The Challenges and Strategies Experienced by EFL Students In using English as Daily Oral Communication

Wardatun Nafisah

English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas, Islam, Malang, Malang 65144, INDONESIA
Email: nafisahwardatun24@gmail.com

Abstract: Several studies have been conducted to investigate the challenges and strategies experienced by EFL students in using English. However, studies on the use of English in specific contexts, such as in daily communication, are rarely. This study investigates the experienced of EFL students at a private university in Malang, East Java. The aim is to explore how EFL students experience the use of English as daily communication.
Using a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design, this study focuses on the challenges and strategies experienced by EFL students when using English as a means of everyday communication through in-depth individual interviews conducted via Zoom meetings and data collection aimed at obtaining stories and experiences from the participants. Participants were selected from among EFL students to explore the challenges they face in using English as a means of daily communication, as well as the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. The findings of this study highlight various aspects, including the challenges faced by EFL students in using English, as well as the communication strategies they actively use to overcome and narrate these challenges in daily life. The challenges faced include a lack of support from the surrounding environment to communicate using English and often receiving criticism from others when speaking English. Strategies to overcome these difficulties include attending English courses, finding partners to communicate using English, and ignoring negative comments from others.

Keywords: communication challenges, communication strategies, EFL students, daily communication, language learning experiences

INTRODUCTION

In this era, people from various countries often see each other for many reasons, such as studying, working, or just getting acquainted. So that you can understand each other, they need to use language to speak to one another. Language is very important because it helps us convey what is on our minds, what we think and feel, and what we want. With language, we can share stories, talk about new ideas, or convey messages important to others. Language also makes us near to other people, even though they originate from far away places. That is so important for us to Study language,

especially the frequently used language throughout the world, such as English. That way, we can talk to more people, understand what they say, and build good relationships. Language helps us become part of a bigger and more connected world. Therefore, we need to understand how to use language well and correctly. Language allows us to interact with each other, share stories and work together. According to Freiermuth & Jarrell (2006), language is even the most important part of human life because it is a need that cannot be abandoned. In this world, there are so many different languages. However, one of the most important languages to learn is English. According to Baugh & Cable (1993), English is important because it is a means of communication in many countries. This means that by learning English, we can talk to more people from various parts of the world. So, learning English will help us understand other people, make friends, and achieve many opportunities in the future.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is very important for helping. We communicate with people all over the world, especially because the world is now more connected. When we study the English language, we cannot only study to speak with people from other countries but also learn about the challenges or difficulties faced by the person who studies the language. This is for EFL students who use the English language in their daily lives.

Many students find it difficult to speak or communicate in English, and they have certain ways to overcome this problem. This is important to understand, especially in a school environment, where English is often used for learning and communicating. Various things can make EFL students feel difficult, such as difficulty speaking fluently, understanding difficult words, or feeling nervous when speaking in front of people. They may also be confused by the rules of English that are different from their language or are afraid of making mistakes. According to Suparsa et al. (2017), learning English remains one of the most important foreign languages in Indonesia. Thus, English is recognized as the first foreign language in Indonesia, and all students, especially those in high school and university, must learn it. When learning English, students must be proficient in four areas of skills. English is not only associated with efforts to encourage students to use English but also to become proficient in speaking Irwandi, (2020). They speak, write, listen, and read. Speaking is the most important of these four qualities and must be taught comprehensively, including in Islamic boarding schools.

Clark et al. (2019), argue that speaking skills are essential because they are lifelong qualities. Since we are social creatures, we cannot survive without speaking. Speaking well can benefit you in

every aspect of your life. Having a wide vocabulary and proficiency in English will help you secure a decent career and communicate effectively with others in the workplace, school, and business. In addition, having good English skills will expand your range of career options, including in sales, commerce, education, management, administration, law enforcement, the hospital sector, marketing, and customer service. It makes sense that the goal of teaching English as a second language is to equip EFL students with a good command of the language, especially in speaking situations when they interact with people from other cultures and regions.

In some schools in Indonesia, there are problems in teaching Language English with less way right. This makes lots of students have difficulty Studying English well. One of the objectives of studying English is for students to be able to speak fluently and understand English easily. However, in some schools, many students cannot reach their objectives. There are some reasons why this can happen. One of them is demotivation, which means a lack of spirit or desire to learn. When students do not feel interested or do not have the spirit to study the language of English, they are too lazy to study and practice. They may feel that the English language is difficult or not fun, so they do not try hard to understand it. Besides, there are also problems, such as lack of support from the teacher or friends or teaching methods that are not interesting. If students do not feel pushed or helped, they may feel separated from hope and lose their Spirit for studying more often. All matters This makes studying the English language more difficult, and students cannot reach the objective of speaking or understanding English well.

