

**EXPLORING INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS' PROBLEMS WHEN
SPEAKING ENGLISH IN ONLINE ENGLISH CLASSROOM FACED BY
STUDENTS OF
MTS AL MA'ARIF MALANG**

Putra Bintang Adhi Pratama
(Mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UNISMA)
putrabintangadhip@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

EFL students are increasingly using online platforms like Google Meet to improve their English speaking skills. However, they face challenges like limited access to learning resources and difficulty in developing their speaking abilities. Professional language instructors are crucial for ensuring fluency and mastery of speaking skills. This research aimed to understand the problems and solutions faced by students of MTs Al Ma'arif Malang while speaking English through Google Meet, using questionnaires and interviews. The study designed with natural environment and mixed method. The research subjects were taken based on the researcher's practical experience for two months while teaching at MTs Al Ma'arif Malang in online English classroom through Google Meet. MTs Al Ma'arif Malang students face speaking difficulties in EFL due to linguistic issues like lack of vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. These issues can lead to anxiety, shyness, and lack of confidence. Online learning, with unstable network connections and reduced face-to-face interaction, hinders the smooth learning process. To overcome these challenges, students should focus on increasing vocabulary and spelling pronunciation through conversations, using Google Meet and Google Translate, and finding suitable providers or networks. Future research can compare the speaking problems experienced by MTs Al Ma'arif Malang students and find better solutions for their speaking skills.

Keywords: *EFL learners' speaking English problem, Online English Classroom.*

Introduction

The pandemic has shifted the learning system from direct meetings to online English learning, requiring EFL teachers and students to enhance their ability to use technology as development capital in their online English learning process. Speaking is crucial for students as it helps them communicate with others and provide clear explanations. As English is widely spoken worldwide, students must develop their communication abilities to succeed in their chosen fields (Rao, 2019). In other words, students must have competence in speaking.

Google Meet is a technology that helps EFL teachers and students communicate and share knowledge of speaking English without questioning location and time. Mobile devices, which deliver educational material through wireless communication devices, are an alternative way for students to continue online class lessons (Cabanban, 2013).

However, EFL students face several challenges in teaching English online, such as the availability of learning facilities and the need for time to adapt (Yuzulia, 2020). One of the most challenging problems is developing speaking skills, which are directly witnessed and known when someone speaks in English (Aziz, 2022). Professional language instructors are required to generate EFL students who can speak English fluently to attain the best possible English-speaking skills. Additionally, practice and material mastery must be provided in equal measure (Megawati, 2016).

The researcher conducted a teaching practicum at MTs Al Ma'arif Malang, a school in Indonesia, where English language learning is challenging for students, particularly in grade 7th. The researcher discovered problems in students' English speaking skills during online classes using Google Meet. Thus, the researcher aimed to explore these issues and the solutions students had, leading to the research "Exploring Indonesian EFL Learners' Problems when Speaking English in Online English Classroom Faced by Students of MTs Al Ma'arif Malang".

Methods

This research used a natural environment and a mixed method methodology, using quantitative for questionnaires and qualitative for interviews, to investigate student problems in speaking English through Google Meeting. The study aimed to explore the significance of an organization or event through mixed method research. The process included questions, data collection, inductive analysis, theme building, and interpretation of data's significance. The final report's writing structure is adaptable (Creswell, 2009).

The study utilized data from MTs Al Ma'arif Malang's online English classroom students, selected based on the researcher's two-month for practical experience using Google Meet. The sample was taken through a small class of 10 students from 7th grade for questionnaires, but only 4 students from 7th grade were randomly selected as samples for interviews due to limited time. The instruments used by the researcher were questionnaires as information in the form of data from respondents, then interviews as information in the form of questions to respondents, and recordings with screen video recordings.

The researcher utilized a structured, closed questionnaire, which offered respondents options like yes or no, short answers, or checking items from a list of suggested responses. The questionnaire was adopted from Afshar and Asakereh (2016), consisted of 13 questions divided into four factor domains to address the

problem of students speaking English. The four factor domains included student's affective problems, instructor and students' social, educational and facilities system, and linguistically. The researcher utilized structured interviews which were imitated from Sugiyono (2016). The interviews consisted of 5 questions focused on problem and 1 question focused on solution with a duration of approximately 13 minutes, and were conducted in Indonesian. Then, the data in this study was analyzed using qualitative analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994) including data reduction, display data, and conclusion drawing or verification.

