

## A Survey of Students' Challenges in English Listening and Speaking Activities in High Schools

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استطلاع حول التحديات التي يواجهها الطلاب في أنشطة الاستماع والتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية

في المدارس الثانوية

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### Abstract:

Listening and speaking are the most important and hardest skills to learn while teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This study explores the practices and limitations of English listening and speaking activities in high school classrooms, with a focus on quantitative data collected through student questionnaires. Although similar challenges have been widely documented in postsecondary education, particularly in public institutions where resources, teacher preparation, and classroom management can vary substantially, there is currently a dearth of research on high school students in EFL circumstances. The research aims to understand students' perceptions and experiences related to oral-aural English skills. A structured questionnaire was administered to 470 high school students to gather data on the frequency, type, and effectiveness of listening and speaking activities used in their classrooms. The findings indicate that while students are exposed to some oral-aural activities, these are often limited in variety and practice time. Furthermore, many students reported difficulties in understanding spoken English, particularly when dealing with unknown vocabulary, fast speech, or background noise. They also expressed challenges in speaking due to fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, and lack of confidence. The results suggest a need for more engaging, student-centered activities that promote interaction and build students' listening and speaking confidence. The study highlights the importance of revising current teaching practices to better support learners' oral-aural language development.

Keywords: listening, speaking, activities, practices, limitations

### المخلص:

تُعد مهارات الاستماع والتحدث من أهم وأصعب المهارات في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). تستكشف هذه الدراسة الممارسات والقيود المرتبطة بأنشطة الاستماع والتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية في صفوف المدارس الثانوية، مع التركيز على البيانات الكمية التي تم جمعها من خلال استبيانات الطلاب. وعلى الرغم من توثيق تحديات مماثلة على نطاق واسع في التعليم العالي، خصوصاً في المؤسسات العامة حيث تختلف

الموارد وإعداد المعلمين وإدارة الصفوف بشكل كبير، إلا أن هناك نقصاً في الأبحاث المتعلقة بطلاب المدارس الثانوية في سياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم تصورات الطلاب وتجاربهم المتعلقة بمهارات الاستماع والتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية. تم توزيع استبيان منظم على ٤٧٠ طالباً في المرحلة الثانوية لجمع بيانات حول مدى تكرار، وأنواع، وفعالية أنشطة الاستماع والتحدث المستخدمة في صفوفهم. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الطلاب يتعرضون لبعض الأنشطة الشفوية والسمعية، إلا أنها غالباً ما تكون محدودة من حيث التنوع ووقت الممارسة. كما أفاد العديد من الطلاب أنهم يواجهون صعوبات في فهم اللغة الإنجليزية المنطوقة، خاصة عند التعامل مع مفردات غير مألوفة أو الكلام السريع أو الضوضاء الخلفية. كما عبّروا عن تحديات في التحدث بسبب الخوف من ارتكاب الأخطاء، وضعف المفردات، وقلة الثقة بالنفس. وتشير النتائج إلى الحاجة لتوفير أنشطة أكثر تفاعلية وتركز على الطالب، من شأنها أن تعزز التفاعل وتبني ثقة الطلاب في مهارات الاستماع والتحدث. وتسلط الدراسة الضوء على أهمية مراجعة الممارسات التعليمية الحالية لدعم تنمية مهارات اللغة الشفوية والسمعية لدى المتعلمين. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاستماع، التحدث، الأنشطة، الممارسات، القيود

## **1. Introduction**

Among the four skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, listening and speaking are the most crucial and, at the same time, the most difficult to acquire. These skills are usually secondary to grammar, reading, or vocabulary instruction—in high school contexts, even more so in examination-oriented classrooms (Hamouda, 2013). Consequently, students tend to struggle with understanding spoken English and expressing themselves fluently and confidently in oral interactions. Such challenges, alongside hindering progression in language fluency, curtail students' motivation and participation in the broader learning endeavor. Research indicates that students experience combined problems in both areas of listening and speaking. Issues within listening comprehension include unfamiliar dialects, rhetoric at a fast pace, difficult words, and content that is too familiar to students' culture (Goh, 1999; Buck, 2001; Azmi et al., 2014; Underwood, 1989). In contrast, speaking problems are often attributed to mental and emotional issues like tendency to make errors, being shy, low self-esteem, high anxiety, and poor drive (Ur, 1996; He & Chen, 2010; Baldwin, 2011; Nunan, 1999; Babu, 2010). In addition, classroom factors such as unequal participation and excessive use of the mother tongue also contribute to students' inability to practice English productively. Research on high school students in EFL situations is still lacking, despite the fact that such difficulties have been extensively reported in postsecondary education, especially in public institutions where resources, teacher preparation, and classroom management can vary greatly. In these situations, high school students frequently have less access to real listening resources and less chances to practice speaking in a meaningful way. Low self-confidence, poor academic performance, and poor communication skills can all be caused by this lack of use of language in everyday situations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to look into the particular difficulties that high school students have when speaking and listening in English classes. The goal of the research is to identify these challenges and comprehend their causes in order to offer insights that can guide the development of more successful teaching methods. The ultimate objective is to assist teachers in developing more encouraging and stimulating learning environments that foster the growth of students' oral language abilities.

### **1.1 Problem of the Study**

Even though speaking and listening are essential components of communicative competence, they are frequently neglected in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, particularly in high schools in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Even while national curricula place a strong emphasis on these abilities, real classroom procedures usually fall short of what kids need. Key difficulties include a lack of interactive speaking and listening tasks, a lack of practice chances, and a limited usage of real materials are shown by quantitative data gathered through student questionnaires. These restrictions have a detrimental effect on students' performance, engagement, and motivation. However, there hasn't been much research done to measure these challenges systematically from the perspective of the students. Finding the main obstacles that students encounter during the learning process is the aim of this study.

### **1.2 Aims of the Study**

The present study aims to:

1. Understand the challenges students encounter while participating in listening and speaking activities in high school English classes.
2. Examine students' participation in and exposure to listening and speaking activities.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the main challenges students face in English listening and speaking activities?
2. Which of the two English language skills—listening or speaking—poses greater difficulty for high school students, as indicated by the weighted mean scores?