EFL learners may struggle with speaking due to a lack of English language proficiency. Language competence refers to a speaker's understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Another study by Jones and Smith (2021), investigated the difficulties of English as a second language (EFL) learners in developing communication skills. Their research supports the theory of communication competence, which emphasizes the importance of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence for successful communication. Students use communication strategies when they face difficulties in expressing their ideas. This is supported by Sari (2014) and Nurdini (2017), Who stated that learners use communication strategies to communicate well.

Effective communication tactics are essential for teaching and learning English as a second language, especially in developing speaking skills. Communication strategies can help students overcome communication barriers or prevent communication breakdowns. This is in accordance

with Al Alawi (2016) who noted that communication tactics can help language learners exchange ideas through language vocal targets. Language learners may use communication tactics to compensate for the limitations of the target language ability. According to Wicaksono (2014), effective communication requires students to use a variety of tactics. In other words, communication tactics help language learners strengthen their speaking skills. Fahira (2022) found various challenges most students face, including difficulties in speaking English. Students have difficulty speaking or pronouncing words correctly and have no ideas to express their views in English.

The researcher was interested in understanding the challenges faced by EFL students in using English as well as the strategies they use to overcome them. Based on the statements and evidence that have been presented, it is clear that university students experience various difficulties when speaking in English in their daily lives. Previous research has also revealed that most students face barriers in speaking, including difficulties in pronouncing words correctly as well as limited ideas in conveying their views in English. This study seeks to dig deeper into the communication challenges and strategies that university students use in their daily interactions using English. Some previous studies have explored students' strategies in using English in general contexts. However, research that specifically addresses English use strategies in daily communication is still rare, especially among EFL students who live in neighborhoods with few native English speakers. Based on this background, the researcher formulated two questions as follows:

1. What are the challenges that EFL students face in using English as daily communication?
2. What strategies do EFL students use to deal with challenges in using English for daily communication?

METHODS

The research in this study uses a qualitative technique, using Clandinin and Connelly's (2006) narrative research design . Narrative research is a qualitative research method that explores and understands individual experiences through the collection and analysis of stories or narratives. In this context, this research design aims to uncover the challenges and strategies faced by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in using English for everyday communication.

This research was conducted in Malang, East Java, a Private University. The researcher wanted to find out the difficulties faced by EFL students in using English to communicate in everyday life,

which the researcher found when the researcher conducted observations and also describe what strategies can be used to overcome the challenges of EFL students in using English as a means of communication in daily life.

Two eighth-semester students from the English Language Education Study Program at a Private University in Malang, East Java, participated in this study. Participants were selected from students studying English as a foreign language at various educational institutions to gain insight into the challenges and strategies they use in speaking English to communicate in daily life because participants were based on their ability to provide the information needed to answer the research questions. Participants in this study consisted of one male and one female.

One-on-one interviews was be conducted via Zoom sessions to collect data for this study and interact with the participants' stories. Interviews are used to collect data because, as indicated Marshall & Rossman, (2006), There are several methods for collecting data, with face-to-face interviews being the most popular.   Prior to data collection, Participants received a clear explanation from the researcher about the purpose of the study, allowing them to understand the meeting and the findings of the study. To ensure there are no misunderstandings and that participants and researchers receive a clear explanation of the questions, Indonesian and English were used interchangeably. Online interviews are recorded in video form to ensure the reliability of the information. To collect data, the researcher uses three instruments, including: Observation, Interview, and Documentation.

To analyze the data, there are several steps taken by the researcher. First, the researcher conducted interviews via Zoom and WhatsApp by recording the voices of the interviewed participants regarding the challenges and strategies of students in using English. Second, the interview data was analyzed, and the process involved identifying students' voice notes by listening to the entire recording several times and highlighting important points. Then, the recordings were transcribed, and the interview transcripts were read back. Challenges in using English during this process were highlighted in blue, purple, and red to indicate Challenges in using English and strategies were highlighted using green, gray, and yellow. Finally, the data were presented based on the relevant themes of each question.

FINDINGS

Participants were able to overcome the challenges they faced by finding and implementing effective strategies. This is particularly important, given that they live in an environment where English acts as a second language after the mother tongue they use in their daily lives. Based on research conducted by Ismiatun et al. (2019), environmental factors, including the community and the surrounding atmosphere, play an important role in the success of English language learning. A supportive environment can help participants improve their English language skills, while a less supportive environment can be a challenge. In this study, participants' identities were protected to preserve their privacy. All informants, consisting of PA (male) and PB (female), were interviewed on the same day, December 25, 2024. As explained in the previous chapter, interviews were the main method used to collect data in this study.

