



A Comparative Study of English Education Department

Hujaefa Hi. Muhamad¹, Ratu Balgis Ibrahim¹

¹Universitas Khairun, Ternate, Indonesia, 97719

*Corresponding Author: Hujaefa Hi. Muhamad

Email: hujaeafamhammad16@gmail.com



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Abstract

The comparative study of English Department students' achievement at Khairun University explores significant variations in speaking skills among 300 students from the 1st, 3rd, and 5th semesters. This research uses quantitative-descriptive methods. The research employs questionnaires and interviews to assess demographic information, speaking challenges, influencing factors, and supporting elements. Findings reveal an average age of 19.2 years impacting speaking achievement, with a noteworthy correlation between proficiency, Grade Point Average (GPA), and academic grades. Higher-than-average GPA and grades correspond to enhanced speaking skills. Additionally, parents' educational backgrounds and occupations significantly influence speaking achievement, with 17.1% having a Bachelor's degree and 53.6% working as farmers. Students from educated and employed families excel in speaking English. Study habits indicate limited commitment, with most students spending less than an hour per week practicing speaking. English speaking courses show advantages for participants, particularly those dedicating more hours to study. The study emphasizes the need to enhance students' awareness and motivation for developing speaking proficiency beyond academic contexts. Overall, the research provides insights for targeted educational interventions to improve students speaking skills in English Department at Universitas Khairun.

Introduction

English is an international language. In the globalization era, the ability to speak English is becoming a very important skill for individuals to participate effectively in various professional and academic environments (Septarini et al., 2024; Hoesny et al., 2025; Sudastrri et al., 2025). Khairun University, with its commitment to providing quality education, has become a popular destination for students interested in the field of English Language Education. In this context, a comparative study focusing on the speaking achievement of English Education students at Khairun University becomes relevant to understand its strengths and areas for improvement in the academic context.

Experts have consistently supported the importance of mastering speaking in English Shi et al., 2024; Yan et al., 2024; Abdumuxtorova & Rayimaliyeva, 2025). As Crystal (2003) notes, speaking lies at the core of language, enabling the expression of thoughts, opinions and emotions. Jack C. Richards (2008) views speaking as a skill that integrates various components of language, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, and socio-cultural aspects, and confirms that mastery of speaking contributes to language fluency and effective communication, speaking as a bridge between language as knowledge and skill, which enables individuals to interact with language in real-world situations, understand grammar and vocabulary, and develop communicative competence. This statement, over time, shows the

consistency of the view that speaking in English is an essential element in language proficiency and effective communication (Abro et al., 2025; Mammadova, 2024; Fakhrurriana et al., 2024).

English Education at Khairun University is known for its rigorous curriculum, which emphasizes not only theoretical knowledge but also practical language skills. With the ever-increasing demand for English proficiency in the global job market, this study aims to assess and compare the speaking skills of students within the department. The research will detail various aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and overall communicative competence to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' speaking achievements (Zega, 2025; Malykhin et al., 2024; Bhutto & Kazmi, 2024).

Furthermore, this study recognizes the diverse backgrounds and learning styles of English Education students at Khairun University. Factors such as socio-economic status, previous language learning experience, and individual motivation can have a significant effect on students' speaking ability. By acknowledging these variables, this study aims to identify potential correlations and patterns that may contribute to the observed differences in students' speaking achievement (Jannah et al., 2024; Fong et al., 2024; Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024).

