English Major Students' Speaking Ability and Areas of Their Weaknesses in Assessment: A Cross-Sectional Study

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The current quantitative research utilized a cross-sectional comparative study to investigate speaking proficiency of different English major students (EMSs) groups throughout the course of the foregoing three years. The study applied a self-assessment of speaking ability to measure both the students' English speaking proficiency and the particular parts of the assessment in which they struggle. The target population were EMSs of three consecutive years, i.e. students of 2022, 2023, and 2024 with 34 students of each. The results of self-assessment of the speaking ability were quantitatively analyzed using SPSS version 24.0 software. One-Way ANOVA was employed to see the differences in the mean scores (M) achieved by each of the three groups of students. The findings showed that all EMSs' English-speaking abilities fall into the 'insufficient' category, indicating that all student groups have subpar English-speaking abilities. There is no significant improvement in EMSs' speaking performance during the last three years. The three groups of EMSs experience the same difficulties in speaking (i.e., pronunciation and fluency). These issues may serve as the basis for further efforts aimed at enhancing EFL students' speaking performance.

Keywords: cross-sectional study, English as a foreign language, English major students, self-assessment, speaking ability

INTRODUCTION

Background

English as a foreign language (EFL) education students are prepared to become proficient language teachers who can encourage and assist EFL learning in a variety of learning environments. Among the many factors influencing the quality of EFL education are the qualifications and proficiency of EFL teachers. English speaking fluently is, therefore, a prerequisite for students of English language education major. Students must achieve academic excellence in English as future EFL teachers in order to navigate the expanding global language education market as certified educators. EFL teachers serve as role model for their own students. Hence, they must be able to articulate concepts, explain grammar rules, and engage students in meaningful conversations to facilitate language learning effectively (Riddell, 2014). In addition, students studying English language education must communicate with peers, supervisors, and other students in English-speaking settings. As a result, being able to speak and understand English fluently helps them collaborate well, take part in professional development activities, and interact with a variety of people (Kien & Nghia, 2024; Faruji e t al. 2024).

Research Gap

Numerous studies have been carried out to reveal speaking performance degree of EFL students in a range of nations and at different educational levels. The results all point to the same conclusion, which is that most of students find it extremely difficult to express themselves in English (Tuan & Mai, 2015; Al-Hasaani & Al-Saalmi, 2022; Tekir, 2021; Amoah & Yeboah, 2021; Tiwari, 2023 etc.). These studies mostly investigated speaking ability of EFL students of any academic discipline that does not focus on English (non-English major students). The goal of teaching English as a general-supporting subject to non-English majors is to get them ready to read and comprehend English-language learning materials that support in the study of other subjects (Harmer, 2008). English speaking ability is, therefore, not an essential priority for non-English major students, in contrast to English major students (EMSs).

Meanwhile, as future English instructors, EMSs concentrated on mastering a number of essential language components that will help them communicate in English, such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, pronunciation, listening, conversational skills, and cultural context. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that EMSs speak English better than those who do not major in the language. It is also assumed that the outcome of teaching English speaking improve significantly year after year as a result of the advancement of language learning technology, as well as the development of other supporting components (such as infrastructure, teaching and learning media, internet, and teacher qualifications). Nevertheless, research on this issue is relatively rare. The studies that have been published in this subject were carried out by Jaya, et al. (2022) in Indonesia and the one carried out by Ramos and Lambenicio (2023) for Philippines context. However several gaps are identified. Both studies employ the same methodology, a survey approach, to gauge the English-speaking ability of English majors. The two studies look only at the level of single group students' English speaking and failing to assess their growth by contrasting them with other groups. In addition, these studies could not identify the evaluation domains in which students perform poorly.

The Objectives and the Significance of the Study

To fill the gap, the current research examines the speaking proficiency of different student groups throughout the course of the foregoing three years applying an alternative assessment i.e. self-assessment of speaking ability to measure students' speaking ability. It looks not only at the level of students' English speaking, but also examines the specific areas of the assessment where the students fall short. By examining some of their speaking problems in English, students' self-awareness, opportunities for growth, and the efficacy of language training techniques can all be learned. In response to results of assessment, it can assist English language instructors in adapting and improving their classroom instruction.