Finding

In this session, the researcher obtained findings to explore the problems of MTs Al Ma'arif Malang students when speaking English via Google Meet based on the results of a questionnaire with four dominant factors and five interview questions. Then, the researcher presented the findings to find out students' solutions in dealing with the problem based on one interview question.

The results of the questionnaire filled out via google form, with 10 of 7th grade students who had filled out the questionnaire. The data obtained from the questionnaire can be seen in table 4.1

Table 4.1 The Results of Questionnaire

Statements	Answer	
	YES	NO
Student's Affective Problems		
1	11	0
2	5	6
3	5	6
Instructor and Students' Social		
4	4	7
5	8	2
6	1	10
7	2	9
Educational and Facilities System		
8	4	7
9	2	9
10	2	9
Linguistically		
11	7	4
12	10	1
13	10	1

Table 4.1's data indicates that the average has been divided into 4 factor domains. The final average is then calculated by averaging the 4 factor domains. The outcomes of the questionnaire data collection can be readily categorized by it. Table 4.2 displays the findings for the percentage category.

Table 4.2 Overall Results

Factor Domains	% Average		Dominant
	Yes	No	
Student's Affective Problems	64%	36%	YES
Instructor and Students' Social	34%	64%	NO
Educational and Facilities System	24%	76%	NO
Linguistically	82%	18%	YES

Based on table 4.2, it is known that the overall results of EFL learners' problems when speaking English in online English classroom, which consist of 4 factor domains show that on the "Student's Affective Problems and Linguistically" factor the average answer is "Yes", which means these two factors are the main factors that influence students when speaking English. Meanwhile, for the "Instructor and Students' Social also Educational and Facilities System" factor, the average answer is "No", which means these two factors do not influence students when speaking English.

Furthermore, the findings of the interview are to find out the problems of students when speaking English in English online classroom. The interviews were conducted via Google Meet with representatives of 4 students, where to get interview participants, the researcher sent a signal to each students' WhatsApp for joining the Google Meet. The researcher used the codes to display interview data including Q as interview questions and A as interview answers, as follow:

Q1: *Apakah ada kendala dan kesulitan dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris?*

(Are there any problems and difficulties in the process of speaking English?

A1: *"Ada, pada ejaan kata bahasa Inggris pengucapannya susah dan kendala nya tidak mempunyai teman untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris"*

(Yes, the spelling of English words is difficult to pronounce and the problem is not having friends who speak English)

A2: *"Saya tidak lancar pada pengucapan kata bahasa Inggris"* (I am not fluent in pronunciation of English words)

A3: *"Cara pengucapan dalam bahasa Inggris kurang lancar sehingga takut salah untuk mengucapkannya"* (The pronunciation in English is not fluent so I am afraid of pronouncing it wrong)

A4: *"Saya tidak percaya diri dan sulit untuk mengerti artinya"* (I am not confident and hard to understand what it means)

Based on the answer to the first question in the interview, 3 of 4 students stated that the lack of fluency in English pronunciation was a problem and difficulty in the process of speaking English. However, there was one student who was not confident and had difficulty understanding the meaning which became a problem and difficulty in the process of speaking English. It can be concluded that the lack of fluency in English pronunciation, lack of confidence, and lack of understanding of English words are problems and difficulties in the process of speaking English.

Q2: *Apakah kamu merasa nyaman berbicara bahasa Inggris melalui Google*

Meet? (Do you feel comfortable doing the speaking English process through Google Meet?)

A1: *"Saya kurang nyaman ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris secara online"* (I feel uncomfortable when speaking English online)

A2: *"Saya tidak merasa nyaman dan lebih memilih untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris secara langsung"* (I don't feel comfortable and prefer to speak English directly)

A3: *"Saya lebih memilih ketemu langsung untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris karena lebih nyaman dan jelas"* (I prefer to meet face to face to speak English because it is more comfortable and clear)

A4: *"Saya tidak merasa nyaman karena kurang stabil jaringannya sehingga tidak lancar saat berkomunikasinya"* (I don't feel comfortable because the network is not stable so communication is not smooth)

Based on the answer to the second question in the interview, all students stated that speaking English through Google Meet was uncomfortable. Due to network connection problems, communication was not smooth. Furthermore, students preferred to speak English face to face because it was more comfortable and clear when communicating. It can be concluded that speaking English through Google Meet is not suitable for students.

Q3: *Apa kelebihan berbicara bahasa Inggris melalui Google Meet?* (What are the advantages of the speaking English process through Google Meet?)

