Speaking Proficiency Among English Specific Purpose Students: A Literature Review On Assessment And Pedagogical Approaches

Shella Gherina Saptiany
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata Indonesia
Email: shellagherina@gmail.com

Bayu Ade Prabowo
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pariwisata Indonesia
Email: bayuadeprabowo@gmail.com

Corresponding author: shellagherina@gmail.com

Abstract. *Developing speaking proficiency is a critical goal for students in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs, as effective oral communication skills are essential for their future professional success. This literature review aims to synthesize existing research on assessing and enhancing speaking proficiency among ESP students through various pedagogical approaches. The review explores three main themes: 1) the multifaceted nature of speaking proficiency for ESP students, encompassing linguistic competencies, pragmatic awareness, and intercultural communicative competence; 2) assessment methods for evaluating ESP students' speaking abilities, including standardized tests, performance-based assessments, and contextualized rubrics; and 3) pedagogical approaches for improving speaking skills, such as task-based language teaching, project-based learning, technology integration, and explicit instruction on pragmatics and discourse strategies. The literature review highlights the importance of aligning assessment practices and instructional methods with the specific communicative needs and target language use situations of ESP learners in their respective professional domains. By critically analyzing and synthesizing the findings from relevant studies, this review contributes to a deeper understanding of best practices for assessing and developing speaking proficiency in ESP contexts. Implications for curriculum design, teacher training, and future research directions are discussed, with the ultimate goal of better preparing ESP students to become effective and confident communicators in their chosen fields.*

Keywords:Assessment, English Specific Purpose, Literature Review, Speaking Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Speaking proficiency, the ability to communicate effectively through spoken language (Sihotang, Sitanggang, Hasugian, & Saragih, 2021). It is a critical skill for students pursuing careers in the tourism industry and other specific professional domains. As part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education, the students must develop a strong command of speaking skills to excel in various professional scenarios (Hartina & Syahrir, 2021), such as delivering presentations, conducting guided tours, interacting with clients and colleagues, and representing their organizations. Speaking skills in ESP contexts encompass several components, including pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic competence (Murcia, 2001; Goh & Burns, 2012). These skills enable individuals to express themselves clearly, engage in meaningful conversations, and convey information accurately within their specific professional domains. Assessing speaking proficiency is crucial for identifying areas of strength and weakness, monitoring progress, and tailoring instructional approaches to meet the specific needs of ESP learners (Ardiyansah, 2019).

Various assessment methods have been employed to evaluate speaking skills in ESP contexts, such as standardized tests, rubrics, and performance-based assessments. Standardized tests provide a structured and consistent measure of language proficiency, while rubrics offer a more detailed and context-specific evaluation of speaking abilities (Ebert & Pham, 2017). Performance-based assessments, such as oral presentations or simulated scenarios, allow for the assessment of speaking skills in authentic, real-world contexts relevant to the ESP domain Pedagogical approaches in ESP contexts refer to the instructional strategies and techniques used to facilitate the development of speaking proficiency specific to the target professional field (Sufiyandi, Muhammad Fadhli, 2020). These approaches may include task-based learning, project-based learning, and other interactive methods that promote active language use and authentic communication situations. Effective pedagogical approaches not only enhance speaking skills but also foster confidence, motivation, and a deeper understanding of the cultural nuances and professional conventions inherent in spoken communication within the ESP domain (Goh & Burns, 2019; Sert, 2019).

In the context of ESP education, developing speaking proficiency is particularly crucial as the students will frequently interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and navigate various professional situations. They must be able to communicate effectively, navigate intercultural exchanges, and adapt their language to suit various contexts and situations specific to the tourism industry. Enhancing speaking proficiency among ESP students in ESP programs is essential for ensuring their preparedness and competitiveness in the global industry. This literature review aims to synthesize the existing research on assessing and enhancing speaking proficiency among ESP students, with a specific focus on tourism education. By examining the assessment methods and pedagogical approaches employed, the review seeks to identify best practices, effective strategies, and potential gaps in addressing the development of speaking skills for ESP learners in tourism programs. The findings of this review can inform curriculum design, instructional practices, and future research in the field of ESP and tourism education, ultimately contributing to the preparation of highly skilled and effective communicators in the tourism industry.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method of this study is used literature review. It has become a recognized form of research based on reviews in various fields (Callahan, 2014; Kraus & Dasí-rodríguez, 2020). To conduct this literature review, a systematic and comprehensive search will be carried out to identify relevant studies, journal articles, and other scholarly publications related to assessing