Research Questions

By paying attention to the research gap, research significance, and objectives of the study, this study aims to address the following three research questions.

1. What is the level of speaking proficiency among each group of English major students, and are there statistically significant differences between the groups?

2. Is there any significant development in the outcome of teaching English speaking over the past three years?

3. What are the areas in which the students of each different year-group fall short in self-assessments?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this review is to synthesize current research to identify common themes, conflicting findings, and gaps in the literature regarding the speaking skills of EFL learners and the relationship between language components mastery and speaking performance. This will be followed by a discussion of the methodological approaches used and a concluding section that will highlight the need for further research on the English major students' speaking ability and areas of their weaknesses in assessment.

Speaking Skills of EFL Learners

Since English is used worldwide, being able to speak the language fluently is essential. Speaking is seen as an indicator of linguistic competence (Bailey, 2020; Palmer, 2014). Thus, improving students' communicative competence—which allows them to speak effectively in real life—is the goal of oral English language instruction. Most EFL learners place a high value on speaking proficiency; however, speaking in a target language is a difficult process for many language learners, particularly in EFL contexts as the students are not exposed to the English language outside of the classroom (Bahador & Mofrad, 2020; Namividia, Mobaraki & Malekzadeh, 2019). Since teaching speaking aims to increase students' speech production, language instruction should make the most of language use in classroom. This is achieved by implementing effective teaching techniques that require students to learn and use the English language.

Studies on EFL students' speaking abilities that have been carried out in various nations usually provide results that fall well short of expectations. For instance, studies on Turkish EFL students revealed that they struggle with speaking because of insufficient chances to speak, poor lexical control, and cultural limitations associated with the teaching strategies employed in ELT classes (Tekir, 2021). According to Afshar and Asakereh (2016), Iranian students' inability to speak English is mostly caused by societal and teacher-related problems, a lack of adequate and effective facilities in language labs, and the country's curricula. Amoah and Yeboah (2021) reported that Chinese university students have very poor English skills, especially when it comes to speaking and listening. Psychological concerns such as nervousness, fear of making mistakes, reluctance, and fear of earning a poor mark are intimately linked to the speaking difficulties. Compared to ESL students, EFL students are frequently less motivated to learn how to speak English, and many of them struggle with communication since they do not have many opportunities to practice speaking the language outside of the classroom (Plengkham &Wasanasomsithi, 2023).

A comprehensive analysis to give a critical overview of recent studies and look at the factors influencing EFL learners' poor oral performance was conducted by IbnaSeraj et al. (2021). For this purpose, a thematic analysis was used to examine 51 empirical research carried out in EFL nations, including China, Thailand, Japan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, Yemen, Taiwan, and others. It was discovered that the main causes of students' subpar speaking performance in an EFL context were contextual factors, including a lack of practice, learners' passivity, the size of the class, and mixed ability. Recent study was conducted by Ramos and Lambenicio (2023) evaluated college students' oral discourse proficiency in English, specifically for those majoring in English instruction at Pangasinan State University in the Philippines. They found that most respondents were only mediocre and needed to improve. In Indonesian context, as reported by Jaya et al. (2022) that oral English competence of English major students is insufficient, which means that most of the students have a lot of problems in expressing themselves orally. Even though previous researches have shed some light on speaking ability of English major students, however, the researches solely examined the English speaking proficiency of a single group of students, neglecting to compare them to other groups to gauge their progress. Prior researches were also unable to pinpoint the evaluation areas where students struggled. Therefore, more research is still needed to address the gaps and limitations of previous

researches. By addressing these issues, this study ultimately contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand.

