



**ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS
TO NON-ENGLISH COURSE STUDENTS AT UTAR**

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected from 36 lecturers from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS) and the Centre for Extension Education (CEE) in Kampar campus. The research aimed to address two key questions which are the difficulties lecturers face in teaching speaking skills and the strategies they propose to improve students' oral proficiency. Findings revealed that psychological barriers such as anxiety, low confidence, and fear of making mistakes, as well as linguistic difficulties such as limited vocabulary, weak sentence structure, pronunciation issues, and dependent on mother tongue usage were a major challenge to students' speaking development. These results align with the existing literature and highlight the impact of both affective and linguistic factors on oral performance. The study also identified several effective strategies, such as role plays, language games, trial-and-error approaches, reading aloud, and the integration of technology were widely endorsed by lecturers. Additionally, creating a safe and supportive classroom environment and tailoring speaking tasks to students' academic backgrounds were emphasized as crucial for enhancing participation and confidence. The implications of these findings highlights the importance of adopting interactive, learner-centered teaching methods and providing institutional support for language lecturers. While the study contributes valuable insights, its scope is limited by the sample size, location, and cross-sectional design. Recommendations for future research include expanding the sample across faculties and institutions, conducting longitudinal studies, and incorporating student perspectives to complement lecturers' views. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of psychological and linguistic difficulties in shaping speaking performance among non-English course students and provides practical strategies to address these challenges. The results contribute to a better understanding of how empathetic, adaptive, and technology-enhanced teaching approaches can foster more effective and engaging speaking lessons in ESL contexts.

Keywords: Speaking skills, English Second Language (ESL), Psychological Challenges, Linguistic Challenges, Affective Filter Hypothesis, Teaching Strategies, non-English course students, Higher Education (UTAR)

Subject area: P95-95.6 Oral communication. Speech

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CEE	Centre for Extension Education
ChatGPT	Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer
ESL	English as a Second Language
FAS	Faculty of Arts and Social Science
IT	Information Technology
MA	Master of Arts
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RQ	Research Question
SD	Standard Deviation
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the background of the study, the statement of the problem of this study, the research objectives and research questions, the significance of the study, the definition of the key term, and the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

The usage of English is crucial because it is one of the most commonly spoken languages in the world today (Ilyosovna, 2020; Yusa, 2021). It serves as a common medium for communication across diverse cultures and nations. English is not just used in schools, but it is helpful in professional fields and industries such as diplomacy, business, and technology because of how widely the language is used. English is widely used for communication, particularly in interactions with individuals from diverse international backgrounds. For instance, when communicating with clients, travelers, and foreign students from other countries. Proficiency in English enables individuals to access a vast range of knowledge, publications, and academic resources predominantly available in the language. According to Tareq (2023), the ability of an individual to be proficient and master the English language is crucial as it could improve creativity in both academic achievement and career development, as well as keeping up with current world events.

In Malaysia, people who can speak or do not speak English fluently have different specific difficulties when learning English as a second language, also known as English Second Language (ESL). This is because students come from various cultures, ethnicity and backgrounds, which brings up difficulties in training the students to communicate with English language, especially

when they have yet to be exposed to the language (Méndez Lopez, 2011; Woodrow, 2006; Zhang & Head, 2010, as cited in Dewi et al., 2022). Students are required to develop proficiency in the English language to perform well in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and Malaysian University English Test (MUET), as achieving high scores in these examinations facilitates entry into their preferred universities and enhances their prospects of securing better employment opportunities after graduation.

However, teachers have observed that students struggle to speak English confidently when asked to present in front of the class or read a paragraph aloud. This is because the students have to frequently deal with psychological factors such as lack of confidence, anxiety, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, and embarrassment to speak in class which have a significant impact on their process of learning the English language (Nijat et al., 2019; Chin, 2020; Amoah & Yeboah, 2021; Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021; John et al., 2021; Dewi & Wilany, 2022; Kaur, 2022).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Speaking is one of the most important and challenging skills to master, especially for ESL learners (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021; Amoah & Yeboah, 2021; Yusa, 2021; Dewi & Wilany, 2022). Despite years of learning English in school, students still tend to rely more on their mother tongue in daily communication. According to Putri (2020), one key reason for this challenge while communicating in English is the distinction between how a sentence or word is spoken and how it is written, which leads to hesitation and lack of fluency when speaking. There are several recent studies on this issue that the researchers have done on the psychological factors such as anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, and embarrassment to speak and challenges affecting English speakers in Malaysian ESL classrooms.

Past studies have explored various psychological challenges and challenges faced by English speakers in Malaysian ESL classrooms (Aziz et al., 2019; Chin, 2020; John et al., 2021; Kaur, 2022). Among these, lack of confidence and anxiety are consistently found to hold back students' speaking performance. Students with low self-confidence tend to overthink their speech, feel nervous when speaking in front of peers or teachers, and are often afraid of being judged for making mistakes (Aziz et al., 2021; Chin, 2020). This fear is heightened when they compare themselves to peers who speak English more fluently, which further discourages participation in classroom speaking tasks. The current English speakers bring concern to the teacher as many prefer to remain silent rather than risk embarrassment, resulting in a lack of engagement and oral practice (Aziz et al., 2021).

The main psychological barriers affecting ESL learners' speaking performance include lack of confidence (Ork et al., 2024; Kizi, 2024), anxiety (Ho, 2003, as cited in Fathi et al., 2024), lack of motivation (Moteballi et al., 2020; Rahmadani et al., 2024), fear of making mistakes (Putri et al., 2020; Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021), and embarrassment (John et al., 2021; Doan, 2024). These are challenging for English speakers when speaking the English language because they are afraid of making mistakes and errors when pronouncing difficult words (Hamid et al., 2024) which the students find embarrassing especially when their friends are making fun of them. This condescending behaviour from other students contributes to peer pressure and the student will lack the motivation to speak (Ork et al., 2024). According to Ork et al. (2024), even though ESL learners have learned English for 10 years, ever since their primary school, secondary school, and tertiary school with excellent results on their English papers and report cards, the students still could not speak English fluently.

As a result, educators must ensure that students can adapt effectively to the classroom environment while learning and practicing English. Teachers have to create a teaching method and strategies that adapt to the student's learning level (Kaur, 2022; Nijat et al., 2019). Such approaches ensure inclusive participation in classroom activities, preventing any student from feeling excluded.

However, limited research has focused specifically on the challenges faced by non-English course students in private universities such as UTAR, especially in relation to speaking skills. Most existing studies emphasize general ESL classrooms or English-major students. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the issues on how psychological factors such as lack of confidence and anxiety affect speaking performance of ESL learners in the classroom. Hence, this study aims to address the challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students at UTAR.

1.3 Research Objectives

The following study aims to examine the following research objectives:

1. To identify the challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students.
2. To investigate the suggested solutions to improve speaking skills for non-English course students.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students?

2. What are the suggested solutions to improve speaking skills for non-English course students?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Firstly, this study could help lecturers better understand what their students are going through by changing and adapting their teaching methods and approaches to suit the student's learning adaptability. When lecturers learn about the student's needs and interests, they would have a better relationship with the students as well as making the learning environment feel more welcoming and supportive for the students. This could help boost the student's self-confidence and willingness to learn to speak the English language. Additionally, understanding the students would ease the lecturer's job to prepare effective lessons for the students and the students would have a good time learning and interacting in the English language.

Next, this study could benefit ESL learners too by making them aware of the psychological factors and challenges that they experience. This study brings awareness to the students as well as helping them to understand about the psychological difficulties that many Malaysian ESL Classrooms encounter. This study is extremely crucial because it could help create a less stressful environment for the learners and make the students feel that they are in a supportive learning environment. Learners will be more eager to learn without fearing being made fun of, and they will benefit by having more confidence to participate in class, which will make learning more fun and enjoyable.

Lastly, this study could benefit future scholarly research on this topic. It provides insights into the challenges faced by both teachers and ESL learners, enabling scholars to explore these issues from a different perspective.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

- i. ***English as a Second Language (ESL)*** is a platform where students would learn to speak English as their second language (Govindasamy et al, 2020).
- ii. ***Anxiety*** is the feeling of constant worries about everything which causes tension, lack of sleep, tiredness, disturbance when sleeping, and irritation (APA, 2013 & Newman et al., 2013 as cited in Williams et al., 2023).
- iii. ***Embarrassment*** is the feeling of self-consciousness that is felt everywhere and to one's physical appearance (Vani et al., 2020).
- iv. ***Motivation*** is the passion for achieving a goal and the determination that motivates someone to keep going towards it (Motevalli et al., 2020).
- v. ***Non-English Course Students*** are students who were exposed to the English language as an academic topic but did not pursue English as their primary major (Yusa, 2021).
- vi. ***Self-confidence*** is the feeling of confidence and trust of an individual towards themselves to reach maximum performance (Dominguez-Gonzalez et al., 2024).
- vii. ***Speaking Skills*** are one of the most important and powerful abilities to interact in any spoken language, particularly if one does not use the language as their native tongue (Meena, 2020).
- viii. ***Psychological Factors*** are the emotions and behaviours that affect a person's actions and learning process (Di Crosta et al, 2021).

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study's limitation is its small sample size with a limited number of 36 participants which focuses only on the lecturers with English Language qualifications from the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) and Centre for Extension Education (CEE) in UTAR Kampar. Hence, a larger

sample could potentially capture a more diverse range of perspectives and enhance the robustness of the results. Future studies should consider increasing the sample size to address this limitation and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Another limitation of this study is due to tight schedules and time constraints, the researcher can only focus on the lecturers in UTAR Kampar District to participate in this study by contributing to the Google Form survey questionnaire and asynchronous email interview. Hence, the findings produced in this study cannot be generalized and only relevant to this specific area. It may not represent the broader population. Therefore, careful consideration must be used when applying these findings to other populations, organizations, or cultural contexts. Future studies could expand the subject matter to incorporate a variety of contexts or people in order to improve the findings' generalizability and broaden their usefulness.

Moreover, the challenges and recommendations shared by the lecturers in this study are tied to a particular period. As time progresses, the teaching environment is likely to change, leading to the emergence of new challenges and more refined suggestions and solutions from the lecturers. Consequently, the findings of this study may become less applicable in the future. To address this, future research could involve ongoing assessments or longitudinal studies to ensure the findings remain relevant and adaptable to future changes.

By acknowledging these limitations, it is hoped that it can guide future investigations toward addressing these constraints for a more comprehensive understanding of challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students at UTAR.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed the psychological barriers to speaking in ESL classrooms, pedagogical challenges in teaching speaking skills, strategies for overcoming challenges, and theoretical frameworks.

2.1 Psychological Barriers to Speaking in ESL Classrooms

A. Lack of confidence of English speakers in Malaysian ESL Classrooms

Bakhtiar and Suwandi (2022) stated that people who have low self-confidence are constantly worried that they will fail when doing things and tend to overthink negatively. This is one of the significant factors that causes learners to have a lack of confidence when speaking in English. Besides that, learners who lack confidence in themselves are not able to communicate in English, and they cannot understand or interpret what others are talking about when they speak in English (Naunan, 1999, as cited in Qureshi et al., 2020). This lack of confidence can result in feelings of discouragement and insecurity, particularly among students with limited English proficiency, such as those in rural schools where exposure to English is minimal, and its use in daily interactions is uncommon. Consequently, students with low confidence often feel embarrassed to speak English or participate in class discussions. This would lead the learners to not voluntarily participate in discussions or answer questions even though they have their answers on hand due to fear of making mistakes or their responses being perceived as inferior to those of their peers.

Other than that, the feeling of discouragement that students experience often persists beyond a single occurrence. Some students are subjected to mockery and made fun of by their

peers due to cultural stigma as learning a non-native language may be perceived negatively by certain cultural groups. For instance, students will receive negative comments from their peers for learning English, saying that they should just focus on their mother tongue or the official language of the country. These hurtful words can significantly undermine students' confidence and motivation to speak English. According to Ork (2024), those students who are interested in learning the English language have not been provided enough support, especially in the environment outside of the classroom which leads them to revert to their native language to conform to societal norms.

Past study research done by Kaur (2022) says that the students hesitate to speak in English language because of fear of making mistakes and the negative peer evaluation that they receive. This fear causes the students to withdraw from participating in classroom discussions. Similarly, Nijat et al. (2019) found out that the students who lack confidence tend to remain passive or silent as they feel their English skills are poor. However, when the students have self-confidence, it can contribute to the student's success in learning the English language (Bakar et al, 2022). Nevertheless, even though confidence is the key factor of the issue, research often fails to explore the individual's characteristics of each learner's needs. Hence, this stage involves the teacher's contribution by giving the students positive motivation or feedback even when the students do not do well in the subject. For instance, the teacher can re-correct the student's answer by giving positive words first before recorrecting the student's answer. This way, it would not completely crush the student's confidence, and students would be excited to try again. John (2021) identifies that the metacognitive strategies are effective for building confidence, but these strategies are underused among Malaysian students. Most studies focus on classroom settings without

considering the external factors, such as cultural norms or socioeconomic backgrounds which might affect the learners' self confidence. This leaves a significant gap in understanding the broader context of confidence in ESL learning.

B. Anxiety of English Speakers in Malaysian ESL Classrooms

Anxiety is also one of the contributing factors that affects English Speakers in Malaysian ESL Classrooms. Anxiety influences the students when learning the English language as well as the communication process when the students are in a classroom situation (MacIntyre, 1999 as cited in Heng et al., 2012). This is because the students tend to exhibit heightened caution when speaking and communicating in the classroom. For instance, when the teacher provides an opinion-based question and asks for volunteers, the students will start to be anxious and aware of what they say because they are worried and afraid that the teacher will reject them and think their opinions are not as good as their peers which in the end will make the students feel embarrassed.