### 2.1 The Role of Listening and Speaking Skills in Language Learning

Two essential language acquisition abilities that are vital to communication and language development in general are speaking and listening. The significance of these abilities has been underlined by numerous academics, especially when it comes to learning a second or foreign language. They are fundamental to oral communication and are necessary for language production as well as understanding. Brown (2007) declares that listening is an active process including response, interpretation, and attention rather than a passive ability. It forms the basis of verbal communication and frequently comes before speaking in language development. Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach (1983) supports this order. It says that language learning starts with a "silent period" during which students mostly listen to and process input before trying to talk. Teaching approaches like Total Physical Response (TPR) and the Audio-Lingual Method also put a lot of emphasis on hearing as the basis for speaking well, encouraging students to improve their understanding skills before they start speaking. According to Vandergrift (1999), good listening teaching can greatly enhance students' understanding abilities, particularly when lesson plans include techniques like summarization, explanation, and prediction. Speaking is another useful ability that enables students to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. The role of interaction in language development is strongly supported by Interactionist theory, which posits that language learning occurs most effectively through social interaction and meaningful communication, speaking, according to Burns and Joyce (1997), entails interaction, fluency, and real-time processing in addition to the simple repetition of learned patterns. The importance of communicative competence—which encompasses the grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic elements required for successful oral communication is emphasized. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method has also emphasized the link between speaking and listening. The Interactionist Theory backs this up since it says that the greatest way to acquire a language is through meaningful conversation that includes both hearing and speaking. Interactionist Theory of Language Development emphasizes that language learning is significantly enhanced through interactive communication, where listening and speaking work together to promote understanding and language acquisition. According to Richards (2006), in order to communicate authentically, students frequently need to combine the two abilities at the same time, as in talks, interviews, or conversations. Furthermore, according to Nation and Newton (2009), incorporating speaking and listening exercises like role plays and task-based interactions improves students' self-assurance and capacity to utilize language in authentic contexts. However, speaking and listening are frequently given less consideration in the classroom than writing and reading, particularly in educational settings that are centered around exams (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). This disparity may restrict students' ability to communicate effectively. As a result, there is an increasing demand for more student-centered, participatory approaches that emphasize meaningful communication in order to improve oral skills.

### 2.2 Teaching Listening and Speaking in High Schools

Speaking and listening are key elements of language proficiency and are crucial to learning a second language, particularly in high school. Both abilities are seen as essential for fostering students' capacity for successful interaction in authentic settings in communicative language instruction (CLT). Even though, speaking and listening are frequently overlooked in high school curriculum, especially in situations where language instruction is exam-focused or where resources and training for communicative teaching are scarce. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the primary objective of language instruction is successful communication, and speaking and listening are important to this goal. These abilities support students' development of interactional competence, confidence, and pronunciation in high school. According to Brown (2001), listening is the most commonly used ability in daily life and serves as the basis for spoken engagement, both of which are essential for social and academic success in contexts where English is being used as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL). High school listening instruction frequently combines top-down (e.g., using prior knowledge, predicting content) and bottom-up (e.g., decoding sounds, vocabulary) processing strategies (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) contend, however, that a large number of high school teachers are undertrained in instructing these techniques, which leads to low student participation and performance on listening assignments. Instead of encouraging fluency and real-world communication,

speaking is usually restricted to controlled practice, such as repetition or responding to single questions (Ur, 1996). According to Thornbury (2005), high school students want frequent chances to communicate in relevant settings, like role-playing, group discussions, presentations, and project-based learning. Students gain confidence and creativity in their language use through these exercises. Effective speaking and listening instruction are hampered by a number of factors in many high schools, particularly in EFL contexts. Large class sizes, a lack of technology support (such as audio resources and language labs), a lack of time allotted for speaking practice, and teachers' dependence on conventional grammar-focused teaching strategies are a few of these (Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014). Oral skill development is further hampered by the fact that students frequently feel anxious and unmotivated to talk in a foreign language (Liu & Jackson, 2008). Despite these obstacles, the need to enhance speaking and listening is becoming more widely recognized. Task-based and student-centered activities that encourage engagement, active listening, and impromptu language use should be combined, according to Harmer (2007). Furthermore, current studies highlight how crucial it is to use real-world challenges and realistic materials to make studying more interesting and applicable for high school students.

### **2.3 Interrelation Between Listening and Speaking**

Enhancing English language learners' performance within the framework of communicative competence is the aim of skill integration. Additionally, it is well known that people can connect any language talent; however, it is recommended to combine those that use the same communication channel, such as writing, speaking, and listening (Brown, 2004). Teachers might wonder, though, how much a supporting skill can help enhance a primary skill or how much a supporting skill can help enhance a primary talent. According to Osada (1994), "speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what being said is comprehended by another person."

### **2.4 Listening and Speaking Skills in Improving oral skills**

According to an experiment conducted by Feyten (1991), listening skills and learning a foreign language are closely related. This is typically the result of listening actively participating in "strategy development." In order for pupils to begin producing language and changing spoken language, they must engage with the declarative information that comes from listening and reading, according to Noblitt (1995). Stated differently, verbal ability is supported by aural comprehension. In her research, Bozorgian (2012) illustrated how listening and other skills relate to one another in the context of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). She highlights in particular the fact that improving listening abilities in the classroom leads to a notable improvement in other skills in her preliminary research.

## **3 Methodology**

The core purpose of this study is to explore the limitations of listening and speaking skills at high schools in Rania city in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Outlining the methodology used to achieve the research objectives is essential before diving into the results. A thorough description of the research design, participant information, the tools used, and the methods for data collection and analysis are provided in this chapter. It also talks about the ethical measures taken to protect participant confidentiality and the validity and reliability of the instruments used.

### **3.1 Participants and Sampling**

Students from public high schools in the Ranya area, which is in Iraq's Kurdistan Region, participated in this study. There are eight morning high schools in Ranya, all of which were included in the study. A sample of 470 students was selected from a total population of 3536 students. Every participant was learning English as a second language, and as part of their English curriculum, they were often exposed to speaking and listening exercises and questionnaires were given out during regular school hours. The objective was to get practical information from students about their difficulties with speaking and listening exercises in the classroom.

### **3.2 Research Design and Approach**

This study adopted a quantitative research design to investigate the limitations of listening and speaking activities in English language classes in public high schools in Ranya. The design relied on the use of a structured student questionnaire consisting of close-ended items, which allowed for the collection of measurable and comparable data across a broad sample of students. Quantitative research is particularly effective for identifying patterns, frequencies, and trends in large populations. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain, quantitative designs enable researchers to test variables and examine relationships using numerical data. The choice of this design was appropriate for the present study, as it aimed to gather students' perceptions and

experiences in a systematic and objective manner. By analyzing responses statistically, the study sought to gain insights into challenges students commonly face in the classroom.

