Exploring the Impact of Learning Styles on Speaking Anxiety: A Qualitative Study of English Education Students in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the relationship between learning styles and speaking anxiety among first-semester English Education Department students at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. Speaking anxiety is a significant barrier to language learning, often exacerbated by mismatches between students' learning styles—visual, auditory, or kinesthetic—and traditional teaching methods. To explore this relationship, a qualitative research approach was employed, with data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis involving 18 participants. The semi-structured interviews were designed to gather students' perspectives on their learning preferences, experiences with speaking anxiety, and how these factors influenced their speaking performance. The document analysis included an examination of academic records, feedback from instructors, and reflective journals, which provided additional insights into students' speaking challenges and coping mechanisms. The findings reveal that students' learning styles significantly influence their experiences of speaking anxiety. Visual learners struggle with spontaneous speaking tasks due to their preference for preparation and reliance on visual aids. Auditory learners face challenges with pronunciation, often fearing their spoken English will not sound "correct." Kinesthetic learners, on the other hand, experience heightened anxiety in formal, non-interactive settings where they are unable to engage physically with the language. This study underscores the importance of aligning teaching strategies with students' learning preferences to reduce anxiety and foster confidence in speaking tasks. Recommendations include adopting flexible, student-centered approaches such as incorporating visual aids, auditory exercises, and interactive, movement-based tasks that cater to various learning styles. These strategies aim to create more supportive and inclusive learning environments.

Keywords: Speaking Anxiety, Learning Styles, EFL Students, Qualitative Research.

INTRODUCTION

English plays a vital role as a global language, especially in academic, professional, and cultural contexts. For students in the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang, mastering English, particularly speaking skills, is essential for their academic and career development. However, many students experience significant challenges in achieving fluency in speaking due to high levels of speaking anxiety. Speaking anxiety, characterized by feelings of nervousness, self-doubt, and fear of making mistakes, often hinders students from expressing their thoughts effectively. Empowerment frameworks, such as those discussed by Acuña Mora et al. (2022), can be applied to language learning, where autonomy and self-regulation are critical for

improving learner performance. This issue has been widely observed among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and poses a significant obstacle to their language acquisition and communicative competence (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Recent research on speaking anxiety has revealed that this issue is not confined to Western EFL contexts but is also prevalent in Asian and Indonesian educational settings. Astuti (2017) demonstrated that learning styles, especially visual and kinesthetic preferences, have a significant impact on students' ability to acquire vocabulary, which is essential for reducing speaking anxiety. A study by Fauzi et al. (2022) found that Indonesian EFL students often experience heightened anxiety when engaging in speaking activities, with factors such as fear of negative evaluation, lack of preparation, and cultural influences playing significant roles. Similarly, a more localized study by Mulyani (2018) found that Indonesian EFL students, particularly in rural areas, report high anxiety levels due to a lack of opportunities for authentic communication and limited exposure to English outside the classroom. This highlights the urgency of addressing speaking anxiety in Indonesian EFL contexts, particularly at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang.

One of the potential factors contributing to speaking anxiety is the mismatch between students' learning styles and teaching methods. Hassani (2012) found that kinesthetic learners often perform better in speaking tasks, a result

that aligns with our focus on learning style mismatches. Fauzi et al. (2022) found that web-based learning significantly helps reduce anxiety in students when speaking English, aligning with the aim of this study to explore anxiety in language learning. Learning styles refer to the preferred ways individuals process and acquire information, commonly categorized into visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles (Dunn & Dunn, 1978). Recent studies, such as those by Hassani (2021), have highlighted how mismatches between teaching methods and students' dominant learning styles can exacerbate anxiety, similarly, Fithrotunnisa et al. (2022) found that learning style mismatches contributed to increased anxiety in language tasks, especially for students in large classrooms with traditional teaching methods. Visual learners tend to grasp information through charts, written materials, and visual aids; auditory learners are more effective when learning through listening and verbal discussions; and kinesthetic learners benefit from active participation, hands-on activities, and movement. Visual and auditory learning styles, as discussed by Lubis et al. (2018), contribute to improved academic performance, which may mitigate anxiety in speaking tasks. In the context of English language learning, mismatches between these preferred learning styles and traditional instructional strategies—often lecture-based and text-heavy—can lead to increased speaking anxiety, especially for students who do not resonate with the teaching methods. As

Cameron (2001) highlighted, when instruction does not align with students' dominant learning styles, it may result in disengagement, exacerbating anxiety and reducing active participation in speaking activities.