Language Components Mastery and Speaking Performance

Speaking performance, according to Johnson (2010), includes: (1) language and discourse familiarity, which comprises knowledge of the language's sound patterns, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, fundamental speaking abilities, and communication and discourse strategies; (2) fundamental speech skills, such as pausing, speech rate, chunking, formulaic language, and discourse makers, which involve improving the ability to digest speech rapidly in order to improve fluency; and (3) communication methods include developing cognitive skills (e.g., circumlocution, paraphrase, gestures, word coinage, approximation, avoidance) to compensate for limitations in language proficiency; (4) metacognitive techniques (such as consciously choosing how to say something or preparing what to say beforehand); and (5) interaction techniques (such as rephrasing, verifying comprehension, asking for clarification or repetition, and reformulating). In the same vein, Owens (2019) affirmed that oral performance is supported by a number of crucial components; the components include vocabulary (the range of words and phrase), grammar (set of rules that governs sentence structure, including verb tenses, agreement, and the correct use of parts of speech), and pronunciation (the ability to produce sounds correctly and use appropriate intonation and stress). Therefore, to learn to produce spoken language in a second or foreign language, one must acquire the skills necessary to employ these elements within the limitations of a speaker's cognitive processes in a way that is accurate, fluid, and acceptable in social situations. Grammatical understanding, narrative production skills, and vocabulary mastery are indicators of English language proficiency and EFL students find it extremely difficult to communicate effectively and fluently in the language due to a complete deficiencies in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency (Abrar et al., 2018).

Scholars who concentrate on one of linguistic elements share their thoughts on the importance of the each element. In terms of vocabulary, some scholars (for example, Miralpeix and Muñoz, 2018; Bashori, van Hout, Strik, & Cucchiarini, 2021; Razaghi, et al., 2022) believe that "vocabulary is a powerful predictor of the four fundamental language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing". It means that lack of vocabulary, therefore, has a detrimental effect on students' language competency. A strong vocabulary allows us to express our thoughts clearly and understand others effectively. Harmer (2008) metaphorically stated that language structure is considered as "the skeleton of the language," and vocabulary is "the vital organs and flesh". It illustrates how crucial it is to become proficient in these two language elements. On the other hand, linguist David Wilkins stresses the value of learning vocabulary is above grammar; in Thornbury (2002), he claimed that very little could be communicated without grammar and that nothing could be said without vocabulary. This illustrates how crucial it is to have sufficient vocabulary mastery. Nonetheless, Graver et al., (2012) claims that non-native speakers may find it difficult to learn English vocabulary because: (1) English contains a large number of words with many meanings and nuances; (2) English is full of idioms that are difficult to understand and use accurately; (3) English spelling and pronunciation can be inconsistent, meaning that words that are spelled similarly may sound different, and vice versa. These challenges turn into a barrier to EFL learners' ability to speak English fluently.

Moreover, mastering grammar, according to Cook and Sievers (2012) is "one of the essential components of second or foreign language competency, and it is beneficial for developing students English language skills." However, EFL students often find English grammar is difficult, and it is because the English grammar has many rules and a significant number of exceptions. English has a wide range of tenses, each with own rules and uses. The use of definite and indefinite articles (the, a, an), for example, can be particularly tricky, especially for speakers of languages that do not use articles in the same way or at all. In the same case, English prepositions are notoriously difficult

because they often do not translate directly from other languages, and their usage can be idiomatic (Johnson, 2010; Bannò & Matssoni, 2024).