Furthermore, anxiety is not a constant feeling, and it is due to external factors found within the learning environment, such as peers, classroom activities, and fear of receiving negative feedback (Sabri et al., 2021). For instance, when there is role play or oral communication, the students who are not good at speaking English tend to be more anxious because they do not know what to say. The feeling of fear of making mistakes, mispronouncing certain words, or having grammar errors in their sentences would make the students feel discouraged and uninterested in learning the language. The anxiety rises even more when all eyes are on them, which makes their minds go blank, forgetting what they are going to say. Although there are many studies on lack of confidence and anxiety, students still face this psychological factor no matter where they are or what they do. Past study research done by Kaur (2022) says that students with high anxiety often freeze during presentations or avoid participating in class discussions due to their fear of making

mistakes. Similarly, Nijat et al. (2019) also found that students feel particularly anxious when speaking in front of teachers or people who they are not familiar with which leads to the lack of participation in classroom discussions. However, there are other existing studies that explore the role of anxiety in speaking skills but there is a lack of longitudinal research which assess the long-term effectiveness of interventions.

According to John (2021), the researcher highlighted the potential of group-based activities to reduce anxiety but did not examine if this would be maintained for a long period of time. Most of the research mainly focuses on school-grad learners and ignores the fact that anxiety evolves and impacts language acquisition in adulthood or even in professional settings. This leaves a significant gap in addressing anxiety at different stages of English language learning.

2.2 Pedagogical Challenges in Teaching Speaking Skills

2.2.1 Teaching Speaking Skills to Non-English Course Students

According to Elmahdi (2020), teaching speaking skills to students who are not part of English language studies provides certain challenges to the teachers because their main focus is usually on content related to their specific fields of study rather than language learning. For instance, students who are studying arts courses are not as particular about their English language skills because they are mostly focusing on the art that they are creating. They would rather prioritise the subjects or skill sets more relevant to their courses, and less so on a language they may not primarily use unless explicitly required in the career. Students might not think that the English language would be a part of their academic success and that the requirement for mastering their technical skills is of higher importance. Even if they know the basics of the English language for assignments and communication, they only use the minimum required to deliver their point, without being too

particular about their fluency. Overall, these students have a lack of interest and motivation to learn and improve their English language.

Another challenge that comes up from teaching speaking skills in primarily non-English courses is the issue of field-specific jargon and contexts. English lessons may be offered as part of the curriculum of these technical courses, but these lessons only teach the general use of the language and may not cover the more technical terms and communication scenarios a student may encounter in their career (Tukan, 2024). For instance, an architecture student would require speaking skills to discuss design concepts and blueprints, but they find the English lessons that are offered do not cover terms specific to their technical field. As a result, the students find that the English lessons feel disconnected from their academic or professional requirements. Therefore, teaching speaking skills to non-English course students is one of the challenges that the teachers go through.

2.2.2 Challenges Faced by Educators in Malaysian ESL Classrooms

In the classroom environment, the educators would often face challenges from the students, and this includes ESL classrooms. According to Draznik (2022), one major challenge that educators need to face is cultural and psychological barriers which deter many students from participating in speaking activities, often with the fear of making mistakes. With classrooms that are diverse in culture, some students may feel inferior to those who are more fluent in the English language and are afraid to make mistakes in front of them, fearing that they would get laughed at for their accents or their limited language proficiency. Some cultures may also perceive speaking English to be less important compared to their own, sometimes even frowning upon those who choose to primarily use English instead of their native language.

These challenges are rather evident in rural areas where students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. This lack of exposure significantly affects students' ability to develop their confidence and fluency in speaking English (Palomargareta et al., 2024; Sam, 2024). In these regions, students primarily use their native languages at home, within their communities, and even at school. Focusing in the classroom of an English lesson, the teacher may assign tasks or assignments that require group discussions and presentations. However, when unsupervised, the students will resort to using their native languages for discussion. There is a gap between classroom instruction and real-world practice. Overall, this behaviour makes it difficult for educators to reinforce the consistent use of the English language in a natural setting.

2.3 Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

This section discusses several strategies that can help address the challenges faced by educators when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. The purpose of this section is to highlight the practical and effective approaches that not only can enhance the students' language proficiency but also to build their confidence and motivation to communicate in English.

2.3.1 Innovative Teaching Strategies to Improve Speaking Skills

To overcome the challenges of limited engagement of students and the needs of a specific field, educators can adopt innovative teaching strategies that make activities of speaking English more engaging and relevant for certain fields. Lessons can be designed to be better aligned for real-world use in more technical fields. For example, mock interviews can be conducted for business students or IT project presentations. Use the approach of task-based learning with real-world scenarios to enhance the practical communication skills of the students, not only for use in academics but also to help them in presentations and meetings in professional careers.

Educators can also use authentic materials, such as videos and articles relevant to a technical field to make lessons more engaging and relatable for the students. Using relevant content may also allow the students to better understand technical terms and field-related jargon used in the context of their technical field, improving both comprehension and communication fields.

Overall, for this strategy to be effective, the lessons should be tailored to meet the specific needs of students of non-English majors. Educators should ensure that the content provided can be directly applicable to their academic and professional aspirations while improving their overall comprehension and communication skills.

2.3.2 Role-Playing, Pair Work, and Group Discussions

Interactive activities such as role-play, pair work, group discussions, and presentations will allow the opportunity for students to practice their English speaking skills while reducing the pressure of speaking in front of a group of people (Khalmurzayevna et al., 2024; Pramudya et al., 2024; Rofiq et al., 2024). Role-playing activities allow students to simulate communication in real-life situations and can be made to relate to certain fields. For instance, the roles that the students can act out are acting as a customer service representative or technical support agent. Role-playing activities can enhance various aspects of a student, not only by practicing specific communication strategies they need in their careers but also by promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Moreover, pair work activities can be used to encourage one-on-one interaction, where students practice dialogues, conduct interviews, or discuss certain topics. According to Thohirah (2024), with one-on-one interaction, students can practice speaking in a low-pressure and supportive environment, also helping with reducing anxiety with speaking and discussions.

Additionally, pair work also encourages peer learning, in a constructive and collaborative learning environment, a more proficient student can help a less confident student to enhance their skills in English. Teachers should provide more pair-work activities to mimic real-world communication and help the students enhance their fluency in communicating in the English language. Besides that, group discussions are also a highly effective strategy for enhancing speaking skills for non-English majors (Rahimi et al., 2022; McKay et al., 2023). For instance, a group of business students discuss with each other to plan a marketing strategy. In group discussions, students often collaborate and share ideas, promoting active interaction and engagement among students and fostering a sense of community and peer learning. In a group of people with diverse ideas, knowledge, and beliefs, students can support or challenge each other's ideas. Overall, these interactive activities are effective strategies that promote communication in an environment that fosters interaction and collaboration. Activities that play out realistic scenarios help enhance critical thinking and problem solving, giving constructive feedback and allowing students to build their confidence with listening and speaking.

2.3.3 Creating a Safe and Supportive Classroom Environment

It is crucial for a student to feel comfortable in practicing their language ability and educators need to create a safe and supportive classroom environment (Chiriac et al., 2023; Hilaire et al., 2023; Astiwi et al., 2024). In such an environment, students would feel more likely to take risks with the use of the language, not be too particular about making mistakes, and overall grow with their English proficiency. The teachers play an important role in creating an atmosphere by providing a space that is inclusive, respectful, and non-judgemental where every student feels valued and appreciated. This is because a safe environment allows learners to focus on improving their English

skills without the fear of being ridiculed or criticised for their mistakes, especially for those students who often feel self-conscious about themselves. According to Matthews (2023), when the students are in a safe classroom, students are more encouraged to actively participate, share ideas, and engage in discussions without the fear of embarrassment. This is important for speaking activities where less fluent students are often anxious about speaking in front of a group of people. A supportive classroom helps alleviate the anxiety of students by promoting encouragement or positive reinforcement (Hanh et al., 2024; Maisarah, 2024). Teachers can acknowledge the efforts of students, celebrate small successes, and provide constructive feedback that guides toward improvements rather than focusing on mistakes. When the students feel supported, they are more likely to take the initiative to practice their language skills.

Other than that, peer-to-peer support among students is also another element of a safe and supportive classroom. Having a collaborative atmosphere allows the students to help each other learn by sharing ideas, fostering a sense of community among students, communicating, and giving constructive feedback through activities such as pair work and group activities (Capatina et al., 2024). Peer interaction not only enhances the speaking skills of students but also builds social connections, which is important for non-English majors who feel disconnected from the process of learning the language. Therefore, a safe and supportive classroom environment leads to long-term success in teaching and learning of the English language. Without the fear of being judged, students are able to develop the confidence they need to speak and interact in English. So, they are more likely to feel empowered to express themselves with their language fluency and overcome the challenges they may face while communicating in academic and professional settings. Educators who create a safe space allow students to thrive, not only with learning language but also contribute to their academic growth.

2.3.4 Using Technology and AI Tools to Enhance Speaking Practice

In modern ESL classrooms, it is increasingly important for students to foster the use of technology and AI tools to enhance learning and speaking of English (Fathi et al., 2024; Hidayatullah, 2024). These tools provide students with interactive, engaging, and personalised experiences to practice language skills outside of the traditional classroom environment. So, by using these language learning apps, speech recognition software, and AI-driven platforms, students can learn and receive real-time feedback on their pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. According to Chen (2022), these technologies offer a level of convenience that allows students to practice at their own pace. This is helpful for those non-English major students who may not have regular time to practice the English language. For instance, Duolingo or Rosetta Stone offers interactive language speaking exercises, receives corrections on the spot, and overall helps students refine their language skills. These apps also track and reward progress, giving the learner a sense of accomplishment, and giving them motivation to continue practicing.

In recent times, AI tools such as ChatGPT have become increasingly common, and they can be quite useful in enhancing language skills for ESL students (Raimi et al., 2024). These AI tools primarily function as text-based conversational agents, and provide simulated conversations. Students can input various topics to interact with, and AI tools can provide examples of sentence structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation. According to Vashishth (2024), a benefit of using AI tools is they provide instant and tailored feedback and if a student does not understand certain answers, they can ask for a more detailed explanation.

In addition, educators can use these technologies to prepare materials by watching videos, podcasts, and articles which are very useful resources for improving listening and speaking skills

(Barbour et al., 2024; Pradana, et al., 2024; Tamara et al., 2024). These materials can be all put together into a resource where it is convenient for the students to access and expose themselves to natural English usage. Students can develop their vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and idiomatic expressions. Technology also enables virtual communication with native speakers or other learners through language exchange platforms, online chatrooms, or video calls. This real-world interaction not only enhances speaking fluency but also allows students to practice communication in diverse, dynamic settings, making the language learning experience better suits their specific fields.

Overall, the integration of technology and AI tools into speaking practice offers students the flexibility to improve their language skills in a way that suits their individual needs and schedules. The biggest advantage of the use of technology is convenience which provides easy access to materials, at any place and at any time. Learning applications that provide students with immediate, personalized feedback, all of which help enhance speaking proficiency. Educators should incorporate these tools into their teaching process to create a more engaging learning environment and make the students feel more motivated to learn and speak English confidently.

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks

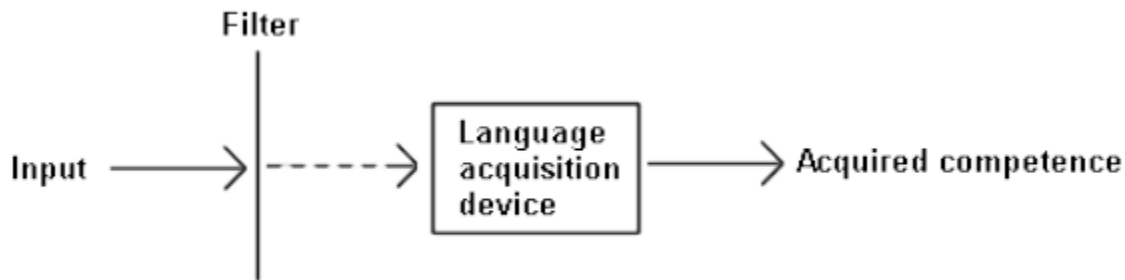


Figure 1 Adopted Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that is used in this study is called Affective Filter Hypothesis adopted from Krashen (1982). Krashen's theoretical framework consists of five major language acquisition theories which are Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, and the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Lin, 2008).

According to Chen (2020), the Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis will illustrate how it would affect the students' learning by relating it to the student's emotions when learning English. Krashen points out that learning a new language is the input that the students are going to receive and the filter is the barrier that is preventing the students from mastering the language. However, this filter can be high or low because it is connected to the student's emotions. When the filter is high, it is more difficult for the teacher to teach the English language to the students, but when the filter is low, the success rate for students to learn the English language is high. So, the Affective Filter Hypothesis has identified three types of factors that play an important role in this hypothesis which are motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety (Zhang, 2023). These three factors are crucial

because they determine whether the filter will be low or high when the students are receiving the input of the English language from the teacher.

There are studies made by Zen and Apriana (2015) mentioned that a family develop the Affective Filter Hypothesis for the development of their children's language and has been recognized by Krashen stating that when the children are comfortable, confident and felt belonged to a group member, the children could absorb the input well. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis is highly relevant to be used in this study because it highlights the emotion and psychological barriers such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation which slows down the students' ability to master and practice their speaking skills. Students who are not from English courses in UTAR often face these challenges which results in a "high affective filter" that limits their willingness to engage in speaking activities in the classroom. So, with the understanding of the role of the affective filter, it could help the lecturers to develop some strategies to create a supportive environment to encourage their students and reduce the student's anxiety.

