An Analysis of Remote Environment on The Students Speaking Skills: Insight from SMKN Yaqin 2 Darul *Qurán*, Jelok Buso

Oleh:
Bayu Islam Assasaki
Institut Studi Islam Sunan Doe, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia
Email: bayuassasaki@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
This study investigates the impact of a remote educational environment on the English-speaking skills of students at SMKN Yaqin 2 Darul Qur'an, Jelok Buso, Indonesia. Speaking is a core language skill essential for communicative competence, yet students in rural areas often struggle due to a combination of linguistic, psychological, and environmental barriers. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through observations, interviews, and documentation to explore how factors such as limited vocabulary, grammar deficiencies, low motivation, mother tongue interference, and minimal English exposure affect learners' oral proficiency. The findings reveal that students face both knowledge-related and affective challenges, which are further compounded by contextual constraints including inadequate infrastructure, infrequent use of English outside the classroom, and cultural dominance of the local language. Despite these obstacles, the research highlights potential improvements through interactive teaching strategies, structured lesson design, and enhanced access to English media. The study underscores the importance of environment-sensitive pedagogical approaches to support speaking skill development in rural EFL contexts.
Keywords: *Remote environment; speaking skills; EFL; rural education; language learning barriers.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool for human communication. It is a system of sounds produced by the vocal organs to convey ideas, emotions, and information (Brown & Douglas, 2005). As a universal medium of communication, language plays a critical role in social interaction, cultural expression, and knowledge exchange across nations (Juhari, 2016; Tseng, 2018; Gomez, 2009). Beyond its communicative function, language fosters intellectual, emotional, and social development, serving as the foundation for effective learning and participation in society.

In today's globalized world, English has emerged as an international language and is a vital means of communication across cultures. Recognizing its importance, English is now a compulsory subject at both junior and senior high school levels in Indonesia (Mitchell, as cited in Zamroni, 2007). The primary goal of English instruction is to help students achieve communicative

competence, particularly in speaking, which is often considered the most challenging yet essential language skill (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Richards, 2008).

Speaking, as a productive skill, involves the active construction of meaning through verbal and non-verbal communication in various contexts (Bailey, 2003; Brown, 2010). It requires not only the ability to articulate words but also the capacity to express ideas, negotiate meaning, and interact effectively with others. Hence, speaking is more than simply producing sounds—it reflects a learner's overall language proficiency and communicative confidence.

Effective speaking instruction in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context demands explicit and consistent practice. Classroom activities such as role plays, storytelling, problem-solving, and group discussions have been shown to significantly enhance students' speaking abilities (Fauziati, 2002; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2003; Kayi, 2006). However, speaking remains difficult for many students due to factors such as limited exposure, lack of confidence, and environmental influences.

One significant challenge faced by EFL learners in rural areas is the lack of a supportive environment. The school and family contexts, particularly in rural regions, often lack the motivation and resources necessary to promote English learning (Uno & Lamatenggo, 2010; Holguin & Morales, 2016). In such areas, students may have limited access to English-speaking environments and role models, which can hinder the development of their speaking skills.

This issue becomes more critical in the context of tourism development. In Indonesia, particularly in East Lombok, tourism is a growing sector that demands strong communication skills, especially in English. The Jerowaru District, known for its natural beauty, attracts many tourists, but the lack of English proficiency among local residents limits the region's tourism potential and economic growth (Erazo et al., 2019). Despite this demand, Indonesia continues to rank among the lowest in English proficiency among ASEAN Economic Community (MEA) member countries, with an English proficiency score ranging between 38.45 and 54.06 (Iriance, 2018).

Given these circumstances, improving English speaking skills among students, especially those in rural and tourism-related areas, is imperative. Educational strategies should focus on creating engaging learning environments that motivate students and foster speaking development. One such technique is story completion, a whole-class, interactive activity that encourages free speaking in a fun and supportive setting (Kayi, 2006).

This research aims to analyze the influence of the remote environment on students' speaking skills at SMKN Yaqin 2 Darul Qur'an Jelok Buso. The findings are expected to contribute to a

deeper understanding of the role of environmental factors in EFL learning and to provide practical recommendations for teachers to implement effective and engaging speaking instruction methods, especially in rural educational settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Skill

Speaking is one of the four foundational language skills—alongside listening, reading, and writing—and holds a central role in oral communication. It involves the articulation of thoughts, emotions, and ideas through spoken language, thereby facilitating interaction and comprehension among individuals. According to Boyd (2004), speaking serves as a medium for conveying information from the speaker to the listener. Brown (2018) further defines speaking as the process of gathering, producing, and delivering validated information through verbal expression. Thornbury (2005) emphasizes its paramount importance by positioning speaking at the forefront of educational priorities. Chivers and Shoolbred (2007) assert that effective communication requires clarity, meaningful content, and audience engagement.