1.1 Challenges Faced by EFL Students in Using English as Daily Communication

The researcher divided the first theme, namely Challenges faced by EFL students in Using English as Daily Communication, into two points: lack of support from the surrounding environment to communicate using English and often being criticized by others when speaking English.

Lack of Support from the Surrounding Environment to Communicate Using English

Participant A admitted that he did not find any significant obstacles. However, the obstacle that Participant A often experienced was when he felt he was in an environment that did not support always using English, as well as Participant B, who found it difficult to interact with others in English. Because often other people refused or did not want to talk when Participant B tried to invite others to talk.

> PA stated, The first challenge I faced was the lack of support from the environment to use English regularly. This is because I live in Indonesia, where English is still considered a foreign language.

> PB stated, Sometimes, I find it difficult to interact with other people in English. Often, they refuse or don't want to talk when I try to talk to them. No doubt, my English is limited because I don't have the opportunity to practice directly.

learning English can be difficult if the environment does not support us to use it often. As experienced by Participant A, living in Indonesia, where English is not the main language, makes it rare for him to have the opportunity to speak English. Participant B also finds it difficult to practice

because people around him often refuse or do not want to speak English. As a result, their English skills do not develop well because they are rarely practiced.

Often Criticized by Others When Speaking English.

On the other hand, Participant A often received criticism or comments when trying to speak English. Negative comments from others often made Participant A feel insecure. This feeling grew stronger because Participant A was afraid of being considered strange or different if he continued to use English in conversations that should have been in Indonesian. Similarly, Participant B, when trying to speak English, also received comments from the surrounding environment, which made Participant B feel doubtful of his own abilities.

> PA stated, My friends and people around me influence me. They often criticize or comment when I try to speak English, and it makes me feel insecure.

> PB stated, The influence of friends who often criticize me when I try to speak English really affects my self-confidence. Every comment or criticism that is given, even though it may be intended to help, often makes me doubt my own abilities.

Criticism or comments from friends and people around can make someone feel insecure when speaking English. As experienced by Participants A and B, these comments, although they may be intended to help, often make them doubt their own abilities.

1.2 Strategies Used to Overcome Challenges Faced When Using English as Daily Communication

In this finding, the researcher divided the second theme, namely strategies used to overcome challenges faced when using English as daily communication, into several points, including taking English courses and ignoring negative comments.

Taking English Courses

Both participants have strategies to overcome the obstacles faced when communicating using English. Both Participants had different strategies that researchers found during interviews; when Participant A was in an environment that did not support continuing to speak English, Participant A decided to take an English course. The environment in the course was very supportive of Participant A's learning process because Participant A was surrounded by people who had similar goals, namely improving their English skills, while the strategy used by Participant B when in an environment that did not support him to communicate using English was to find a partner who could speak English

with Participant B every day. Speaking directly to someone in English helped Participant B improve his speaking skills, increase fluency, and increase self-confidence.

> PA stated I took a course in which this environment can support me in always learning English, make me feel more confident, and improve my abilities even more."

> PB stated I'm always trying to improve my English speaking skills, and one way I do that is by finding a partner who can speak English with me every day.

Learning English can be easier and more enjoyable if we are in a supportive environment. As experienced by Participant A, taking a course helped him feel more confident and continue learning. The same thing was done by Participant B, who looked for friends to speak English with every day to improve his skills.

Ignoring Negative Comments

Participant A and Participant B admitted that they received criticism or comments when trying to speak English. Both Participants chose to ignore what other people said or thought when they were speaking English,

> PA stated I make it a point to ignore negative comments from others, especially those that belittle my ability to speak English. I am aware that others may have opinions or criticisms that are not always constructive, and I choose not to think too much about what they say. Instead, I focus on my personal goals of continuing to learn and improve.

> PB stated, I always feel confident when speaking in English even though I have received comments from others. Although sometimes I feel embarrassed to speak in public and be heard by others, I still speak English with my friends."

It is important to remain confident when learning English, despite negative comments from others. As Participant A did, ignoring unconstructive criticism and focusing on personal goals can help us continue to grow. Participant B did the same, who remained confident in speaking English with her friends, despite feeling embarrassed or hearing comments from others.

DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by EFL students in using English as a means of communication every day and the strategies used to overcome these challenges. Based on the results of the research obtained, the discussion will connect the findings of the results with research previously.