According to the study made by Parrales and Dajely (2022) using Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, the study showed that factors such as anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, and attitude play a big role for the students in learning a language. The low affective filter is conducted in this study and it is successful because it helps the students to learn the language better. Some activities like games and tasks engagement were conducted and it successfully reduced the anxiety and built up confidence in the students. The students found these activities enjoyable and felt more comfortable speaking in the English language which supports the success of Krashen's theory. Other than that, Parrales and Dajely highlighted that the teachers play an important role in creating a supportive environment by giving helpful feedback which can reduce anxiety and encourage students to participate in the classroom discussion. However, it is shown that there are certain

issues like negative peer feedback and low self-confidence showing how a high affective filter can make it difficult for the students to learn a language. By putting these challenges aside, the research concluded and confirmed Krashen's hypothesis could reduce the emotional barriers which can improve the students' speaking skills. Therefore, the study highlighted the need for interactive and supportive teaching methods to help students to succeed in learning a language.

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis offers a useful framework for understanding the emotional and psychological barriers for non-English course students face in learning speaking skills. This framework can help this study by exploring the specific challenges that UTAR English lecturers encounter such as students' anxiety and lack of confidence. Krashen's hypothesis also stresses the importance of low-anxiety and a supportive environment which are the solutions in building positive relationships between the teacher and students, and reducing negative peer feedback through interactive activities. Additionally, Krashen's hypothesis also emphasises the teacher's role in conducting games, role-playing, and group exercises to ensure that the filter barrier is low. Teachers focusing on motivation is useful for non-English course students especially when the students have a lack of exposure towards the language or interest in English language. Therefore, by applying Krashen's framework in this study, it can help the teachers to better identify the challenges and effective solutions for teaching English language to the students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter covered the research design, population and sample, sampling technique, research instrument, data collection and ethical consideration, and plans for data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study aims to investigate the challenges and suggested solutions that UTAR English educators encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. This study used a mixed-method research design. According to Creswell (2018), mixed-method designs combine a minimum of one quantitative approach that is used to gather data along with a qualitative approach that is used to gather statements, neither of which has a deep connection with any specific framework of study.

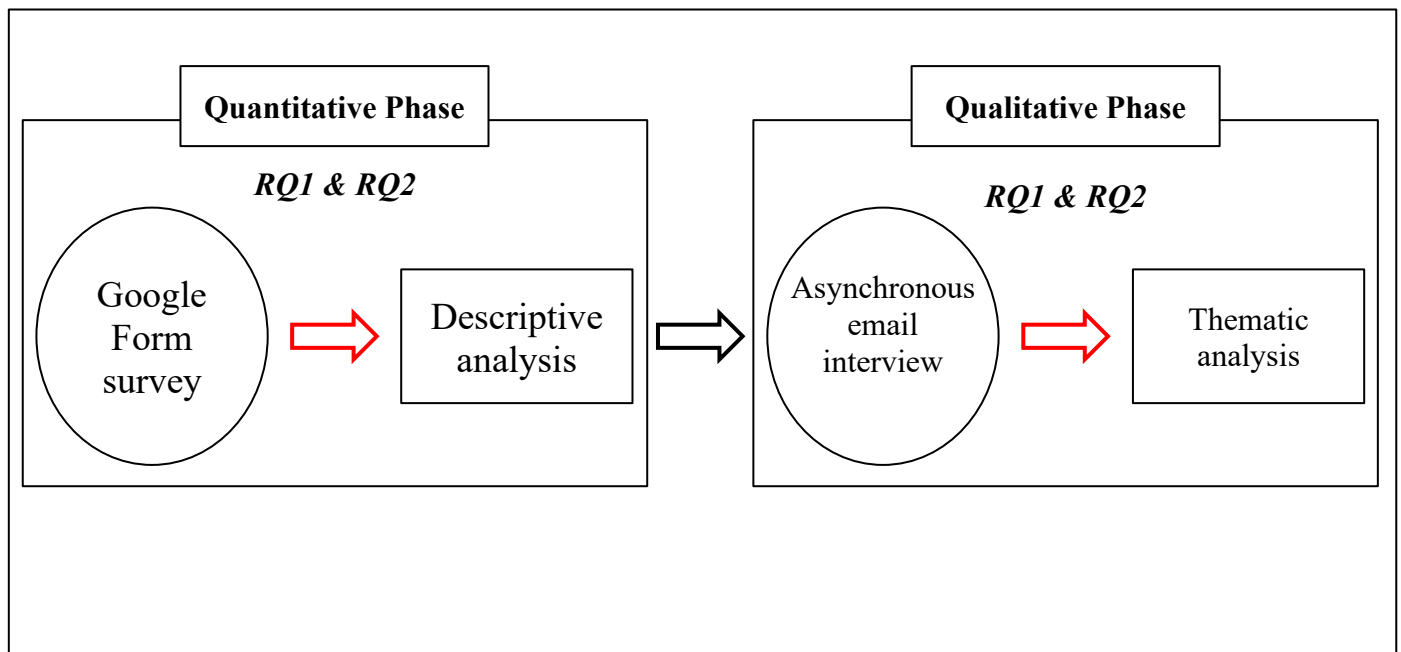


Figure 2 Adapted Mixed Method Research Design

Based on Figure 2, this research used the Explanatory Sequential Design where both quantitative method and qualitative method is used to conduct the research answer for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. The researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative because this method could provide stronger results for this study and overcome the weaknesses of the quantitative approach. Therefore, the result of this research will be more detailed when combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The study was conducted first using the quantitative phase, and followed by the qualitative phase. The data collected by the quantitative phase will answer questions for both challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills towards non-English course students at UTAR. Then, the qualitative approach is used to provide a more in-depth answer to support the questionnaire solutions as well as answer the second research question that is proposed in this study.

3.2 Population and Sample

This study aims to approach 35 lecturers from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FAS) and the Centre for Extension Education (CEE). However, according to the sample size from Krejcie and Morgan's table below, there will only be 32 selected lecturers to participate in the Google Form survey with a consent form attached to it as an acknowledgment to voluntarily participate in the questionnaire about the challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students in UTAR.

Table 1: Krejcie and Morgan Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338

Figure 3 Krejcie and Morgan Table

Meanwhile, 4 selected lecturers participated in the asynchronous email interview for in-depth answers for the solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students in UTAR to support the Google Form survey. There are 2 lecturers chosen from FAS and 2 lecturers chosen from CEE to participate in this interview to understand the challenges and solutions that they face from both departments. This way, it could help us to better understand the challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students at UTAR.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique of this research was selected by using a non-probability basis of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a method of finding and choosing events that can successfully utilize minimal data collection assets and is employed to choose respondents who are most likely to provide suitable and helpful data (Kelly, 2010; Palinkas et al., 2015 as cited in Campbell et al., 2020).

The sample of this study has selected 32 English educators from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FAS) as well as Centre for Extension Education (CEE) who are teaching non-English course students. This sampling technique is used because this research wants to focus on lecturers who are English educators and speakers who are teaching the students in a Malaysian ESL classroom as the students are not often speaking in English other than using the English language during presentations.

3.4 Research Instrument

To study the challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students at UTAR, the researcher has created a Google Form survey using the amended questions adapted from Trinh (2021) which will be focusing on the challenges related to linguistic difficulties and amended questions adapted from Rahmon (2024) will be focusing on the challenges related to psychological difficulties for the quantitative approach. *(Refer to Appendix A)* Additionally, the researcher used the amended questions adapted from Noori (2018) and Batuto and de la Pena (2019) to focus on the solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. *(Refer to Appendix A)* Besides that, an asynchronous email interview for the qualitative approach was conducted using the amended questions adapted from Adickalam and Md Yunus (2022) to understand the lecturer's perspective of the challenges encountered when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students and asking some suggested solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students from the lecturers. *(Refer to Appendix B)* The questions are adapted in this study because they share the similar goal and focus to answer about the challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills at UTAR.

3.4.1 Quantitative approach

This quantitative approach uses a Google Form survey questionnaire which consists of 5 items for demographic information, 22 items for challenges in teaching speaking skills to non-english course students which has been divided into two sections which are 11 items for challenges related to psychological difficulties and 11 items for challenges related to linguistic difficulties. Besides that, the Google Form survey questionnaire includes 22 items for the solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. The researcher uses a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) for the respondents to answer. According to Heo et al. (2022), the 5-point Likert scale is widely used because the respondents are familiar with it, it is easy to manage and score, and the responses from the participants are easy to be quantified for mathematical analysis for group comparisons and causality testing. Using the scales in Google Forms allows the participants to show the strength of their opinions rather than giving a simple 'yes' or 'no'. This makes the data more detailed and accurate, as it highlights the differences of the perception, shows overall trends, and provides numerical results that can be easily analyzed (Mohd Rokeman, 2024). This study uses a Google Forms survey because the respondents can access it easily and have the flexibility to answer the questionnaire depending on their convenience no matter the location and time. Besides that, the Google Form survey has a variety of options on how the questions will be created, and it will generate the results of the responses in a pie chart or bar chart form as well as provide the percentage and number of responses who chose the options provided. Moreover, using the Google Form survey, the questions can be categorized into different sections which is very neat. Each section can provide context to allow the respondents to know what type of questions they are answering to avoid any confusion.

3.4.2 Qualitative approach

This qualitative approach uses asynchronous email interview questions which consist of 9 items to fit the context of this study to answer the first and second research question in this study. With the use of asynchronous electronic communication, it allows both researcher and participants to reflect and edit the responses before sending the messages, helping to align ideas, intentions, and their written expression more accurately (Levinson, 1990, as cited in Meho, 2006). The researcher chooses to use asynchronous email interviews due to the tight schedule of the lecturers. Besides, the respondents can access the interview questions easily and have the flexibility to answer them in their free time no matter the location and time. Additionally, using asynchronous email interviews gives the interviewee time to think for better and more in-depth responses to the questions. So, the researcher could receive a more accurate response from the participants. The transcription of the interview could be taken directly from the email and it could not be edited by anyone once it is sent. Therefore, the responses received from the respondents are valid and concrete compared to physical interviews.

3.5 Data Collection and Ethical Considerations.

The data collection consists of five major steps as shown in Figure 4 which are:

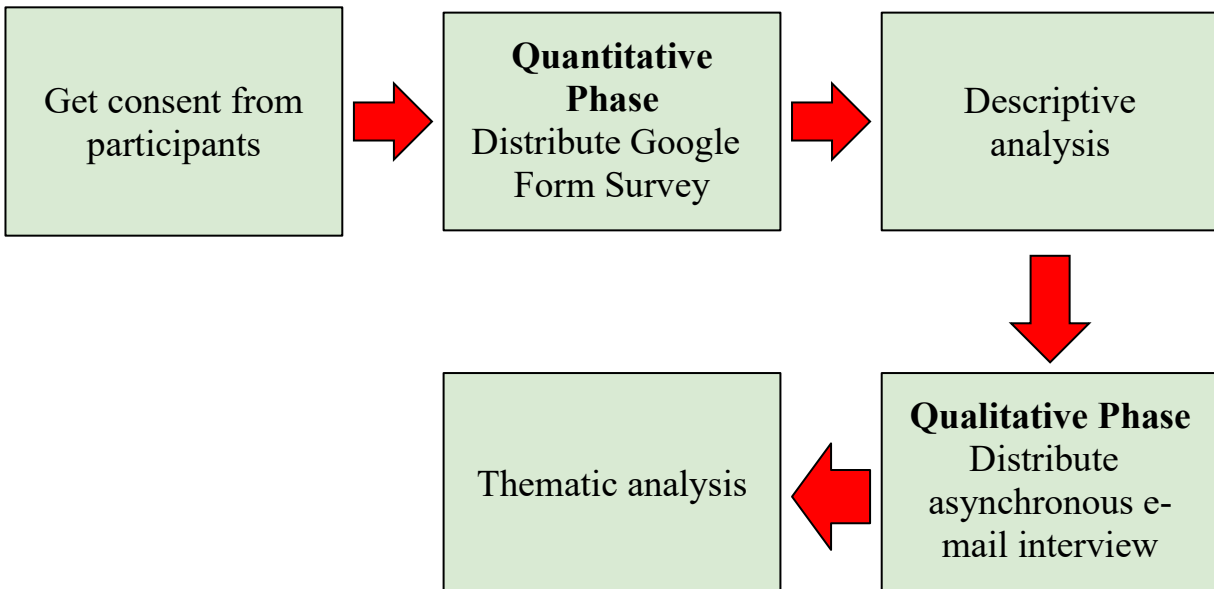


Figure 4 Data Collection Process

Firstly, the researcher began with the quantitative study by getting the participants' consent through email to ensure that every participant understands what this research study is about, ensuring fairness and preventing any exploitation in the study. Based on Figure 4, the researcher began with the quantitative Google Form survey distribution that has been conducted through email for the data collection process. There are 32 participants selected based on the selection criteria that the researcher had set for the Google Form survey. After the responses have been collected from the participants, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis for the quantitative data.

Next, after the completion of the quantitative data collection, the researcher conducted the next phase for the qualitative asynchronous email interview distribution by distributing the interview questions to the participants through email. There are 4 participants selected based on the selection criteria that the researcher had set for the interview where 2 participants were selected

from FAS and another 2 participants were selected from CEE. This arrangement aims to explore the challenges and solutions from both perspectives. The interview questions took approximately 10 - 15 minutes to complete. After the responses have been collected from the participants, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis for the qualitative data.