Speaking also plays a pivotal role in personal and professional interactions, often forming the basis of initial impressions. Bygate (2017) identifies two integral components of speaking: production skills, which involve speech without real-time constraints, and interaction skills, which involve negotiation and collaborative communication. Both elements are essential for language learners to achieve fluency and effective verbal communication. Within the scope of this research, speaking skill refers to learners' capacity to initiate and sustain dialogue using grammatically accurate and contextually appropriate language.

Components of Speaking Skill

Speaking involves both accuracy and fluency, which are essential for effective verbal communication. Gower et al. (2020) suggest that accuracy includes proper use of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Syakur (2016) further delineates five core components of speaking: comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

1. Comprehension: Understanding the meaning and intent of spoken language is fundamental to effective conversation. Comprehension ensures that listeners can process and respond meaningfully, even in complex or risk-laden communicative contexts (Cohen, 2015).

2. Grammar: Grammar underpins the structural correctness of speech. Purpura (2014) defines grammar as a set of principles governing the formation of syntactically accurate utterances.

Greenbaum and Nelson (2018) emphasize grammar's role in organizing smaller linguistic units into cohesive expressions.

3. Vocabulary: Vocabulary forms the core of language expression. Turk (2013) argues that a robust vocabulary enhances the speaker's ability to convey ideas effectively, both in written and spoken forms.

4. Pronunciation: Fraser (2019) expands the definition of pronunciation to include segmental features (e.g., vowels, consonants), prosody (intonation, rhythm), and paralinguistic features such as gesture and eye contact, all of which are vital for intelligibility and clarity.

5. Fluency: Fluency is marked by the ability to speak smoothly, with minimal hesitation. Harris and Hodges (2018) define fluency as the speaker's ability to articulate speech spontaneously and efficiently.

Teaching Speaking in Senior High School

Teaching speaking is essential in the English language learning process. Brown (2017) outlines several principles for effective speaking instruction: aligning objectives, balancing fluency and accuracy, utilizing authentic communication, providing meaningful feedback, integrating speaking with listening, and encouraging student-led interactions. Despite its importance, speaking is often the most neglected skill in the language classroom (Brown, 2020; Köroğlu, 2017).

Teachers must employ motivating and engaging strategies to foster active participation. Alhabbash (2014) notes that introducing interesting and relatable topics can stimulate students' enthusiasm and willingness to communicate. Since English is a mandatory subject in Indonesia, speaking instruction must be tailored to align with the national curriculum, which emphasizes integration across all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Assessing Speaking

Assessment is a critical aspect of teaching, providing both teachers and students with feedback on learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness. Fulcher and Davidson (2017) define assessment as the collection of evidence to evaluate students' performance in real communicative tasks. McNamara (2020) notes that assessment design and rubric selection can significantly influence scoring outcomes.

Speaking assessments commonly use holistic and analytic scoring methods (Bachman, 2019). Analytic rubrics, as recommended by the Center for Teaching and Learning Assessment (2014), allow for the separate evaluation of specific speaking components such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Nunan (1999) emphasizes that speaking tests should evaluate learners'

ability to apply linguistic features in real-time, communicative contexts.

Rubrics should be clear and transparent, enabling students to understand performance expectations. Brown (2004) advocates for multi-criteria scoring that encompasses various aspects of oral proficiency. Khan (2010) asserts that continuous assessment fosters the enhancement of teaching, learning, and curriculum design. Ultimately, effective assessment serves as a formative tool, guiding both learners and instructors toward improved educational outcomes.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to examine how remote environments affect students' speaking skills at SMKN YAQIN 2 Darul Qur'an. Descriptive qualitative research is suitable for capturing natural settings and understanding social phenomena through the participants' perspectives. It focuses on describing existing conditions in detail, emphasizing meaning, behavior, and process rather than numeric outcomes or hypothesis testing (Joubish et al., 2011; Creswell, 2009).

The research involved two main variables: the independent variable, which is the influence of the remote environment, and the dependent variable, which is students' speaking ability. The population consisted of 50 tenth-grade students, with a purposive sampling method used to select participants based on observed learning challenges, particularly inadequate facilities for English learning.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation, allowing the researcher to gather in-depth, contextual data. Observations were openly conducted, while interviews varied between structured and unstructured formats to explore relevant issues. Documentation supported the validation of findings.