### 3.3 Validity and Reliability of Tools

The instrument of the study, which was the students' survey, in order to ensure understanding, The questionnaire's items were translated into Kurdish and sent to a group of linguistics and applied linguistics specialists for review and face validity. They offered input on the questionnaire's items' appropriateness, relevance, and clarity, which were eventually taken into consideration to refine the tool. For piloting purposes, the questionnaire was administered to 10 students of the population who were excluded from the final version and administration. Then, the collected data in the final version went through an assessment of internal consistency which was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The items were consistently measuring the intended constructs, as evidenced by the satisfactory coefficient of 0.87 that was obtained. These procedures confirmed that the questionnaire was both valid and reliable for collecting data on students' challenges with listening and speaking activities and difficulties in English classes.

### 4. Data Analysis methods

For this particular study, the data from the final version of student questionnaire were processed with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 27. All close-ended items from the questionnaires were first coded and then entered into the SPSS program for statistical evaluation.

To explore students' responses and gain insights into their difficulties with various listening and speaking activities, descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were applied. This overview provided valuable insight into the activity's limitations, the challenges students encountered, and their confidence levels regarding English communication.

With SPSS, the researchers were able to structure and analyze the data meticulously as well as present the findings objectively, reducing the biased portrayal of the students' difficulties on learning the English language in public high schools. Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Students' Challenges Towards Speaking and Listening

| questions   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree     | Neutral      | Agree        | Strongly Agree | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 1. I do not have enough vocabulary knowledge to speak with.                               | 25<br>%5.3        | 58<br>%12.3  | 54<br>%11.5  | 242<br>%51.5 | 91<br>%19.4    | 3.67 | 1.084          |
| 2. I do not have enough grammar knowledge which leads to lack of accuracy in my speaking. | 27<br>%5.7        | 86<br>%18.3  | 70<br>%14.9  | 202<br>%43   | 85<br>%18.1    | 3.49 | 1.151          |
| 3. My pronunciation is not good enough which causes difficulty in my communication.       | 35<br>%7.4        | 67<br>%14.3  | 57<br>%12.1  | 200<br>%42.6 | 111<br>%23.6   | 3.61 | 1.203          |
| 4. I am afraid of speaking English.   | 93<br>%19.8       | 98<br>%20.9  | 62<br>%13.2  | 119<br>%25.3 | 98<br>%20.9    | 3.07 | 1.445          |
| 5. I feel embarrassed to speak English.   | 57<br>%12.1       | 85<br>%18.1  | 100<br>%21.3 | 118<br>%25.1 | 65<br>%13.8    | 3.34 | 1.351          |
| 6. I feel hesitation because I can't speak.   | 104<br>%22.1      | 88<br>%18.7  | 59<br>%12.6  | 106<br>%22.6 | 113<br>%24     | 3.08 | 1.503          |
| 7. I am unwilling to speak English.   | 218<br>%46.4      | 112<br>%23.8 | 52<br>%11.1  | 36<br>%7.7   | 52<br>%11.1    | 2.13 | 1.365          |
| 8. I often use mother tongue unconsciously if I want to speak English.                    | 102<br>%21.7      | 85<br>%18.1  | 100<br>%21.3 | 118<br>%25.1 | 65<br>%13.8    | 2.91 | 1.360          |
| 9. I get stuck on one or two words when I speak English.                                  | 42<br>%8.8        | 52<br>%11.1  | 67<br>%14.3  | 195<br>%41.5 | 114<br>%24.3   | 3.61 | 1.218          |
| 10. I know so many words but I forget them when I speak.                                  | 27<br>%5.7        | 55<br>%11.7  | 60<br>%12.8  | 169<br>%36   | 159<br>%33.8   | 3.80 | 1.190          |
| 11. I don't speak because my peers/friends make fun of me when I make mistakes.           | 140<br>%29.8      | 99<br>%21.1  | 76<br>%16.2  | 59<br>%12.6  | 96<br>%20.4    | 2.73 | 1.508          |
| 12. My class environment is not suitable to speak English.                                | 82<br>%17.4       | 93<br>%19.8  | 95<br>%20.2  | 88<br>%18.7  | 112<br>%23.8   | 3.12 | 1.424          |
|   | 62                | 82           | 81           | 122          | 123            | 3.34 | 1.376          |