3.5.1 Ethical Considerations

The researchers who developed the original questionnaire were notified through email to seek permission before adapting the questions from the journal article to use in this study. This action is taken to show respect and acknowledge the author's right to know how their research could contribute to this study as well as to ensure that their research will not be misused for other purposes. Moreover, the author's insights from the article will be cited thoroughly to maintain the integrity of the author's contribution. Furthermore, the participants in this study were informed about the purpose of this research, the time required to answer the survey and interview, their consent to participate in this study, and their rights to withdraw from this research at any time without consequences through email.

3.6 Plans for Data Analysis

After collecting the quantitative data from the Google Form survey, the first step is to clean the data by removing any incomplete or irrelevant responses. Once the responses have been filtered, the dataset was imported into Jamovi Cloud which is a free, web-based statistical software that is user-friendly. Compared to traditional tools like SPSS, Jamovi offers an accessible, menu-based interface that makes it easier to perform various statistical tests without needing to write code (Şahin & Aybek, 2019). It is widely used in the field of social sciences and education because of its simplicity and powerful features (Ahmed & Muhammad, 2021).

Using Jamovi, the researcher began the analysis by generating descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency distributions. These basic statistics helped to identify general trends and patterns in the participants' responses. In addition, Jamovi allows the data to be visualized using bar charts, histograms, and box plots, which will make the results easier to interpret and present. If the research requires more advanced analysis, Jamovi also supports tools for running t-tests, ANOVA, reliability tests, and even factor analysis, depending on what is needed for deeper exploration of the data (Jamovi, n.d.).

For the qualitative part of the study, the data from the asynchronous email interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis which is the foundational approach developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis was analyzed using the NVivo software to code and group the responders' responses into wider categories or 'themes' that reflect common ideas, emotions or meaningful phrases shared by the participants. Once the themes are identified, they are reviewed, refined, and clearly categorised. Each theme was explained and supported with direct quotes from the participants to give a more complete picture of their experiences.

By combining the statistical capabilities of Jamovi Cloud for the survey data with thematic analysis for the interview responses, this study will provide a well-rounded understanding of the research topic. Jamovi not only helps present the data in a clear and organized way but also makes it easier to analyze without technical barriers. This approach ensures that both the numbers and the voices behind those numbers are represented in the findings.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULT

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data collected from both quantitative and qualitative study. The Jamovi Cloud version 2.6.44 is used to analyse the quantitative data (*Google Form Survey*) while the NVivo software is used to analyse the qualitative data (*Asynchronous Email Interview*). The result from the entire analysis will answer the RQ1 and RQ2. A total of 32 questionnaires were distributed to UTAR lecturers from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS) and the Centre for Extension Education (CEE). The quantitative data were collected through an online Google Form survey. Additionally, four lecturers were interviewed to gain an in-depth understanding of their personal experiences and insights regarding the teaching of speaking skills in the ESL context. The data collection process was conducted over a period of five months, from February to June. This chapter concludes with a summary that outlines the key findings regarding the factors influencing the teaching of speaking skills among non-English course students at UTAR.

4.1 Demographic Profile

The responses collected from 32 UTAR lecturers were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, to provide an overview of the participants' demographic background. The detailed demographic distribution based on the questionnaire answers which include age, gender, educational qualification, teaching experience, and number of students in one classroom is presented in Table 1.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21 – 25	0	0
	26 – 30	3	9.4
	31 – 35	7	21.9
	36 – 40	14	43.8
	> 41 – 45	8	25
Gender	Male	10	31.3
	Female	22	68.8
Educational Qualification	Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA)	5	15.6
	Master of Arts Degree (MA)	23	71.9
	Doctorate Degree (PhD)	4	12.5
Teaching Experience	1 – 3 years	3	9.4
	4 – 6 years	4	12.5
	> 7 – 10 years	25	78.1
Number of students in one classroom	10 students and below	4	12.5
	11 – 20 students	2	6.3
	21 – 30 students	3	9.4
	> 30 students	23	71.9

Table 1 Demographic Information of Respondents

Based on the sample distribution, the 32 UTAR lecturers who took part in this study came from a variety of backgrounds, offering different perspectives based on their age, gender, qualifications, teaching experience, and class size. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 36 and 40 (43.8%), followed by those aged 41 to 45 (25%), 31 to 35 (21.9%), 26 and 30 (9.4%), and none were under the age of 25 (0%). This shows that the majority of the participants were experienced adults who had spent a significant amount of time in the teaching profession. In terms of gender, the sample was made up of 68.8% female lecturers and 31.3% male lecturers.

When it comes to qualifications, most lecturers held a Master of Arts Degree (71.9%), while others had either a Bachelor of Arts Degree (15.6%) or a Doctorate Degree (12.5%). These

numbers show that the lecturers were academically qualified and capable of handling the demands of teaching. However, despite their strong qualifications, many still face various challenges when it comes to teaching speaking skills especially to students from non-English courses. Some of the most common issues mentioned were students' lack of motivation, limited interest in speaking activities, and fear of being laughed at or making mistakes. In addition, lecturers often struggled with large class sizes and time constraints, making it hard to give every student a chance to speak or receive feedback.

Other than that, when it comes to teaching experience, the majority (78.1%) had been teaching for more than seven years, while others had between four to six years (12.5%) or one to three years (9.4%) of teaching experience. On top of that, most lecturers reported that they are handling over 30 students (71.9%) in class, while only a few taught smaller classes of 10 to 30 students. Overall, while the lecturers in this study were highly qualified and experienced, they still faced real and ongoing challenges in helping the students to develop their speaking skills. These findings help to highlight the importance of investigating these kinds of support and strategies that could help to improve English speaking lessons, especially for students who may not see English as the main priority.

4.2 Challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students.

This section presents the findings that are related to the first research question which is “*What are the challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students?*” The data collected from the Google Form survey identified two main types of challenges that are related to teaching speaking skills which are psychological difficulties and

linguistic difficulties. To analyse the survey results, this study uses a five-point Linkert scale to interpret the mean scores for the data collected (Lindner & Lindner, 2024). This scale will help to show how much the respondents agreed or disagreed with the items in the Google Form survey. The table below shows how the scores are grouped and what each range means.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
SD	D	NAE	A	SA
1-1.50	1.51-2.50	2.51 - 3.50	3.51 - 4.50	4.51 - 5.00

*Table 2 Range of Mean Scores and Corresponding Response Categories for a Five-Point Linkert Scale
adapted from Lindner & Lindner*

4.2.1 Psychological Difficulties

The respondents' perceptions of the psychological challenges faced by students during speaking activities are presented. The detailed distribution of responses, based on items P1 to P11 from the questionnaire, is shown in Table 3.

Descriptives					
	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
P2. I believe students fear making mistakes in front of classmates while speaking.	32	4.47	5.00	5.00	0.761
P11. I believe students have low self-esteem, which affects their willingness to speak in English.	32	4.47	5.00	5.00	0.671

P10. I believe students experience anxiety or shyness during speaking activities.	32	4.47	4.50	5.00	0.567
P3. I believe students fear criticism or losing face when speaking in English.	32	4.28	4.50	5.00	0.851
P6. I believe students lack intrinsic motivation to speak in English.	32	4.28	4.00	4.00	0.772
P7. I believe students generally lack motivation to participate in speaking activities.	32	4.22	4.00	4.00	0.751
P1. I believe students feel pressure to perform well during speaking activities.	32	4.09	4.00	4.00	0.818
P4. I believe students feel overpowered by better-performing classmates during speaking tasks.	32	3.91	4.00	4.00	1.027
P9. I believe cultural or social differences hinder students from participating in speaking tasks.	32	3.84	4.00	4.00	1.081
P8. I believe students feel unsupported by their listeners during speaking activities.	32	3.47	4.00	4.00	1.135
P5. I believe the atmosphere in the classroom is sometimes unpleasant, discouraging students from speaking.	32	3.19	3.00	2.00	1.230

Note: SD (1 – 1.50), D (1.51 – 2.50), NAE (2.51 – 3.50), A (3.51 – 4.50), SA (4.51 – 5)

Table 3 Respondents' Perception of Challenges Related to Psychological Difficulties

To explore the psychological difficulties that affect non-English course students in speaking skills, this section presents findings of 11 survey items (P1 - P11). Out of the 11 items, three items which are P2, P10, and P11 have recorded the highest mean score of 4.47 which shows strong agreement among the respondents. The item that obtained the highest mean score was item P2 which stated, *"I believe students fear making mistakes in front of classmates while speaking."* which highlights the fear of making mistakes as one of the most major factors which limits the students' participation in the classroom. Other than that, the item related to anxiety (P10) and low self-

esteem (P11) also has recorded the highest mean score of 4.47 which highlights the psychological difficulties that the students often experience when they are required to speak in English.

Next, item P3 which stated, *“I believe students fear criticism or losing face when speaking in English”* and item P6 which stated *“I believe students lack intrinsic motivation to speak in English”* showed a mean of 4.28 which reflects the respondents’ concern about how the students are perceived by others and the lack of internal drive to engage in speaking tasks. Meanwhile, item P7 which stated, *“I believe students generally lack motivation to participate in speaking activities.”* has the mean of 4.22 which shows that the findings of this item are aligned with item P6 because it suggests that lecturers not only observe low intrinsic motivation but also lack of motivation among the students from speaking tasks. Additionally, item P1 which stated, *“I believe students feel pressure to perform well during speaking activities.”* scored a mean of 4.09 which shows that the students often feel that they have to be good in speaking when performing which causes them to not want to participate in speaking activities.

On the lower end, item P4 which stated, *“I believe students feel overpowered by better-performing classmates during speaking tasks.”* recorded a mean of 3.91. Although the mean is slightly lower than the rest of the items, it still falls within the “Agree” range which shows that some students compare themselves with their peers which causes them to not participate in speaking tasks to avoid embarrassment. Item P9 which stated, *“I believe cultural or social differences hinder students from participating in speaking tasks.”* recorded a mean of 3.84. This suggests that students that have various cultural backgrounds and social differences would be a reason that discourages them from speaking in the classroom.

Last but not least, the two remaining items which are P8 and P5 have the mean score which places them in the “Neither Agree nor Disagree” range. Item P8 which stated, *“I believe students*

feel unsupported by their listeners during speaking activities.” recorded a mean of 3.47 and item P5 which stated, *“I believe the atmosphere in the classroom is sometimes unpleasant, discouraging students from speaking.”* recorded the lowest mean of 3.19. This suggests that although some students might feel that their lack of peer support or classroom environment might be the challenges for the students to have speaking difficulties in the classroom while others might not see it as a significant issue in psychological difficulties.

4.2.2 Linguistic Difficulties

The respondents’ perceptions of the linguistic challenges faced by students during speaking activities are presented. The detailed distribution of responses, based on items L1 to L11 from the questionnaire, is shown in Table 4.

Descriptives					
	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
L2. Students do not use English much outside in the classroom.	32	4.59	5.00	5.00	0.665
L1. Students have a habit of using their mother tongue instead of English.	32	4.47	5.00	5.00	0.842
L5. Students have limited vocabulary, which hinders their ability to speak fluently.	32	4.34	5.00	5.00	0.865
L7. Students have difficulty with pronunciation when speaking in English.	32	4.31	4.00	4.00	0.693
L3. Students lack the skills to form correct sentences during speaking activities.	32	4.09	4.00	4.00	0.893
L4. Students lack topical knowledge to participate in speaking tasks.	32	4.00	4.00	5.00	0.984

L11. I believe grammatical errors affect students' ability to speak confidently.	32	3.97	4.00	4.00	1.062
L6. Students use inappropriate vocabulary during speaking activities.	32	3.78	4.00	4.00	1.008
L9. Students struggle to arrange their ideas logically during speaking tasks.	32	3.78	4.00	4.00	0.941
L10. Students are unable to listen effectively during speaking activities.	32	3.50	3.00	3.00	0.916
L8. Students are discouraged when their mistakes are corrected while speaking.	32	3.34	3.50	4.00	1.096

Note: SD (1 – 1.50), D (1.51 – 2.50), NAE (2.51 – 3.50), A (3.51 – 4.50), SA (4.51 – 5)

Table 4 Respondents' Perception of Challenges Related to Linguistic Difficulties

To explore the linguistic difficulties that affect non-English course students in speaking skills, this section presents findings of 11 survey items (L1 - L11). Out of the 11 items, item L2 which stated, “*Students do not use English much outside in the classroom.*” has recorded the highest mean score of 4.59 which shows strong agreement among the respondents and placing it in the “Strongly Agree” range. This highlights that the lack of English language used outside of the classroom settings is a major challenge in developing the student’s speaking proficiency as the students may struggle to reinforce what they have learnt in the classroom which leads to limited fluency. Item L1 which stated, “*Students have a habit of using their mother tongue instead of English.*” recorded as the second highest mean score of 4.47. This highlights that the students often use their mother tongue to communicate inside and outside of the classroom which would reduce the chance for the students to improve their English fluency.

Next, item L5 which stated, “*Students have limited vocabulary, which hinders their ability to speak fluently.*” recorded a mean of 4.34 which shows that the gap of the vocabulary concerns the lecturers because the students often have difficulties in expressing their ideas when they lack the necessary words. Other than that, item L7, which stated, “*Students have difficulty with pronunciation when speaking in English.*” recorded a mean of 4.31 shows that inaccurate pronunciation would lead to communication breakdowns or fear of being misunderstood by other people. Item L3 which stated, “*Students lack the skills to form correct sentences during speaking activities.*” recorded a mean of 4.09 reflects that the students often make structural errors such as incorrect words arrangement when speaking. Item L4 which stated, “*Students lack topical knowledge to participate in speaking tasks.*” recorded a mean of 4.00 suggests that some students may not be familiar with the content of the topics which limits the students to speak properly.