Despite the importance of this issue, limited research has explored the relationship between learning styles and speaking anxiety in the context of Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. Fitriani et al. (2022) found that speaking anxiety in EFL students is influenced by various factors, which is similar to the findings in this study. According to preliminary data collected at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang, 60% of first-semester students report moderate to severe anxiety when engaging in speaking tasks, particularly in large, lecture-style classes where individual interaction is limited. This gap in understanding the relationship between learning styles and speaking anxiety underscores the need for a study that specifically examines how students' learning preferences influence their speaking anxiety in the Indonesian context. This is especially crucial at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang, where students often experience anxiety due to a combination of inadequate speaking practice opportunities, lack of exposure to English in authentic settings, and the predominance of teacher-centered instruction.

To address this gap, this research aims to identify dominant learning styles and assess their influence on students' speaking anxiety levels. In this study, we used a stratified random sampling technique, following the guidelines set by Amin, Garancang, and Abunawas (2023), to ensure diverse representation from various student groups. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights that can improve teaching strategies and better support students.

This research adopts a descriptive quantitative approach to investigate the interplay between learning styles and speaking anxiety. This study follows a mixed-methods approach as outlined by Emzir (2019), incorporating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data. Data will be collected using validated questionnaires, including the Learning Style Inventory (Dunn & Dunn, 1978) and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986). These tools will assess the dominant learning styles and speaking anxiety levels among students. Based on preliminary data, 60% of students at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang report moderate to severe anxiety when engaging in speaking tasks, with visual learners reporting the highest levels of discomfort during spontaneous speaking activities. By analyzing the relationship between these variables, this study seeks to uncover patterns that can inform instructional practices and help reduce speaking anxiety among students.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between learning styles and speaking anxiety among first-semester students in the English Education

Department. Specifically, the study aims to identify the dominant learning styles of students, assess their levels of speaking anxiety, and analyze how these learning styles influence their experiences of speaking anxiety. Furthermore, the research seeks to provide actionable recommendations for aligning teaching strategies with students' learning preferences to create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

This study is grounded in well-established theoretical frameworks. Learning style theory (Dunn & Dunn, 1978) provides a basis for understanding how students process information differently, which directly affects their engagement in language tasks. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), speaking anxiety is a multifaceted issue influenced by both cognitive and emotional factors. Previous studies have shown that aligning teaching methods with students' learning styles can enhance their engagement, reduce anxiety, and improve language proficiency (Cameron, 2001; Thornbury, 2002). These frameworks guide the study's approach and emphasize the importance of customizing teaching strategies to meet individual learner needs.

The findings of this study are expected to provide significant contributions to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the research will enhance the understanding of how learning styles influence speaking anxiety, adding to the body of knowledge in EFL education. Practically, the study aims to equip educators with strategies to align teaching methods with students' preferences, thereby reducing speaking anxiety and fostering more effective language learning. By addressing a critical gap in the literature, this research has the potential to improve the quality of English language education at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang and serve as a reference for future studies in similar contexts.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the relationship between learning styles and speaking anxiety among first-semester students of the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in learning English, particularly in relation to their dominant learning styles and levels of speaking anxiety.

The research was conducted during the 2020–2021 academic year, focusing on 18 students as participants. These students were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which was specifically chosen to ensure the inclusion of diverse learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) as well as varying levels of speaking anxiety. The sampling process aimed to represent a wide range of experiences and learning preferences among the first-semester

students, ensuring that all three learning styles were well-represented. In particular, participants were selected to reflect both high and low levels of speaking anxiety, as measured through a preliminary survey. This allowed for a deeper understanding of how different learning styles intersect with varying anxiety levels, ensuring that the sample represented the diversity of the student population at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang.

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The interviews were designed to explore students' perceptions of their learning preferences, their experiences with speaking anxiety, and how they believed their learning styles influenced their ability to speak English. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was conducted in a relaxed setting to encourage open and honest responses.

