

Speaking Fluency Difficulties Among EFL Students: A Quantitative Investigation

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Abstract

Speaking fluency is a fundamental component of English language proficiency, yet many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners struggle to achieve it. In the Yemeni higher education context, limited research has systematically investigated the specific speaking difficulties encountered by university students, particularly at Dhale University. This study aims to: (1) identify the major speaking fluency difficulties faced by EFL students at Dhale University, (2) examine the underlying causes of these difficulties, (3) propose appropriate solutions, and (4) explore modern techniques for improving speaking fluency skills. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed. A validated questionnaire was administered to 42 undergraduate students (4 males, 38 females) from all academic levels at the Department of English, Dhale University. The instrument demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.70-0.73$). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages) and inferential statistics (chi-square test). Findings revealed that speaking fluency difficulties were highly prevalent (overall mean = 3.73/5.00). The most significant challenges were lack of regular speaking practice in the classroom ($M = 4.19$), difficulty retrieving suitable vocabulary during spontaneous speech ($M = 4.14$), and fear of making mistakes ($M = 4.10$). Pronunciation difficulties, shyness, and limited collocational knowledge also emerged as major barriers. Analysis of causes identified lack of practice ($M = 4.33$) and poor pronunciation skills ($M = 4.24$) as the primary contributing factors. No statistically significant differences were found across academic levels ($\chi^2 = 2.561$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that fluency difficulties persist throughout students' university years. The study concludes that addressing speaking fluency difficulties requires a multifaceted approach combining systematic classroom instruction (pronunciation training, vocabulary enrichment) with autonomous learning strategies (peer practice, authentic media exposure). These findings provide an evidence-based foundation for curriculum development and instructional design in similar EFL contexts, and they are discussed in light of Nation's fluency-oriented instruction framework.

Keywords: speaking fluency, efl students, speaking difficulties, Dhale University, Yemen; language anxiety, communicative competence

1. Introduction

The primary objective of learning English is to communicate effectively in the language. Davies and Pearse (2000, cited in Leong & Seyedeh, 2017) contend that the major purpose of English language teaching is to equip learners with the ability to use English effectively and correctly in communication. Speaking is regarded as one of the fundamental skills that need to be developed in the language classroom. Mouhoub (2016) believes that mastering the speaking skill is the keystone in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Among the four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—the latter appears to be of top priority in contemporary language classrooms due to the significant role it plays in learners' mastery of the target language.

Richards and Renandya (2002, cited in Ahmad & Mustafa, 2016) point out that achieving proficiency in oral communication is the main dream and motivation that a large percentage of learners bring to language classes. For Warschauer (2000, cited in Fareen, 2013), communicating in English has become a prerequisite factor in both academic and professional domains. Anton (2017) emphasizes that oral communication is very important for students because good communication enables students to assimilate more from the learning process by empowering them to ask relevant questions and discuss doubts. Effective verbal communication nurtures the

process of socialization by facilitating new friendships, which in turn aid the learning process.

Ur (2000) succinctly captures the importance of speaking: "Of all the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers' of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing."

Despite its recognized importance, EFL students at Dhale University face considerable difficulties in speaking fluency. These difficulties stem from a combination of linguistic challenges, such as limited vocabulary and weak sentence formation and psychological factors, including lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, and communication apprehension. Additionally, ineffective teaching methods that focus heavily on grammar translation rather than interactive, communicative strategies hinder students' progress.

This study investigates the specific difficulties encountered by EFL students at Dhale University in developing speaking fluency, with the goal of informing targeted pedagogical strategies to enhance their oral communication skills.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

EFL students at Dhale University face significant challenges in achieving fluency in spoken English. Despite their efforts, many students struggle with pronunciation, vocabulary limitations, anxiety, and lack of confidence, which hinder their ability to communicate effectively. These difficulties not only affect their academic performance but also limit their opportunities for future career development. This study aims to identify and analyze the specific difficulties encountered by EFL students at Dhale University in developing speaking fluency, with the goal of informing targeted pedagogical strategies to enhance their oral communication skills.