On the lower end, item L11 which stated, “*I believe grammatical errors affect students’ ability to speak confidently.*” recorded a mean of 3.97. Although the mean is slightly lower than the rest of the items, it still falls within the “Agree” range which shows that grammar-related issues not only hinder the student’s speaking accuracy but will also affect their confidence. Meanwhile, item L6 which stated, “*Students use inappropriate vocabulary during speaking activities.*” and item L9 which stated, “*Students struggle to arrange their ideas logically during speaking tasks.*” recorded a mean of 3.78. Item L6 highlights about the use of inappropriate vocabulary while L9 highlights about the students’ difficulty in arranging the ideas logically during speaking tasks. Both the items suggest that the students would try attempting to speak, but with poor vocabulary, the students would have poor organization to arrange what they want to say when they are communicating which affects the clarity and quality of their communication.

Last but not least, the two remaining items which are L10 and L8 have the mean score which places them in the “Neither Agree nor Disagree” range. Item L10 which stated, “*Students are unable to listen effectively during speaking activities.*” recorded a mean of 3.50 and item L8 which stated, “*Students are discouraged when their mistakes are corrected while speaking.*” recorded the lowest mean of 3.34. This suggests whether poor listening skills really affects the students’ speaking performance or students feeling demotivated when corrected might be the challenges for the students to have speaking difficulties in the classroom while others might not see it as a significant issue in linguistic difficulties.

4.3 Solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students.

The responses collected from 32 UTAR lecturers were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean, median, mode, and standard deviation, to provide an overview of the respondents’ perception of solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students during speaking activities. The detailed distribution is based on the questionnaire answered which consists of S1 to S22 in Table 5.

Descriptives					
	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
S6. I believe simulations and role plays make learning interactive and practical.	32	4.63	5.00	5.00	0.660
S10. I believe games make learning fun and encourage spontaneous speaking.	32	4.50	5.00	5.00	0.622
S15. I believe language in speaking classes develops through trial and error.	32	4.47	5.00	5.00	0.621

S8. I believe reading aloud improves pronunciation and fluency.	32	4.44	5.00	5.00	0.669
S2. I believe group discussions foster collaboration and relaxed speaking practice.	32	4.16	4.00	5.00	0.847
S22. I believe students should start communicating in English from the beginning of the course.	32	4.38	4.50	5.00	0.751
S13. I believe reading and reciting dialogues improves intonation and speech patterns.	32	4.38	4.50	5.00	0.751
S9. I believe pronunciation drills help students articulate sounds accurately.	32	4.38	4.50	5.00	0.707
S18. I believe teachers should give instructions in the target language during speaking classes.	32	4.34	5.00	5.00	0.902
S3. I believe pair work gives students a safe space to practice and gain confidence.	32	4.34	4.00	5.00	0.701
S12. I believe calling on students to discuss topics promotes critical thinking and speaking.	32	4.28	4.00	4.00	0.683
S5. I believe using dictionaries expands vocabulary and improves pronunciation.	32	4.25	4.00	5.00	0.842
S16. I believe dialogues in speaking classes focus on communication, not memorization.	32	4.22	4.00	4.00	0.706
S11. I believe listening to audio and answering questions enhances comprehension.	32	4.22	4.00	4.00	0.751
S7. I believe reading and reporting from websites develops research and presentation skills.	32	4.16	4.00	4.00	0.767
S1. I believe explaining grammar helps students build a strong foundation for accurate sentences.	32	4.16	4.00	5.00	0.847

S17. I believe communicative activities follow extensive drills and exercises in speaking classes.	32	4.06	4.00	4.00	0.801
S19. I believe questions and answers should be based on dialogues and situations in speaking classes.	32	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.803
S4. I believe translation exercises enhance understanding of language differences.	32	3.88	4.00	4.00	0.976
S21. I believe speaking classes should emphasize pronunciation.	32	3.63	4.00	4.00	1.040
S14. I believe the mother tongue should be forbidden in speaking classes.	32	3.47	3.00	3.00	1.164
S20. I believe students should only have a little time to plan for speaking tasks.	32	3.09	3.00	3.00	1.174

Note: SD (1 – 1.50), D (1.51 – 2.50), NAE (2.51 – 3.50), A (3.51 – 4.50), SA (4.51 – 5)

Table 5 Respondents' Perception of Solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

To explore the solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students, this section presents findings of 22 survey items (S1 - S22). Out of the 22 items, item S6 which stated, “*I believe simulations and role plays make learning interactive and practical.*” has recorded the highest mean score of 4.63 which shows strong agreement among the respondents and placing it in the “Strongly Agree” range which highlights that the lecturers support the use of simulation-based methods such as role plays to create a realistic and engaging learning environment for the students to practice their speaking skills. Other than that, item S10 which stated, “*I believe games make learning fun and encourage spontaneous speaking.*” recorded the mean of 4.50 which shows that games can be used as a valuable tool to provide motivation to the students to engage in speaking activities. Item S15 which stated, “*I believe language in speaking classes develops through trial and error.*” recorded the mean of 4.47 which allows the students to view mistakes

as a learning opportunity for them to gain confidence when speaking. Meanwhile, item S8 which stated, *“I believe reading aloud improves pronunciation and fluency.”* recorded the mean of 4.44 emphasize the importance of reading aloud in improving the student’s speaking skills while item S2 which indicates, *“I believe group discussions foster collaboration and relaxed speaking practice.”* recorded the mean of 4.16 shows that the students would be more willing to participate in speaking activities in a group rather than individually.

Next, item S22, S13, and S9 have the same mean score which places them in the “Agree” range. Item S22 which stated, *“I believe students should start communicating in English from the beginning of the course.”*, item S13 which stated, *“I believe reading and reciting dialogues improves intonation and speech patterns.”*, and item S9 which stated, *“I believe pronunciation drills help students articulate sounds accurately.”* recorded a mean of 4.38. Item S22 highlights about early exposure to English language, item S13 supports the use of dialogues to improve intonation and speech patterns when speaking in English while S9 highlights the importance of pronunciation that would help the students to improve their articulate sounds. These results suggest that pronunciation-focused and speech pattern-enhancing techniques during early exposure are effective strategies to improve speaking skills for the students.

Moreover, item S18 which stated, *“I believe teachers should give instructions in the target language during speaking classes.”* and item S3 which stated, *“I believe pair work gives students a safe space to practice and gain confidence.”* recorded the mean of 4.34 where it is important to guide the students consistently and build a supportive environment where the students would feel comfortable speaking without fearing of being judged by their peers in an English classroom. Item S12 which stated, *“I believe calling on students to discuss topics promotes critical thinking and speaking.”* recorded a mean score of 4.28 highlights about the opportunities for students to engage

in discussion helps them to develop both of their cognitive and speaking abilities in the classroom. Item S5 which stated, *“I believe using dictionaries expands vocabulary and improves pronunciation.”* recorded a mean of 4.25 which highlights that using dictionaries in speaking lessons can support the student’s vocabulary development and overall speaking fluency.

Furthermore, item S16 which stated, *“I believe dialogues in speaking classes focus on communication, not memorization.”* and item S11 which stated, *“I believe listening to audio and answering questions enhances comprehension.”* recorded a mean of 4.22 highlights about the importance of the communication and listening-based activities in strengthening students’ understanding and speaking responses. Item S7 which stated, *“I believe reading and reporting from websites develops research and presentation skills.”* and item S1 which stated, *“I believe explaining grammar helps students build a strong foundation for accurate sentences.”* recorded a mean of 4.16 emphasise about the role of external resources and grammar explanations in building the student’s confidence during speaking activities.

Following that, item S17 which stated, *“I believe communicative activities follow extensive drills and exercises in speaking classes.”* recorded a mean of 4.06 reflects that structured practice should be implemented in communication speaking activities to ensure that students have the necessary foundation before engaging in an open-ended conversation. Item S19 which stated, *“I believe questions and answers should be based on dialogues and situations in speaking classes.”* recorded a mean of 4.00 which supports the view that context-based questioning can enhance relevance and encourage authentic speaking experiences. Item S4 which stated, *“I believe translation exercises enhance understanding of language differences.”* recorded with a mean of 3.88 shows a moderate agreement among the respondents which suggests that translation can be a tool of aid comprehension for the students but it may not be the primary method preferred in

speaking classes. Item S21 which stated, *“I believe speaking classes should emphasize pronunciation.”* records the mean of 3.63. Although the item is still within the “Agree” range, the low score may indicate balancing pronunciation with other speaking sub-skills.

Last but not least, the two remaining items which are S14 and S20 have the mean score which places them in the “Neither Agree nor Disagree” range. Item S14 which stated, *“I believe the mother tongue should be forbidden in speaking classes.”* recorded a mean of 3.47 and item S20 which stated, *“I believe students should only have a little time to plan for speaking tasks.”* recorded the lowest mean of 3.09. This suggests that the respondents allow limited use of the mother tongue to aid comprehension and providing sufficient time for preparation allows the students to organise their ideas and respond more confidently during speaking activities while others might not see it as a possible solution in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students.

4.3 Thematic Analysis

The responses collected from four UTAR lecturers through asynchronous email interviews were analysed using thematic analysis using NVivo software. This qualitative approach aims to identify emerging patterns and themes related to the challenges and solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students and is used to support the quantitative data that is gathered earlier which provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

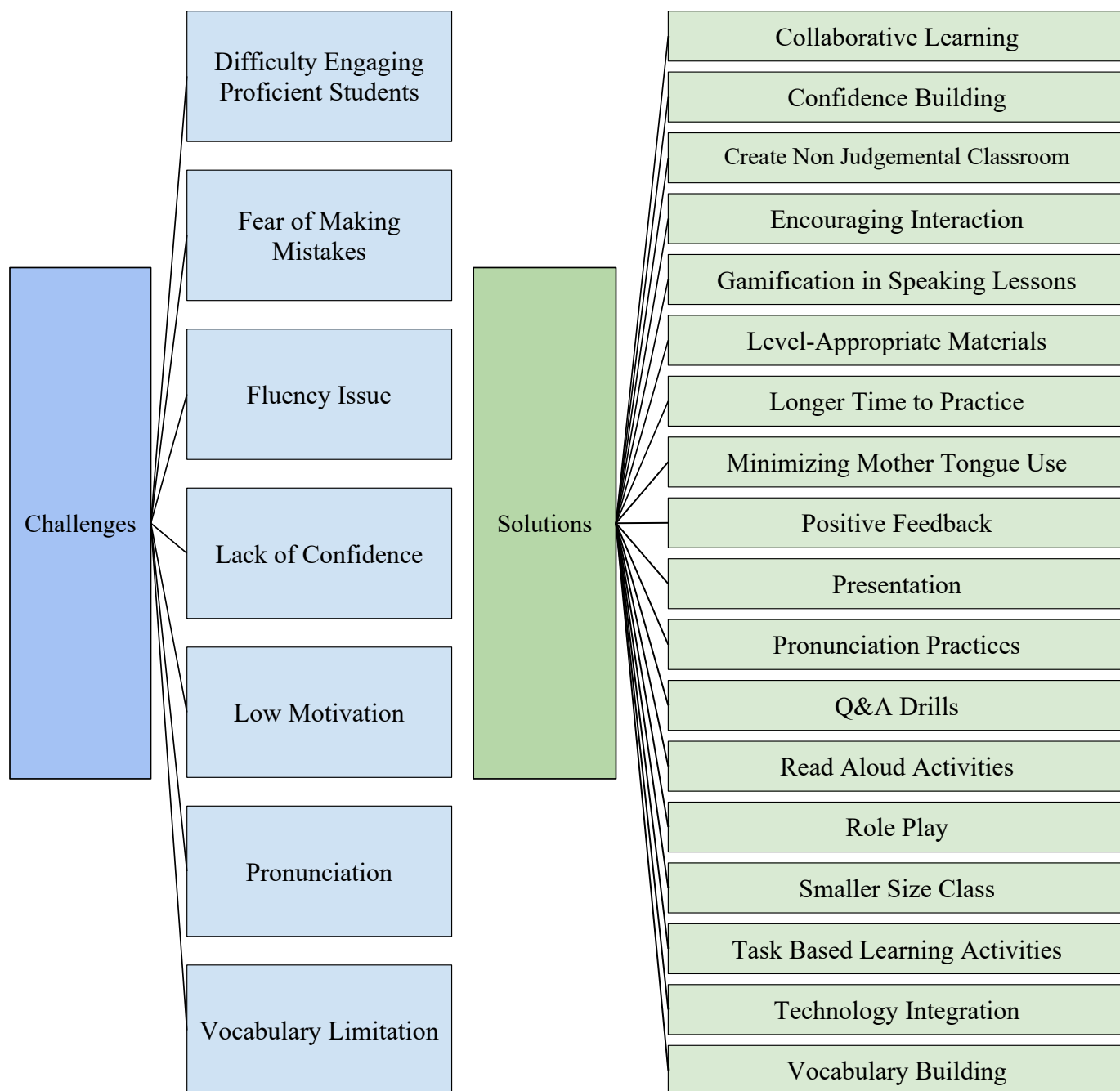


Figure 5 Challenges and Solutions themes

4.3.1 Thematic Analysis of Challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students.

The responses collected from 4 UTAR lecturers were analysed using NVivo and the thematic analysis revealed several recurring challenges faced by UTAR lecturers when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. There are varied types of challenges listed in Table 6 and some challenges were more common across the respondents than others.

