

# **“HOW FUN IS IT?”: EFL ENGINEERING STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF A FUN SPEAKING CLASS**

## **Case Study at Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang**

**Masrurotul ajiza<sup>1</sup>**

Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang  
Jl. Bendungan Sigura-gura No.2, Malang, Indonesia  
E-mail: [masrurotul\\_ajiza@lecturer.itn.ac.id](mailto:masrurotul_ajiza@lecturer.itn.ac.id)

### **ABSTRAK**

Globally, educators work to ensure that students have a solid foundation in English language proficiency, including speaking abilities. The lecturer tries hard to create a comfortable and fun environment for the students in the speaking class. Yet, sometimes there is a misleading between the perception of the lecturer and the student's point of view in the definition of fun speaking class. This study aims to explore the student's perception of a fun speaking class. 14 students of engineering students participated in this study. The researcher used a qualitative method and used a questionnaire and an observation as the instruments. The study found that engineering students have various perceptions toward a fun speaking class, starting from the environment, lecturer, the technology used, and material choice. In addition, the students like direct conversation in speaking class.

**Keywords:** EFL student, perception, speaking class

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globally, educators work to ensure that students have a solid foundation in English language proficiency, including speaking abilities.

Speaking is generally understood to be the act of verbally communicating thoughts, ideas, or information. It entails communicating with an audience—whether it be a single person or a group of people—by utilizing words. According to Saldaria (2019), Speaking skill is the skill of speaking words to express thoughts, ideas, or feelings.

When discussing language acquisition or instruction, the term "speaking" particularly refers to the capacity to pronounce words and sentences orally to demonstrate understanding and efficient communication. It includes not just how words are pronounced and articulated but also how ideas are put together and how well they may be understood.

There are some components in speaking English. Harris (1974) mentioned five components of speaking: comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

#### **1. Comprehension**

It is undoubtedly necessary for a person to both start and reply to speech in oral communication.

#### **2. grammar**

Students must be able to put together a proper sentence when speaking. Grammar is useful for learning how to become proficient in a language both orally and in writing.

#### **3. Vocabulary**

A person's vocabulary is their ability to use proper language when speaking. One cannot properly communicate or convey their views in writing or orally without a large vocabulary. One such obstacle that keeps people from learning a language is a small vocabulary. Very little can be communicated without grammar, and nothing at all without vocabulary.

#### **4. Pronunciation**

When the students talk, they can produce clearer language by using proper pronunciation. It deals with the phonological process, which is the part of grammar composed of the constituents and principles that establish the patterns and variations in sounds in a language.

Pronunciation has two components: suprasegmental characteristics and phonemes. The researcher deduced from the remark that pronunciation is the study of how words in a certain language are formed clearly when individuals speak. Pronunciation is important when communicating to facilitate simple understanding of the other person.

#### **5. Fluency**

The capacity to read, speak, or write with ease, fluidity, and expression is known as fluency. To put it another way, the speaker is able to relate meaning and context while reading, understanding, and responding in a clear and succinct manner. The capacity to talk clearly and smoothly is known as

fluency. For many language learners, speaking fluently is the goal.

However, most English language learners, particularly those studying English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL), still find it difficult to improve their speaking abilities. According to Paneerselvam (2019), some challenges faced by the students in speaking English are Lack of drive and self-assurance, nervousness, inhibition, and inadequate vocabulary. In addition, Possú (2021) mentioned that the lecturer's traditional method and a big class were the challenges faced by the students in learning English speaking.

In answering all the challenges, some studies were conducted to find some methods to improve speaking skills. Meinawati et al. (2020) and Ajiza (2023) mentioned that YouTube positively affects students' speaking ability. Parmawati and Inayah (2019) as well as Kinasih and Olivia (2022) used a movie to improve students' speaking ability. In addition, to make a meaningful and fun classroom, Nair and Yunus (2021) used digital storytelling.

Different from previous studies conducted, this study did not focus on the strategies to improve students' ability in speaking but on the student's perception of a fun speaking class from an EFL engineering student's point of view. The researcher wanted to explore an environment where students are not only learning but also enjoying the process of speaking and expressing themselves.

## METHOD

This study was conducted at Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang. 14 Environmental engineering students joining the English subject in their first semester were pointed as the subject of the study.

The researcher used a case study approach by using a questionnaire as the instruments. Before the questionnaire, the researcher asked the multi-background of the students, such as: their english experiences, study background, and environment English-native. The open-ended questionnaire was chosen to know the students' perceptions towards a fun speaking class to answer the reseach questions. The researcher analyzed all data from the instruments discriptively.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study showed that the participant had a multi-background. All the participant of this study had no language education background as all of them had Science and Social in their senior high school. Mostly they have learned English for more than 10 years (71.4%). In addition, they have minimum partners as family or friends that can talk in English daily (85.7%). It means that the students do not have any additional support in enhancing

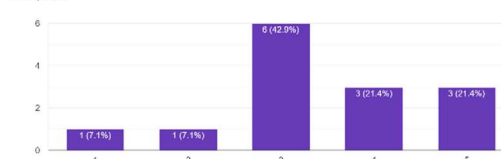
their speaking ability in daily or special circumtance to have tendency to like English more.

