speaking to higher-level students; however, giving direct feedback – explicitly correcting the mistake - is more preferable for beginners (Mengke, 2016). On a side note, that explicit feedback given to students' performance may enhance students' accuracy but negatively affects their fluency; on the other hand, feedback given implicitly can assist students' fluency but is not as effective for their accuracy (Shirani, 2020). Looking at these different preferences and benefits, educators need to be ready to meet learners' individual feedback preferences (see Tasdemir & Arslan, 2018) and the level of the learners (see Mengke, 2016) whenever giving feedback.

***The present research***

For the context of this research, university students majoring in office administration in a vocational faculty in Indonesia, speaking English is one of the main communication skills that is compulsory to master. For students in vocational faculty, being able to communicate orally using English will prepare them to face a real-world situation where they are expected to be able to communicate both for interpersonal or transactional purposes with their colleagues and clients from other countries. Graduates of this vocational faculty are indeed expected to be active language 'users' (practice-based) who use the language rather than just someone who understands the rules of the language (theory-based) compared to graduates from an academic-based institution (see Sudira, 2012).

Regrettably, students being too afraid to make mistakes in speaking is still a common phenomenon in the context of this research. Based on our day-to-day observation, many students in our classroom shutter or are even not willing to speak during speaking activities in the classroom because they fear making grammar or pronunciation mistakes. Unfortunately, this phenomenon can result in a lack of fluency in their speech. Thus, it becomes intriguing to see how students see a speaking performance, especially related to the technicality of accuracy and fluency and other factors such as psychology. It is also captivating to see how students would suggest making make their speaking class better at assisting them to speak more fluently and accurately.

To date, there have been many studies about teaching accuracy and fluency, especially related to the speaking teaching methods (e.g. Derakhshan et al., 2016;

Nasri et al., 2019; Nilsson, 2012; Pineda, 2016; Roosdianna et al., 2018; Wang, 2014) and corrective feedback (e.g. Mengke, 2016; Shirani, 2020). A great deal of research has also tapped and discussed psychological factors in speaking (e.g. Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Park & Lee, 2005; Toomnan & Intaraprasert, 2015; Trinh & Pham, 2021). However, to the best of our knowledge, there is still limited research done to bring forth how students themselves as language learners see accuracy, fluency and how, in their opinion, the psychological challenges affect them to deliver an accurate and fluent speech. Therefore, to widen the knowledge of this research topic and add new literature, this research is to explore how students in vocational faculty see a speaking class, especially to tap deeper into how they see accuracy and fluency in speaking English as a foreign language as well as how other psychological-related factors influence their speaking performance. Moreover, this research also wants to bring forward students' suggestions related to the methodology and technique of teaching speaking to assist them better.

## Method

This current research uses the descriptive-qualitative method as it aims to provide an in-depth and holistic description of the object under study rather than drawing a conclusion from a series of numeric data (see Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010). By examining qualitative data, this research aims to explore and examine how vocational faculty students see English speaking class, specifically how accuracy, fluency, and psychological aspect mean for their learning while also collecting students' suggestions related to the methodology and technique of teaching speaking.

To provide a comprehensive picture and bring forward students' voices related to the topic, this research used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire, which was distributed to all students majoring in office administration of a vocational faculty in Indonesia, consists of Likert-scale statements which were adapted from Torres' (1997) work (as cited in Vigoya, 2000). The questionnaire also includes several guiding questions to help uncover students' thoughts about speaking English as well as how they perceived accuracy, fluency, and other psychological aspects in speaking as well as their suggestions for better speaking classes. Thirty-two students voluntarily participated in this research. In addition, to provide more data and understanding, semi-structured interviews with 6 (six) students were also conducted. These students were chosen with a purposeful sampling based on the data from the questionnaire to represent the holistic picture of the topic. All interviewees were given a pseudonym.

All collected data was examined and organized inductively - from the bottom up until certain themes emerged - (see Creswell, 2007). To analyse the data, the researchers also conducted three-step coding, and: *open coding, axial coding, and selective coding* (Ary et al., 2010) in which the results are presented in the form of a thick description. The emerged themes are discussed by comparing with the result from the previous studies.

## Findings and Discussion

The findings of this research are presented under four subtitles. The first part is to provide a brief description of how the speaking class is conducted in the

context of this research. This includes the speaking tasks as well as how students perceive them. The second part discusses how students see accuracy and fluency, including students' "ideal self" of an English speaker described and their challenges in mastering how to speak the English language fluently and accurately. The third part discusses psychological-related aspects as perceived by students in speaking. The final part presents students' suggestions for a better speaking class.