This research is driven by the need to improve the quality of language education at Khairun University and to equip English Language Education students with the necessary skills to succeed in an increasingly globalized world. By conducting a comparative analysis, this study aims to highlight effective teaching methodologies and strategies that can be implemented to improve students' speaking achievement. Ultimately, the results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for Khairun University's ongoing efforts in improving its English language program and ensuring the holistic development of its students (Salamun et al., 2024; Rani & Nissa, 2025; Rafi'I & Niswa, 2025)

Literature Review

L.R. Gay, et al. (2012) Comparative research is a study that attempts to determine the cause, or reason, for differences that exist in the behavior or status of groups of individuals. The cause is a behavior or characteristic that is believed to influence some other behavior or characteristic, and is known as the grouping variable. This method is sometimes also known as ex post facto research. There are two types of ex-post facto designs: proactive and retroactive. This research design is a proactive design. According to Ary (2010) a proactive ex-post facto design begins with subjects who are grouped on the basis of an independent variable. Ex post facto research is conducted after variations in the variable of interest have been determined in natural events (such as ethnicity or gender). Based on the explanation above, a casual comparative design is suitable to be used to find out the differences in the phenomenon of male and female students' speaking fluency (Yar & Cemrek, 2024; Ding & Yusof, 2025; Al-Khresheh, 2024).

Speaking is the ability to produce words in language practice. Speaking is one of the important abilities that must be mastered by students (Yasin et al., 2024; Sabilla & Kaniadewi, 2025; Kuliahana et al., 2024). This is because in speaking, we can find out students' ability to produce the target language or English. Speaking is a productive oral skill and consists of producing systematic spoken utterances to convey meaning. Speaking is the process of sharing knowledge, emotions, needs, opinions or ideas that occur between the speaker and the listener. Speaking skills are an important aspect that must be possessed by learners of a second or foreign language, and the success of language learning is measured by the learners' ability to speak using the

language learned. Hayriye (2006) states that speaking is choosing the right words and sentences according to the right social setting, audience, situation, and subject matter. Being a fluent speaker requires a lot of knowledge about the language being learned and its use in actual communication. Speaking problems are some of the issues that make a person lack the ability to speak. Language problems are actually one of the important reasons behind poor academic performance (Zhang et al., 2024; Ahmed, 2024; Al-Okaily et al., 2024)

Brown (2001), the most difficulties faced by students in speaking are the interactive nature of communication. In speaking, especially when they are having conversation they are engaging in a process of negotiation of meaning. According to Hornby (1984) Fluency is able to speak or write a language or perform an action smoothly or expressed in a smooth and fluent way in order to make it easy for someone to understand what he or she said.

Methods

The given research utilized a comparative design and a descriptive quantitative framework to examine the English-speaking achievement among the students studying the Department of English Education at Khairun University (Abduh et al., 2025; Permatasari et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2024). The comparative design was considered suitable since it would help to analyze the difference in performance among different cohorts, which in this case are the students in the first, third, and fifth semesters. At the same time, the descriptive quantitative methodology permitted the results to be represented in an objective manner highlighting trends and tendencies in the data with no plans of generalization. This moment of choice of methods, thus, can be justified by the main goal of the study: to receive a clear understanding of how the skills of speaking of students change in different academic stages, as well as what factors influence it.

The data was collected during the period between October and December 2023 at Khairun University. The population under study consisted of 300 students majoring in English Education out of whom a random sample of 41 respondents was picked off to make certain inclusion representative. Twelve first-semester, 13 third-semester and 16 fifth-semester students were sampled (29.3 percent, 31.7 percent, and 39 percent respectively). The gender balance was 11 and 30 respectively (26.8 and 73.2 respectively). The equal allocation of levels of semester and gender ensured a sound basis of comparative analysis and allowed the investigator to examine speaking success of different groups of students.

Two major data collection tools were employed, namely a questionnaire and a speaking test offered in the form of structured interviews. The questionnaire not only gave demographic information, but also discussed the difficulties experienced in speech, and the inhibitory and facilitative forces. The speaking test was tested with the help of a scoring rubric which assesses key attributes of the speaking skill such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and general communicative abilities. Besides this, six students (two students in each semester level) were invited in order to undergo in-depth interviews. These qualitative interviews were used to complement the quantitative, and thus, add the contextual insights on the numerical results and offer a more detailed portrait of the learning experiences of the students.