A1: *"Menurut saya tidak ada, tapi bisa mempermudah saat komunikasi dengan teman karena tidak perlu ketemu secara langsung"* (In my opinion, there is not, but it can make it easier to communicate with friends because you do not need to meet in person)

A2: *"Tidak membuat saya gugup"* (It makes me less nervous)

A3: *"Saya bisa memakai aplikasi selain Google Meet ketika sedang berbicara bahasa Inggris seperti Google Translate yang mana bisa mengartikan apa yang sedang di bicarakan secara langsung"* (I can use applications other than Google Meet when speaking English, such as Google Translate, which can interpret what is being said directly)

A4: *"Tidak ada"* (There is not)

Based on the answer to the third question in the interview, 2 of 4 students stated that there were no advantages when speaking English through Google Meet, but it could make it simpler for students to communicate with their friends without face to face. On the other hand, 2 other students stated that the advantage of speaking English via Google Meet were that it did not make you nervous and could be multifunctional by using other applications while using Google Meet such as Google Translate to interpret what is being said at that time. It can be concluded that speaking English via Google Meet may or may not be effective for students.

Q4: *Apa kekurangan berbicara bahasa Inggris melalui Google Meet?* (What are the weaknesses of the speaking English process through Google Meet?)

A1: *"Saya harus membutuhkan jaringan bagus agar bicara bahasa Inggris nya lancar"* (I need a good network to speak English fluently)

A2: *"Tidak ada"* (There is not)

A3: *"Membutuhkan jaringan yang bagus agar bicara bahasa Inggris nya lancar"* (It requires a good network to speak English fluently)

A4: *"Tidak nyaman karena belajar nya seperti sendiri"* (It is uncomfortable because studying is like being alone)

Based on the answer to the fourth question in the interview, 1 of 4 students stated that there were no deficiencies when speaking English through Google Meet. On the other hand, 3 students stated that this process required a good network connection in order to speak English fluently. In addition, this made students uncomfortable because they were studying alone and not like they were in face-to-face class. It can be concluded that network problems are the main thing in the process of speaking English through Google Meet.

Q5: *Ketika menggunakan Google Meet untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris, apakah kamu menemukan masalah dan kesulitan?* (While using Google Meet in speaking English, did you face any problems and difficulties?)

A1: *"Hanya di masalah jaringan"* (Just a problem with the network)

A2: *"Jaringannya harus lancar"* (The network must be smooth)

A3: *"Tidak ada masalah untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris nya tapi memang membutuhkan jaringan yang bagus agar jelas menyampaikan apa yang sedang di bicarakan"* (There is no problem for English speaking part but it does require a good network to clearly convey what is being said)

A4: *"Tiba-tiba suaranya hilang saat berbicara bahasa Inggris dan saat buka link Google Meet nya itu lama"* (Suddenly the sound can disappear when speaking English and it takes a long time to open the Google Meet link)

Based on answers from interview, 1 of 4 students stated that the problems and difficulties they faced when speaking English through Google Meet were problems with the sound or microphone and opening the Google Meet link took time. Furthermore, 3 out of 4 students stated that the problems and difficulties they faced in speaking English through Google Meet required a good network. It can be concluded that this process really requires a good network connection.

Lastly, after the students answered the five questions about the problem, the researcher gave the sixth question about the solution as the last question in the interview session. With the same Q and A codes in presenting data, as follows:

Q6: *Apa solusi yang kamu gunakan untuk menghadapi permasalahan berbicara bahasa Inggris melalui Google Meet?* (What solutions do you use to overcome the problems of the speaking English process through Google Meet?)

A1: *"Lebih banyak belajar dan berlatih cara ejaan dan pengucapan kata nya"* (Learn and practice more spelling and pronunciation of words)

A2: *"Membiasakan untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris saat berbicara dirumah dan belajar"* (Get used to using English when talking at home and studying)

A3: *"Menggunakan Google Translate sambil berlatih untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris melalui Google Meet"* (Using the Google Translate while practicing speaking English through Google Meet)

A4: "Belajar lebih giat dan berlatih bicara bahasa Inggris bersama teman teman melalui Google Meet. Untuk masalah jaringan, bisa membeli provider atau jaringan yang sesuai dengan tempat atau daerah yang di tinggali" (Study harder and practice speaking English with friends through Google Meet. For network problems, you can buy a provider or network that suits the place or area you live)

Based on answers from interview, the students stated that the solution to facing problems speaking English through Google Meet required studying harder and practicing spelling and pronunciation. Then, you needed to get used to using English when speaking at home so that you could speak fluently both online and face to face. Furthermore, using Google Translate was a solution for practicing speaking English. In addition, for network problems, you could buy a provider or network that suited the place or area you live in. It can be concluded that by studying and practicing, students will get used to being better at speaking English, and connection problems require a provider that suits the place where they live.