1.2 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties of speaking fluency encountered by EFL students?
2. What are the reasons behind the difficulties of speaking fluency encountered by EFL students?
3. What are the solutions to the difficulties of speaking fluency encountered by EFL students?
4. What are the modern techniques to improve EFL students' speaking fluency skills?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

Speaking is defined as the process of sharing thoughts and ideas through spoken words and sounds, involving both verbal and non-verbal communication (Kayi, 2006). Nunan (2003) emphasizes its importance in understanding and interacting with others, while Nakhalah (2016) notes that it involves vocalizing sounds using various parts of the body. Speaking is one of the four key language skills and is essential for clear communication and relationship building.

Students face several key challenges in speaking English. Poor pronunciation can affect intelligibility (how recognizable the speech is), comprehensibility (how well the listener understands), and interpretability (understanding the speaker's intent). Limited vocabulary makes it difficult for learners to express their thoughts and form sentences, often leading to confusion about word choice and structure. Additionally, a lack of confidence—often resulting from pronunciation and vocabulary issues—can make students hesitant to speak. Afisah (2015) points out that the factors causing difficulties in speaking English can generally be divided into two types: linguistic factors and psychological factors.

Nation (1989, 2001) proposed a fluency-oriented instruction framework that emphasizes the importance of repeated practice, meaningful interaction, and the development of automaticity in language use. According to Nation, fluency development requires four essential conditions: (1) meaningful communication, (2) repetition of language items, (3) opportunities for learners to focus on fluency rather than accuracy, and (4) feedback on fluency performance. This framework provides a valuable lens for understanding the causes of fluency difficulties identified in the present study and for designing effective pedagogical solutions.

2.1.1 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Yemen

The status of English in Yemen falls under Kachru's Expanding Circle, where the language is neither a native tongue nor a second language with official status, but rather a foreign language studied primarily for academic and professional advancement. In the Yemeni educational context, particularly at institutions such as Dhale University, English is a pivotal component of the higher education curriculum.

Historically, the pedagogical approach in Yemen has been heavily influenced by the Grammar-Translation Method. This traditional framework prioritizes structural accuracy, rote memorization of vocabulary, and bilingual translation over communicative fluency. Consequently, students often develop a high level of "passive

competence", understanding complex texts—but suffer from a deficit in "active competence," specifically in oral production.

2.1.2 Aspects of Speaking: Accuracy and Fluency

Speaking is one of the most complex language skills because it requires the simultaneous use of several interrelated components. Among these, accuracy and fluency are considered central dimensions that determine a learner's speaking proficiency (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Accuracy refers to the correctness of language use in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax during oral production. According to Bygate (2001), accuracy reflects the learner's knowledge of the target language system and is crucial when the speaker focuses on producing precise and error-free utterances.

Fluency refers to the smoothness, continuity, and ease of speech production. A fluent speaker can express ideas coherently without unnatural pauses, undue hesitation, or frequent self-correction. Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) state that fluency is an indicator of automaticity in language use, where learners can retrieve words and structures quickly and coordinate them efficiently during conversation.

2.1.3 Difficulties of Speaking Fluency Encountered by EFL Students

Speaking fluency has been recognized as one of the most challenging aspects of foreign language learning for EFL students. Derakhshan (2021) identifies limited vocabulary as one of the most frequently reported barriers, restricting students' ability to express their ideas effectively and leading to pauses and hesitation during speech. Shalaby (2023) notes that lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes cause many EFL students to feel anxious when required to speak, especially in front of peers or teachers, increasing hesitation and reducing willingness to take communicative risks.

Al-Hassaani and Qaid (2021) emphasize that poor pronunciation and phonological errors affect comprehensibility and cause listeners to struggle to understand the speaker, undermining learners' fluency and self-assurance. Additionally, over-reliance on the mother tongue in the classroom prevents students from practicing English speaking regularly and limits exposure to authentic communicative use (Derakhshan, 2021).

2.2 Previous Studies

Al-Shujaa and Al-Hattami (2021) examined speaking difficulties among Yemeni EFL students at Aden University using a descriptive method and a questionnaire with 102 students. The study found that anxiety, low confidence, weak pronunciation, and limited vocabulary were the main barriers to fluency, and that traditional teaching methods reduce speaking practice. The authors recommended using communicative activities such as pair work and role-plays to improve fluency.

Al-Jamal and Al-Jamal (2014) explored speaking difficulties among 158 Jordanian university students through questionnaires and interviews. Results showed that students suffer from lack of vocabulary, fear of mistakes, and high anxiety, which negatively affect fluency. Large classes and few opportunities to speak also limited students' oral performance.