The study process had a number of consecutive steps, including: the selection of the sample, administration of questionnaires, conducting of speaking tests, and further interviews. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative information in questionnaires and speaking tests to compare the performance of groups to each other, but the analysis of qualitative responses provided interpretive information. Such methodological triangulation

allowed the study to estimate not only quantifiable differences in speaking achievement but also those factors of speaking achievement such as age, GPA, family background, study habits and enrolment in speaking-related courses which affect them.

As a result, the selected methodology provides a comprehensive approach to the English-speaking success of the students studying at the Department of English Education at Khairun University.

Results and Discussion

Data Presentation

The total population was 300 students consisting of 1st semester, 3rd semester, and 5th semester students of English education study program. In this case, the researcher used a questionnaire to obtain the sample. The questionnaire was conducted to find out students' demographic information, problems in speaking, and factors in speaking, as well as factors supporting speaking ability. The researcher obtained 41 out of 300 students consisting of 6 English class students. The sample consisted of 12 1st semester students (29.3%), 13 3rd semester students (31.7%) and 16 5th semester students (39%). The sample consisted of 11 male students with a percentage of 26.8% and 30 female students with a percentage of 73.2%. In addition to filling out the questionnaire, the researcher also conducted interviews with 6 resource persons consisting of 2 1st semester students, 2 3rd semester students, and 2 5th semester students.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

| Gender | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------|---------------|----------------|
| Male | 11 | 26.8% |
| Female | 30 | 73.2% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Semester

| Semester | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1st Semester | 12 | 29.3% |
| 3rd Semester | 13 | 31.7% |
| 5th Semester | 16 | 39.0% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

The results of this study show that there are significant differences in the speaking achievement of students of the Department of English at Khairun University based on several factors. The students studied varied in age between 16-23 years old with an average age of 19.2. In addition, the data analysis also revealed an observable relationship between speaking achievement and other factors, such as Grade Point Average (GPA) and academic grades. Students had an average GPA of 3.71 and an average grade point average of 88.5. Students with more than average grades tend to show higher levels of speaking achievement. The findings provide an in-depth understanding of the factors that can influence students' speaking ability in the context of higher education.

Based on the results of data processing on the age of respondents, the average age was 19.2 years. This average value indicates that the majority of research participants are in the late

adolescent early young adult age range, in accordance with the target sample of 1st to 5th semester students.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Age (Years) | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| 16 | 1 | 2.4% |
| 17 | 3 | 7.3% |
| 18 | 9 | 22.0% |
| 19 | 10 | 24.4% |
| 20 | 12 | 29.3% |
| 21 | 3 | 7.3% |
| 22 | 2 | 4.9% |
| 23 | 1 | 2.4% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

Students' Family Background

Table 4. Table: Parents' Educational Background

| Level of Education | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Primary School | 7 | 17.1% |
| Junior High School | 5 | 12.2% |
| Senior High School | 22 | 53.7% |
| Bachelor's Degree | 7 | 17.1% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

Table 5. Parents' Job Distribution

| Job | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Farmer | 22 | 53.6% |
| Fisherman | 2 | 4.8% |
| Civil Servants | 2 | 4.8% |
| Private Employee | 7 | 17.1% |
| Motorcycle Driver | 7 | 17.1% |
| Others | 1 | 2.4% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

Parents' educational background and occupation can be key factors that influence students' speaking achievement in English. Data analysis shows that 17.1% of the students' parents have completed their education up to Bachelor's degree level, while the majority, 53.7%, have an educational background up to Senior High School (SM). In addition, parents' employment patterns also contribute significantly, with the majority of student parents working as farmers (53.6%), followed by civil servants (PNS) and private workers, each at 17.7%. On the other hand, children who come from a background of parents with higher education and regular employment tend to have higher speaking skills, as reflected in their grades. The implication is that an in-depth understanding of the impact of parents' educational background and occupation on speaking achievement can be the basis for the development of more inclusive

educational programs, taking into account the diversity of socioeconomic conditions that may affect students' English proficiency.