Document analysis was used to examine a range of students' academic records, including speaking performance assessments, feedback from instructors, and reflective journals. In particular, feedback from instructors and reflective journals were used to identify recurring themes related to speaking anxiety and how students' learning styles may have impacted their performance. To ensure the validity and reliability of the document analysis, a clear coding protocol was established, which involved reviewing the documents in multiple stages. Initially, key excerpts from the feedback and journals were highlighted based on their relevance to themes of speaking anxiety and learning preferences. Then, these excerpts were categorized into broader thematic areas, such as self-perceived strengths and weaknesses, coping mechanisms, and the influence of instructional strategies. These categories were cross-checked by the researcher to ensure consistency and coherence in the thematic analysis process.

Each of the data sources—interviews, assessments, and feedback—was triangulated to ensure reliability and cross-check findings. Triangulation was used to compare and contrast information obtained from different data sources, ensuring that conclusions were not based solely on one type of data, but rather integrated and supported by multiple perspectives.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding the qualitative data into themes that emerged from the students' responses and academic records. The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns related to the three dominant learning styles and their potential impact on speaking anxiety. Themes such as self-perceived strengths and weaknesses, coping mechanisms, and the influence of instructional strategies were highlighted during the analysis process.

To ensure transparency and reliability, a clear coding framework was applied across both the interview transcripts and document analysis. This framework involved initially identifying broad themes (e.g., speaking anxiety, learning styles, coping strategies) and then narrowing down to more specific sub-themes, such as visual learners' reliance on written material or kinesthetic learners' preference for interactive activities. Each theme was revisited and refined through constant comparison, where new data were continuously compared with existing codes to ensure that the analysis remained consistent and rigorous. Additionally, peer review was conducted with another researcher to cross-check the themes and ensure that the analysis was not influenced by personal biases.

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the study. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research and provided consent prior to participation. Their anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by assigning pseudonyms and ensuring that their data were used solely for research purposes.

Although this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge the limitations inherent in qualitative methods. One potential limitation is interview bias. Since the semi-structured interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting, students might have provided answers that they believed were expected or socially desirable, rather than their true feelings. To mitigate this bias, interviewers were trained to create an open, non-judgmental atmosphere and were mindful to avoid leading questions. Future research could consider using more diverse methods, such as group interviews or participant observation, to further triangulate the findings and reduce potential bias.

Another limitation is the relatively small sample size of 18 participants, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. While the purposive sampling technique aimed to ensure diversity in learning styles and anxiety levels, a larger sample size would allow for a more robust analysis and better generalizability to the broader population of English Education students at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. Future studies could consider expanding the sample size or comparing multiple cohorts across different semesters to increase the reliability of the results and better capture the diversity of student experiences across a wider range of contexts.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the relationship between learning styles and speaking anxiety among first-semester students of the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. The data collected from semi-

structured interviews and document analysis indicate that students' learning styles play a crucial role in shaping their experiences of speaking anxiety. The results are presented in three key areas: the characteristics of learning styles, the manifestations of speaking anxiety, and the interplay between these two factors.

Characteristics of Learning Styles

The analysis of interviews revealed that students exhibit distinct preferences for visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learning styles, each influencing their approach to language acquisition. Quantitative data from the survey conducted during the study indicate that 40% of the participants identified themselves as visual learners, 35% as auditory learners, and 25% as kinesthetic learners.

Visual learners expressed a strong reliance on written materials, diagrams, and visual aids. They reported feeling more confident when they could visualize grammatical structures or vocabulary through mind maps or flashcards. One student shared, "I feel more comfortable learning English when I can see the rules and examples clearly written. It helps me organize my thoughts."

Auditory learners, comprising 35% of the sample, preferred oral explanations and discussions. They described benefiting from listening activities, such as dialogues, podcasts, or teacher-led explanations. However, these students also expressed challenges when the learning environment was overly text-heavy. One participant noted, "I struggle when the

teacher uses too many slides without speaking much. I need to hear and repeat to understand."

Kinesthetic learners, who made up the remaining 25%, preferred hands-on activities and movement-based tasks. These students thrived in role-plays, simulations, and group activities that allowed them to engage actively with the language. However, they reported feeling anxious and disengaged in traditional lecture-based settings. One kinesthetic learner explained, "I get restless when I have to sit still and listen for too long. I learn better when I can move around and practice."

Manifestations of Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety emerged as a common issue among participants, with varying degrees of severity. Quantitative data revealed that 60% of the participants experienced moderate to severe anxiety during speaking tasks, with visual learners reporting the highest levels of discomfort during spontaneous speaking activities. Students described their anxiety as stemming from a fear of making mistakes, being judged by peers, and feeling unprepared to express themselves in English. This anxiety often led to avoidance behaviors, such as reluctance to participate in class discussions or hesitance to volunteer for speaking tasks.