Al-Saqqaf (2023) investigated factors affecting fluency in Saudi universities using a quantitative questionnaire with 200 students. Findings revealed that weak pronunciation, insufficient speaking practice, and overuse of Arabic in the classroom reduce fluency. The study emphasized the importance of trained instructors and communicative teaching techniques.

Patel (2024) identified strategies to overcome EFL speaking problems using a descriptive design with 72 learners. The study found that learners struggle with low vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and social anxiety, highlighting that active learning, role-plays, and collaborative speaking tasks significantly improve fluency.

2.3 Research Gap

Although numerous studies have investigated the challenges faced by EFL students in developing speaking fluency globally and in various contexts, there is a notable lack of research focused specifically on Dhale University. Existing literature does not sufficiently explore the unique linguistic, cultural, and educational factors influencing EFL students' speaking difficulties within this particular setting. Moreover, little is known about the specific types of challenges students encounter—such as psychological barriers, limited vocabulary, or instructional shortcomings—and how these obstacles affect their speaking proficiency. Therefore, there is a critical need for a context-specific investigation into the speaking difficulties of EFL students at Dhale University to inform targeted language teaching strategies and improve students' oral communication skills in this environment.

Despite the contributions of previous studies, there remains a lack of research that systematically investigates speaking fluency difficulties at Dhale University and that frames the analysis of causes and solutions within a coherent theoretical model of fluency development. The present study addresses this gap by drawing on Nation's (1989, 2001) fluency-oriented instruction framework to interpret the findings and to propose evidence-based

pedagogical recommendations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is considered the most appropriate method for identifying and describing the difficulties encountered by EFL students in speaking fluency.

3.2 Participants

The research population consisted of all students of the Department of English and Translation at Dhale University. The total number of students was 111 (18 males, 93 females). Using stratified random sampling, the sample comprised 42 students (4 males, 38 females), representing 38% of the original population. Participants represented all academic levels: first year (n=10), second year (n=11), third year (n=10), and fourth year (n=11). Participants were distributed across academic levels as shown in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the research sample according to gender and academic level

Academic level	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
First	1	9	10
Second	1	10	11
Third	1	9	10
Fourth	0	11	11
Total	3	39	42

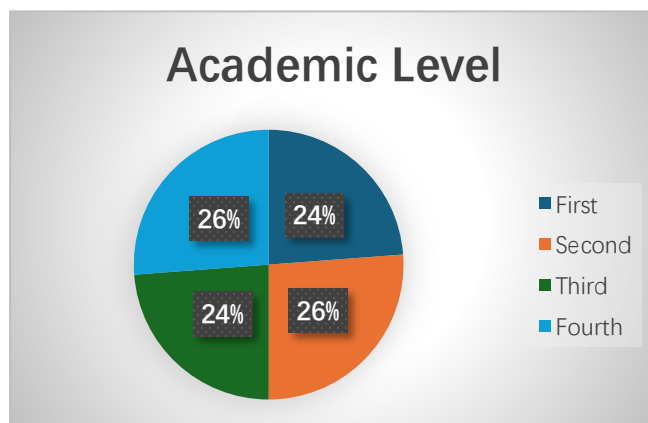


Figure 1. Distribution of the research sample according to gender and academic level

3.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed consisting of 37 items distributed across four sections: (1) speaking difficulties (10 items), (2) causes of difficulties (7 items), (3) proposed solutions (9 items), and (4) modern techniques for improvement (11 items). Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree).

3.3.1 Validity

Face validity was established through review by three experts in English language teaching. Construct validity was assessed using Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and its domain total. Table 3 presents the results for all 37 items across the four domains. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.40 to 0.79, all statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, confirming strong internal consistency and good construct validity.