***Students and their speaking classes***

The study found that the participants experience both monologic and dialogic speaking tasks in their classes. The participants mentioned various tasks that they have experienced in their study, ranging from simple individual tasks to complex group tasks. All the tasks were related to business.

For the monologic tasks, the participant mentioned speaking tasks such as reading graphs and doing a presentation on a company's competitive advantages company rules and regulations, and organization structure. For the dialogic task, the participants mentioned making a conversation about certain topics, – such as making plans and schedules, arranging a business trip, as well as negotiating – and having a meeting. Hence, it can be seen that the participants had various speaking task types.

In doing those speaking tasks, the participants demonstrate various feelings, ranging from positive to negative feelings. Table 1 presents the common feelings the participants mentioned when asked how they perceive speaking tasks.

Table 1. Common Feelings towards Speaking Task

| Feelings | Common Feelings | Number of Mentioned |
|---|---|---|
| Positive | Getting more confident | 16 |
| | Happy/Proud | 4 |
| | Challenged | 2 |
| Negative | Nervous | 6 |
| | Not Confident | 6 |
| | Afraid | 4 |

As shown in table 1, the participants mostly had positive feelings toward speaking tasks. The majority of the participants mentioned that they were "getting more confident" over time. This shows that as they progressed through every speaking task, the participants were able to gain more courage to be brave in speaking. A case in point, participant 32 mentioned that she felt "not confident and afraid in the beginning but as the time goes by, the fear subsided, and the confidence grew". In addition, the participants also mentioned other positive feelings, such as feeling "happy/proud" and "challenged" when they are speaking.

Despite quite a lot of positive feelings mentioned, several participants still mentioned some negative feelings towards the speaking task. Some of them reported that they felt "nervous", "not confident", and "afraid" whenever they had to speak in English. For instance, participant 4 shared how she felt "nervous and unconfident" because she was "afraid to go blank and mess up the performance."

Similarly, in the interviews, the participants also shared various dominant feelings they experienced whenever is time for them to have a speaking performance. Anne, for instance, shared that she felt "nervous and hesitant … but

proud of herself even if the performance was not perfect." Similarly, Brooke mentioned how she felt "nervous but happy" when speaking. Going further, some other interviewees also reported negative feelings whenever they are expected to speak. Camila shared that the feeling of being "tensed and afraid to make mistakes" was still dominant whereas Fiona felt "unconfident" when she had to speak.

Related to this matter, research has found that positive feelings, in this case, self-confidence have a significant correlation to speaking achievement (Tridinanti, 2018). That is, students who are more confident in themselves tend to perform better in speaking. Therefore, cultivating these positive feelings is a necessity to encourage students to learn to speak better.

Furthermore, despite positive feelings being dominant among the participants of this research, educators should acknowledge that a number of negative feelings towards speaking English are still present especially when research in a similar context, Indonesia, has found that speaking anxiety is common for language learners (see Jannah & Fitriati, 2016). They found that students are afraid of making mistakes and getting ridiculed, shy of the feeling of inadequate English ability, as well as anxious about the attention they get when speaking.

These forms of negative feelings, such as speaking anxiety, can derive from "communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation" (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020, p. 152). Therefore, having found some common negative emotions in speaking English, educators need to be attentive to students' feelings and find a way to help them be more comfortable talking in the target language (see Coutinho dos Santos, Veiga de Souza, & Vélez-Ruiz, 2020).

### *Accuracy, fluency, and students' challenges*

To gain information related to students' thoughts about accuracy and fluency, we first asked the participants to describe what is an "ideal speaker" of the English language for them, the participants mentioned several characteristics. Table 2 sums up the common characteristics of an "ideal speaker" as perceived by students.

Table 2. "Ideal Speaker" as perceived by students

| Elements | Characteristics | Number of Mentioned |
|---|---|---|
| Accuracy-related | having good grammar | 8 |
| | accurate pronunciation | 7 |
| | vast vocabulary and diction | 4 |
| Fluency-related | speaking flowingly | 8 |
| | easy to understand | 3 |
| | adapting to the context | 3 |
| Others | understand what others say | 5 |
| | confident | 2 |

Referring to Table 2, the participants mostly mentioned characteristics related to speaking accurately to describe their "ideal speaker", namely having good grammar, accurate pronunciation, vast vocabulary, and diction. To mention some examples, participant 6 mentioned that a good speaker is someone who is able to "speak with appropriate vocabulary and correct pronunciation with a good grammar" whereas participant 30 shared a good speaker is someone who can "choose the correct diction and pronounced it correctly."