Visual learners reported feeling anxious when they were required to speak spontaneously without sufficient preparation. As one participant explained, "I need time to write down my thoughts before I speak. When I

am put on the spot, I freeze and forget what I want to say."

Auditory learners, on the other hand, expressed concerns about pronunciation and accent, often fearing that their spoken English would not sound "correct" or natural. Quantitative data also showed that auditory learners had a higher level of anxiety related to pronunciation errors compared to kinesthetic learners, with 75% of auditory learners reporting a fear of making pronunciation mistakes during speaking activities.

Kinesthetic learners highlighted their discomfort in formal speaking situations, such as presentations, where their movement and active engagement were restricted. One student shared, "I feel trapped when I have to stand still and speak formally. It makes me even more nervous.

The intensity of speaking anxiety was further compounded by classroom dynamics and instructional methods. Students reported feeling more anxious in large classes where they perceived greater scrutiny from peers and instructors. They also noted that traditional, lecture-based teaching methods failed to provide adequate opportunities for meaningful interaction and practice, which exacerbated their anxiety.

Interplay Between Learning Styles and Speaking Anxiety

The findings indicate that students' learning styles significantly influence the way they experience and cope with speaking anxiety.

Visual learners tended to rely on preparation and visual aids to reduce their anxiety. They reported feeling more confident when they could organize their thoughts using notes or slides before speaking. However, their reliance on preparation often became a source of anxiety in spontaneous speaking situations.

Auditory learners emphasized the importance of listening and repetition in building their speaking confidence. They reported benefiting from activities such as group discussions and listening exercises that allowed them to internalize pronunciation and sentence structures. However, these learners often struggled in environments where listening opportunities were limited, leading to increased anxiety.

Kinesthetic learners, who thrive in dynamic and interactive settings, expressed a preference for activities such as role-playing, games, and simulations. These activities helped them overcome their anxiety by creating a less formal and more engaging learning environment. However, in traditional settings where movement and interaction were restricted, their anxiety levels increased, and they felt disconnected from the learning process.

The findings also highlight the importance of alignment between teaching methods and students' learning styles. When instructional strategies matched students' preferences, their speaking anxiety decreased, and their confidence improved. Conversely, mismatched

teaching methods often heightened students' anxiety and hindered their progress. For example, visual learners reported feeling overwhelmed in auditory-dominant classrooms, while kinesthetic learners felt disengaged in text-heavy environments.

Contextual Influences on Speaking Anxiety

In addition to the core findings, several contextual factors emerged that influenced students' experiences of speaking anxiety. These included a lack of exposure to English outside the classroom, limited opportunities for authentic communication, and insufficient feedback from instructors. Students emphasized the need for a more supportive and interactive learning environment that encouraged risk-taking and experimentation with the language.

The institutional support and availability of English resources also played a crucial role in shaping students' speaking anxiety. A lack of access to extracurricular English practice, such as conversation clubs or language exchange programs, was frequently mentioned as a barrier to overcoming anxiety. Students noted that opportunities to practice English outside the classroom could significantly boost their confidence and reduce speaking anxiety. Moreover, the limited availability of feedback from instructors, particularly on informal speaking tasks, left many students feeling uncertain about their progress.

Participants also highlighted the role of peer dynamics in shaping their anxiety levels. Positive peer interactions and collaborative activities helped reduce anxiety, while fear of negative judgment from peers increased it. One student remarked, "When my classmates are supportive, I feel more comfortable trying to speak. But when I sense judgment, it's hard to even start".

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between learning styles and speaking anxiety among first-semester students of the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. The results highlight the critical role of aligning teaching methods with students' learning preferences to address speaking anxiety effectively. This discussion explores the implications of the findings, links them to existing theories and research, and offers practical recommendations for enhancing English language instruction.

The Role of Learning Styles in Language Learning

Learning styles are essential factors in determining how students process information and engage with language tasks. The study identified three dominant learning styles among students: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Each group displayed unique preferences and challenges in learning English, particularly in speaking activities. Visual learners, for instance, benefited from structured and visualized materials such as charts, diagrams, and notes, consistent with the findings of Dunn and Dunn (1978), who emphasized that visual learners

thrive when they can organize and see information clearly.