Table 2. Validity of internal consistency by calculating Pearson's correlation coefficient between the item score and the total score of the section to which it belongs

Domain	Items	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Significance	Domain	Items	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Significance
Speech Difficulties	1	.41**	.000	Suggested solutions	1	.44**	.000
	2	.48**	.000		2	.53**	.000
	3	.47**	.000		3	.48**	.000
	4	.40**	.000		4	.67**	.000
	5	.50**	.000		5	.70**	.000
	6	.63**	.000		6	.44**	.000
	7	.51**	.000		7	.63**	.000
	8	.79**	.000		8	.46**	.000
	9	.59**	.000		9	.54**	.000
	10	.61**	.000		1	.58**	.000
Reasons for Difficulties	1	.52**	.000	Modern Improvement Techniques	2	.46**	.000
	2	.77**	.000		3	.49**	.000
	3	.40**	.000		4	.41**	.000
	4	.53**	.000		5	.51**	.000
	5	.47**	.000		6	.46**	.000
	6	.41**	.000		7	.72**	.000
	7	.53**	.000		8	.73**	.000
					9	.55**	.000
					10	.60**	.000
					11	.50**	.000

3.3.2 Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the four domains ranged from 0.70 to 0.73, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the Questionnaire and its Four Parts

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Speaking Difficulties	0.71
Causes of Difficulty	0.73
Suggested Solutions	0.72
Modern Improvement Techniques	0.70

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages) were used to identify difficulties, causes, solutions, and techniques. The Kruskal-Wallis test was employed to examine differences across academic levels. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to verify construct validity.

While the Kruskal-Wallis test is robust for non-parametric data with small samples, the relatively small sample size (N = 42) limits the statistical power and generalizability of the inferential findings. Therefore, the results of the inferential analysis should be interpreted with caution, and future studies with larger, more representative samples are recommended to confirm these findings.

4. Results

4.1 Speaking Difficulties

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for speaking fluency difficulties.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranks of Speaking Difficulties

RANK	ITEM	MEAN	SD	LEVEL
1	Students are not used to speaking English regularly in the classroom	4.19	0.98	High
2	Students face difficulty finding suitable words/expressions	4.14	0.48	High
3	Students feel afraid of making mistakes	4.10	0.99	High
4	Students feel shy when speaking English	4.00	1.22	High
5	Students face difficulty pronouncing words correctly	3.95	0.97	High
6	Students face difficulty expressing ideas clearly	3.86	1.11	High
7	Students face difficulty with word collocations	3.43	1.12	High
8	Students face difficulty using suitable prepositions	3.43	1.12	High
9	Students face difficulty with word order	3.29	1.06	Moderate
10	Students face difficulty with subject-verb agreement	2.95	1.16	Weak
OVERALL		3.73	0.51	High

The overall mean of 3.73 indicates that speaking fluency difficulties are highly prevalent among EFL students at Dhale University. The most significant difficulty was the lack of regular speaking practice in the classroom ($M = 4.19$), followed by difficulty retrieving suitable vocabulary ($M = 4.14$) and fear of making mistakes ($M = 4.10$).

4.2 Differences Across Academic Levels

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed no statistically significant differences in speaking fluency difficulties across academic levels ($\chi^2 = 2.561$, $p = 0.109 > 0.05$), indicating that fluency difficulties persist throughout students' university years.

4.3 Causes of Speaking Difficulties

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranks of Causes of Difficulties

RANK	ITEM	MEAN	SD	LEVEL
1	Lack of practice	4.33	1.02	Very High
2	Poor pronunciation skills	4.24	0.89	Very High
3	Poor vocabulary/expressions	4.05	0.92	High
4	Lack of motivation	4.00	1.09	High
5	Overuse of mother tongue	3.62	1.60	High
6	Lack of grammar knowledge	3.57	0.98	High
7	Lack of confidence	3.05	1.20	Moderate
OVERALL		3.84	0.54	High

Lack of practice emerged as the primary cause ($M = 4.33$), followed closely by poor pronunciation skills ($M = 4.24$).

4.4 Proposed Solutions

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranks of Proposed Solutions

RANK	ITEM	MEAN	SD	LEVEL
1	Teachers should provide pronunciation skills	4.62	0.50	Very High
2	Teachers should provide necessary grammatical rules	4.52	0.51	Very High
3	Teachers should provide daily vocabulary	4.52	0.60	Very High
4	Teachers should encourage practice inside and outside class	4.48	0.51	Very High
5	Teachers should encourage confident speaking	4.48	0.68	Very High
6	Teachers should provide useful expressions	4.43	0.60	Very High
7	Students should use every opportunity to practice	4.33	0.97	Very High
8	Students should have time to watch English movies	3.95	0.59	High
9	Teachers should not criticize students' mistakes	3.10	1.41	Moderate
OVERALL		4.27	0.30	Very High

Students strongly endorsed pronunciation instruction as the top priority solution ($M = 4.62$), followed by grammar and vocabulary instruction.