Furthermore, the participants also mentioned several fluency-related characteristics that describe their "ideal speaker." The characteristics include being able to speak flowingly, using language in such an understandable manner and the ability to adapt the speaking to the context. Participant 24, for example, shared that a good speaker for her is someone who can "directly speak using English without having to think too much." Similarly, participant 5 regarded a good speaker as someone who can speak "really flowingly with such easy-to-understand" language use.

Going further, when asked about their thought on the importance of accuracy and fluency in English speaking, the majority of the participants considered both accuracy and fluency important for their speaking performance. When asked to rate the level of importance of the following speaking elements, the participants showed relatively the same score for both accuracy and fluency elements with the accuracy element showing a slightly higher score, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Rate on the Importance of Accuracy and Fluency

| Elements | Details | Average | σ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Accuracy | pronunciation, intonation, stress pattern | 4.6 | 0.55 |
| | diction | 4.4 | 0.75 |
| | grammar and sentence structure | 4.3 | 0.65 |
| Fluency | speech speed, pauses, rhythm | 4.2 | 0.79 |
| | coherence, reasoning, and meaningfulness | 4.0 | 0.73 |
| | judgment to adapt to the context and audiences | 4.4 | 0.56 |

The numbers shown in Table 3 align well with how participants responded to the open-ended questions shown in Table 4. When the participants were given the definition of accuracy and fluency and asked to give their opinion about the importance of those elements in English speaking, most of the participants considered both elements as either very important or important. However, similar to Table 3, slightly more numbers of participants viewed accuracy as slightly more important than fluency.

Table 4. Students' View on Accuracy and Fluency

| Rate | Accuracy | Fluency |
|---|---|---|
| very important | 15 | 13 |
| important | 12 | 15 |
| neutral | 2 | 2 |
| not really important | 3 | 2 |

These findings resonate well with the interview data where the students have various opinions about accuracy and fluency. When asked about her opinion on accuracy and fluency, Diana mentioned that while both aspects are important, she feels accuracy is somehow more important. She shared her thought that the students generally need to master the "foundation of the language" before they learn to speak fluently. Camila, on the other hand, thought that fluency should come first. She shared that "foreigners often do not care about grammar" and highlighted the importance of fluency.

Going further, in their effort to achieve their speaking mastery, the participants reported various challenges in relation to speaking accurately and

fluency – where most of them are related to accuracy. Table 5 sums up the participants' common accuracy and fluency-related challenges in speaking.

Table 5. Students' Common Challenges in Speaking (Accuracy and Fluency Related)

| Challenges | Details | Numbers of Mentioned |
|---|---|---|
| Accuracy-related | grammar | 18 |
| | vocabulary/diction | 18 |
| | pronunciation | 15 |
| Fluency-related | twisted tongue | 2 |
| | mimicking foreigners' accent | 2 |

Looking at Table 5, it is quite apparent that the participants mostly mentioned the challenges related to speaking accuracy. The most common ones are problems with speaking with grammatically correct structure and appropriate diction. Participant 15, for instance, mentioned how she felt she did not have enough "grammatical knowledge" that she needed to produce accurate utterances, whereas the participant also mentioned how she found it difficult to recall "the appropriate diction" to compose her sentences when speaking. Moving forward, challenges with speaking with correct pronunciation was also reported by many participants. Participant 9, for example, shared that she was oftentimes "clueless on how to pronounce certain words" because she rarely "heard those words."

Other than problems related to the accuracy, a few participants also shared that they also had fluency challenges in speaking in English, especially related to their "twisted tongue" and trying to mimic a native speaker's "accent." Regarding this matter, participant 9 shared her thought that she felt it hard to speak English because she has "Indonesian people's tongue" hinting that her tongue is not designed to pronounce English words fluently".

From these findings, it is safe to say that the participants of this research arguably put more emphasis on speaking accuracy. While the participants acknowledged that both accuracy and fluency were important, they rated a slightly higher rate for accuracy. Furthermore, the participants mentioned more accuracy-related characteristics when describing their ideal speakers, such as having good grammar, accurate pronunciation, and appropriate word choice. The participants also mentioned way more accuracy-related challenges than fluency-related challenges, suggesting that they considered speaking more on being accurate.