	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4
FLUENCY ISSUE	61.11%	33.93%	92.86%	0%
VOCABULARY LIMITATION	38.89%	0%	0%	20.69%
LACK OF CONFIDENCE	0%	26.79%	0%	18.97%
LOW MOTIVATION	0%	39.29%	0%	0%
FEAR OF MAKING MISTAKES	0%	0%	0%	36.66%
DIFFICULTY ENGAGING PROFICIENT STUDENTS	0%	0%	0%	20.69%
PRONUNCIATION	0%	0%	7.14%	0%

Table 6 Thematic Analysis of Challenges

One of the most frequently mentioned issues is fluency. This issue was highlighted by 3 out of 4 respondents. Respondent 1 (61.11%), Respondent 2 (33.93%), and Respondent 3 (92.86%) identified fluency as the biggest concern which suggests that a high number of students struggle to maintain smooth and fluent speech when communicating where it will affect the student's overall speaking performance. Another issue that is mentioned frequently is vocabulary limitation. Respondent 1 (38.89%) and Respondent 4 (20.69%) pointed out that the students had a limited range of vocabulary which made it hard for them to elaborate their ideas or engage in longer

conversations. This limitation has restricted the student's ability to express themselves effectively in English.

Other than that, lack of confidence that is highlighted by Respondent 2 (26.79%) and Respondent 4 (18.97%) mentioned that many students have low self-esteem and did not believe that they are able to speak well in English. As a result, the students are often reluctant to participate in classroom activities or speak up in the class. A closely related to this issue is low motivation was another challenge especially for students who did not view English as a relevant subject to their field of study. Respondent 2 (39.29%) shared that some students showed little interest in improving their speaking skills which made it difficult to keep them engaged. Moreover, fear of making mistakes is also highlighted as a concern by Respondent 4 (36.66%) as students were very self-conscious and hesitant to speak because they are afraid of saying something wrong. This fear often led to silence or avoidance during speaking tasks which hides the student's progress. Additionally, difficulty engaging proficiency students was mentioned by Respondent 4 (20.69%). Most challenges were focused on lower-proficiency students but this respondent highlighted that students who are more advanced can be hard involved in speaking tasks too if they find the content to be too easy or uninteresting. Lastly, pronunciation problems were mentioned by Respondent 3 (7.14%). Although these challenges were not widely mentioned, this issue is still a barrier for some students when trying to speak clearly and confidently in English. Therefore, the most common challenges identified were fluency issues, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and low motivation. These findings suggest that UTAR English lecturers often face a mix of psychological and linguistic difficulties when teaching non-English course students in improving their speaking skills.

4.3.2 Thematic Analysis of Solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students.

The responses collected from 4 UTAR lecturers were analysed using NVivo and the thematic analysis revealed a variety of strategies applied by UTAR lecturers when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. There are types of solutions listed in Table 7 and some respondents highlight a blend of pedagogical, psychological and technological approaches used in the classroom.

	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING	20.51%	11.29%	20.29%	21.46%
ENCOURAGING INTERACTION	23.08%	18.71%	13.04%	0%
GAMIFICATION IN SPEAKING LESSONS	27.35%	0%	21.74%	0%
ROLE PLAY	0%	5.16%	14.49%	11.16%
CREATE NON JUDGEMENTAL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT	5.98%	9.03%	0%	14.59%
TASK BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES	0%	10.32%	0%	15.88%
PRESENTATION	0%	0%	20.29%	0%
POSITIVE FEEDBACK	8.55%	10.32%	0%	0%
READ ALOUD ACTIVITIES	0%	10%	7.25%	0%
PRONUNCIATION PRACTICES	0%	5.81%	2.9%	9.44%
MINIMIZING MOTHER TONGUE USE	14.53%	0%	0%	0%
Q&A DRILLS	0%	9.03%	0%	4.72%
VOCABULARY BUILDING	0%	0%	0%	9.01%
TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION	0%	0%	0%	8.15%

LONGER TIME TO PRACTICE	0%	5.81%	0%	0%
LEVEL-APPROPRIATE MATERIALS	0%	0%	0%	4.72%
SMALLER SIZE CLASS	0%	4.52%	0%	0%
CONFIDENCE BUILDING	0%	0%	0%	0.86%

Table 7 Thematic Analysis of Solutions

One of the solutions that were frequently mentioned by four respondents was collaborative learning. Respondent 1 (20.51%), Respondent 2 (11.29%), Respondent 3 (20.29%), and Respondent 4 (21.46%) emphasize on the value of peer interaction and group-based activities in helping students to build their confidence and practice speaking in a supportive environment. Other than that, another solution that is mentioned frequently is encouraging interaction as highlighted by Respondent 1 (23.08%), Respondent 2 (18.71%), and Respondent 3 (13.04%) which include promoting student-to-student and student-to-teacher dialogue to create more opportunities for real communication practices. Another commonly applied solution is gamification in speaking lessons. Respondent 1 (27.35%) and Respondent 3 (21.74%) highlighted that using games during speaking activities made lessons more engaging and encouraged students to participate more actively. This approach is helpful in reducing anxiety and increasing the motivation among the students. In my opinion, the use of games creates a less formal and more relaxed learning environment which helps the students to lower their affective filter and dare to take the risks in using the language without fear of being judged. When the students are focused on completing a task or achieving a goal in a game, they become more engaged and have less conscious of making mistakes which naturally increases their willingness to speak and communicate.

In terms of specific speaking activities, Respondent 2 (5.16%), Respondent 3 (14.49%), and Respondent 4 (11.16%) mentioned that they use role play in their classes because it is effective

in simulating real-life scenarios and allow the students to practice the language use in a meaningful context. From my perspective, when students are familiar with the scenarios that are being role-played such as situations they have personally experienced, they tend to feel more comfortable speaking in English because this familiarity reduces anxiety and helps them to express themselves more confidently as they already have a basic understanding of the context. Next, creating a non-judgmental classroom environment was also emphasized by Respondent 1 (5.98%), Respondent 2 (9.03%), and Respondent 4 (14.59%). These lecturers aimed to foster a safe and respectful space where students felt comfortable making mistakes without fear of criticism which is important in developing the student's speaking confidence. Similarly, read-aloud activities were used by Respondent 2 (10%) and Respondent 3 (7.25%) to support pronunciation and fluency development. Moreover, pronunciation practices were mentioned by Respondent 2 (5.81%), Respondent 3 (2.9%), and Respondent 4 (9.44%) while Q&A drills were mentioned by Respondent 2 (9.03%) and Respondent 4 (4.72%) as a type of method to build spontaneous speaking ability.

Respondent 4 (9.01%) focused on vocabulary enhancement which is vocabulary building as a strategy to help students to express themselves more accurately and effectively. From my perspective, when students have more words to choose from, they can share their ideas more confidently. This makes it easier for them to join into conversations and explain what they mean without struggling to find the right words. Additionally, minimizing mother tongue use was mentioned by Respondent 1 (14.53%) which suggests the effort to increase English exposure in the classroom. When students are encouraged to rely less on their first language, they are more likely to think and respond in English. This helps them to become more comfortable with using the language naturally and builds their confidence over time. Respondent 2 (10.32%) and Respondent 4 (15.88%) adopted task-based learning activities to promote purposeful

communication that required students to use English meaningfully to complete the assignments or solve problems.

Other practical strategies included the use of positive feedback (Respondent 1 (8.55%), Respondent 2 (10.32%), presentation activities (Respondent 3 (20.29%), and technology integration (Respondent 4 (8.15%) to enhance engagement and performance. Meanwhile, level-appropriate materials (Respondent 4 (4.72%) and longer time to practice (Respondent 2 (5.81%) were adopted to match the students' proficiency and learning pace better. Finally, a smaller class sizes mentioned by Respondent 2 (4.52%) helped to provide better guidance, attention and increased speaking opportunities for all the students in the classroom. In my opinion, when they are fewer students in a classroom, each learner has more chances to speak and receive a direct feedback from the lecturer. This not only helps the students to feel more supported but also reduces the fear of speaking in front of a large group which allows them to participate more actively and confidently during speaking activities. Therefore, the solutions provided by the respondents show a diverse and practical approach in teaching speaking. This addresses not only the linguistic needs of the students but also their emotional and motivational challenges which are important in teaching effective language learning.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a thorough analysis and interpretation of the findings obtained from both of the quantitative and qualitative data of the study. It offers a detailed discussion that combines both data to provide a comprehensive understanding from the lecturers' perspectives and experiences, the implications of the results, the limitations encountered throughout the research process, recommendations for future research related to the teaching of speaking skills in higher education contexts, and a summary of the key insights gained from the present study.

5.1 Discussion

This section will discuss the findings that are related to the research questions. This study aims to investigate the challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students (RQ1) and the suggested solutions to improve speaking skills for non-English course students (RQ2).

5.1.1 Challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students (RQ1)

This section presents the discussion of Research Question 1 which is “*What are the challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students?*” The findings from both quantitative data and qualitative data has revealed that UTAR English lecturers had encountered significant challenges when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. These challenges fall into two categories which are psychological difficulties and linguistic difficulties.

Based on the quantitative data of psychological difficulties, UTAR lecturers observed that the students have fear in making mistakes (P2), experience anxiety or shyness (P10), and have low self-esteem (P11) where three of these points recorded the highest mean scores of 4.47. These findings are consistent with Bakhtiar and Suwandi (2022) who stated that students with low self-confidence often overthink and hesitate to speak English in the classroom while Kaur (2022) and Nijat et al. (2019) highlighted about the fear of making mistakes and peer judgement as challenges for the students to participate in speaking English. These data align with the Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis that shows high levels of anxiety and low motivation are the psychological barriers which results in a "high affective filter" that limits their willingness to engage in speaking activities in the classroom. The qualitative responses further reinforced these psychological challenges and revealed that fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and low motivation were common themes mentioned by the lecturers. One lecturer quoted "*Students tend to be very self-conscious and afraid of making mistakes*" which shows that students tend to avoid speaking tasks due to past negative experiences, such as being laughed at or corrected in front of their peers. Other lecturers observed that students often compare themselves to more fluent classmates which leads them to feel inferior and prevents them from speaking. These observations are supported by John (2021), who found that Malaysian students often "went blank" during presentations due to fear and embarrassment. Sabri (2021) also reported that classroom anxiety can be triggered by unfamiliar peers and environments where students feel they are being judged.

Next, based on the quantitative data of linguistic difficulties, the findings showed that the students have limited exposure to English from outside of the classroom (L2, M: 4.59) and it correspond with those of earlier research such as Palomargareta et al. (2024) and Sam (2024) stated that students, especially from the rural areas or from non-English major backgrounds does not have

many opportunities to practice English in their daily life. Moreover, the use of mother tongue (L1, M: 4.47) and limited vocabulary (L5, M: 4.34) had made it harder for the students to communicate effectively in English language. Additionally, pronunciation difficulties (L7, M: 4.31) and weakness in forming correct sentences (L3, M: 4.09) were also seen as linguistic barriers. These linguistic challenges were also supported by qualitative data. Respondent 1 (61.11%), Respondent 2 (33.93%), and Respondent 3 (92.86%) highlight the fluency issues as a significant concern. Some lecturers observed that students struggled to maintain their flow when speaking and they often pause or rely on repetitive vocabulary when speaking. Vocabulary limitation was also highlighted especially by lecturers who noted that students often lacked the words to express themselves in a more complex idea. All of these points align with Putri et al. (2020) who highlighted about the gap between written and spoken English and its effect on the fluency, while Tukan (2024) who highlighted about the students who often struggle with English lessons as part of the curriculum of these technical courses, but these lessons does not cover the more technical terms and communication scenarios a student may encounter in their career.

Overall, the results shown in Chapter 4 have confirmed that the main challenges faced by UTAR lecturers are consistent with the existing journals and literature. Psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, low motivation and low confidence including the linguistic limitations such as poor fluency, limited vocabulary, and pronunciation difficulties have contributed to the difficulties in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students.

5.1.2 Suggested solutions to improve speaking skills for non-English course students (RQ2)

This section presents the discussion of Research Question 2 which is “*What are the suggested solutions to improve speaking skills for non-English course students?*” The findings highlighted various solutions that the lecturers suggested to improve speaking skills among non-English course

students. The most mentioned strategies are simulations and role play (S6, M: 4.63), language games :S10, M: 4.50), trial and error approaches (S15, M: 4.47), and reading aloud (S8, M: 4.44). These strategies were supported in the Literature Review in Chapter 2.

Based on the collected data, **role-playing, pair work** and **group discussions** were mentioned in Section 2.3.2 as effective tools to encourage participation and to reduce anxiety. According to Rofiq et al. (2024), Pramudya et al. (2024), and Thohirah (2024) who all agree that these methods could create a supportive environment for the students to speak. In this study, the lecturers highlight all these activities that can help students feel more relaxed and confident, especially when placed in pairs or small groups because it encourages collaboration and enhances critical thinking skills during discussion. In addition to the quantitative findings, the qualitative responses from UTAR lecturers offered more strategies that they apply in their teaching. The thematic analysis has revealed that there are several practical solutions that match with the survey results. One frequently mentioned approach was collaborative learning which was mentioned by Respondent 1 (20.51%), Respondent 2 (11.29%), Respondent 3 (20.29%), and Respondent 4 (21.46%). The lecturers emphasised that pair or group work helped to create a more interactive and supportive learning space which allows the students to practice speaking without feeling isolated.

Moreover, gamification in speaking lessons was another key theme identified especially by lecturers who use games to make speaking activities more engaging. This approach was considered effective in increasing student's motivation and encouraging active participation. Similarly, some lecturers highlight the importance of creating a non-judgmental classroom environment. The students were more willing to speak when they did not feel judged or criticised which aligns with Matthews (2023) who mentioned that learners grow better in a supportive

environment. Hanh et al. (2024) and Maisarah (2024) also highlight that peer support and positive reinforcement could build learners' confidence.