and enhancing speaking proficiency among ESP students through various pedagogical approaches. Databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and subject-specific databases in the fields of tourism, hospitality, and language education will be utilized to locate pertinent literature. The researcher investigated 25 journals that published articles in both national and global publications. The search will be guided by keywords and phrases such as "speaking proficiency," "oral communication skills," "tourism students," "assessment methods," "pedagogical approaches," "English for Specific Purposes (ESP)," and combinations thereof. After an initial screening of titles and abstracts, the full texts of relevant publications will be critically analyzed and synthesized. The literature review will aim to provide an in-depth understanding of the current state of knowledge, synthesize findings from various studies, and identify gaps, challenges, and effective practices in assessing and developing speaking proficiency among tourism students through diverse pedagogical interventions.

FINDINGS AND DUSCUSSION

The findings reveal three salient themes that warrant further exploration in this section. First, an evaluation of the current speaking proficiency levels among ESP (English for Specific Purposes) students is critical to establish a baseline understanding. Secondly, effective assessment methods to accurately gauge ESP students' oral communication abilities need to be examined, as this will inform pedagogical decisions. Finally, investigating innovative pedagogical approaches specifically tailored to enhancing speaking skills for ESP learners is paramount. Delving into these three interrelated themes of proficiency levels, assessment strategies, and instructional techniques will shed light on the challenges faced and potential solutions to bolster the speaking competencies of ESP students.

Speaking Proficiency of ESP Students

Speaking proficiency is a crucial component of language competence for ESP students, who need to develop specialized communication skills to function effectively in their respective professional domains. In the context of ESP, speaking proficiency goes beyond general conversational ability and encompasses the ability to use language accurately, fluently, and appropriately within specific occupational or academic settings. ESP students must acquire the relevant vocabulary, discourse patterns, pragmatic competence, and cultural awareness to engage in spoken interactions that are tailored to their fields of study or future careers. Achieving a high level of speaking proficiency enables ESP students to communicate their ideas clearly, participate in discussions and meetings, deliver presentations, negotiate with

clients or stakeholders, and represent their organizations or disciplines confidently in both local and international contexts.

A study conducted by Abdullah Al-Malki, (2023) and Arifuddin, Arafiq, Sujana, & Apgriyanto, (2020) inform that ESP students in Saudi Tourism and Hospitality are weak in the speaking skill and have a low mastery of idiomatic expressions. Their English grammar skills, vocabulary related to tourism, and other language sub-skills are also lacking. The current teaching materials used in Saudi Arabian tourism and hospitality colleges are not tailored to meet their specific tourism requirements. Additionally, a study by (Venkateswara & John, 2021) also said that ESP students lack in speaking skill. The students faced several typical challenges in language learning, including limited language proficiency, insufficient subject knowledge, frequent grammatical errors, anxiety about social acceptance, fear of being perceived as poor communicators by peers, and reluctance to step out of their comfort zones. Additionally, weaker students are dissuaded from speaking by friends who are not confident in the language themselves. Moreover, proficient English speakers tend to avoid speaking English with those who struggle to communicate in the language. Further research conducted by Hashmi, Rajab, & Sindi, (2019) explained that the learners of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the dentistry department display a notably favorable disposition towards acquiring the English language, particularly ESP. Their recognition of their linguistic requirements underscores the importance of this study within the ESP domain in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the outcomes indicate that the content and materials of the coursebooks are outdated and unsuitable for ESP learners in the Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. These findings emphasize the necessity for ESP teachers to employ English in class and implement learner-centered interactive approaches to stimulate student engagement in classroom interactions.

Assessment of ESP Student' Speaking Proficiency

Assessing the speaking proficiency of ESP students requires a combination of various assessment methods that can effectively evaluate their ability to communicate in relevant professional or academic contexts. Standardized language proficiency tests, while providing a general measure of speaking skills, may not fully capture the specific linguistic demands and communicative tasks faced by ESP learners. Performance-based assessments, such as oral presentations, role-plays, or simulated job interviews, can offer more authentic and contextualized evaluations of ESP students' speaking abilities. Additionally, the use of rubrics or rating scales tailored to the target language use situations can provide detailed feedback on various aspects of speaking proficiency, including vocabulary usage, fluency, pronunciation,

pragmatic awareness, and task fulfillment. Effective assessment of ESP students' speaking proficiency should align with the learning objectives and real-world communicative needs of their respective fields, enabling educators to identify areas for improvement and design targeted pedagogical interventions.