As is standard in qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary instrument, directly involved in planning, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Sugiyono, 2012). Data were analyzed through narrative and thematic approaches, focusing on identifying patterns related to how remote settings impact students' speaking development, using inductive reasoning to draw meaningful conclusions. The following is the entire process of the research (see figure 1).
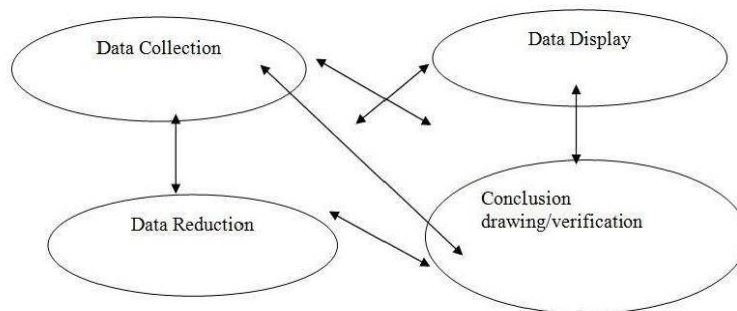
Figure 1. Research Process

RESULTS

Factors in the Remote Environment Affecting Students' Speaking Skills

The research conducted at SMKN Yaqin 2 Darul Qur'an, Jelok Buso, revealed a range of interrelated factors within the remote environment that significantly influenced students' ability to develop English speaking skills. Through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews, it became evident that these challenges fell into two broad categories as described by Thornbury (2005): knowledge-related and skill-related.

Students displayed a notable lack of foundational knowledge in essential language components such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (see figure 2). This deficiency often led to difficulties in constructing coherent sentences and expressing ideas fluently in English. Many students struggled to recall or apply appropriate vocabulary, and their limited pronunciation skills resulted in hesitancy and uncertainty when attempting to speak. This gap in knowledge hindered their ability to participate actively in classroom speaking activities.
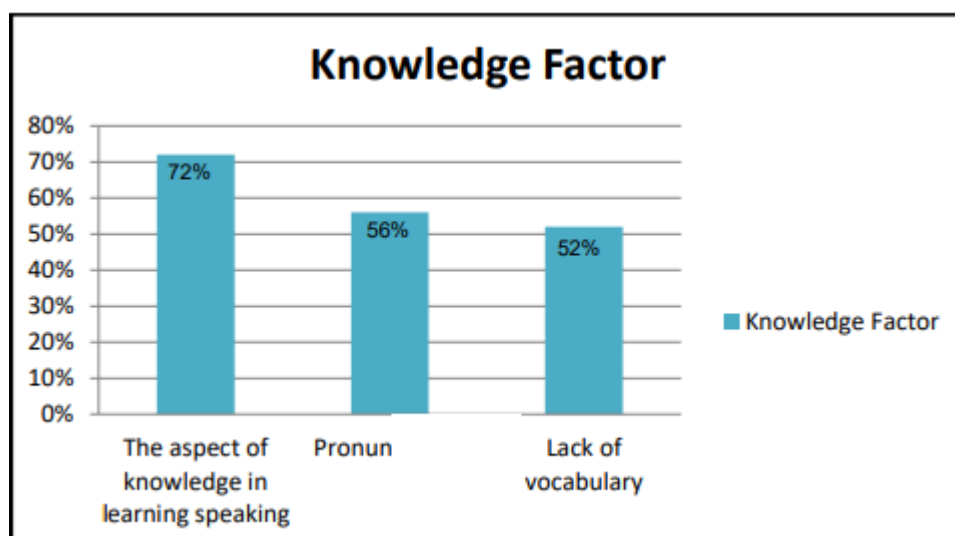
Knowledge Factor