**Table 1.** Data of the Students' Background

Stud ent	English experien ce	Ed.backgr ound	Family to talk English	Friends to talk English
1	< 10 y.	Science	No	No
2	< 10 y.	Science	No	Yes
3	> 10 y.	Vocational	No	No
4	< 10 y.	Science	No	No
5	< 10 y.	Science	No	No
6	> 10 y.	Vocational	No	No
7	< 10 y.	Science	No	No
8	> 10 y.	Science	Yes	Yes
9	< 10 y.	Science	No	No
10	> 10 y.	Science	No	No
11	< 10 y.	Science	No	No
12	< 10 y.	Science	No	No
13	< 10 y.	Science	Yes	Yes
14	< 10 y.	Science	No	Yes

With a bare minimum of partners to speak English, the students still had a high will to speak English in the class.

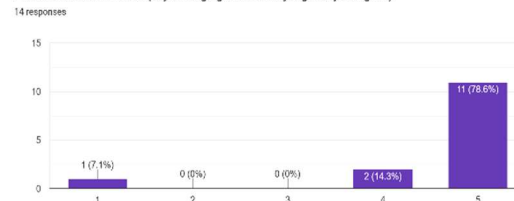
How much do you like to speak English in the English class? (Seberapa besar kamu suka berbicara menggunakan bahasa Inggris di kelas bahasa Inggris?)  
14 responses



From the numbers of the students that want to enhance their ability in English by trying to speak in English rather than their mother tongue or their first language during the class, a fun class will be very helpful for them as a support.

Almost all the students wanted to have a fun class that let them to communicate well in good class environment.

I want to have a fun class (saya menginginkan kelas yang menyenangkan)  
14 responses



Picture 1. Number of students love fun class

Most of the students saw a fun class as a need in speaking class. Students have different point of view in defining a fun class.

**Table 2.** Students' expectation in speaking class

Student	Expectation in Speaking class
1	Dosen not Galak (not fierce lecturer)
2	Kelas yang menyenangkan adalah, kelas yang antara murid dengan dosen saling ceria, tidak ada rasa dendam satu sama lain

Student	Expectation in Speaking class
	dan ada waktu bercanda juga dalam mata pelajaran sehingga pelajaran tidak tegang sekali (A fun class is a class where students and lecturers are happy with each other, there are no feelings of resentment towards each other and there is also time to joke around in the subject so that the lesson is not at all tense.)
3	Yang tidak menegangkan (not tensed)
4	dosen baik dan ramah (kind lecturer)
5	In my opinion, a fun class is often practicing or communicating directly so that it is easy to use every day rather than learning a lot of the basics
6	semuanya aktif direct conversation (all active in direct conversation)
7	Menurut saya menyenangkan itu dimana kita semua dapat berkomunikasi menggunakan bahasa Inggris dengan baik (I think it is fun that we can all communicate using English well)
8	Relaxed but serious and not nerve-wracking.
9	Yang aktif (active)
10	Miss open question with all sudden
11	Seruuu (fun)
12	Like our class
13	an atmosphere that is free from pressure, safe, relaxed, interesting, arouses interest in learning, there is full involvement, students' attention is paid, the learning environment is interesting, enthusiastic, can create a feeling of joy and high concentration
14	Dengan belajar penuh semangat dan good mood (By studying enthusiastically and in a good mood)

According to the students, a fun class is affected by the environment, friends, and lecturer. This fun class can make them joining a speaking class enthusiastically that can set them in a good mood.

In the field of environment, the students wanted to have an atmosphere that is free from pressure, safe, relaxed but serious, interesting, arouses interest in learning, there is full involvement, students' attention is paid, the learning environment is interesting, enthusiastic, can create a feeling of joy and high concentration.

For a lecturer, they expected to have a kind, not fierce, and funny one. They wanted to avoid a nerve-wrecking speaking class. They also wanted to have a not monotonous lecturer that like to give a surprise in each meeting, such as giving a direct question. This result is in line with the study conducted by Pranoto and Suprayogi (2021) which studied about the students' perspective on humorous memes used in EFL classroom. The result showed that humorous environment could make the students less stressful can build a good chemistry between the students and the lecturer.

While a pair/partner they needed is the supportive one. They like to have a friend that could help them in speaking or presenting.

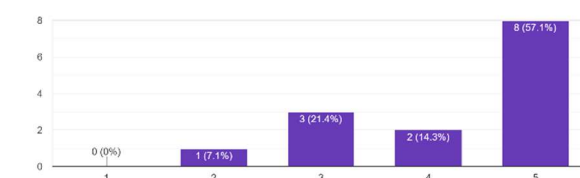
The next question was about the theme the students will like the most in speaking class.

**Table 3. themes in speaking class**

Student	theme the students will like the most in speaking class
1	Waste
2	Environmental problems in Indonesia
3	Pollution
4	Bercerita (story telling)
5	Environment
6	daily activity
7	Tema yang menyenangkan ♥
8	About daily life, our experiences, and the things that we like the most.
9	Keseharian (daily)
10	Collaboration
11	Composition
12	About everything
13	environmental problems
14	Theme of Environmental

From the data, 50% of the students agreed that a theme related to their field would be great to study. In this case, they preferred in environmental engineering themes, such as: Environmental problems, pollution, and composition. The rest of students chose a daily related theme, such as daily activities or storytelling.