When it concern with spoken language, pronunciation is essential as it is an integral element of oral language. Accurate pronunciation is crucial to reduce misunderstanding and enhance linguistic competency (Alghazo et al., 2023; Metruk, 2025). Consequently, the primary objective of pronunciation instruction should be to assist students in producing intelligible and clear conversation. By adhering to the intelligibility principle, pronunciation instruction aims to promote intelligible pronunciation, which allows students to be understood by their interlocutor regardless of their accent, rather than achieving native-like pronunciation (Bissett & Ma, 2015; Lee et al., 2019; Seidlhofer, 2005). However, English pronunciation can be particularly challenging for learners of EFL because of several reasons. Some scholars (e.g. Alghazo et al., 2023; Bissett & Ma, 2015; Morley, 1991) enumerated several reasons why it is difficult for EFL students to pronounce English words correctly, namely: (1) the inconsistency in spelling and sound, which means that the way words are spelled often does not correspond to how they are pronounced; (2) English is a stressed-timed language (certain syllables are stressed more than others); (3) English has a wide variety of vowel sounds and many of which may not exist in the learners' native languages that can lead to difficulties in distinguishing and producing these sounds, resulting in mispronunciations; (4) English often uses consonant clusters (multiple consonants together) at the beginning or end of words (e.g., "strength," "split") making these clusters difficult for learners to pronounce as many languages have simpler syllable structures; (5) in conversational English, words are often linked together or pronounced more quickly, which can make it hard for learners to recognize individual words. Features such as contractions, reductions, and elision (omitting sounds) add to the challenge; (6) some sounds in English, such as the /θ/ (as in "think") and /ð/ (as in "this"), may not exist in learners' native languages, making it difficult for them to produce and differentiate these sounds. These factors combined can create significant challenges for EFL learners as they work to develop their pronunciation skills in English. Regular practice, exposure to native speakers, and focusing on specific pronunciation challenges can help learners improve over time.

Oral English proficiency, according to Renandya, et al., (2018), is measured by: (1) accuracy, which is proficiency in producing words with appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation; (2) complexity, or the capacity to employ a broad variety of grammar and vocabulary; (3) appropriateness, i.e. the extent to which the language we employ is relevant and appropriate for the circumstance, target audience, and setting; (4) capacity, that is, the degree of sophistication with which we can use our knowledge to write and speak about a range of subjects in formal and casual contexts.

METHOD

This section outlines the methodology used for the research. It describes the research design as a cross-sectional study, demographic data of research respondents, research instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis technique.

Research Design

The current study is quantitative in nature, and it utilizes a cross-sectional comparative study. The objective of a cross-sectional study, as stated by Nichols and Edlund (2023), is to determine and characterize the frequency of specific traits, behaviours, or conditions in the chosen population that is accomplished by gathering information from a wide range of people or subjects who represent various age groups, populations, or other pertinent categories at a specific moment in time. This aligns with the objectives of this study of assessing three distinct groups of English major students' proficiency in speaking, their growth over the previous three years, and the evaluation domains in which they struggle.

Respondents

This research was carried out at Universitas Dayanu Ikhsanuddin, Indonesia, one of the higher education institutions in Indonesia that participates in providing education for prospective English teachers through the English language Education study program which was opened since 1998. The respondents of the research were senior English language education study program students (or fourth-year students), i.e., the 2022, 2023, and 2024 students. The students' demographic data is shown in Table 1. The Table 1 shows that for the class of 2022, each consisting of 12 men and 20 women with an age range of 21-26 14 men and 18 women with an age range of 20-25 for the class of 2023, and 12 men and 20 women with an age range of 21-24 for the class of 2024.

Table 1
The Demographic Information of Participants

	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Male	14	16	15
Female	20	18	19
Age range	21-26	20-25	21-24
Total	34	34	34

Instrument and Data Collection

A self-assessment of speaking ability modified from O'Malley and Pierce (1996) was used to assess the OES progress of the students. Self-assessment of oral skills is an alternative assessment method that is thought to be more useful and efficient in evaluating students' speaking abilities. It involves students in the evaluation process and is a potent tool for enhancing performance because it enables them to analyze their own development, areas for growth, and areas of strength (Babaii, Taghaddomi & Pashmforoosh, 2016; Farooq, Ahmed, & Farooq, 2020; Abu-Gweder, 2024). Self-assessment is one of the greatest forms of evaluation and may even be the most fruitful (Brown, 2018).