In studying, the challenges faced by EFL students are divided into two main points, namely, lack of support from the environment around them for speaking English and often getting criticism from others. These findings are consistent with the results of the previous study, which were found in EFL students in different contexts. Results study show that one of the main in the use of English in daily life is the lack of support from the environment around. This matter is seen from statements from participants who said that they had difficulty training because they lived in a sparse environment with the English language. This condition is in line with the findings of Ismiatun et al., (2019), which states that factors in the environment, such as the public and atmosphere, play a role in the success of learning English. These Findings is also supported by a study by Herliza, (2023), who found that the difference between online and offline learning influences the interaction of students with the environment. In online learning, students face challenges from less environmental support, such as a lack of interaction with Friends or lecturers in a way directly, that hinders exercise Language English. This shows that a supportive environment is very important in the learning process, as well as the use of the English language in daily life.

Criticism from friends or people around them also becomes a big challenge for participants to study. Afraid of criticism often lowers the students' sense of confidence, which makes them hesitant to speak English. These findings his by results study Fahira, (2022), who found that students often feel Embarrassed and afraid to make errors when speaking Language English because of worry about criticism from their friends. This criticism can hinder the development of speaking skills because students choose to be silent or use language mother they. Besides that, Wulandari et al., (2020), identify that not enough believe self Because of a lack of exercise in the English language. Criticism and negativity from other people aggravate the feeling of inadequacy, and believing in this, students tend to avoid exercise.

The participants in this study used a variety of strategies to overcome challenges and communicate in English. The strategies used by the participants in this study included taking English

courses, finding conversation partners, and ignoring negative comments. Previous research has also found these strategies to be effective solutions to improve speaking skills with EFL students.

One of the main things the participant used was to take the English course. Courses provide a supportive environment in which students can train to speak with friends and peers who have the same purpose. This Findings are in line with the study by Ismiatun et al., (2019), which emphasizes the importance of strategy positive learning, such as joining with community study language English. According to Ismiatun et al., (2019), technology, society, and an atmosphere conducive to learning are the main things that help increase the ability of Language and English students. Besides that, Sholeha et al., (2023), found that EFL students often use metacognitive strategies, such as utilizing courses or learning language platforms, to increase their ability to speak. This matter shows that course language English can become an effective solution for overcoming limitations with less environmental support. Strategy This is also related to findings from Khalidah et al., (2023), who found that skilled EFL students tend to use strategy learning based on memory and social, such as following courses and speaking the community Language, English, to increase their skills speak they.

Participants chose to look for partner talk as a main strategy. With the train in a way direct with partners, students can increase fluency, confidence self, and skills speak they. This Strategy is consistent with the results of the study by Sholeha et al., (2023), who found that students often use social strategies, such as training with friends in English or through social media platforms, to increase their skills in speaking English. Findings This Also supports the results of the study. Wulandari et al., (2020), stated that finding the best method to study the English language, including training with others, can help overcome difficulty in Studying English. By speaking in a way directly, students can be used to use Language English in context communication daily.

Ignoring criticism or negativity is also an effective strategy for overcoming fear. Speak in the English language. Participants' study mentions that they choose to focus on objective learning alone rather than think about other people's opinions. Strategy this supported study by Herliza, (2023), who found that students often use strategy cognitive and metacognitive to prepare self they face challenges. Besides that, the findings are also relevant to the study by Fahira (2022), where the teacher encourages students to still believe in themselves, although they feel afraid or embarrassed. Ignoring negativity can help the students maintain motivation. They keep going to study and develop. In line with the findings study by (2022), who identified that language teachers English try

to overcome the lack of trust in students in spoken language English by using a tailored approach, including giving support and motivation to the student.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study highlights two main challenges that EFL students face in communicating using English, namely, lack of environmental support and fear of criticism. To overcome these challenges, students implemented various strategies, such as attending English courses, finding conversation partners, ignoring negative comments, and staying focused on learning. This study confirms that a supportive environment, courage to face criticism, and consistent practice play an important role in improving EFL students' speaking skills. In addition, a positive attitude towards the learning process, including accepting mistakes as part of development, helped to increase their confidence in using English.

The researcher suggests the following ideas, EFL students are advised to create a supportive environment for learning English, such as joining a language community or club and utilizing technology to practice. Strategies such as taking courses, practicing with friends, noting down new vocabulary, and watching English videos can also help improve their skills. In addition, they need to overcome their fear of criticism by remaining confident and focused on the learning process. Future research is recommended to involve more students from various backgrounds so that the results are more extensive. In addition, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used by students so that a more optimal way of learning can be found. The development of learning methods that are more suitable to the needs of students, especially for those who have little opportunity to practice English, is also needed to make learning more effective.

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