Moreover, reading aloud (S8, M: 4.44), pronunciation drills (S9, M: 4.38) and reading and reciting dialogues (S13, M: 4.38) are good solutions to improve speaking skills. These findings align with Section 2.3.2, which highlights the repeated practice to improve speech patterns and intonation which receive the support from the lecturers about the idea that speaking fluency improves with consistent exposure to spoken English in different forms.

Thematic analysis also revealed other classroom-based strategies which include Q&A drills, vocabulary-building activities, and minimizing mother tongue use to encourage more English speaking during class. A few lecturers also mentioned that using level-appropriate materials, giving students more time to practice, and incorporating technology into lessons. Although these additional solutions are not mentioned a lot in the survey results, it still reflects on the lecturers' efforts to change their instructions following the students' proficiency levels and needs. As discussed in Section 2.3.4, the use of technology and AI tools such as Duolingo, Rosetta Stone and ChatGPT was acknowledged as helpful tools to provide students with opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom and to receive immediate feedback. Vashishth (2024), Chen (2022) and Raimi et al. (2024) highlighted that these tools enhance learning flexibility which is useful for students who do not have a lot of confidence to practice or try in traditional settings.

In summary, the lecturers' solutions support the findings and strategies discussed in Chapter 2. Role-play, group work, games, technology and a supportive environment are all effective strategies in reducing students' affective filters and improving their speaking skills as discussed in Krashen's hypothesis. The suggestions provided by UTAR lecturers align with the

broader literature and realistic classroom-based strategies to address the challenges faced by non-English course students.

5.2 Implications

The findings of this study have several important implications for English language teaching, particularly in the context of teaching speaking skills to non-English course students at UTAR. The challenges identified are both **psychological difficulties** (*fear of making mistakes, low confidence, and anxiety*) while **linguistics difficulties** (*fluency issues, vocabulary limitation, and pronunciation difficulties*) have highlighted the need for English lecturers to adopt more student-centered approaches that respond directly to the students' needs and affective barriers.

From Chapter 1 to Chapter 5, the results have consistently shown that the students face internal and external barriers when it comes to speaking in English. The data gathered supports the idea that speaking is not only a matter of language proficiency but also emotional readiness and classroom environment. Therefore, the study implies that English lecturers should carefully consider how they design their lessons, creating a non-judgemental environment, and offer opportunities for gradual and supported practice.

Additionally, the solutions suggested by the lecturers such as role play, language games, reading aloud, and technology integration shows that the lecturers are aware of the strategies that can help students to overcome their difficulties. These suggestions are based on real classroom experiences which reflects the lecturers' understanding of what their students need. However, as the data was based on the lecturers' perspectives, it is important to also consider from the student's perspective to ensure that the strategies are effective and well-received by the learner themselves.

Moreover, these findings can serve as a reference for curriculum developers, especially for non-English academic programmes by considering more structured speaking components in their

English modules. This would help to connect students' communicative needs in both academic and future professional settings.

5.3 Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the participant sample consists of 36 English lecturers from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS) and Centre for Extension Education (CEE) at UTAR Kampar. As a result, the study's findings are limited in scope and cannot be generalised to other faculties, campuses or institutions. So, by widening the scope of the participants in future studies such as including lecturers from different faculties or other universities would increase the validity and representativeness of the results.

Next, the data collection was conducted in a short amount of time which has limited the study to a cross-sectional perspective. This means that the study only explored the challenges and solutions at a specific point in time without including the possible changes or developments in students' speaking skills over a longer period. A longitudinal approach in future research would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how students' speaking abilities evolve with consistent intervention and support.

Other than that, another limitation is on the method of qualitative data collection. Interviews were conducted using asynchronous email which is effective for the researcher to collect data in this study, however, this method has limited the expressiveness and the depth of the responses from the responders. Future studies could adopt in-person or video-call interviews to encourage richer responses and allow real-time clarification and follow-up questions.

In addition, even though the lecturers provided a variety of suggested solutions to improve students' speaking skills, this study did not evaluate the actual effectiveness of those solutions in the classroom. The data gathered reflects the lecturers' personal experiences, but the validity and

reliability of their proposed methods were not tested. It remains uncertain whether these strategies would be effective in improving the students' speaking performance. Future research could benefit from applying and assessing these strategies through experimental or quasi-experimental designs.

Lastly, this study only focused on the perspectives of UTAR lecturers which provides valuable insights into teaching challenges and strategies, but it does not focus on the student's perspectives which are equally as important in understanding the full scope of the problem. So, by including the student's viewpoints in the future studies could provide a more balanced and comprehensive analysis of the challenges in teaching and learning speaking skills.

5.4 Recommendations

To enhance future research and practice, there are several recommendations that can be made in this study. Firstly, future studies should include a wider and more diverse sample of participants by involving lecturers from different faculties, UTAR Sungai Long campus, or even different universities in Malaysia. Through this, researchers can make more comprehensive comparisons and generalisations from different perspectives and increase the validity of the study.

Next, longitudinal study is recommended for future researchers as it could be used to observe how speaking challenges and solutions evolve over time by tracking the implementation of strategies like role-play, language games or how using AI tools can help to provide long-term effectiveness to the students. This could reveal whether certain interventions have lasting impacts on student's confidence and fluency in speaking English in the classroom.

Other than that, future studies should actively involve students in the research process by gathering data from the students through surveys and interviews which would offer a clearer understanding of the student's emotional and motivational barriers. The student's direct feedback

could improve the development of more teaching methods and support strategies for future teachers.

Lastly, future research should consider using more dynamic data collection methods such as face-to-face interviews, classroom observations or focus group discussions. These methods can help to capture more detailed and authentic responses which offer richer insights into real classroom experiences.

5.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings from this study revealed that UTAR English lecturers face significant challenges in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students. These challenges include both **psychological difficulties** (*anxiety, fear of mistakes, and low confidence*) and **linguistic difficulties** (*limited vocabulary, reliance on mother tongue, and lack of the usage of English*).

The consistency of these findings with the existing literature strengthens the study's validity and highlights the importance of these issues. However, despite these challenges, this study also identified several effective strategies that lecturers use to support students. There are some techniques such as simulations, language games, reading aloud and creating a supportive classroom environment were helpful in helping the students in improving their speaking skills. The use of technology and adaptation of learning activities to suit the student's academic proficiency were also promising approaches that can be adopt in improving the student's speaking skills. These findings prove the importance of addressing both emotional and linguistic needs in ESL classrooms by applying the principles of Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and incorporating the learner-centered strategies where lecturers can foster a more effective language learning environment. It is important for researchers, stakeholders and institutional support in

advancing the teaching of speaking skills for students and ensuring that non-English course students are left behind in their language learning journey.

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Appendix A

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS TO NON-ENGLISH COURSE STUDENTS AT UTAR

I am Sammi Oon Wei Ting (ID No: 21AAB05091) from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), conducting a survey on "Addressing Challenges and Solutions in Teaching Speaking Skills to Non-English Course Students at UTAR." This research aims to identify the challenges UTAR English lecturers face when teaching speaking skills to students in non-English courses and to explore possible solutions to enhance these students' speaking abilities.

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary, and all responses will remain confidential, used only for academic purposes. Your honest feedback is invaluable and will contribute to improving teaching practices and supporting student development. Thank you for your participation!

Section 1: Demographic Information

Instructions:

Kindly provide the required demographic information by choosing the option that best applies to each question. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

1. Age

- 21 - 25
- 26 - 30
- 31 - 35
- 41 - 45 and above

2. Gender

- Male
- Female

3. Educational Qualification

- Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA)
- Master of Arts Degree (MA)
- Doctorate Degree (PhD)

4. Teaching Experience

- 1 - 3 years
- 4 - 6 years
- 7 - 10 years and above

5. Teaching Load

- 10 students and above
- 11 - 20 students
- 21 - 30 students
- 30 students and above

Section 2: Challenges UTAR English lecturers encounter when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

Number of item	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Respondents' Perceptions of Challenges Related to Psychological Difficulties						
P1	I believe students feel pressure to perform well during speaking activities.					
P2	I believe students fear making mistakes in front of classmates while speaking.					
P3	I believe students fear criticism or losing face when speaking in English.					
P4	I believe students feel overpowered by better-performing classmates during speaking tasks.					
P5	I believe the atmosphere in the classroom is sometimes unpleasant, discouraging students from speaking.					
P6	I believe students lack intrinsic motivation to speak in English.					
P7	I believe students generally lack motivation to participate in speaking activities.					
P8	I believe students feel unsupported by their listeners during speaking activities.					

P9	I believe cultural or social differences hinder students from participating in speaking tasks.					
P10	I believe students experience anxiety or shyness during speaking activities.					
P11	I believe students have low self-esteem, which affects their willingness to speak in English.					
Respondents' Perceptions of Challenges Related to Linguistic Difficulties						
L1	Students have a habit of using their mother tongue instead of English.					
L2	Students do not use English much outside the classroom.					
L3	Students lack the skills to form correct sentences during speaking activities.					
L4	Students lack topical knowledge to participate in speaking tasks.					
L5	Students have limited vocabulary, which hinders their ability to speak fluently.					
L6	Students use inappropriate vocabulary during speaking activities.					
L7	Students have difficulty with pronunciation when speaking in English.					
L8	Students are discouraged when their mistakes are corrected while speaking.					
L9	Students struggle to arrange their ideas logically during speaking tasks.					
L10	Students are unable to listen effectively during speaking activities.					
L11	I believe grammatical errors affect students' ability to speak confidently.					

Section 3: Solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

Number of item	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
S1	I believe explaining grammar helps students build a strong foundation for accurate sentences.					
S2	I believe group discussions foster collaboration and relaxed speaking practice.					
S3	I believe pair work gives students a safe space to practice and gain confidence.					
S4	I believe translation exercises enhance understanding of language differences.					
S5	I believe using dictionaries expands vocabulary and improves pronunciation.					
S6	I believe simulations and role plays make learning interactive and practical.					
S7	I believe reading and reporting from websites develops research and presentation skills.					
S8	I believe reading aloud improves pronunciation and fluency.					
S9	I believe pronunciation drills help students articulate sounds accurately.					

S10	I believe games make learning fun and encourage spontaneous speaking.					
S11	I believe listening to audio and answering questions enhances comprehension.					
S12	I believe calling on students to discuss topics promotes critical thinking and speaking.					
S13	I believe reading and reciting dialogues improves intonation and speech patterns.					
S14	I believe the mother tongue should be forbidden in speaking classes.					
S15	I believe language in speaking classes develops through trial and error.					
S16	I believe dialogues in speaking classes focus on communication, not memorization.					
S17	I believe communicative activities follow extensive drills and exercises in speaking classes.					
S18	I believe teachers should give instructions in the target language during speaking classes.					
S19	I believe questions and answers should be based on dialogues and situations in speaking classes.					
S20	I believe students should only have a little time to plan for speaking classes.					
S21	I believe speaking classes should emphasize pronunciation.					
S22	I believe students should start communicating in English from the beginning of the course.					

Appendix B

Interview Consent Form

Research Project Title: Addressing Challenges And Solutions In Teaching Speaking Skills To Non-English Course Students At UTAR

Research investigator: Sammi Oon Wei Ting (21AAB05091)

We do not foresee any risks associated with your participation, and you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview for the above research project. Ethical guidelines for academic research conducted at UTAR require interviewees to provide explicit consent for the interview and for how the information shared will be utilized. This consent form ensures that you understand the purpose of your participation and agree to the terms outlined.

Please review the attached **information sheet** and sign this form to confirm your agreement to the following:

- the transcript of the interview will be analysed by Sammi Oon Wei Ting, the research investigator.
- access to the interview transcript will be restricted to Sammi Oon Wei Ting and academic colleagues and researchers with whom collaboration may occur during the research process.
- any interview content or quotes used in publications will be anonymized to protect your identity, and no identifying information will be shared.
- the actual response will be (kept or destroyed)

The content of your interview, in full or in part, may be used;

- In academic papers, policy papers or news articles.
- On our website and in other media, such as spoken presentations.
- During feedback events.
- As part of the project archive as described above.

By signing this form, I confirm that:

1. I am participating in this project voluntarily. I understand that participation is optional, and I can withdraw from the interview at any time.
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as outlined above.
3. I have read and understood the **information sheet**.
4. I do not expect any compensation or benefits for my participation.
5. I may request a copy of my interview transcript and may make edits if needed to uphold confidentiality agreement.
6. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and understand that I can contact the researcher with any future inquiries.

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Interview Questions

Section 1: Demographic

1. How many students are in your class? (E.g. 120 students)
2. Are students active or passive in the class?
3. Do you enjoy teaching English lessons to your students? Why?

Section 2: Challenges encountered when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

4. What challenges have you encountered while teaching speaking skills to your students during English lessons?
5. How did you help your students in overcoming difficulties with speaking English in class?

Section 3: Suggested solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

6. How do you teach speaking skills in your English lessons?
7. Do you believe that working in pairs or groups can help your students build confidence in speaking English? Why?
8. Do you prepare any interesting activities for your class during speaking activities? What are they?
9. In your opinion, what are your suggestions to improve the speaking activities conducted in the class?