|   |       |       |       |       |       |      |       |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| 13. I am worried about difficulty of English.   | %13.2 | %17.4 | %17.2 | %26   | %26.2 |      |       |
| 14. There is no cooperation spirit among my classmates in speaking classes.   | 53    | 67    | 73    | 125   | 152   | 3.54 | 1.364 |
|   | %11.3 | %14.3 | %15.5 | %26.6 | %32.3 |      |       |
| 15. Group discussions are not arranged.   | 42    | 33    | 37    | 125   | 233   | 4.01 | 1.290 |
|   | %8.9  | %7    | %7.9  | %26.6 | %46.9 |      |       |
| 16. My parents don't help me speak English.   | 97    | 84    | 121   | 77    | 91    | 2.96 | 1.395 |
|   | %20.6 | %17.9 | %25.7 | %16.4 | %19.4 |      |       |
| 17. I do not have opportunity to speak during class breaks.   | 41    | 36    | 69    | 160   | 164   | 3.79 | 1.243 |
|   | %8.7  | %7.7  | %14.7 | %34   | %34.9 |      |       |
| 18. My teacher of English language do not have a good command of English-speaking skills.                             | 223   | 88    | 62    | 41    | 56    | 2.19 | 1.413 |
|   | %47.4 | %18.7 | %13.2 | %8.7  | %11.9 |      |       |
| 19. My teachers make too much use of mother tongue in the classroom.  | 110   | 95    | 96    | 101   | 68    | 2.83 | 1.381 |
|   | %23.4 | %20.2 | %20.4 | %21.5 | %14.5 |      |       |
| 20. My teacher's pronunciation in English is not good enough to be a model for me.                                    | 211   | 99    | 64    | 40    | 56    | 2.21 | 1.399 |
|   | %44.9 | %21.1 | %13.6 | %8.5  | %11.9 |      |       |
| 21. My teacher does not seem inclined to speak English with me, even though I try outside the class.                  | 132   | 69    | 98    | 59    | 112   | 2.89 | 1.531 |
|   | %28.1 | %14.7 | %20.9 | %12.6 | %23.8 |      |       |
| 22. My English class is teacher-centered and I cannot find the chance to express my ideas and participate in English. | 87    | 79    | 116   | 84    | 104   | 3.08 | 1.403 |
|   | %18.5 | %16.8 | %24.7 | %17.9 | %22.1 |      |       |
| 23. In my classroom, no real English communication takes place.   | 73    | 54    | 80    | 109   | 154   | 3.46 | 1.439 |
|   | %15.5 | %11.5 | %17   | %23.2 | %32.8 |      |       |
| 24. My teacher of English language does not present interesting topics for discussion.                                | 115   | 77    | 71    | 79    | 128   | 3.06 | 1.550 |
|   | %24.5 | %16.4 | %15.1 | %16.8 | %27.2 |      |       |
| 25. I find it difficult to understand every word of spoken English.   | 38    | 45    | 61    | 171   | 157   | 3.78 | 1.222 |
|   | %7.7  | %9.6  | %13   | %36.4 | %33.4 |      |       |
| 26. I struggle with listening tasks that contain too many unfamiliar English words.                                   | 17    | 34    | 49    | 202   | 168   | 4.00 | 1.039 |
|   | %3.6  | %7.2  | %10.4 | %43   | %35.7 |      |       |
| 27. Before listening tasks, I fear that I won't understand what I will hear in English.                               | 27    | 74    | 77    | 142   | 150   | 3.67 | 1.234 |
|   | %5.7  | %15.7 | %16.4 | %30.2 | %31.9 |      |       |
| 28. I feel worried when I don't understand spoken English   | 37    | 29    | 48    | 150   | 206   | 3.98 | 1.224 |
|   | %7.9  | %6.2  | %10.2 | %31.9 | %43.8 |      |       |
| 29. I find it difficult to understand when a speaker speaks English too fast.   | 32    | 32    | 45    | 155   | 206   | 4.00 | 1.193 |
|   | %6.8  | %6.8  | %9.6  | %33   | %43.8 |      |       |
| 30. I find difficult to concentrate on spoken English when there is background noise.                                 | 16    | 35    | 56    | 151   | 212   | 4.08 | 1.082 |
|   | %3.4  | %7.4  | %11.9 | %32.1 | %45.1 |      |       |
| 31. I struggle to focus on listening activities while searching for answers during dialogues.                         | 20    | 36    | 70    | 174   | 170   | 3.93 | 1.094 |
|   | %4.3  | %7.7  | %14.9 | %37   | %36.2 |      |       |
| 32. I find it difficult to remember English words or phrases I have just heard.                                       | 33    | 45    | 84    | 175   | 133   | 3.70 | 1.179 |
|   | %7    | %9.6  | %17.9 | %37.2 | %28.3 |      |       |
| 33. I struggle to understand listening tasks in English when the topic is unfamiliar.                                 | 21    | 54    | 63    | 170   | 162   | 3.85 | 1.149 |
|   | %4.5  | %11.5 | %13.4 | %36.2 | %34.5 |      |       |
| 34. I find it hard to infer the meaning of unknown English words while listening.                                     | 31    | 36    | 63    | 164   | 176   | 3.89 | 1.183 |
|   | %6.6  | %7.7  | %13.4 | %34.9 | %37.4 |      |       |
| 35. I find it more challenging to understand recorded sounds than when my teacher reads aloud.                        | 48    | 63    | 167   | 106   | 86    | 3.25 | 1.200 |
|   | %10.2 | %13.4 | %35.5 | %22.6 | %18.3 |      |       |
| 36. I find it difficult to grasp the overall message from listening the first time.                                   | 30    | 50    | 72    | 146   | 172   | 3.81 | 1.219 |
|   | %6.4  | %10.6 | %15.3 | %31.1 | %36.6 |      |       |
|   | 47    | 54    | 98    | 119   | 152   | 3.59 | 1.313 |



|   |       |       |       |       |       |      |       |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| 37. My limited knowledge of English makes listening tasks harder for me.                            | %10   | %11.5 | %20.9 | %25.3 | %32.3 |      |       |
| 38. I struggle to understand listening tasks that contain complex grammatical structures.           | 30    | 46    | 55    | 189   | 150   | 3.81 | 1.171 |
|   | %6.4  | %9.8  | %11.7 | %40.2 | %31.9 |      |       |
| 39. I find it hard to follow when the speaker doesn't pause between sentences                       | 28    | 38    | 56    | 165   | 183   | 3.93 | 1.169 |
|   | %6    | %8.1  | %11.9 | %35.1 | %36.9 |      |       |
| 40. I struggle to quickly recall words or phrases I have just heard.                                | 26    | 31    | 72    | 176   | 165   | 3.90 | 1.122 |
|   | %5.5  | %6.6  | %15.3 | %37.4 | %35.1 |      |       |
| 41. I find it challenging to stay focused on a listening task when I do not understand parts of it. | 32    | 47    | 64    | 163   | 164   | 3.81 | 1.210 |
|   | %6.8  | %10   | %13.6 | %34.7 | %34.9 |      |       |
| 42. I find it difficult to answer Wh-questions in listening tasks.                                  | 92    | 74    | 77    | 91    | 136   | 3.22 | 1.499 |
|   | %19.6 | %15.7 | %16.4 | %19.4 | %28.9 |      |       |

Table 2: Weighted mean for skills

| Skills    | Weighted mean |
|-----------|---------------|
| Speaking  | 3.19          |
| Listening | 3.57          |