Students' Study Habits

Based on the survey results involving all respondents, the majority of them spend limited time learning and practicing English speaking. This directly affects their achievement in English speaking skills, given that speaking requires consistent practice. Interestingly, 65.85% of the respondents admitted that they learn to speak English with their friends, while 34.15% prefer to study independently. The survey also reflects that 56% of the total respondents allocate less than an hour per week to speak English outside the classroom environment, with only 2% doing so for more than 3 hours a week. The frequency of daily study is only shared by 7% of students, while the majority, 63%, stated that they rarely study and practice speaking English. In fact, only 2.4% of respondents reported learning to speak English from various sources every day. The findings highlight the need to increase students' awareness and motivation to develop their English-speaking skills outside of the academic context.

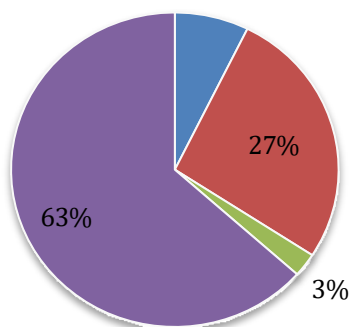
Table 6. Participation in English Speaking Course

| Participation | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yes | 10 | 24.4% |
| No | 31 | 75.6% |
| Total | 41 | 100% |

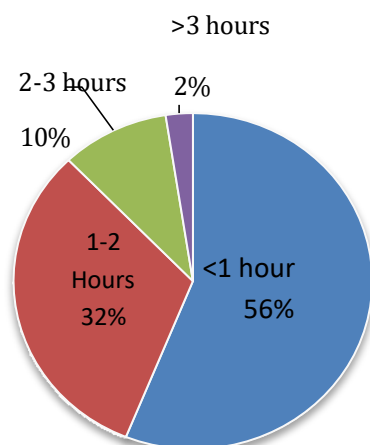
In terms of achievement, respondents showed various results, including "no achievement", "can watch without subtitles", "can broadcast on radio" and the highest achievement of the respondents was winning an English debate competition. Of course, this is also in line with their GPA level, the higher their achievement is, the more relevant the GPA is above the average of other respondents. According to the survey, students who are very confident speaking in English were recorded at only 2%, confident at 12% and not confident at 86%. It is seen that the questionnaire survey and oral test in the form of an English interview show that 34% of students are still not good at speaking English, 22% are quite good at speaking English, and 39% are good at speaking English. But on the other hand, they agree that mastering English-speaking skills is very important for their future.

Students' Learning Frequency outside of Class

■ Everyday ■ Several time ■ Once a week ■ Rarely



Hours of study at home in a week



The results of the current study show that the development of speaking English among the students is not linear as it could be assumed intuitively. Even though the higher semesters students are more likely to be performing better than their first semester counterparts, this does not mean the two are completely different. The fifth-semester students still report the same challenges as the junior, which implies that classroom experience notwithstanding the number of semesters cannot ensure communicative competence. The act of speaking is an art that thrives when actively and fruitfully utilized. Richards (2008) contends that grammar and vocabulary knowledge is merely a starting point and it is real interaction that offers fluency and communicative self-esteem. The disjointed development of semester levels identified in the present research, it is clear that teaching will need to be supplemented by the situations where students will be able to practice English as a living language and not as an abstract science.

There is also another aspect of the results, which corresponds to the importance of family background and the social environment, in general. At the same time, students whose parents have had higher education or have stable jobs are more likely to perform well in the speaking, thus implying that economic and educational stability in the household provides environments that help in the learning of the language. On the other hand, a high number of students in agricultural families do not have the chances to listen and speak English outside a classroom and show structural inequalities but not personal weaknesses. According to Gay et al. (2014), comparative studies reveal how the socioeconomic disparities influence academic performance. In the case of a university like Khairun University, this highlights a need to offer compensatory opportunities. Peer mentoring, informal speaking groups and language clubs may provide exposure which a home environment may not provide. Without such programs, the poor students will continue to be on a disadvantaged platform despite their academic dedication.