Appendix C

Google Form Responses

Consent	1. Age	2. Gender	3. Education	4. Teaching Experience	5. Number of Students	P1. I believe	P2. I believe	P3. I believe	P4. I believe	P5. I believe	P6. I believe	P7. I believe	P8. I believe	P9. I believe	P10. I believe	P11. I believe	L1. Student
I AGREI 26 - 30	Female	Bachelor	1 - 3 years	10 students	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 31 - 35	Male	Master o	4 - 6 years	30 students	4	5	5	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
I AGREI 36 - 40	Male	Master o	7 - 10 years	10 students	4	5	5	4	2	5	4	2	4	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 26 - 30	Female	Bachelor	1 - 3 years	10 students	5	5	4	2	5	5	5	2	1	4	5	5	5
I AGREI 31 - 35	Male	Doctorate	1 - 3 years	30 students	5	5	5	5	2	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Doctorate	7 - 10 years	30 students	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 26 - 30	Female	Master o	4 - 6 years	30 students	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	4	4	2	2	4	3	2	4	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Bachelor	7 - 10 years	10 students	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	2	5	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 31 - 35	Male	Master o	4 - 6 years	30 students	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
I AGREI 41 - 45	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	2
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	11 - 20 students	4	4	3	3	2	4	3	1	3	4	4	5	5
I AGREI 41 - 45	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	5	5	5	3	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 41 - 45	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	2	5	4	2	5	5	5	2	5	4	5	5	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	5	5	5	1	3	5	1	1	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 41 - 45	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	4
I AGREI 41 - 45	Female	Doctorate	7 - 10 years	21 - 30 students	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	3	3	3	3	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
I AGREI 36 - 40	Male	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	4	4	5	2	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4
I AGREI 31 - 35	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	2	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
I AGREI 31 - 35	Male	Bachelor	4 - 6 years	11 - 20 students	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4
I AGREI 41 - 45	Male	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	4	3	3	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	5	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	4	4	4	2	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Male	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	3	5	5	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	4
I AGREI 41 - 45	Female	Doctorate	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
I AGREI 31 - 35	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	21 - 30 students	4	5	5	4	2	5	4	3	3	4	5	5	5
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I AGREI 36 - 40	Male	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	3
I AGREI 36 - 40	Female	Master o	7 - 10 years	30 students	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 41 - 45	Female	Bachelor	7 - 10 years	30 students	5	5	5	2	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
I AGREI 36 - 40	Male	Master o	7 - 10 years	21 - 30 students	4	4	4	5	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

L2. Studi	L3. Studi	L4. Studi	L5. Studi	L6. Studi	L7. Studi	L8. Studi	L9. Studi	L10. Studi	L11. Studi	I bel	S1. I bel	S2. I bel	S3. I bel	S4. I bel	S5. I bel	S6. I bel	S7. I bel	S8. I bel	S9. I bel
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3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	3	2	2	4
5	5	4	5	5	2	4	4	4	5	2	2	2	4
5	3	5	5	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
4	5	4	4	4	3	5	5	5	4	5	4	3	5
4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
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4	5	4	3	4	1	5	3	3	4	4	2	3	4
4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	5
5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Appendix D

Participant A

Interview Questions

Section 1: Demographic

1. How many students are in your class? (E.g. 120 students)
 - There are fewer than 10 students.
2. Are students active or passive in the class?
 - Most of them are passive.
3. Do you enjoy teaching English lessons to your students? Why?
 - Yes, I enjoy teaching English because, despite being passive, my students show a passion for learning. I can see their hard work and dedication. I especially enjoy teaching when I see them having fun while learning.

Section 2: Challenges encountered when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

4. What challenges have you encountered while teaching speaking skills to your students during English lessons?
 - There are many challenges. Firstly, they have a limited vocabulary and often require extra explanations, preferably in simplified sentences. Additionally, they rely heavily on their phones for translation into their native language instead of trying to understand the meaning in English and how words can be used in different contexts.
5. How did you help your students in overcoming difficulties with speaking English in class?
 - I try to encourage them as much as possible by providing positive feedback and reassuring them that making mistakes is part of learning. I let them attempt speaking first and avoid correcting every single mistake they make, such as pronunciation, so they feel more comfortable and confident when speaking.

Section 3: Suggested solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

6. How do you teach speaking skills in your English lessons?
 - I encourage students to talk to their peers in pairs or groups. If I have only one student, I engage in more conversations with them by providing suitable discussion topics. I also use online resources and games related to the lesson topic to make speaking activities less intimidating.
7. Do you believe that working in pairs or groups can help your students build confidence in speaking English? Why?
 - Yes. Speaking with friends allows them to use English in real-life situations, which helps them practice naturally and gain confidence.
8. Do you prepare any interesting activities for your class during speaking activities? What are them?
 - Not all the time, but I try to include mini-games such as Bamboozle or printable English-language activities from educational websites.
9. In your opinion, what are your suggestions to improve the speaking activities conducted in the class?
 - I believe implementing a rule of minimizing the use of their native language can significantly improve their speaking skills. Over time, this will help them become more comfortable with English and encourage them to apply it in daily life. Since speaking requires continuous practice, using English regularly in class and with peers can greatly enhance their confidence and fluency.

Participant B

Interview Questions

Section 1: Demographic

1. How many students are in your class? (E.g. 120 students)
 - About 250 students.
2. Are students active or passive in the class?
 - Most of them are passive whereas a small portion of the students is active and willing to express their thoughts or opinions.
3. Do you enjoy teaching English lessons to your students? Why?
 - Yes. I wish to improve their English skills especially their communication skills. It is crucial for them to be able to communicate effectively when they deal with others for any purpose. As an educator especially in the field of English Education, it is crucial for us to play the role in ensuring that the future generation is guided the correct use of the English language, so that they will be able to use the language correctly in any contexts.

Section 2: Challenges encountered when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

4. What challenges have you encountered while teaching speaking skills to your students during English lessons?
 - Most students do not express their thoughts or opinions, probably due to low self-esteem or low proficiency. Besides, some students do not take the class seriously, leading to frequent absence or low motivation in class. Due to their lackadaisical use of the English language, they are often not willing to speak. Sometimes, Chinese students (both local and international) also tend to translate the information received from English to Chinese.
5. How did you help your students in overcoming difficulties with speaking English in class?
 - I tried to give them more opportunities to express their thoughts during my classes. So, I often used prompting to stimulate their willingness to speak. I always asked open questions

to them, so that they could freely voice out their opinions or ideas. During the class, I emphasised that speaking errors were not the main concern and encouraged them that the focus was to speak out the language. In short, I would constantly remind myself to let them speak. If they struggled to speak, I would offer some help. For example, if a student struggled to recall the exact vocabulary, I would wait for him or her without interrupting. However, if the situation persisted, I would suggest some appropriate words to complete the sentence.

Section 3: Suggested solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

6. How do you teach speaking skills in your English lessons?
 - First, I offer students more opportunities to speak. I focus more on fluency rather than accuracy. However, I do let them know the importance of pronunciation. I always advise students to check Oxford or Cambridge dictionary when they are not sure of the pronunciation.
 - In addition, I also let them realise the importance of using the language in real life. As speaking skills have to be put into daily practices, so I encourage them to speak the language in their daily lives. Classroom learning itself is not sufficient, so I always encourage them to use the language outside classroom. For example, they can mingle with peers of other ethnicities as this increases their exposure to using the language. They are also advised to do some self-practices such as listening to English podcast or news and repeat after it, record and review their own speech production, and so on.
7. Do you believe that working in pairs or groups can help your students build confidence in speaking English? Why?
 - Yes, it can. Peer support is one important aspect when learning a second language. More knowledgeable others (MKO) will be able to provide some feedback on their peers with lower proficiency. They can also identify the mistake and correct instantly. Often, students feel more connected with their peers than educators. Collaborative learning can also build students' speaking ability through verbal encouragement and collective support. Of course, the activities should not be dominated by the MKO or more capable learners, every member must be given a chance equally when using the language. Pair or group work will enable

support to each other, thus increasing learner's motivation to learn, in this case, speak English.

8. Do you prepare any interesting activities for your class during speaking activities? What are them?
 - I do have some role-play cards for them to engage in conversation with their partner. It is a pair work in which student A will have to communicate with Student B based on the situation card they get. Then, they need to produce a dialogue for the situation they are placed in. Once their production finishes, I will then provide some immediate feedback for the areas they can improve.
9. In your opinion, what are your suggestions to improve the speaking activities conducted in the class?
 - Allocate longer tutorial time so that the students could be given enough time to participate in speaking activities.
 - Encourage students to participate in CLT (communicative language teaching) activities such as role-play, dialogue, opinion-sharing, etc. This will increase their engagement and interaction with peers in a controlled English environment.
 - Make the tutorial size smaller so that attention can be given to each student.

Participant C

Interview Questions

Section 1: Demographic

1. How many students are in your class? (E.g. 120 students)
 - 10 - 20 students
2. Are students active or passive in the class?
 - Depends on the type of lesson but mostly passive.
3. Do you enjoy teaching English lessons to your students? Why?
 - Yes, English is a flexible subject which allows you to incorporate a lot of different activities to it. Hence, teaching English can be enjoyable if you choose to have fun with your students. at the end of the day, I felt deeply satisfied if my students performed well in the class.

Section 2: Challenges encountered when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

4. What challenges have you encountered while teaching speaking skills to your students during English lessons?
 - Pronunciation and fluency problem. Student find it hard to speak English without mother tongue interference.
5. How did you help your students in overcoming difficulties with speaking English in class?
 - A lot of reading aloud and pronunciation practices will be given for lower level students and at the same time, encourage group discussion in class using the target language. Class presentation is also a good method to encourage students to use English naturally.

Section 3: Suggested solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

6. How do you teach speaking skills in your English lessons?
 - Same answers as question 5.
7. Do you believe that working in pairs or groups can help your students build confidence in speaking English? Why?
 - Yes, it builds their confidence and give them time to interact with their peers.
8. Do you prepare any interesting activities for your class during speaking activities? What are them?
 - Provide English games such as riddles and bingo for students to have fun learning English.
9. In your opinion, what are your suggestions to improve the speaking activities conducted in the class?
 - You can try to incorporate role-playing activities in class.

Participant D

Interview Questions

Section 1: Demographic

1. How many students are in your class? (E.g. 120 students)
 - In my previous classes, I typically taught small groups, usually around 7 to 10 students per class. I found this class size ideal, especially for teaching a skill like speaking, because it allowed me to give more personalized attention and closely monitor their progress.
2. Are students active or passive in the class?
 - That really depends on their level. For lower-level classes, especially Level 1 or 2, students tend to be quite passive at first. Many of them are shy and don't want to speak unless they're directly asked. This is mostly due to their limited vocabulary and the fear of making mistakes. But once they move up in levels and gain confidence, they become more comfortable speaking. In higherlevel classes, students are usually more open, responsive, and engaged in discussions.
3. Do you enjoy teaching English lessons to your students? Why?
 - Yes, very much. I love the English language, and I love teaching it. There's something deeply fulfilling about seeing students improve and gain confidence in a language that they once found intimidating. I believe that for students to really learn the language, they need to develop a liking for it. That's why I try to make my lessons engaging and approachable. I want them to enjoy the process, not feel pressured or afraid.

Section 2: Challenges encountered when teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

4. What challenges have you encountered while teaching speaking skills to your students during English lessons?
 - The biggest challenge is usually with lower-level students. Most of them don't have the vocabulary they need to express themselves. Some even struggle with basic sentence construction. They tend to be very self-conscious and afraid of making mistakes, especially

when speaking in front of others. For these students, it's not just a language issue but also a confidence issue. In contrast, the challenge with higher-level students is keeping them engaged. They already have the basics, so the focus shifts to giving them interesting and meaningful content to discuss.

5. How did you help your students in overcoming difficulties with speaking English in class?
 - For the lower levels, I spend time building their vocabulary. I include spelling exercises and teach them practical words they can actually use in conversation. I also reassure them that their English doesn't need to be perfect. As long as the message is understood, that's a good start. We do pronunciation practice, sometimes through singing activities, which also helps with confidence. For higher levels, I use activities like debates, interviews, product reviews, and even vlogs. These tasks help them speak more naturally, and often they don't even realize how much speaking practice they're getting because the activities are fun and relevant.

Section 3: Suggested solutions in teaching speaking skills to non-English course students

6. How do you teach speaking skills in your English lessons?
 - I usually structure the course around four components: Week 1 is Speaking, Week 2 is Reading, Week 3 is Listening, and Week 4 is Writing. For speaking, my approach varies by level. Lower level students need vocabulary support and confidence-building, so I use basic speaking drills and repetitive Q&A to encourage them. For higher-level students, I design tasks that reflect real-life communication, such as discussions, debates, and presentations. I try to keep it as interactive and practical as possible.
7. Do you believe that working in pairs or groups can help your students build confidence in speaking English? Why?
 - Yes, I believe group work is essential. When students are put on the spot to speak individually, especially at lower levels, the pressure can be overwhelming. But when they work in pairs or small groups, it lowers the anxiety. They feel safer and more willing to take risks. It also promotes peer learning, where students can support and correct each other

in a more relaxed setting. I've seen a big difference in participation when speaking tasks are done in groups compared to individual presentations.

8. Do you prepare any interesting activities for your class during speaking activities? What are them?
 - Definitely. I try to keep activities fun and purposeful. For lower levels, singing simple songs helps with pronunciation and rhythm. I also use role-plays to help them practice common scenarios like ordering food or introducing themselves. For upper-level classes, I use debates, product reviews, interviews, and vlogging projects. These activities allow them to express opinions, use more complex language, and practice fluency. Plus, they're fun and give students a sense of ownership over what they produce.
9. In your opinion, what are your suggestions to improve the speaking activities conducted in the class?
 - I think speaking activities should always be level-appropriate and meaningful. For beginners, start with vocabulary-building and simple dialogues that they can use in daily life. It's also important to create a non-judgmental space where they feel comfortable making mistakes. For higher levels, the content should be intellectually stimulating and relevant to their interests. Using technology can also help things like vlogging or using AI tools for feedback can make practice more engaging. The ultimate goal is to make students want to speak, not feel like they're being forced to.