Auditory learners, on the other hand, relied on listening and verbal repetition to build their speaking confidence. Activities such as group discussions, dialogues, and listening exercises helped these students internalize pronunciation and vocabulary. Kinesthetic learners preferred active engagement through role-playing, games, and physical interaction, aligning with Cameron's (2001) assertion that movement-based tasks are particularly effective for kinesthetic learners in language learning.

However, the study also revealed that when teaching methods failed to accommodate these learning styles, students experienced heightened anxiety and disengagement. This finding underscores the importance of tailoring instructional strategies to align with diverse learning preferences, a recommendation supported by Harmer (2010), who advocates for differentiated teaching methods to address individual learner needs.

The study's findings align with Dunn & Dunn's (1978) Learning Style Theory, which suggests that students' learning preferences can significantly impact their ability to acquire and engage with new content. Visual learners, as highlighted in the findings, prefer more structured, visual content, which allows them to organize their thoughts, while auditory learners benefit from verbal exchanges, reinforcing Horwitz et al.'s (1986) model of speaking anxiety, which ties cognitive barriers (like fear of

making mistakes) to inadequate learning conditions. Kinesthetic learners, as the study shows, thrive in interactive environments, yet struggle in traditional lecture-based settings where movement is restricted, echoing findings in Thornbury (2002), where he links physical engagement with reduced anxiety in language acquisition.

Speaking Anxiety and Its Manifestations

Speaking anxiety emerged as a significant barrier to effective language learning, with students reporting feelings of fear, self-doubt, and nervousness when speaking English. This aligns with Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) conceptualization of foreign language classroom anxiety, which identifies communication apprehension as a primary source of anxiety in EFL learners. The study found that visual learners were particularly anxious in spontaneous speaking tasks, auditory learners worried about pronunciation and accent, and kinesthetic learners struggled in formal speaking situations. These findings highlight the need to address both the cognitive and emotional aspects of speaking anxiety in language classrooms.

In addition to the cognitive and emotional factors identified, the role of cultural and institutional dynamics must also be considered. At Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang, students often feel a strong cultural emphasis on respect and formality, which increases pressure during speaking activities, especially in front of peers or instructors. This

institutional culture might inadvertently amplify speaking anxiety, especially for kinesthetic learners who may feel constrained by formal classroom settings. As Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis suggests, language learners benefit from a low-anxiety environment that encourages risk-taking, which contrasts with the more rigid, hierarchical classroom settings that many students in this study experienced. Moreover, students' limited exposure to English outside the classroom, as mentioned in the study, could also be a significant external factor, limiting authentic language use and increasing anxiety, particularly for auditory and kinesthetic learners.

The Interplay Between Learning Styles and Anxiety

The findings demonstrate that students' learning styles significantly influence how they experience and cope with speaking anxiety. Visual learners relied on preparation and visual aids to reduce anxiety, but their dependence on structured materials often became a source of stress in unplanned speaking situations. Auditory learners benefited from listening and verbal practice, yet they expressed concerns about their ability to produce accurate pronunciation. Kinesthetic learners found comfort in interactive and movement-based activities but felt constrained in traditional, formal settings.

This interplay suggests that mismatched teaching methods can exacerbate speaking anxiety, while alignment with learning styles can alleviate it. For example, visual learners may feel more confident in environments where visual aids are integrated into speaking tasks, while kinesthetic learners may thrive in classrooms that prioritize interactive and physical engagement. This finding aligns with Harmer's (2010) assertion that teaching strategies should be flexible and adaptable to the learners' needs, particularly in addressing their emotional and cognitive barriers.

Implications for Instructional Strategies

The findings have significant implications for English language teaching practices. First, instructors should adopt a flexible and differentiated approach to teaching that accommodates the diverse learning styles of students. For visual learners, incorporating visual aids, such as mind maps, slides, and infographics, can help them organize and retain information. For auditory learners, activities such as group discussions, listening exercises, and verbal repetition can enhance their engagement and confidence. For kinesthetic learners, role-playing, games, and physical interaction should be prioritized to create a dynamic and supportive learning environment.