#### 4.1 Results and Discussions

To answer the research questions, data was collected via a student questionnaire with 42 closed-ended Likert scale items. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, first 24 items were about speaking and the last 18 questions were about listening. Additionally, the outcome data were analysed descriptively using the percentage of agreement for each item, along with the mean and standard deviation (shown in Table 1). According to the results of item 1 in the survey as shown in Table 1, 70.9 % of participants—equals 333 students—either strongly agreed or agreed that they didn't know enough vocabulary to speak in English. In contrast, 17.6 % of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11.5% were neutral. The mean score of 3.67 suggests a positive tendency regarding students' lack of vocabulary knowledge, indicating that they don't know enough words to speak in English. The standard deviation of 1.084 suggested moderate consistency in responses, indicating that most students shared similar views regarding their lack of vocabulary knowledge for speaking English. According to Table 1's item 2 results, 61.1% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their lack of grammar knowledge causes them to speak inaccurately. On the other hand, 14.9% were neutral and 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A positive tendency towards agreement is indicated by the mean score of 3.49. The standard deviation of 1.051 indicated a comparatively narrow range of answers, demonstrating that students' perceptions of how their poor grammar knowledge affects speaking accuracy were consistent. The findings for item 3 in Table 1 showed that 66.2% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their pronunciation is inadequate for communication. 12.1% of participants were neutral, while 21.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. With a mean score of 3.61, there was a tendency towards agreement, suggesting that students' pronunciation errors prevent them from communicating in the target language. Table 1's standard deviation of 1.203 revealed a moderate range of answers, indicating some students' disagreement over whether their pronunciation is sufficient for communication. Table 1's item 4 results showed that 46.2% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that speaking English made them nervous. However, 13.2% of the students were neutral, and 40.7% disagreed with the statement. There was a slight tendency towards agreement, as indicated by the mean score of 3.07. The standard deviation of 1.445 indicated significant response variability, indicating varying student perceptions of their fear of speaking English. According to Table 1's results for item 5, 38.9% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that speaking English made them feel embarrassed, while 30.2% disagreed and 21.3% had no opinion. A positive tendency towards agreement is indicated by the mean score of 3.34. There was a wide range of responses, as indicated by the standard deviation of 1.351, which showed that students were significantly embarrassed when speaking English. This variation implies that although some students are confident, others have noticeable anxiety related to their speaking skills. Based on the results of item 6 in Table 1, 46.6% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt hesitation because they couldn't speak. In contrast 40.8% of students disagreed, and 12.6% remained neutral towards the statement. The mean score of 3.08 indicated a tendency toward agreement. Moreover, the standard deviation of 1.503 indicated significant variability in responses, highlighting that many students experienced hesitation when attempting to speak English. This suggests a strong correlation between their language proficiency and their

confidence in speaking. Based on the results of item 7 in Table 1, 70.2% of participants, representing more than half, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were unwilling to speak English, only 18.8% of students were agreed that they were unwilling to speak English. The mean score of 2.13 indicated a tendency toward disagreement, and it stated that they want to speak with the language but they can't. The standard deviation of 1.365 indicated a considerable variation in responses, suggesting that students had differing levels of willingness to speak English. This variability highlights that although some students were open to participating in speaking activities, others showed unwillingness, possibly due to a lack of confidence or fear of making mistakes. Results of item 8 in Table 1, revealed that 38.9% participants agreed or strongly agreed that they often use mother tongue unconsciously when they want to speak English. Otherwise, 39.8% of the students disagreed with the statement, and 21.3% remained neutral. The mean score of 2.91 suggested tendency toward disagree. The standard deviation of 1.380 indicated a notable range of answers, viewing that students varied in how often they unconsciously used their mother tongue when attempting to speak English. This suggests that while some students were able to maintain communication in English, others struggled to avoid reverting to their native language, reflecting differing levels of language control and fluency. Participants indicated that they frequently run out of words when responding to Item 9 in Table 1. 65.8% of participants agreed with the statement or strongly agreed with it. Of the students, 14.3% were neutral and only 19.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The average score of 3.61 indicated a propensity to disagree. Table 2 shows that the median and mode were both 4. The standard deviation of 1.218 reflected a moderate spread in responses, representing that student had varying experiences with getting stuck on words while speaking English. This suggests that while some students were able to express themselves more fluently, others frequently struggled to find the right words, which may point to gaps in vocabulary or speaking practice. Nearly two-thirds of the participants, or 69.8%, agreed or strongly agreed that they know a lot of words but forget them when speaking, according to the results of Item 10 in Table 1. Just 17.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 12.8% were neutral. With a mean score of 3.80, agreement was more likely. A moderate degree of response variability was indicated by the standard deviation of 1.190, which suggested that although many students believed they had a large vocabulary, they frequently forgot the words while speaking. This illustrates a prevalent problem in which passive knowledge is difficult to convert into active use, perhaps as a result of anxiety or a lack of speaking experience. According to Table 1's participant responses to Item 11, a quarter of students—33 percent—strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that they avoid speaking because their friends and peers tease them when they make mistakes. 50.9% disagreed or disagreed strongly. Furthermore, 16.2% of respondents expressed no opinion. The average score of 2.73 indicated a general inclination towards disagreement, indicating that the majority of students discovered that their friends do not make fun of them when they use English. Significant response variability was indicated by the standard deviation of 1.508, which suggests that students' experiences with peer reactions during speaking varied. This wide range of responses shows that although some students felt comfortable making mistakes, others remained silent out of concern that their peers would make fun of them, which can negatively impact their self-esteem and willingness to engage. Based on the results of item 12 in Table 1, less than half of the students who include 42.5% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed that their class environment is not suitable to speak English. Otherwise, 39.2% the participants reject the idea and they thought that their classes are suitable, and 20.2% remained neutral. The mean score of 3.12 indicated a positive tendency toward agreement. The standard deviation of 1.424 showed a moderate level of variation in responses, suggesting that many students felt their classroom environment was not appropriate for speaking English. This implies that the setting may not support or encourage students to speak freely, possibly due to a lack of interactive activities or a stressful atmosphere. 52.2% of the participants in item 13 in Table 1 strongly agreed or agreed that they are worried about the difficulty of English. 30.6% of the participants disagreed, and 17.2% remained neutral. The mean score was 3.34 indicating a positive tendency toward agreement. The standard deviation of 1.376 indicated a moderate level of variation in responses, saying that many students believed English is a difficult language. This reflects the common perception among learners that English grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation present challenges, especially for those with limited exposure or practice. 58.9% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that there is no spirit of cooperation among my classmates in speaking classes, according to the results of item 14 in Table 1. However, 15.5% of participants were neutral, and 25.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. A generally neutral attitude was indicated by the mean score of 3.54. The moderate degree of response variation indicated by the standard deviation of 1.364 suggests that many students felt there was no spirit of cooperation among classmates