The present finding is similar to what has been found by Krystyna Droz´dzial -Szelest (2011). When the participants of the study were asked if they focus more on speaking accuracy or fluency, the majority of the participants were preoccupied with speaking accuracy. Not wanting to make mistakes becomes the main reason for this tendency. However, the finding of the present research is quite the opposite of what Trinder (2013) reported. In her study, most participants agreed that being accurate is not the priority in spoken language, which in turn reflects on their willingness to take a risk. The participants of this study, for example, indicated that is okay to guess when not knowing the meaning of certain words. Therefore, drawing from these previous studies, it is safe to say that while it is quite normal for students to focus more on accuracy, fluency should not be neglected. Focussing on accuracy may help the students to be more aware of their language structure to avoid grammatical and pronunciation mistakes indeed. However, being too focused

on accuracy may inhibit the students from risk-taking, which is important in language learning.

***Psychological elements in speaking***

When discussing challenges in speaking, the participants went further to share their other challenges that are outside the realm of accuracy and fluency. Rather, those challenges are more related to the psychological aspects of speaking. These other challenges are summed up in Table 6, as follows.

Table 6. Students' Psychological Related Challenges in Speaking

| Challenges | Details | Numbers of Mentioned |
|---|---|---|
| Psychological-Related | nervous | 10 |
| | feeling unconfident/doubtful | 9 |
| | afraid to make mistakes | 5 |
| | other reasons | 3 |

From table 6, it can be seen that the participants mentioned psychological-related challenges. These challenges include – but are not limited to –nervousness, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes when speaking. For instance, participant 12 shared how she was "haunted by nervousness" whenever she was asked to talk in English. Similarly, participant 13 also mentioned that she felt "not confident which caused [her] to lose focus."

In addition, it is also quite common that the psychological-related challenges also influence how they perform in relation to both speaking accurately and fluency. A case in point, participant 31 shared how she felt "nervous" she had to talk in English which in turn caused her to "overthink grammar and pronunciation and forget the appropriate vocabulary." In the same boat was participant 24 who felt "afraid to make pronunciation mistakes" which subsequently caused her to "choose another diction that is not appropriate for the context."

The data from the interview also supports these findings. There are several psychological-related challenges that the interview respondents have experienced, such as: being nervous, insecure, not confident, fear of making mistakes in grammar, diction, and pronunciation, fear of not knowing how to respond (ideas drain), fear of critics (in the speaking performance).

These challenges are all coming from the inside of the students. One most possible factor that contributes to these challenges is that they are not ready - or they just simply feel they are not – to perform speaking activities in the target language. No being or feeling ready is indeed a common phenomenon in speaking. A great body of research has reported these challenges (see Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021; Kara & Ayaz, 2017; Trinh & Pham, 2021). This feeling of not being ready to speak in English causes what is then called psychological related challenges such as nervousness, anxiety, insecurity, unconfident, and fear of making mistakes. These feelings created significant challenges in oral production.

Moreover, the awareness of them not being a native speaker of the target language in turn may create anxiety before speaking, feeling of insecurity, and fear of making mistakes (see Ilyas, Putri, & Nurani, 2021; Jejo, 2020; Pratolo et al., 2019; Tulgar, 2018). Therefore, it becomes imperative for educators to address this phenomenon, especially when psychological challenges may greatly affect

students' performance in speaking (see Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Park & Lee, 2005).

***Suggestions for better teaching methods***

When asked about how the educators can help them do better in the speaking class, both concerning accuracy and fluency or even beyond, the participants proposed several suggestions. Table 6 presents the four most common suggestions posed by the participants.

Table 6. Students' Suggestions for Speaking Classes

| Students' suggestion | Numbers of Mentioned |
|---|---|
| more English exposure/practice | 13 |
| provide more feedback | 7 |
| create a safe and collegial learning atmosphere | 7 |
| utilize more fun activities | 5 |

As seen in Table 6, the most prevalent suggestion for a better speaking class is providing students with more English exposure or practice, both to enhance their accuracy and fluency in speaking. The participants felt that is the best way to be skillful in using English spoken language. In particular, participant 10 pointed out how "using full English in class when speaking is hard, but it will help [her] in the class." By the same token, participant 12 suggested more English practice using a group "discussion to discuss a certain topic" more often, whereas participant 28 suggested "more conversation practice" to enhance her speaking skills.

Another common suggestion presented by the participants is to give more feedback on the speaking performance. Participant 17, for instance, suggested that the educators are to "remind [her] when [she] made grammatical or pronunciation errors" in speaking. Likewise, participant 11 suggested that her "mispronunciations should be corrected" by the educators whereas participant 9 wanted the educators to give them "suggestions" on how to improve her overall speaking ability.