Another factor that proved to be critical is study habits. Most students also said that they spoke less than an hour a week out of class. It is not surprising that so few manage to practice it and thus become less fluent and less confident. Brown (2001) points out that the spoken language is shaped by the ongoing negotiation of meaning in the course of interaction and not by the short or limited exercises. The gap between high GPAs and poor speaking in students supports

the argument that academic achievement in terms of exams and coursework does not always imply communicative competence. The disconnect is especially worrying to the English Education students who undergo training towards professional roles that will require them to be active in language usage. The findings indicate that the assessment systems and teaching methods should be redone in a way that communicative performance would be given the same weight as written achievement.

No one can say, however, that any factor is more telling than confidence, or lack of it. Most students admitted the relevance of English in their future but they feel insecure when they are required to speak. Such bashfulness is in itself an obstacle: the less they say the less they feel sure, and the process continues. Hayriye (2006) reminds that to speak well, it is not only necessary to have some linguistic knowledge, but also the boldness to use language in various contexts and to different audiences. Breaking this cycle may be possible by creating classroom culture that views the mistakes as a learning process instead of a failure. Self-confidence may be developed with activities that involve low-stakes peer discussions, small-group assignments, informal presentations and positive feedback. Such practices may eventually turn the hesitation into willingness, and willingness into fluency.

This is what comes out of these findings and it is a portrait of speaking achievement which is influenced by several forces that are interdependent such as academic progression, family situation, personal study practices and psychological preparedness. All these factors do not act independently but rather interact to affect the learning of language as a student. In the case of Khairun University, the issue is whether to have an integrated solution to this complexity. It is true that stronger curricula are noteworthy, but they should be supplemented with measures that increase the opportunities of real practice, help less fortunate students and develop confidence in addition to competence. When such factors come together they are able to create graduates who not only are academically successful but also they can talk English easily and successfully in the real world

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the acquisition of English speaking proficiency to the students of the Department of English Education in Khairun University is not a linear process that is directly linked to the semester level. Even though students in higher semesters often perform better than their juniors, there is still a group that still finds it challenging regardless of the number of years that they have taken up the course. This disordered trend suggests that one can not achieve good speaking by simply attending the classroom lessons, but the process must be long-lasting and deliberate, and it must go beyond the traditional school activities, when the language is used in real-life situations and is not just studied and analyzed in theoretical terms.

These are further influenced by family and social background. Students that come out of families with better educated or continuously employed parents tend to have a higher confidence level and competence, but students of agricultural or less fortunate backgrounds have challenges that limit their exposure to the English language. Such disparities emphasize the fact that achieving success, does not depend only on the personal effort but also on environmental factors that a student grows up in. In the case of a university with diverse populations, this fact brings to the fore the need to offer some form of compensatory measures in the form of language clubs, mentoring programmes, or informal speaking areas to ensure that every student has an equal access to developing their linguistic ability.

The impacts of the study habits and assessment practices are also identified in the study. The students spend little time conversing outside the classroom, which makes a gap between high grades in the written part and relatively lower grades on oral performance. This deviation begs the question of the operationalisation of success in the learning of a language. When achievement is mostly determined by written work, the student can gain academic perfection, and still be unprepared to meet the communicative needs of his or her future profession. In the case of English Education majors, oral competence is not optional but rather compulsory, and the instruction as well as assessment would have to take this priority into account.

And lastly, there is a focal problem of confidence. Many students admit that they have understood the importance of the English language, but they do not use it, being afraid to make some mistake, or be embarrassed. Without confidence, there will be no practice opportunities and progress will cease. The reluctance to take risks can be turned into fluency by establishing positive classroom cultures where mistakes are perceived as part of the learning process and where students are persuaded to take risks. Combining these lessons, the paper proposes that to enhance attainment of speaking, a holistic strategy should be implemented that should solidify the curriculum, increase the authentic practice opportunities, mitigate social inequity, and develop self-belief. In this way Khairun University will be able to develop graduates that are not just academically sound but also well prepared communicators who can be able to operate within broader professional and global environments.

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