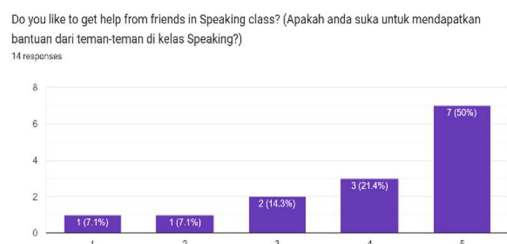
Do you like to be allowed using translator/ dictionary in Speaking class? (Apakah anda suka untuk diperbolehkan menggunakan alat penerjemah/ kamus di kelas Speaking?)  
14 responses



**Picture 2. Number in using tools in speaking**

During the speaking class, the students like to use a supporting tools like a translator to help them to speak well. 57.1% students agreed with the use of translator.

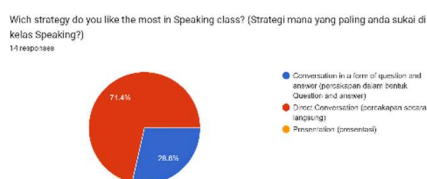
In using a translator, the students did not use it for all the sentences. Sometimes, they needed it to complete their sentence, or to find a hard term in Engineering. In addition, they also like to use a translator to check a word's pronunciation.



**Picture 3.** Number in asking for a friend help

Beside the use of a tool like a translator, the students also wanted to have a support from their friends or pairs in the speaking class. 50% students needed maximum help from their friend to in the speaking class, not only because they were lack in speaking ability, but because the existance of friends can improve their confidence in speaking English. This condition was approved by the lecturer's daily observation since some students were seen more confident in speaking English when they must do it in a group rather than to speak alone.

Further, the students were asked the strategy they like the most in Speaking class.



**Picture 4.** Preference in speaking strategy

From the data, more than 70% of students chose a direct conversation in speaking class, and the rest chose question and answer type. No one was choosing a presentation as their preference in speaking class. This result can create a serious consideration of the lecturer in conducting presentation as it is unwanted by the students. This result is supported by the study of Grieve et al. (2021) which mentioned that students still face a high fear of oral presentation that can give a negative impact on their higher education experience.

## CONCLUSION

This study was conducted in engineering environment. To conclude, engineering students have a various perception in seeing a fun class in a speaking class. Environment, lecturer, friends, technology, and materials choice are seen taking a big role in having a fun speaking class. During speaking class, the students like direct conversation more than question and answer, and no one like a presentation class.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you for the research and community service institution of Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang for the support. By giving a grant, and also all the students of Environmental Engineering as the subjects of the study.

## REFERENCES

- Ajiza, Masurotul. 2023. "The Use of Youtube in Improving the Speaking Skills of EFL Higher Education Students." *UNNES-TEFLIN National Conference* 5:469–77.
- Grieve, R., J. Woodley, S. E. Hunt, and A. McKay. 2021. "Student Fears of Oral Presentations and Public Speaking in Higher Education: A Qualitative Survey." *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 45(9):1281–93. doi: 10.1080/0309877X.2021.1948509.
- Harris, David. 1974. *Testing English as a Second Language*. New York: Mc. Graw. Hill Book Company.
- Kinasih, Putri Rindu, and Olivia Olivia. 2022. "An Analysis of Using Movies to Enhance Students' Public Speaking Skills in Online Class." *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching* 10(3):315. doi: 10.33394/jollt.v10i3.5435.
- Meinawati, Euis, Danang Dwi Harmoko, Nazzala Aulia Rahmah, and Nurmala- Dewi. 2020. "Increasing English Speaking Skills Using Youtube." *Polyglot: Jurnal Ilmiah* 16(1):1. doi: 10.19166/pji.v16i1.1954.
- Nair, Viknesh, and Melor Md Yunus. 2021. "A Systematic Review of Digital Storytelling in Improving Speaking Skills." *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 13(17). doi: 10.3390/su13179829.
- Parmawati, Aseptiana, and Ratih Inayah. 2019. "Improving Students' Speaking Skill through English Movie in Scope of Speaking for General Communication." *ELTIN Journal* 7(2):43–44.
- Possú, María Cristina Fory. 2021. "Groups : Challanges and Useful Strategies."
- Pranoto, Budi Eko, and Suprayogi. 2021. " Insights from Students' Perspective of 9GAG Humorous Memes Used in EFL Classroom ." *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Conference on Applied Linguistics (CONAPLIN 2020)* 546(Conaplin 2020):72–76. doi: 10.2991/assehr.k.210427.011.
- Saldaria, Elnida, Vina Anggia Nastitie Ariawan, and Isah Cahyani. 2019. "Speaking Skill of Elementary Students Reviewed by Gender." *Jurnal Prima Edukasia* 7(1):20–27. doi: 10.21831/jpe.v7i1.20363.