Discussion

Based on the interviews that have been conducted, the problems faced by students of MTs Al Ma'arif Malang while speaking English through Google Meet are:

Lack of linguistic is the first problem. Pratiwi and Nur (2021) and Brown (2003) highlight that linguistic problems, such as lack of vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation, are major contributors to speaking difficulties in EFL students. This is in line with what was found by researchers that students tend to have vocabulary problems that make it difficult for students to understand the meaning, then fluency problems that make students not fluent when speaking so that this also causes students to have problems with pronunciation.

The next problem is lack of internet connection. Internet connection is the most terrible problem faced by EFL students and unsupported devices make students unable to focus on online classes (Annisa, 2022). According to Salamah et al. (2021) stated that "*the smooth online learning process depends on a good network system*". This is in line with the problems that occur with students where if students have an unstable network, then online learning will not be effective, especially using Google Meet. As we know, Google Meet is a medium that requires a network connection according to what was stated by Sawitri (2020) that Google Meet requires a stable internet network.

Furthermore, lack of interaction is the last problem. Syifa' et al. (2020) stated that *“online student learning activities can be said to be no better than direct learning activities”*. This is in line with the interaction problems experienced by students, especially when speaking English. This can be seen by the lack of interaction between fellow students to practice speaking English in online learning. So, students are more comfortable choosing to meet face to face rather than online.

From the problems in the discussion, the researcher presented students' solutions when facing problems in speaking English via Google Meet based on the interviews that have been conducted, as follows:

Studying and practicing harder is the first solution, especially in increasing vocabulary and spelling pronunciation. This is in line with research conducted by Sari and Lestari (2019) which stated that increasing English vocabulary and pronunciation can improve English speaking skills. Meanwhile, students can use Google Translate as a translator if they do not understand the meaning of a word. The above statement is supported by Idham (2014) who stated that learners can continue the language process by using translations in their own words when they are having trouble explaining anything in the language they are studying.

Choosing the right connection is the next solution. Students' families need to choose a provider or connection network that is suitable for a good network in the area where they live, so that it does not hinder or interfere when students carry out online class activities. This will also make students feel more comfortable and can be more focused when participating in online class activities. This is in line with the statement above that internet access can help students to access various information and knowledge and share it between students, especially with those who live far away (Marwah, 2022).

The last solution is making a good interaction. Students can get used to using English when speaking in their residential environment at least through conversations with family or friends. Because, students can activate their speaking skills through dialogue or conversation (Maghfiroh et al., 2023). This is in line with Rofikoh et al. (2020) stated that *“a student's speaking ability will not improve by itself, but requires a proper way for students to be able to interact with their environment so that speaking ability will improve”*. Furthermore, students and their friends can use Google Meet as a medium for discussion and practice when studying online for improving student's speaking ability. This is in accordance with what was explained by Lewandowski (2015) that the use of the Google Meet application can improve language competence and student learning outcomes.

Conlusion and Suggestion

Based on research finding and discussion of research on Exploring Indonesian EFL learners' Problems when Speaking English in Online English Classroom Faced by Students of MTs Al Ma'arif Malang, it can be concluded that the problems faced by students of MTs Al Ma'arif Malang while speaking English through Google Meet are:

EFL learners often face speaking problems, including mainly students' linguistic problems such as lack of vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. Then, students' affective problems that can cause anxiety, shyness, and lack of confidence when speaking English. Students often struggle with vocabulary and pronunciation, making it difficult for them to understand the meaning of their words. In addition, students feel shy and lack motivation, which further worsens their speaking difficulties.

Furthermore, English learners face common problems in online learning due to unstable network connections, hindering the smooth learning process. Google Meet, a medium that requires stable internet connectivity, becomes ineffective due to these issues. The smooth online learning process depends on a good network system, and unstable connections hinder effective English language learning.

Lastly, online learning reduces student activity, especially speaking English, and interaction between students and teachers. This lack of face-to-face interaction hinders the improvement of speaking skills and confidence in English, making it more comfortable for students to meet face-to-face.