Figure 2. Percentage of knowledge factor

In addition to cognitive limitations, students also faced various psychological and motivational barriers (see figure 3). A significant number exhibited low self-confidence and a tendency toward shyness when speaking English. This was often accompanied by anxiety and fear of making mistakes in front of peers, further reducing their willingness to engage. Motivation to participate in speaking tasks was also low, suggesting a disconnect between the students' perceived relevance of English and their learning experiences.
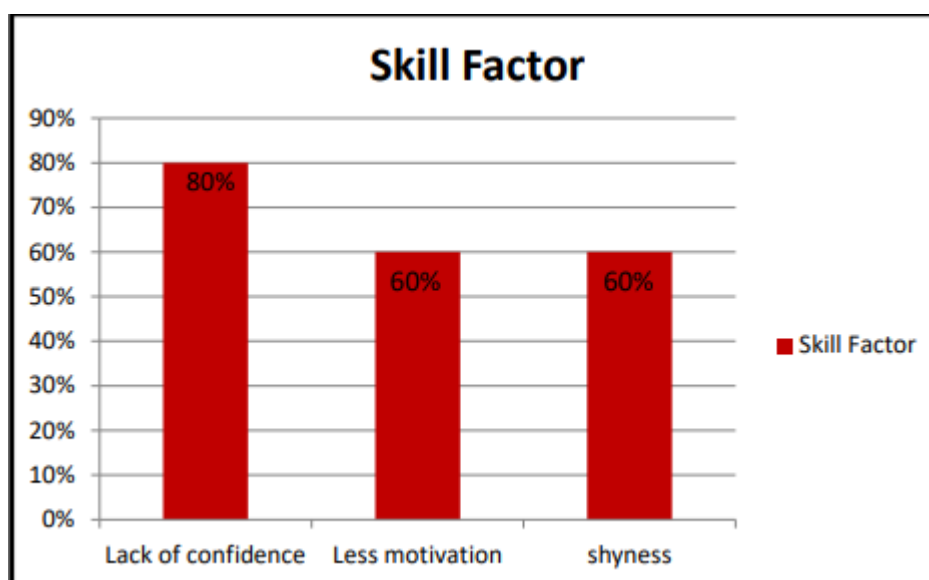
Skill Factor

Figure 3. Percentage of skill factor

These individual challenges were further compounded by environmental factors associated with

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the remote setting. English was seldom used outside the classroom, limiting students' exposure to authentic language use. Moreover, classroom conditions were often not conducive to focused learning; external disturbances, such as noise from nearby sports activities, disrupted lessons and made it difficult for students to hear or concentrate. The limited classroom time also restricted opportunities for all students to practice speaking equally, and English was typically spoken only when prompted by the teacher.

Although the teacher adhered generally to Brown's (2007) framework for teaching speaking, several important instructional elements were consistently overlooked. These included the clear communication of learning objectives at the beginning of lessons and the implementation of post-activity evaluations. The absence of these components left students uncertain about the purpose of the lesson and unaware of whether they had made progress or committed errors.

Overall, the findings indicate that the development of speaking skills among students in this remote setting was hindered by a combination of knowledge gaps, affective barriers, and environmental limitations. The challenges identified are consistent with established theories on language acquisition and are further intensified by the geographical and institutional constraints of a rural educational context.

Influence of the Remote Area on Students' Speaking Skills

The findings of this study also underscored the significant influence of the school's remote setting on students' English speaking skills. Drawing on Ur's (2014) framework, the research revealed that several interconnected factors shaped students' ability and willingness to speak English. A prevailing sense of inhibition was evident among many students, who frequently hesitated to participate in speaking activities due to fear of making mistakes, particularly in pronunciation. This anxiety was often rooted in low self-confidence and concern about being ridiculed by peers, making them reluctant to express themselves in a foreign language.

The environment itself posed additional barriers. As a rural community with limited exposure to English, both culturally and practically, students lacked opportunities to hear and use the language outside the classroom (see figure 4). English was rarely spoken unless explicitly required by the teacher, and students did not experience a supportive linguistic atmosphere that would encourage practice or spontaneous communication. Infrastructure constraints such as poor internet access and limited access to English-language media further contributed to the problem, reducing opportunities for immersive learning and interaction with authentic language use.
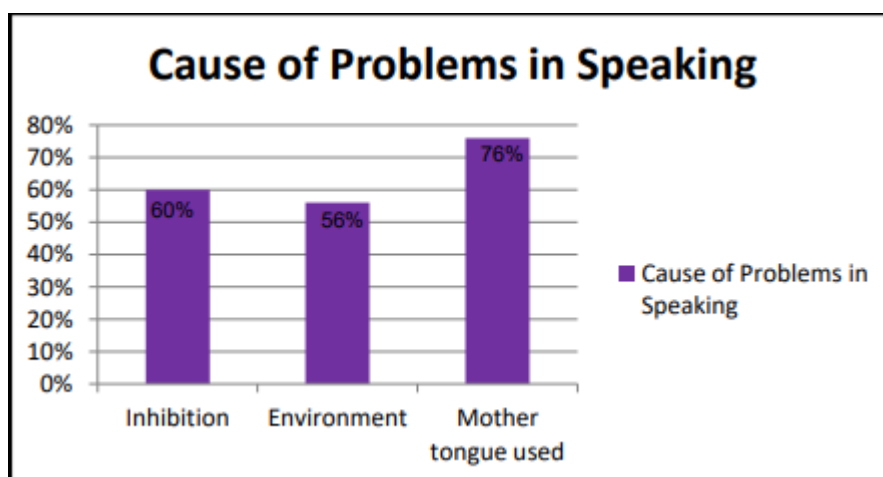
Figure 4. Percentage of cause of problems in speaking