A research by Dunifa, (2023) assessed with Oral English skills (OES). The study seeks to evaluate how much the OES program influences the enhancement of students' speaking abilities and to uncover the learning needs of students in regard to the OES. The findings indicated that the OES program for NEMS has not produced desirable outcomes. In general, students' proficiency in OES is poor and inadequate. Fluency emerges as the category in speaking assessment where learners encounter the most significant challenges. There are six primary prominent requirements of students in learning OES: the chance to converse in English within the classroom, the option to study OES in a smaller class setting, uninterrupted continuity in OES learning without interference from other classes, and studying OES alongside classmates from the same academic major. Further research examined Dialogic Interactive skills assessment by Liubashenko & Kornieva, (2019). The authors suggest employing dialogic collaborative interaction not only as a teaching method but also as an alternative assessment tool. Assessment criteria include adherence of utterances to the topic, speaking pace, relative accuracy in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, coherence and cohesion, adherence to English stylistic and etiquette conventions, variety of linguistic tools for mutual understanding, initiation of dialogue by the interlocutor, reaching agreement, and deduction of background knowledge. The research findings affirm that implementing this assessment procedure contributes to enhancing oral production, provided that techniques for supporting collaborative dialogic interaction are utilized by participants. Collaborative dialogue positively influences students' development of communicative competence and acquisition of skills such as comprehending, interpreting, and analyzing oral content, identifying the communicative intent behind interlocutors' statements by evaluating verbal and non-verbal cues, determining the style and genre of utterances, and aligning them with appropriate stylistic registers in English.

A Language Portfolio used by Kotlovskiy, Mykytenko, Onufriv, & Salamakha, (2020) to assessed the ESP language speaking skill. The aim of this study is to explore students' perspectives on the use of language portfolios, identify the types of student autonomy, with guidance from teachers, that contribute to the successful development of lexical and grammatical skills through independent work, and provide recommendations to educators regarding the use of language portfolios to enhance lexical and grammatical proficiency in ESP

speaking. The results indicate that students prefer a level of autonomy, either relative or partial, along with clear guidance from their teachers, to effectively develop lexical and grammatical skills in ESP speaking. Additionally, most students acknowledge that language portfolios serve as effective tools for promoting significant improvement in their lexical and grammatical abilities in ESP speaking. An investigation by Kotlovskiy et al., (2020) described the Formative Assessment involves an ongoing collaboration between teachers and students, centered around learning objectives and strategies to achieve them. It entails continuous monitoring of students' progress and ongoing evaluation of their performance by both teachers and peers, with feedback provided to both parties. This research concentrates on enhancing presentation skills, where presentations are followed by interrogations and group dialogues on the presented subjects, and subsequently evaluated by peers, presenters, and instructors. The outcomes of the student questionnaire at the course's conclusion reveal that such formative practices and assessments heightened student motivation and class participation. Agustina, Setiawan, Laaribi, & Hong, (2024) used Informal Assessments in Project-Based Learning to assess the ESP students' speaking skill. The utilization of informal assessment techniques, particularly within the framework of project-based learning, has emerged as an exceptionally effective method for fostering and refining students' speaking abilities, focusing specifically on aspects such as pronunciation and grammatical precision. In the dynamic environment of project-based learning, instructors play an active role in overseeing and directing students' pronunciation during discussion sessions. Through this interactive approach, students are encouraged to actively engage in their language development journey, leading to improved speaking proficiency and increased confidence in communication. Consequently, the integration of informal assessment methods within project-based learning acts as a catalyst for managing and enhancing students' speaking skills, contributing significantly to their overall language acquisition and fluency.