Three primary characteristics are covered by the instrument: comprehension, fluency, and accuracy (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary). Using Ari's proficiency classification (2023), students' oral English competency is categorized, where six means 'very good', five means 'good', four means 'sufficient', three means 'insufficient', two means 'weak', and one means 'very poor' or 'no performance'. Poor performance is indicated by grades below 4. A pilot test was carried out to ascertain the validity and reliability of the instrument. According to Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004), the validity and reliability of a measurement tool are determined by how well it measures the variables that it is intended to assess. For this aim, 34 junior English language education students from Universitas Dayanu Ikhsanuddin agreed to participate. The product-moment formula of Pearson was used to assess the validity of this instrument. With 34 respondents (n=34), the r-table value at $\alpha=0.05$ is 0.301. Item validity is tested using the following criteria: (1) item X is valid if its r-count is greater than or equal to r-table; (2) item X is invalid or dropped if its r-count is less than or equal to r-table. The results of computation prove that the r-table coefficient reaches 0.34, while the minimum and maximum r-count values are 0.45 and 0.78, respectively. Based on the results it can be claimed that the instrument is valid and meet the requirements for use. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha method, and according to the results of computation, the reliability coefficient is 0.69, indicating that the instrument is reliable for use in the research field.

The self-assessment of speaking ability is administered following the steps recommended by Brown (2018), which cover the following steps. First, the students were told the purpose of assessment that they can gain deeper understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement in speaking skill. It can also help them set realistic and achievable goals based on their current performance and skills, and allowing them to monitor their growth and development over time. Second, the researcher defines the task clearly, which means that to make sure if the students exactly

know what they are supposed to do with the self-assessment. Third, the students were encourage to do impartial evaluation on their own speaking ability as one of the drawbacks of the self-assessment is the threat of subjectivity. By showing students the advantage of honest and objective opinions, the researcher can maximized the beneficial washback of the self-assessment.

Data Analysis

The results of the self-assessment of students' speaking ability were quantitatively examined using SPSS version 24.0 software (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). One-Way ANOVA was utilized to see differences in the mean scores (M) achieved by the three groups of students. Warne (2021) emphasized that One-Way ANOVA test is used if (1) samples derived from independent groups; (2) factor variables are non-metrical; (3) the data of each group is normally distributed; and (4) the variance between groups must be normal. Therefore, prior to One-Way ANOVA analysis a pre-requirement analysis was conducted in the following steps: (1) assessing the normality of data using the Shapiro-Wilk method. Basics for making decisions: if the Sig value is > 0.05, the data is normally distributed; if the Sig value < 0.05, the data is not normally distributed; (2). assessing the homogeneity of data variance using Levene Statistic method. Basics for making homogeneity test decisions: if the Sig value is > 0.05, the data is homogeny but if the Sig value < 0.05 the data is not homogeny.

Table 3 displays the results of the normality test, which indicate that the Shapiro-Wilk value for each variable are higher than the significance value (0.05). Specifically, the values for the class of 2022 is 0.28, the class of 2023 is 0.13, and the class of 2024 is 0.13. It is therefore possible to conclude that, each variable's data is normally distributed.

Tabel 3
Test of Normality

	Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov [a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Speaking Ability	Class of 2022	.092	34	.200 [*]	.962	34	.282
	Class of 2023	.128	34	.174	.951	34	.133
	Class of 2024	.106	34	.200 [*]	.950	34	.125

*This is a lower bound of the true significant
a. Lilliefors Significant Correction

Furthermore, the results of the variance homogeneity test, as shown in Table 4, the Levene Statistics value of speaking ability based on mean is 0.94. This value is greater than the significance value (0.96 > 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that the group data is homogeneous and it meets the requirements for the mean difference test using the ANOVA technique.

Table 4
Test of Homogeneity of Variance

Speaking Ability		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
	Based on Mean	.066	2	99	.936
	Based on Median	.055	2	99	.947
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.055	2	93.143	.947
	Based on trimmed mean	.083	2	99	.920

FINDINGS

This study aims to measure the level of English speaking ability among English education students from three different year groups and oral English skill development in the last three years. This study also assesses the areas in which students of different-year groups face difficulties related to self-assessments.