in speaking classes. Students may feel alone or be deterred from taking part in speaking exercises as a result of this lack of peer support. 73.5% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that group discussions are not organised, according to the results for item 15 in Table 1. By comparison, only 15.9% disagreed, and 7.9% were neutral. A positive tendency towards agreement was indicated by the mean score of 4.01. Students' moderate agreement that group debates are not organised in their classes was indicated by the standard deviation of 1.290. This implies that there aren't many opportunities for group speaking practice, which could hinder students' capacity to improve their speaking abilities through engagement. The findings of item 16 in Table 1 show that 35.8% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their parents did not assist them in speaking English, while 38.5% of participants disagreed. In addition, 25% of participants were agnostic. The mean score of 2.96% showed a general tendency towards disagreement, despite the fact that many parents help their kids speak English. Both the median and the mode were 3, as Table 2 demonstrates. The overall outcome demonstrates that many students did receive some form of parental support or encouragement when learning to speak English, despite some variation in the responses, as indicated by the standard deviation of 1.395. According to the results of item 17 in Table 1, 68.9% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were not given the chance to speak during class breaks. 16.4% disagreed or disagreed strongly. Ten percent of participants were neutral as well. The majority of students did not speak English during their break, according to the mean score of 3.79, which indicated a general tendency towards agreement. Students' agreement that they did not have the opportunity to speak English during class breaks was evident from the standard deviation of 1.243. This implies that informal settings, which could facilitate language practice, are not being used to promote English speaking in an efficient manner. According to participants' answers to item 18 in Table 1, 68.7% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that their English language instructor lacked a strong command of the language. However, 20.6% agreed or strongly agreed. 13.2% of participants were neutral as well. The average score of 2.12 indicated a moderate propensity for disagreement, indicating that the majority of teachers possess strong command of the English language. Although the standard deviation of 1.413 demonstrated a noticeable range of answers, the mean score showed that the majority of students did not agree that their English teacher lacked a strong command of speaking. This implies that, in spite of some individual disagreements, students generally thought their teacher was proficient in spoken English. 43.6% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that their teachers used their mother tongue excessively in the classroom, according to the results of item 19 in Table 1. 36%, however, agreed or strongly agreed. Furthermore, 20.4% of participants had no opinion. The majority of teachers do not use their mother tongue in their classes, according to the mean score of 2.83, which indicated a general tendency towards disagreement. Students' answers varied moderately, with a standard deviation of 1.381, and most of them denied that teachers used the mother tongue excessively in the classroom. This suggests that there was little use of the native tongue during instruction and that English was primarily used appropriately. 66% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion that their teacher's English pronunciation is insufficient to serve as an example for them, according to the results of item 20 in Table 1. In contrast, 20.4% agreed or strongly agreed. Additionally, 13.6% of participants expressed no opinion. Students can benefit from their teachers, and their pronunciation is good, according to the mean score of 2.21, which showed a general tendency towards disagreement. The standard deviation of 1.399 revealed a moderate level of response variation, indicating that many students disagreed with the idea that their teachers' English pronunciation was unsuitable for use as an example. This implies that most students believed their teachers' pronunciation to be sufficiently correct for learning purposes. According to the results of item 21 in Table 1, 42.8% of participants disagreed that, despite their attempts outside of class, their teacher did not seem interested in speaking English with them. 20.9% of participants were neutral, while 36.4% agreed or strongly agreed. With a mean score of 2.89, there was a tendency towards disagreement. A comparatively high degree of response variation was indicated by the standard deviation of 1.531, which implied that many students disagreed with the claim that their teacher was not likely to communicate with them in English outside of the classroom. This suggests that most students thought their teacher was open to communicating in English outside of scheduled class time. The majority of participants felt that their English class is teacher-centered and that they don't have enough opportunities to participate and voice their opinions, according to item 22 in Table 1. 40% of pupils said they agreed or strongly agreed. Additionally, 24.7% were neutral and 35.3% disagreed. With a mean score of 3.08, agreement was more likely. A moderate degree of response variation was indicated by the standard deviation of 1.403, which suggested that many students believed their English classes were teacher-centered and did not give them enough

opportunities to participate in English or express their ideas. This suggests that low levels of student participation might be impeding the growth of speaking abilities. According to the results of item 23 in table 1, 54% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with that. There was no genuine communication in their classroom. whereas 27% disagreed or disagreed strongly. Furthermore, 17% of participants had no opinion. There appears to be no genuine communication in classrooms, as indicated by the mean score of 3.46, which showed a general tendency towards agreement. A moderate degree of response variation was indicated by the standard deviation of 1.439, which suggested that many students believed their English classes lacked genuine communication. This suggests that meaningful exchange and authenticity, which are critical for the development of effective speaking abilities, may have been lacking in classroom interactions. According to participants' answers to item 24 in Table 1, 44% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their English language instructor did not provide engaging discussion topics. However, 40.9% disagreed or disagreed strongly. Furthermore, 15.1% of participants had no opinion. The teachers only present what is on the book, according to the mean score of 3.06, which indicated a moderate tendency towards agreement. A comparatively high degree of response variation was indicated by the standard deviation of 1.550, which implied that many students thought their English teacher did not offer engaging discussion topics. This suggests that students' motivation to engage in speaking activities may have been lowered by a lack of interesting content. In summary, these paragraphs have presented the data gathered from the close-ended questions in the questionnaire. These items focused on students' attitudes toward the difficulties they face in speaking English. The results showed that while students spoke positively about their teachers, they expressed dissatisfaction with their classes and the overall learning environment. According to the results of item 25 in Table 1, 69.8% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had trouble understanding every word of spoken English, while 17.3% disagreed. Furthermore, 13% of participants had no opinion. Most students don't understand every word they hear, according to the mean score of 3.78%, which showed a general tendency towards agreement. Students generally agreed that it was difficult to understand every word of spoken English, as evidenced by the relatively low difference in their responses (standard deviation of 1.222). This draws attention to a typical listening difficulty that could impede their general understanding and communication confidence. More than three quarters of students, or 78.7%, agreed or strongly agreed that they had difficulty with listening tasks that included an excessive number of unfamiliar English words, according to participant responses to item 26 in Table 1. On the other hand, 20.8% agreed or strongly agreed. 10.4% of participants were neutral as well. The average score of 4.00 indicated a moderate inclination towards agreement, indicating that most students have trouble understanding new subjects and phrases. Students agreed strongly that they had trouble with listening tasks that included too many unfamiliar words, as evidenced by their responses' low variation (standard deviation of 1.039). This implies that a major obstacle to efficient listening comprehension is a lack of vocabulary. The results of revealed that speaking posed significant challenges for students due to limited vocabulary, weak grammar and pronunciation, and emotional barriers such as fear, embarrassment, and hesitation. Many students reported getting stuck on words and forgetting vocabulary while speaking, indicating difficulties with fluency and active recall. Classroom conditions—such as lack of group discussions, teacher-centered instruction, and limited peer support—also reduced opportunities for spoken interaction. These findings support the first research objective by identifying key linguistic, emotional, and environmental barriers to speaking 62.1% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they were afraid they wouldn't understand what they would hear in English before listening tasks, according to the results of item 27 in Table 1. In contrast, 16.4% of participants were neutral and 21.4% disagreed with the statement. A positive tendency towards agreement was indicated by the mean score of 3.67. Many students experienced anxiety prior to listening tasks because they were afraid they wouldn't understand what they would hear, as indicated by the standard deviation of 1.234, which shows a reasonably consistent pattern in their responses. Their focus and general listening skills may suffer as a result of this anticipatory anxiety. 75.7% of participants agreed that they became anxious when they couldn't understand spoken English, according to the results of item 28 in Table 1. 10.2% of participants were neutral, while 14.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The average score was 3.98, indicating a tendency towards agreement. Many students expressed concern when they were unable to comprehend spoken English, as evidenced by the standard deviation of 1.224, which shows a generally stable trend in responses. Their capacity to remain composed and focused during listening exercises may be hampered by this emotional reaction. According to the results of item 29 in Table 1, 76.8% of participants who were older than three quarters agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had trouble understanding speakers who spoke English