Moving further, the participants also proposed some suggestions that are more relevant to their psychological factors in speaking, namely providing them with a safe learning atmosphere and utilizing more fun activities in class. Related to creating a safe learning atmosphere, participant 17 reminded the educators to be "more patient" in guiding the students. Similarly, participant 9 suggested that the educators do not "corner the students" because their minds "could go blank" when they panic while participant 32 suggested a less "tensed situation" so that students can be more confident when speaking. Furthermore, related to fun activities in class, as suggested to use more "speaking games" (participant 2), "movies" (participant 19), or "videos" (participant 25). Participant 26, in particular, mentioned that by employing more fun activities in class, the students can "enjoy" the speaking class more.

The result of the interview strengthens the aforementioned data. There are some points suggested by the interview respondents to be accommodated in a 'constructive' speaking class. They are warming up activities; relaxing learning atmosphere or safe learning environment; encouraging corrective feedback which is not discouraging; summary of speaking performances including evaluation, speaking tips, and tricks; more examples (videos, recording, samples of

conversation); small-group learning; more target language exposure: outside class activity independent activity; extra target language engagement.

These suggestions from the participants can be grouped into four phases of speaking activities: pre-speaking, whilst-speaking, post-activities, and extensive activities (see Wang, 2014). In the pre-speaking phase, educators should be able to provide ample warming up activities and examples such as videos, recordings, or conversation samples to help them be familiar with the context of the speaking classes (cf. Nasri et al., 2019; Navidinia et al., 2019). By giving the students more exposure to how the target language, the students can be more prepared to speak.

In the whilst-speaking phase, educators should encourage and maintain a relaxing and safe learning atmosphere for the students (cf. Batyrova, 2021; Derakhshan et al., 2016; Fauzan, 2014; Trinh & Pham, 2021). Creating such an environment helps students to become more comfortable speaking and not afraid of making mistakes, by, for example, letting them to speak freely first without interruption or correction. This way, educators can encourage students to speak fluently (see Shirani, 2020).. In addition, at this stage also, educators can divide the students into several small groups learning to practice their speaking skills with their peers (Derakhshan et al., 2016).

In the post-speaking phase, corrective and encouraging feedback is the main point of participants' suggestions. However, there are some differences in their feedback preferences (see Tasdemir & Arslan, 2018). In the interviews, five out of six interviewees prefer explicit feedback, meaning that they wanted the educators to explicitly tell them which parts of their speaking needs improvements. The respondents mentioned that they need explicit feedback so that they can know for sure what they need to improve without causing too much confusion. Brooke, for example, preferred direct feedback because she feared that "what [she] thought is right differs from [her] lecturers." However, one interviewee, Diana, preferred implicit feedback because she felt that implicit feedback feels less attacking. A learner who chooses this kind of feedback usually perceives it as less embarrassing or stressful for the learners (Yoshida, 2008). In terms of the timing, five interviewees favored feedback be given at the end of their speaking performance. For instance, Diana preferred this type of feedback as she would be hesitant to continue if the feedback were given in the middle of the performance. On the other hand, one interviewee, Eloise, preferred feedback be given directly after she made a mistake to ensure she knows "exactly where the mistake is" so that she can correct it immediately.

As students' preference for the type of feedback given to the speaking performance differs, it becomes educators' responsibility to try to cater to these diverse preferences, both in the types of the feedback and the timing (cf. Sakale, 2019; Tasdemir & Arslan, 2018). This finding resonates well with the work of Sakale (2019) and Tasdemir & Arslan (2018) who remind educators to consider the timing and types of the feedback.

In the last phase, the extensive activities which take place outside class activity or independent activity, educators are to provide opportunities for the students to have extra target language engagements. This can be done by, for instance, assigning students with speaking projects outside the classroom or by having them form a small group of speaking communities in which they can

practice freely outside the classroom walls. These activities are to provide the language learners with supportive and good interaction (Nilsson, 2012).

## Conclusion

Speaking skills have been known as an indicator of showing how competent a foreign language learner is, especially in terms of whether they have the ability to speak accurately and fluently. The present study has shown how the students of vocational faculty tend to give more attention the accuracy compared to fluency, which can possibly lead to less willingness to risk-taking if it is not treated carefully. The present research has also found that psychological challenges, such as being nervous, unconfident, fear of making mistakes, and a feeling of not being ready to perform oral production affect the speaking performance. Furthermore, students' suggestions for a better speaking class which are categorized into four phases – before speaking, whilst speaking, after speaking, and extensive practice – have also been presented. Although the present research has provided more literature on speaking activities, especially from EFL students' perspective, the result of this research cannot be accounted for as a generalization because of its specific and limited number of respondents. The researchers hope that future research can tap more into this issue with broader and more participants as well as dig deeper into to what extent the psychological challenges in speaking affect EFL speaking performance.

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