Mother tongue interference emerged as another key factor. Students' speech patterns were heavily shaped by their native language, affecting not only pronunciation but also sentence structure and vocabulary usage. This interference made it difficult for them to internalize English language norms, often resulting in unnatural phrasing and grammatical errors that hindered fluency.

Moreover, physical conditions within the school environment compounded these challenges. Noise from nearby areas, such as the sports field, frequently disrupted classroom activities, making it harder for students to focus and engage in speaking exercises. The absence of a consistent English-speaking culture among peers meant that there was little reinforcement of language use beyond teacher-led instruction.

These observations align with findings from previous research, including studies by Amelia (2022), Juhary (2016), and Gomez (2014), which emphasized that students in remote areas often face disadvantages related to teacher quality, technological access, and educational resources. The broader cultural and social context—often more oriented toward the local language and traditions—also limited students' exposure and motivation to speak English regularly.

Despite these limitations, the study suggests that improvements are possible with targeted interventions. Encouraging more dynamic teaching methods, improving lesson structure, and ensuring consistent feedback can gradually build students' confidence and competence. Additionally, increasing exposure to English through multimedia resources and fostering a classroom culture that supports risk-taking and peer collaboration may help overcome environmental constraints and enhance students' speaking proficiency over time.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the remote environment plays a significant role in shaping students' English speaking skills at SMKN Yaqin 2 Darul Qur'an. The challenges encountered by students were not only related to linguistic competence but also to external and psychological factors influenced by their surroundings. The observations, questionnaires, and teacher interviews revealed that many students lacked a fundamental understanding of the components necessary for effective spoken English, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. These limitations hindered their ability to construct coherent sentences and express themselves confidently.

In addition to these knowledge gaps, students also experienced several psychological barriers, such as low self-confidence, limited motivation, and a strong sense of shyness. These issues contributed to their reluctance to participate actively in speaking activities, which was further intensified by minimal opportunities to practice the language in or outside the classroom. The remote and rural setting of the school amplified these difficulties. The surrounding environment, which is deeply rooted in Indonesian language and culture, did not foster the regular use or practice of English. This lack of exposure created a fear of making mistakes, especially in pronunciation, as students worried about being judged or ridiculed by their peers.

Another critical factor was the strong influence of the students' mother tongue, which significantly affected their ability to speak English fluently and with correct pronunciation. The interference from their native language was evident in their speech patterns and sentence construction, making it difficult for them to adopt the norms of English communication. These challenges align with the theoretical framework of inhibition, environmental limitations, and mother tongue interference as outlined in prior literature.

Overall, the research highlights that while students in remote areas face unique obstacles in developing speaking skills, understanding these challenges offers valuable insight for designing more supportive and responsive teaching strategies. Addressing both linguistic deficiencies and environmental constraints is essential for fostering an effective and confidence-building speaking environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it is evident that the remote environment significantly affects students' ability to develop English speaking skills. The study revealed a combination of linguistic, psychological, and environmental challenges that hinder students at SMKN Yaqin 2 Darul Qur'an

from communicating effectively in English. Limited knowledge of essential language elements—such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation—was compounded by low self-confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes. These internal barriers were intensified by external conditions such as the absence of English use outside the classroom, minimal exposure to authentic language input, and frequent disruptions in the learning environment.

The influence of the rural setting further complicated students' progress. Cultural norms that prioritize the local language, insufficient access to English-language media, and interference from the students' mother tongue all contributed to reduced fluency and accuracy. Despite these limitations, the study also suggests that improvements are possible through well-planned interventions. By adopting more engaging teaching methods, reinforcing lesson objectives, providing regular feedback, and increasing exposure to English through accessible media, educators can create a more supportive and effective learning atmosphere. This conclusion underscores the need for context-sensitive strategies that address both the cognitive and environmental aspects of language learning in remote educational settings.

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