too quickly. 13.2%, however, agreed or strongly agreed. Neutral participants also made up 9.6% of the sample. The average score of 4.00 indicated a general trend towards agreement, indicating that most students find it difficult to follow when the speaker speaks too quickly. A consistent outline in the students' responses is indicated by the standard deviation of 1.193, which implies that many students had trouble understanding spoken English when the speaker spoke too quickly. This demonstrates how their speech level has a big impact on their listening comprehension. According to the survey's item 30 results, which are displayed in Table 1, 77.3% of respondents—more than three quarters—agreed or strongly agreed that background noise made it difficult for them to focus on spoken English. 11.9% were neutral, while 10.8% agreed. According to the mean score of 4.8, which suggested a propensity for disagreement, they are unable to comprehend English when background noise is present. Students' answers were closely aligned, with a standard deviation of 1.082, suggesting that it is generally difficult to focus on spoken English when there is background noise. This emphasises how crucial a calm and regulated setting is for efficient listening comprehension. Results of item 31 in Table 1 indicated that 73.9% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they struggled to focus on listening activities while searching for answers during dialogues, while 12% disagreed. Additionally, 14.9% of participants were neutral. The mean score of 3.93% reflected a general tendency toward agreement, suggesting that the students can't focus on listening activities while they search for answers. The standard deviation of 1.094 suggests a high level of consistency among students' responses, revealing that many found it challenging to stay focused during listening tasks when they had to search for answers at the same time. This indicates that multitasking during listening may negatively impact their ability to process spoken information effectively. The results of item 32 in the table demonstrated that 65.5% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had trouble remembering English words or phrases they had just heard. 16.6%, however, disagreed or disagreed strongly. Furthermore, 17.9% of participants expressed no opinion. Students' inability to recall English words they have just heard is indicated by the mean score of 3.70, which showed a general tendency towards agreement. Many students had trouble remembering English words or phrases they had just heard, as evidenced by the standard deviation of 1.179, which suggests reasonably reliable responses. This implies that their listening retention and general comprehension may be impacted by short-term memory impairments. In reference to item 33, the findings showed that 70.7% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they found it difficult to comprehend English listening tasks when the subject matter was unfamiliar. On the other hand, 13.4% were neutral and only 16% disagreed. The students' lack of understanding of new subjects is suggested by the mean score of 3.85, which showed a positive tendency towards agreement. Moderate variability in student responses was indicated by a standard deviation of 1.249, which suggested varying degrees of difficulty in comprehending English listening tasks when the subject was unfamiliar. Some students were able to cope, but others had severe difficulties because they lacked prior knowledge. Regarding item 34, approximately two-thirds (69.8%) of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had difficulty deducing the meaning of unknown English words while listening. 12.8% of participants were neutral, and just 17.4% disagreed. A positive tendency towards agreement was indicated by the mean score of 3.89. A standard deviation of 1.183 suggested that students' answers were generally consistent, indicating that many of them had trouble deducing the meaning of unknown English words while listening. This implies that listening exercises were difficult due to a lack of contextual cues and a restricted vocabulary. Table 1's item 35 shows that 40.9% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had a harder time understanding recorded sounds than when their teacher read aloud. However, 23.6% disagreed or disagreed strongly. Furthermore, 35.5% of those who took part were neutral. Students may have trouble understanding native speakers, as indicated by the mean score of 3.25, which showed a moderate tendency towards agreement. Many students found it more difficult to understand recorded audio materials than when their teacher read aloud, according to a standard deviation of 1.200 that revealed a reasonably consistent pattern in student responses. Variations in accent, speed, or the absence of visual cues during recorded listening tasks could be the cause of this. Prior to listening tasks, 67.7% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were afraid they wouldn't understand what they would hear in English, according to the results of item 36 in Table 1. Otherwise, 15.3% of participants were neutral and 17% disagreed with the statement. A positive tendency towards agreement was indicated by the mean score of 3.81. Students' moderate agreement, as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.219, showed that many of them were afraid they wouldn't comprehend what they were going to hear in English. Their listening skills and general confidence in speaking the language may have suffered as a result of this anxiety. According to item 37's results in Table 1, over half of the students (55.6%) agreed or strongly agreed