The next studies are evaluating speaking skill with the technology terms. A research by Suprayogi & Pranoto, (2020) implemented the Virtual Exhibition to improve student' speaking skill. They said that contextual simulation is rarely used and addressed to the students. A questionnaire concentrating on learning objectives, technological proficiency, and interaction was utilized to gather the requisite data. The findings reveal that the virtual tourism exhibition offered a learning alternative during the COVID-19 quarantine, resulting in some enhancement in speaking skills and a satisfactory level of technological literacy for virtual learning. Nonetheless, students still express a preference for face-to-face activities over virtual meetings. Additionally, despite time constraints and unstable internet connections, interaction between

students and instructors persists. A study by Dizon, (2020) use of intelligent personal assistants (IPAs). This study fills a void in existing literature by investigating the utilization of the IPA, Alexa, within the classroom setting among second language (L2) English learners, with the aim of enhancing both listening comprehension and speaking proficiency. Findings from the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the experimental group demonstrated notably greater advancements in L2 speaking proficiency.

Pedagogical Approaches for Improving Speaking Skills

Effective pedagogical approaches to enhance ESP students' speaking proficiency include task-based language teaching through authentic communicative tasks, project-based learning with simulated professional scenarios, and leveraging technology for interactive practice. Explicit instruction on pragmatics, discourse strategies, and intercultural communication is also beneficial. Ultimately, a learner-centered, communicative approach exposing students to real-world language use situations and ample opportunities for practice and feedback is crucial.

A research examined by Cloudia Ho, (2020) that the aim of her research was to examine the impact of implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on developing undergraduates' communicative abilities in Tourism English within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Results revealed significant advancements in students' communicative competence, as evidenced by improvements in both written and oral assessments. Students' perceptions of their communicative abilities were consistent with these findings. The study suggests that CLT fosters English language learning among students, boosts their confidence, and improves their communicative skills in Tourism English. The next pedagogical approaches that used by previous studies are from Abu Bakar, Noordin, & Razali, (2019). The researchers used Project-Based Learning teaching strategy. Information was gathered through both a speaking test and a listening test, conducted as pre-tests and post-tests, as well as a student questionnaire administered upon completion of the study. The results indicated a notable enhancement in the overall oral communicative skills of the learners and a positive perception of Project-based Learning (PjBL) among them. The study concludes that the PjBL teaching approach effectively enhances the oral communication abilities of English language learners. It suggests the adoption of PjBL as a suitable instructional strategy for technical students, particularly those who typically possess lower levels of English proficiency. Next study from Salem, (2019) and García-Pinar, (2019) that used Ted Talks for improving oral skill. This study investigates the influence of utilizing TED Talks on enhancing the oral presentation abilities and vocabulary acquisition/retention of Business English students. Additionally, it evaluates

the impact of enhancing these cognitive skills on reducing the level of speaking anxiety among Business majors. The oral presentation skills of Business students were evaluated using the Oral Presentation Skills Sheet (OPSS), vocabulary retention was assessed through the Vocabulary Uptake/Retention Test (VURT), and speaking anxiety levels were measured using the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA). The findings indicate that the use of TED Talks as an ICT tool led to improvements in oral presentation skills and vocabulary acquisition/retention levels. Furthermore, it was observed that Business majors in the experimental group exhibited increased enthusiasm, energy, and motivation to deliver impactful presentations, as they became more confident and less anxious. Another pedagogical approach of Flipped Classroom used by Chen & Hwang, (2020) and Abdullah, Hussin, & Ismail, (2020). They investigated the impact of concept mapping-based flipped learning, utilized as a listening-speaking strategy, on learning outcomes, critical thinking awareness, and speaking anxiety among English as a foreign language (EFL) learner. Pretest results showed that participants in both groups exhibited similar levels of proficiency, critical thinking awareness, and EFL speaking anxiety. The experimental group was tasked with creating concept maps following each listening exercise and used them to formulate responses to speaking tasks. Posttest results indicated that concept mapping had a positive and noteworthy effect on EFL learners' English-speaking abilities and critical thinking awareness, while also reducing speaking anxiety. Additionally, statistical analysis revealed correlations between concept mapping, learning performance, and critical thinking. Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was found between speaking anxiety and the other variables.