4.5 Modern Techniques for Improvement

Table 7. Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranks of Modern Techniques

RANK	ITEM	MEAN	SD	LEVEL
1	Practicing with friends/classmates	4.52	0.68	Very High
2	Speaking with native speakers	4.43	0.51	Very High
3	Watching English TV programs	4.38	0.74	Very High
4	Watching English movies	4.38	0.67	Very High
5	Learning English from the Internet	4.38	0.50	Very High
6	Listening to English music	4.29	0.72	Very High
7	Taking English speaking courses	4.19	1.03	High
8	Listening to English news	4.14	1.01	High
9	Practicing speaking on one's own	4.10	0.99	High
10	Finding an English-using job	3.95	1.12	High
11	Becoming an English teacher	2.86	1.19	Moderate
OVERALL		4.15	0.40	High

Peer practice was rated as the most effective modern technique ($M = 4.52$), followed by interaction with native speakers ($M = 4.43$).

5. Discussion

5.1 Speaking Fluency Difficulties

The finding that speaking fluency difficulties are highly prevalent among EFL students at Dhale University aligns with previous research in Yemeni and Arab contexts. Al-Shujaa and Al-Hattami (2021) reported similar findings among students at Aden University, and Suleiman (2014) documented comparable challenges among Yemeni university students.

The most significant difficulty—lack of regular speaking practice in the classroom—supports Littlewood's (1981) communicative language teaching theory, which emphasizes that fluency develops through meaningful interaction

and practice. Nation's (1989) research on fluency development further demonstrates that repeated practice opportunities are essential for building speaking speed and reducing hesitation.

The high ranking of vocabulary retrieval problems reflects the fundamental linguistic challenge of limited lexical access during spontaneous speech. This finding is consistent with Derakhshan (2021), who identified vocabulary limitations as among the most frequently reported barriers to fluent speaking. Nation (2001) explains that the gap between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge is exacerbated by insufficient speaking practice.

The significant role of psychological factors—fear of making mistakes and shyness—supports Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that affective variables such as anxiety and self-confidence can impede language acquisition. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identified communication apprehension as a core component of foreign language anxiety, and Woodrow (2006) found that shy students participate less in speaking activities, receive less practice, and consequently develop fluency more slowly.

The finding that lack of regular speaking practice is the most significant difficulty aligns with Nation's (1989, 2001) fluency-oriented instruction framework, which emphasizes that fluency develops through repeated, meaningful practice rather than through isolated grammar or vocabulary instruction.

From a theoretical perspective, the causes identified in this study, particularly lack of practice and poor pronunciation skills, can be understood through Nation's (1989, 2001) framework, which posits that fluency development requires both extensive practice opportunities and systematic attention to the sub-skills that support fluent speech, including pronunciation and vocabulary retrieval.

5.2 Causes of Speaking Difficulties

The finding that lack of practice is the primary cause confirms the earlier identification of insufficient practice as the most significant difficulty. This alignment strengthens the conclusion that practice opportunities are foundational to fluency development.

Poor pronunciation skills emerging as a very large cause is consistent with Al-Hassaani and Qaid (2021), who found that Yemeni EFL learners face specific pronunciation challenges related to English sounds not present in Arabic, as well as suprasegmental features like stress and intonation.

The persistence of difficulties across all academic levels, with no significant differences found, suggests that current instructional approaches may not adequately address fluency development throughout the curriculum. This finding indicates the need for sustained, systematic attention to speaking skills across all years of study.

It is important to acknowledge that the small sample size ($N = 42$) may limit the robustness of the inferential conclusions. Although the Kruskal-Wallis test is appropriate for non-parametric data with small samples, the absence of statistically significant differences across academic levels should be interpreted with caution. Future research with larger samples from multiple Yemeni universities is needed to confirm whether these findings are generalizable.

5.3 Solutions and Modern Techniques

Students' strong endorsement of pronunciation instruction as the top priority solution aligns with Celce-Murcia's (2001) emphasis that pronunciation instruction should include both segmental features (individual sounds) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, intonation), as both contribute to intelligibility and fluency.