that listening tasks were more difficult for them because of their limited English proficiency. The remaining 20.2% of participants were neutral, while only 21.5% rejected the idea and believed they knew enough. A positive tendency towards agreement was indicated by the mean score of 3.59. Significant variation in responses was indicated by a standard deviation of 1.313, indicating that although many students felt that listening tasks were more challenging because of their limited English proficiency, others might not have felt the same way. This suggests that the students' levels of language proficiency vary. According to the results of item 38 in Table 1, 72.1% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they found it difficult to comprehend listening tasks that included intricate grammatical structures. 16.2%, however, disagreed or disagreed strongly. 11.7% of participants also expressed no opinion. The average score of 3.81 indicated a general trend towards agreement, indicating that the majority of students struggle with complex grammar. expressing agreement with the assertion. The moderate degree of response variation indicated by the standard deviation of 1.171 suggests that many students had trouble understanding listening tasks that involved intricate grammatical structures. This suggests that difficult grammar might have served as a comprehension roadblock, making it more difficult for students to follow and interact with spoken English. According to the findings for item 39 in table 1, 72% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that it was difficult for them to follow when the speaker didn't pause in between sentences. By comparison, just 14.1% disagreed, and 11.9% were neutral. Table 2's mean score of 3.93 suggested a favourable inclination towards agreement. A fair level of agreement among students is indicated by the standard deviation of 1.169, which shows that some of them found it difficult to follow spoken English when the speaker didn't pause in between sentences. This implies that listening to speech that is delivered nonstop can overwhelm listeners, making it more difficult for them to understand and follow the flow. According to the results of item 40 in table 1, 72.5% of participants said they had trouble remembering words or phrases they had just heard. 15.3% of participants were neutral, while 12.1% agreed or strongly agreed. Many students had trouble recalling words or phrases they had just heard, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.90, which leaned towards disagreement, and the standard deviation of 1.122, which shows a fair degree of agreement among students. Given that students might have trouble remembering and retrieving spoken input right away after hearing it, this shows that real-time language processing presents a challenge. According to the results of item 41 in table 1, 68.9% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had trouble focussing on a listening task when they did not fully understand certain aspects of it. 16.8%, however, disagreed or disagreed strongly. 13.6% of participants were neutral as well. The average score of 3.81 indicated a general trend towards agreement, indicating that students find it challenging to concentrate on listening assignments when they are unclear. While many students found it difficult to maintain focus on listening tasks when they didn't understand certain parts, others may have been less affected, as indicated by the standard deviation of 1.243, which shows a moderate to high variation in responses. This suggests that comprehension lapses can cause students to lose focus and find it more difficult to understand the main idea. Based on the results of item 42 in table 1, less than half of the students who include 48.3% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed that they found it difficult to answer Wh-questions in listening tasks. Otherwise, 35.3% the participants reject the idea and they thought that they can understand on Wh questions, and 16.4% remained neutral. The mean score of 3.22 indicated a positive tendency toward agreement. The relatively high standard deviation of 1.449 suggests that students' opinions varied widely regarding the difficulty of answering Wh- questions in listening tasks. This may indicate that some students had trouble locating specific information in spoken texts, while others were more confident or experienced in handling such question formats. The findings showed that students face several challenges in listening, including anxiety before tasks, difficulty understanding fast speech, unfamiliar topics, and background noise. Many also struggled with recalling recently heard words, inferring unknown vocabulary, and processing continuous speech without pauses. Complex grammar and multitasking during listening tasks further affected comprehension. These results fulfill the first research aim by identifying the key barriers students face in listening. The survey results show that most students have a lot of trouble speaking English. This is mostly because they don't know many words, their grammar is bad, and they have trouble with pronunciation. These results are in line with Hamouda (2013), who talked about comparable problems with speaking, and Ur (1996), who talked about how important vocabulary and grammar are for fluency. Pronunciation also came up as a big problem, which backs up Goh's (1999) claim that it makes oral communication less successful. Fear, doubt, and worry were also big psychological variables. A lot of students said they were scared to speak and often lost words when talking, which shows that their passive and active language skills weren't quite in sync. These results corroborate Ur's (1996) assertions regarding the influence of psychological factors on speaking

performance and reflect Hamouda's (2013) insights concerning learners' hesitance arising from fear of making mistakes. Interestingly, previous studies frequently indicated a poor readiness to speak; however, this study shown that students were generally motivated, suggesting a favourable shift potentially attributable to increased exposure to English or modifications in the curriculum. The investigation further emphasised many contextual elements. In contrast to earlier research, a significant number of pupils did not perceive peer scorn or excessive teacher reliance on the mother tongue as substantial obstacles. However, there were problems including bad classroom settings, not enough group talks, and weak peer collaboration. Most students, on the other hand, thought their professors' pronunciation and speaking skills were good. This is different from past criticisms of teacher language proficiency (Ur, 1996). There were also emotional and motivational factors at play. Students said they were worried about how hard English was and that their parents weren't helping them enough. Teachers were generally seen favourably; nonetheless, the absence of interactive and communicative practices in classrooms persists as a concern, underscoring a disparity between communicative teaching methodologies and their practical application (Ur, 1996; Goh, 1999). Students had trouble listening because of quick speaking, words they didn't know, background noise, and complicated grammar. These problems have also been noted by Goh (1999), Hamouda (2013), and Ur (1996). Psychological stress, including anxiety during listening exercises and challenges in sustaining focus, exacerbated comprehension difficulties. Problems with multitasking and short-term memory recall were also noticeable, demonstrating that cognitive load is a considerable impediment. Also, problems with test design, such how hard it is to understand recorded speech and the types of questions asked, show that we need more varied and helpful listening materials. In general, the results show that both cognitive and emotional factors have a big impact on how well people listen and talk. According to Table 2, the weighted mean for speaking was 3.19, while for listening it was 3.57. This indicates that students experience more difficulties in listening than in speaking. One possible reason is that they are mostly exposed to their teachers' English rather than native speakers. Additionally, the curriculum includes only a limited number of listening activities, which may contribute to these difficulties. To summarize, this section has presented the data collected from the close-ended questions in the questionnaire, which explored students' attitudes toward the challenges they encounter when listening to English. The findings revealed that the majority of students struggle to comprehend English listening tasks, particularly when the speech resembles native speaker patterns and lacks pauses between sentences.

### Conclusion

In the public high schools of Ranya, students face numerous obstacles that hinder the development of their practical English-speaking abilities. Limited opportunities for real communication in the classroom, combined with a lack of confidence and minimal exposure to natural spoken English, create a learning environment where speaking skills cannot flourish. Although the curriculum emphasizes the importance of listening and speaking, there remains a clear gap between these objectives and the actual classroom practices.

This study further highlights how weak vocabulary knowledge, grammatical inaccuracy, and pronunciation difficulties contribute to students' limited speaking proficiency. Emotional factors—such as fear of speaking, hesitation, and difficulty recalling words while talking—also play a significant role in undermining learners' performance. Moreover, the absence of group discussions, insufficient peer support, and uninspiring classroom environments intensify the problem. Despite these challenges, many students demonstrate a strong willingness to improve and engage in English, suggesting that with better instructional practices and a more supportive atmosphere, meaningful progress is possible. These findings reinforce the urgent need for more communicative, student-centered approaches that bridge the gap between curriculum goals and classroom realities.

### Recommendations

The study's results suggest that the English curriculum should be changed to focus more on real-life listening and speaking exercises that encourage meaningful conversation. Teachers should be encouraged to spend more time and energy on oral skills, making sure that they are just as important as reading and writing. Also, the school's infrastructure should be upgraded by making classrooms more flexible so that students can work together and by setting up audio labs with real listening materials to provide students more chances to hear natural language.

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