The researchers named Fortanet-Gómez & Edo-Marzá, (2022) used new approach named Product Pitches. One of the most innovative forms of communication in contemporary business is the product pitch (PP), distinguished primarily by its multifaceted nature. Despite the growing importance of this oral genre in the business arena, there has been limited research on teaching PPs to business English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students. Hence, the objective of this paper is to introduce an original pedagogical model comprising a learner-driven genre-based approach, grounded in a teaching-learning cycle aimed at fostering critical thinking and multimodal awareness. By adhering to the four stages of the proposed cycle, and with continuous support from the instructor during the initial phases, a cohort of tertiary business students were tasked with analyzing the multimodal elements of a YouTube PP and subsequently developing their own PPs. These student-generated presentations were evaluated multimodally through peer review by their classmates and by the instructor using a comprehensive rubric encompassing all modes of communication. This innovative pedagogical

method for a new genre not only enhanced students' motivation and multimodal awareness but also transcended the traditional focus solely on language-based teaching and assessment in ESP. Further research conducted Blended Learning Approach, it investigated by Almansour & Al-Ahdal, (2020). The present study focuses on implementing a blended learning (BL) approach to teach and improve the speaking skills of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners. This approach has become necessary due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to the widespread adoption of e-learning platforms worldwide, including in Saudi Arabia. The study was conducted shortly before global lockdowns using readily available free software, combined with teacher-led virtual instruction, involving 30 participants. A control group of equal size was also included. Post-intervention assessments revealed a significant improvement in the participants' English skills for specific purposes. The findings suggest that online learning is not only essential given the current circumstances but also offers increased learning opportunities and autonomy for Saudi ESP learners.

The further studies are using the approach to improve speaking skill with the technology terms. A study from (Al-Jarf, 2022) used specialized mobile dictionaries Apps (MDAs). They serve as effective tools for enhancing students' specialized vocabulary and facilitating quicker learning and improved retention within a shorter timeframe. The purpose of this article is to provide ESP instructors with examples of engineering, computer science, and business Mobile Device Applications (MDAs) available on platforms such as Google Play or Apple Stores. It outlines methods for identifying specialized MDAs, criteria for their selection, lexicographical features, and instructional approaches involving MDAs. Instructional use of MDAs involves three phases: pre-task, task, and post-task, with the instructor acting as a facilitator. The instructor assists students in finding and downloading MDAs that align with their needs and proficiency levels, provides pre-task questions, and offers guidance to ensure optimal utilization of MDAs throughout the learning process. Next study used Digital Storytelling conducted by Yang, Chen, & Hung, (2022). In their research, Digital Storytelling (DST) was implemented through an interdisciplinary project, which involved collaboration between an English course and a computer course. During class time, the English course focused on content design, while the computer course focused on multimedia design for learner-generated digital stories. The results highlight the genuine and significant learning opportunities provided by DST in facilitating the development of students' proficiency in English speaking and nurturing their creativity. Difference from a study of Bury, (2020) that conducting only storytelling. Storytelling plays a pivotal role in human communication and can offer numerous benefits when introduced as a teaching method. However, despite its potential advantages, storytelling

is not widely utilized by educators in tertiary education settings in Japan. Consequently, there is limited reporting on students' reactions to this pedagogical approach in that context. This study aimed to explore the perceptions of undergraduate students (n = 132) enrolled in the Faculty of Tourism and Business Management at a university in Japan after the integration of storytelling into the curriculum. The findings revealed that participants believed storytelling enhanced their understanding of the tourism and hospitality industry, positively influenced their course experience, and boosted their confidence and English proficiency. Therefore, it is recommended that storytelling be more extensively incorporated into tourism and hospitality courses. So between the use of digital or only storytelling in the class also improve the speaking skill of ESP students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In summary, this literature review has explored the critical aspect of speaking proficiency for ESP (English for Specific Purposes) students across various professional domains. It has underscored the multidimensional nature of speaking proficiency, encompassing linguistic competencies as well as pragmatic and intercultural awareness necessary for effective communication in specific occupational or academic contexts. The review has highlighted the Speaking proficiency of ESP Students that describe the level of speaking proficiency the students. the importance of employing valid and contextualized assessment methods, such as performance-based assessments and domain-specific rubrics, to accurately evaluate ESP students' speaking abilities. Furthermore, it has emphasized the value of adopting communicative and learner-centered pedagogical approaches that actively engage students in authentic language use situations. Task-based language teaching, project-based learning, and the integration of technology and multimedia resources have emerged as effective strategies for improving speaking skills. Additionally, explicit instruction on pragmatics, discourse strategies, and intercultural communication has been recognized as crucial for preparing ESP students to navigate the linguistic and cultural nuances of their target professional environments. By synthesizing these three key themes, this literature review contributes to the ongoing efforts to enhance the assessment and instruction of speaking proficiency tailored to the specific needs of ESP learners across various disciplines.

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