Speaking Proficiency Level of English Major Students

Table 5 revealed that the mean score obtained by the class of 2022 was 3.11 with a minimum of 2.40 and a maximum of 4.10, and for the class of 2023, the mean score reached was 3.15 with a minimum of 2.45 and a maximum of 4.22. With a lowest score of 2.58 and a highest score of 4.50, the class of 2024 received an average score of 3.39. According to Ari's proficiency classification (2023), the English speaking skills of these three student groups fall into the insufficient category, which suggests that their English speaking skills are poor.

Development in the outcome of teaching English speaking over the past three years

The results of the mean difference test, which was conducted using the One-Way ANOVA test (Table 6), show how students' performance in oral English skills has improved over the last three years. Basis for making the decisions: (1) then the average is the same, if the significance value (Sig) > 0.05; (2) the averages is different, if the significance value (Sig) < 0.05. As shown in Table 6 that the significance value obtained from the ANOVA test is 0.04. This value is smaller than the significant value of 0.05 (0.04 < 0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that the averages of the three data groups of students' speaking ability are significantly different. Furthermore, the results of the post-hoc multiple comparison test, as presented in Table 7, explain that the post-hoc multiple comparison test results as shown in the output table above can be explained that speaking ability between the Class of 2022 and the Class of 2023 is not significantly different. The mean difference reached -0.04, the lower bound was -0.32, and the upper bound was 0.24 with a significant value of 0.930 which was higher than sig. value 0.05 (0.930 > 0.05). Likewise, speaking ability between the Class of 2023 and Class of 2024 does not show any significant difference (0.111 > 0.05).

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics

	Class		Statistic	Std. Error
Speaking Ability	Class of 2022	Mean	3.1138	.07754
		Median	3.1000	
		Minimum	2.40	
		Maximum	4.10	
	Class of 2023	Mean	3.1562	.08089
		Median	3.2450	
		Minimum	2.45	
		Maximum	4.22	
	Class of 2024	Mean	3.3929	.08876
		Median	3.4250	
		Minimum	2.58	
		Maximum	4.50	

Table 6
The Results One-Way ANOVA Test

Speaking Ability	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	1.539	2	.769	3.322	.040
Within Group	22.926	99	.232		
Total	24.465	101			

Table 7
The Results of Post-Hoc Test (Multiple Comparisons) Dependent Variable: Speaking Ability. Tukey HSD

(I) Class	(J) Class	Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Class of 2022	Class of 2023	-.04235	.11671	.930	-.3201	.2354
	Class of 2024	-.27912*	.11671	.049	-.5568	-.0014
Class of 2023	Class of 2022	.04235	.11671	.930	-.2354	.3201
	Class of 2024	-.23676	.11671	.111	-.5145	.0410
Class of 2024	Class of 2022	.27912*	.11671	.049	.0014	.5568
	Class of 2023	.23676	.11671	.111	-.0014	.5145

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The mean difference obtained from the calculations reached -0.236, the lower bound was -0.514, the upper bound was 0.041, and the significant value was 0. What was significantly different was the speaking ability between the Class of 2022 and the Class of 2024 (0.049 < 0.05). The mean difference (I-J) between these two groups reached -0.279 with a lower bound of -0.556, and an upper bound of -0.0014. It can be explained that the speaking ability of students in 2024 has increased significantly.

The Areas the Students of Different Year-Group Struggle in Assessments

The areas in which the students of each different year group struggle in assessments can be learnt from the results of the self-assessment displayed in Table 8. For the 2022 student group, the fluency component has the lowest mean score (2.76) and is followed by pronunciation (2.79) of all assessment components. For the 2023 student group, the pronunciation and fluency components have the lowest average scores of the other components, namely 2.83 and 2.85. Likewise with the 2024 student group, of all assessment components, pronunciation and fluency also got the lowest mean scores, namely 2.82 and 2.91. All three groups of students experience the same problems in pronunciation. This shows that a small portion of each student from the three groups felt that their accent was really strong and they made a lot of mistakes, which made it hard to comprehend and required explanations, and most of the students of each group admit that their pronunciation causes miscommunication and difficult to comprehend. In terms of fluency, tend to speak awkward, and erratically; sometimes they do not finish sentences.