The high valuation of peer practice as a modern technique supports Mackey and Goo's (2007) finding that peer interaction facilitates second language development through negotiation of meaning. Similarly, the importance placed on interaction with native speakers reflects students' recognition of the value of authentic interaction with proficient English speakers. Students' endorsement of media-based learning, including watching English movies, TV programs, and using Internet resources, aligns with Krashen's (2004) emphasis on the value of extensive exposure to comprehensible input for language development.

5.4 Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, they provide empirical support for Nation's (1989, 2001) fluency-oriented instruction framework, demonstrating that fluency difficulties are closely associated with insufficient practice opportunities, limited vocabulary retrieval, and psychological barriers such as fear and shyness. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that addressing fluency difficulties requires a multifaceted approach that combines systematic instruction in pronunciation and vocabulary with ample opportunities for meaningful, low-anxiety practice, both inside and outside the classroom.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study has achieved its objectives of identifying the difficulties of speaking fluency encountered by EFL students at Dhale University, shedding light on the reasons behind these difficulties, and identifying solutions and modern techniques for improvement. The findings provide a comprehensive picture of speaking fluency challenges in this context and offer clear direction for pedagogical intervention.

Speaking fluency difficulties are highly prevalent among students, with lack of regular practice, vocabulary retrieval problems, and psychological barriers (fear and shyness) emerging as the most significant challenges. These difficulties persist across all academic levels, indicating the need for sustained, systematic attention to fluency development throughout the curriculum. The primary causes identified are lack of practice and poor pronunciation skills, which directly inform the solutions prioritized by students: pronunciation instruction, vocabulary and grammar development, and opportunities for meaningful practice.

Students strongly endorsed both teacher-centered interventions (systematic instruction in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar) and learner-centered strategies (peer practice, native speaker interaction, and media exposure). These findings collectively indicate that addressing speaking fluency difficulties requires a multifaceted approach that combines systematic classroom instruction with autonomous learning strategies.

While this study provides valuable insights into the speaking fluency difficulties experienced by EFL students at Dhale University, it is not without limitations. The small sample size ($N = 42$) limits the generalizability of the findings, and the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may be subject to response bias. Future research should address these limitations by employing larger, more representative samples, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom observations, and conducting experimental studies to test the effectiveness of specific pedagogical interventions identified in this research.

6.2 Recommendations

For English Language Instructors:

1. Integrate regular speaking activities into daily classroom routines, including pair work, group discussions, role-plays, and presentations
2. Provide systematic pronunciation instruction addressing both segmental and suprasegmental features
3. Emphasize active, productive use of vocabulary rather than passive recognition
4. Establish a low-anxiety classroom environment where mistakes are treated as learning opportunities
5. Guide students in effectively using modern techniques, including recommending appropriate English media and facilitating peer practice

For Students:

1. Actively seek practice opportunities inside and outside class
2. Regularly watch English movies, listen to English music, and use Internet resources
3. Form speaking groups or partnerships to practice English regularly

For Curriculum Developers and Administrators:

1. Redesign speaking courses to prioritize communicative activities with structured practice opportunities
2. Explicitly address pronunciation and active vocabulary development as core components of speaking instruction
3. Integrate technology and media-based learning, providing access to authentic materials

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Conduct similar studies with larger sample sizes from multiple Yemeni universities
2. Design experimental studies to measure the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies identified in this research
3. Examine relationships between speaking fluency and other language skills
4. Investigate the impact of specific digital tools and online platforms on speaking fluency development
5. Conduct qualitative research, including interviews and classroom observations, to gain deeper insights into students' experiences

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the findings or interpretations presented in this study.

Author Contributions

Nada Jamal Al-Jaradi, Kefa Abdulrahman Al-Wajih, Naba'a Khalil Al-Mhaqni, Jehan Ahmed Sufyan, Fada Ali Jafar, and Hadeel Mohsen Al-Gharbani contributed to the conceptualization, data collection, analysis, and drafting of the manuscript. Mohammed Abdulkareem A. Alkamel supervised the research, provided methodological guidance, and revised the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Funding Declaration

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Originality Statement

The authors hereby declare that this manuscript is an original work that has not been published previously and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

questionnaire, approval was obtained from the Department of English and Translation prior to data collection. All procedures were designed to ensure the protection of participants' rights and welfare.

Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in this study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. All participants provided verbal consent, and anonymity was guaranteed throughout the research process.

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