To overcome obstacles in speaking English via Google Meet, students should focus on increasing vocabulary and spelling pronunciation. This can be achieved through conversations with family or friends. Google Meet can be used for discussion and practice, while Google Translate can be used for translations if understanding is unclear. Families can also find suitable providers or networks to ensure a comfortable online learning experience. By incorporating these strategies, students can develop their English speaking skills and improve their overall English proficiency.

Concerning the preceding research findings, the researcher provided several suggestions about the study's findings. For teachers must create interesting and enjoyable innovations in online learning activities and teaching systems to help students, especially in overcoming students' affective and linguistic problems. Next, for students must learn more optimally by preparing everything and the knowledge needed for online learning so that students can overcome problems that occur in online learning. Moreover, for future researchers should conduct an in-depth investigation of students' problems when speaking English in

online classroom and their solutions in facing problems that may not be mentioned in this study.

References

- Annisa, R. (2022). *The EFL Students' Challenge and Problem on Speaking Activities During Online Learning*. 2021, 1–16.
- Aziz, A. (2022). *Improving Student's Speaking Skill Through ESA Straight for Word Model at The Year 11th Students of MA Muhammadiyah 1 Malang*. 2022.
- Brown, H. D. (2003). *Language Assessment Principle and Classroom Practice*. Longman.
- Cabanban, C. L. G. (2013). *Development of Mobile Learning Using Android Platform*. 9(December 2011), 98–106.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches Second Edition*. *Research Design*. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501721144-016>
- Idham, S. (2014). Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sebagai Bahasa Asing Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Bberbahasa Siswa. *Kutubkhanah*, 127–145.
- Lewandowski, M. (2015). Creating Virtual Classrooms (Using Google Hangouts) For Improving Language Competency. *Language Issues: The ESOL Journal*, 26(1), 37–42.
- Maghfiroh, Z. F., Hamiddin, & Karimullah, I. W. (2023). *Reasons Behind the Problem in Students' Speaking Skill: A Study from EFL Teachers' and Students' Self Reflection Perspective*.
- Marwah, M. (2022). Analisis Dampak Penggunaan Internet Terhadap Perilaku Peserta Didik Kelas VIII Di MTs Muhammadiyah Wuring. *Holistic Science*, 2(1), 5–8. <https://doi.org/10.56495/hs.v2i1.107>
- Megawati, F. (2016). Kesulitan Mahasiswa dalam Mencapai Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Secara Efektif. *PEDAGOGIA*, 5(2)(9), 147–156. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00381-016-3174-3>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis Second Edition*. In C (Vol. 1304).
- Pratiwi, S., & Nur, H. (2021). *The Students' Speaking Anxiety : Psycho-Social*. 1(1), 16–27.
- Rao, P. S. (2019). *The importance of speaking skills in english classrooms*. March.
- Rofikoh, S., Romdanih, & Dwiprabowo, R. (2020). Peningkatan Keterampilan

Berbicara Bahasa Inggris Materi Percakapan Sederhana melalui Penerapan Model Contextual Teaching and Learning. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan STKIP Kusuma Negara II*, 2(4), 208–214.

Salamah, D., Suryana, Y., & Pranata, O. H. (2021). Analisis Pembelajaran Online Matematika di masa Pandemi Covid-19. *PEDADIDAKTIKA: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, 8(2), 301–311.
<https://doi.org/10.17509/pedadidaktika.v8i2.35336>

223–453. <https://jurnal.univpgri-palembang.ac.id/index.php/Prosidingpps/article/view/2566>

Sawitri, D. (2020). Penggunaan Google Meet Untuk Work From Home Di Era Pandemi Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). *Prioritas: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 2(01), 13–21.
<https://jurnal.harapan.ac.id/index.php/Prioritas/article/view/161>

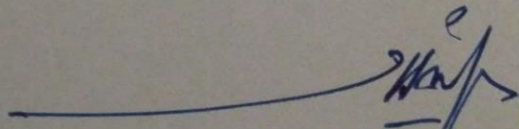
Soodmand Afshar, H., & Asakereh, A. (2016). Speaking Skills Problems Encountered by Iranian EFL Freshmen and Seniors from Their Own and Their English Instructors' Perspectives. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 13(1), 112–130. <http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/>

Sugiyono. (2016). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.

Yuzulia, I. (2020). *EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Strategies in Implementing Learner Autonomy*. 2069(6), 36–54.

Approve by

Advisor I



Drs. H. Ali Ashari, M.Pd.
NPP. 1910200021