Table 8
The Results of Self-Assessment of Speaking Ability

Com-po-nent	Score	When I speak in English …	Class of 2022		Class of 2023		Class of 2024	
			f	M	f	M	f	M
Pronunciation	1	I thought my pronunciation was often difficult to understand.	7	0,21	5	0,15	6	0,18
	2	My accent was really strong and I made a lot of mistakes, which made it hard to comprehend and required explanations.	5	0,29	9	0,53	9	0,53
	3	Sometimes my pronunciation causes miscommunication and makes it difficult to comprehend.	12	1,06	10	0,88	8	0,71
	4	Others can understand me even with my sporadic pronunciation faults.	8	0,94	6	0,71	7	0,82
	5	I believed my pronunciation was faultless, but I doubt anyone would mistake me for a native speaker.	2	0,29	4	0,59	4	0,59
	6	I did not think there was any evidence of a foreign accent in my pronunciation.	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00
		Total	34	2,79	34	2,85	34	2,82
Grammar	1	I believed that almost all of my English grammar was wrong.	5	0,15	2	0,06	2	0,06
	2	My habitual English grammar errors usually hindered conversation.	2	0,12	5	0,29	4	0,24
	3	I made many mistakes, exhibiting notable out-of-control verbal patterns that occasionally caused misunderstandings.	9	0,79	7	0,62	5	0,44
	4	My imperfect knowledge of different sentence structures shows in my occasional mistakes, but I do not have any defects that cause fallacies.	13	1,53	13	1,53	12	1,41
	5	I believed that my sentence structure and grammar were both sound.	5	0,74	7	1,03	11	1,62
	6	I do not think I have more than two grammar errors.	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00
		Total	34	3,32	34	3,53	34	3,76
Accuracy / Vocabulary	1	My English vocabulary is inadequate, even for a simple conversation.	4	0,12	4	0,12	2	0,06
	2	My vocabulary is limited to words pertaining to food, family, transportation, time, and other essentials of life.	7	0,41	5	0,29	5	0,29
	3	My limited vocabulary and erroneous word choices make it difficult for me to explain basic social and professional subjects.	9	0,79	9	0,79	9	0,79
	4	I have enough vocabulary to discuss various social contexts and complex problems.	12	1,41	12	1,41	10	1,18
	5	I thought my general vocabulary was adequate to handle challenging situations and a range of social contexts, and I had a large and precise vocabulary.	2	0,29	4	0,59	8	1,18
	6	I possess an extensive and accurate vocabulary.	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00
		Total	34	3,03	34	3,21	34	3,50
Fluency	1	I have very slow, rambling speech, which makes conversation nearly impossible for me.	8	0,24	6	0,18	6	0,18
	2	Aside from short or regular sentences, my speech is very halting and irregular.	7	0,41	8	0,47	7	0,41
	3	I tend to speak erratically; sometimes I do not finish sentences.	8	0,71	9	0,79	9	0,79
	4	Sometimes I talk awkwardly and hesitantly.	7	0,82	7	0,82	8	0,94
	5	My speech is understandable, but it is obviously not native in its speed and evenness.	4	0,59	4	0,59	4	0,59
	6	I speak fluently and easily on all professional and general themes.	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00
		Total	34	2,76	34	2,85	34	2,91
Comprehension	1	I thought my comprehension was too limited for even the most basic of conversations.	4	0,15	4	0,12	1	0,03
	2	I can only grasp slow, extremely simple talks about general societal issues; it necessitates repeating and rephrasing.	5	0,26	6	0,35	3	0,18
	3	I understand somewhat simplified communication in a conversation, but I need a lot of repetition and restating.	8	0,71	7	0,62	5	0,44
	4	I can understand most regular conversations, but occasionally I need to hear things repeated or rephrase.	9	1,06	9	1,06	13	1,53
	5	I comprehend anything stated a casual conversation and rapid speech.	8	1,18	8	1,18	12	1,76
	6	I am conversant in both formal and informal speaking.	0	0,00	0	0,00	0	0,00
		Total	34	3,35	34	3,32	34	3,94
		Total Mean		15,56		15,76		16,94
		Overal Mean		**3,11**		**3,15**		**3,39**

DISCUSSION

The first research question was aimed at examining the speaking proficiency of each of the three distinct year groups of English major students. The findings showed that oral skill performances of each group were at a low level. It means that they still struggle with oral communication. This

clarifies that even though they are majored in English and have learned English speaking (in a particular course named Speaking Subject), which is supported by learning other language skills and language components, making students proficient in oral English communication is still insufficient. This shed light previous researches on speaking ability of English major students (e.g, Jaya, et al, 2022; Ramos & Lambenicio, 2023), who reported that English major students have low English speaking skills. Researchers attribute the cause of EFL students' low ability to speak English to two problems, namely lack of exposure and lack of practice (Ur, 1998; Hoesny et.al, 2024). In this regard, especially in Indonesia context, there is absolutely lack of exposure to English usage for EFL students. Their English teacher, who is only accessible during class, is their only source of exposure. They are surrounded by non-native English speakers. As a result, students do not have enough opportunities to practice speaking English. Stryker and Leaver (1997) assert that learning to speak is similar to learning to ride a bike or play an instrument. Therefore, practicing speaking is the most effective way to improve speaking skill.

The findings of the study also underlie that the English proficiency of the 2024 class differs markedly from that of the two former groups as the former groups received lower average scores. Therefore, it can be explained that the speaking ability of English major students in 2024 has increased significantly. However, between 2022 and 2023, there was no significant development. This implies that it is not possible to ensure that the results of teaching English speaking will consistently show notable improvement.

The findings self-assessment of the speaking ability showed that fluency—which is diminished by poor pronunciation and a lack of command of grammar—is the speaking ability component with which students struggle the most. When it comes to English pronunciation, Indonesian EFL learners must contend with features of the language that differ from those in their mother tongue. Numerous English phonemes, including vowel sounds like /æ/, /ə/, /ʊ/, /ɔɪ/, /aɪə/, and /aʊə/, and consonant sounds like /ð/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /dʒ/, and /tʃ/, are absent from the Indonesian language. As a result, Indonesians find it challenging to pronounce English words that contain these phonemes. Those patterns and components indicate a more sophisticated system and essentially depart from the native language of the EFL learners. Therefore, Murphy (2020) recommended the need to compare the sound systems of English and native language of learners and forecasting the problems and difficulties those learners will encounter.

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to assess the degree of English speaking proficiency among students of English major from three distinct year groups, its development together with areas in which the students struggle in assessment. The findings underlie that the speaking proficiency of the three groups of student is relatively similar, namely at the insufficient level with the following characteristics: (1) in terms of accuracy: their pronunciation causes miscommunication, they made a lot of mistakes in grammar that occasionally cause misunderstanding, and they have limited vocabulary and erroneous diction; (2) in terms of fluency, they tend to speak erratically, and sometimes they do not finish sentences; and in terms of comprehension they need a lot of repetition and restating to understand simple communication. Despite the fact that their speaking abilities are still inadequate, the students of 2024 have better average score as an indication of a significant development in the past three years. In the area of assessment, the students of three year-group struggle in in the same components of assessment, i.e. pronunciation and fluency. Essentially, these shortcomings could be the foundation for future initiatives to enhance the results of oral English instruction.

There was no data triangulation from on-call English instructors; this study only included students. It is possible that the data obtained from self-assessment does not accurately reflect how well the students performed in oral English. It is expected that this study can be expanded upon and duplicated

by include traditional oral English evaluation, the perspectives of English teachers, and/or observations. Notwithstanding the drawbacks, however, the present study can nonetheless advance knowledge of oral English proficiency in the setting of English as a foreign language in a developing country. Through self-assessment of speaking skills, students can analyze their own growth, areas for improvement, and strengths. Furthermore, the self-assessment technique would motivate students to participate more actively in English classes, by encouraging individual learning, setting personal goals, and developing learners' awareness of their own learning.

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