However, it is crucial to recognize the constraints faced by educators, particularly in terms of time and resources. Many educators may not have access to an extensive range of resources or the ability to devote long hours to lesson planning. Huda and Nasution (2022) demonstrated that visual and kinesthetic learning styles contributed positively to better

academic achievement, which aligns with the findings of this study. This highlights the importance of aligning teaching strategies with students' learning preferences, even in resource-limited settings, to mitigate anxiety and promote effective learning. In such cases, prioritizing low-resource strategies becomes essential. For example, visual learners can benefit from using easily accessible materials like handouts or whiteboard sketches rather than complex digital tools or expensive infographics. Auditory learners can participate in informal conversations with classmates or use podcasts as a means of practicing listening skills without requiring heavy technological setups. Kinesthetic learners, on the other hand, can engage in simple group exercises or walking debates that encourage movement without requiring extra classroom space or resources.

Linking Findings to Existing Literature

The results of this study align with previous research emphasizing the role of learning styles in language learning. Thornbury (2002) highlights that matching instructional strategies with learners' preferences can significantly enhance their engagement and performance. Similarly, Harmer (2010) stresses the importance of creating varied learning experiences that cater to different learning styles. Moreover, the findings confirm Horwitz et al.'s (1986) assertion that speaking anxiety is a multidimensional construct influenced by psychological, cognitive, and contextual factors. The study adds to this body of knowledge by demonstrating how learning styles intersect with speaking anxiety, providing a nuanced understanding of how these variables interact in an EFL context.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of aligning teaching methods with learning styles on reducing speaking anxiety. Future studies could also investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as digital tools or immersive language programs, in addressing the challenges identified in this research. Moreover, future studies should incorporate the impact of institutional and cultural factors, such as classroom dynamics and peer interactions, on students' speaking anxiety, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how external factors shape the language learning experience.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that students' learning styles significantly influence their experiences of speaking anxiety in the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. Visual learners face challenges in spontaneous tasks, auditory learners struggle with pronunciation, and kinesthetic learners feel constrained in formal settings. These findings underscore the importance of aligning teaching methods with students' learning preferences to reduce anxiety and enhance engagement.

However, the findings also reveal a more nuanced interaction between students' learning styles and their anxiety levels, which suggests that simply aligning teaching methods with learning styles may not be sufficient in addressing speaking anxiety. For example, visual learners may feel less anxious with visual aids, but still experience stress in high-pressure speaking tasks, suggesting the need for a balanced approach that also addresses emotional and cognitive aspects of anxiety. Similarly, kinesthetic learners, although more engaged in dynamic tasks, might still struggle with formal assessments, indicating that classroom flexibility needs to be extended to include evaluation methods that cater to diverse learners.

Practical Recommendations

To address these issues, educators are encouraged to adopt flexible and student-centered teaching strategies. In real-world practice, this can be implemented by integrating simple and low-cost tools into everyday classroom activities. For instance, visual aids such as whiteboard diagrams, simple handouts, or even sticky notes can help visual learners organize information without requiring complex technology. Auditory learners can benefit from more frequent verbal interactions and peer discussions that encourage repetition and pronunciation practice. For kinesthetic learners, simple classroom games or role-plays, which do not require much extra space or resources, can be integrated into lessons. These strategies not only cater to diverse learning styles but also promote an interactive classroom environment that encourages active participation.

Creating a supportive classroom environment that fosters confidence and provides constructive feedback is essential. Educators should aim to provide feedback that is constructive, focusing on students' progress rather than their mistakes. Given the constraints of time and resources, teachers can consider peer feedback systems, where students give feedback to one another. This can help students practice speaking in a less formal, more supportive environment, which can reduce anxiety and enhance their speaking skills. Additionally, low-stakes speaking exercises, such as quick group discussions or peer-to-peer presentations, can be scheduled regularly to provide students with opportunities for spontaneous speaking practice.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations must be acknowledged to enhance transparency and credibility. First, the study's sample size was relatively small, limited to 18 first-semester students. As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to all students in the English Education Department or other academic institutions. Future research could involve a larger, more diverse sample, including students from various academic years or different institutions, to validate the findings and expand the understanding of the relationship between

learning styles and speaking anxiety across different contexts.

Second, the study primarily relied on qualitative methods, including interviews and document analysis, which, while offering rich insights, are inherently subjective. Interview bias and the potential for misinterpretation of documents may have affected the accuracy of the findings. Future studies could consider incorporating mixed methods approaches, including quantitative data such as surveys, to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between learning styles and speaking anxiety. Additionally, longitudinal studies could explore the long-term impact of tailored teaching strategies on students' speaking anxiety and proficiency.

Lastly, the study did not fully account for external factors, such as students' home environments, cultural influences, or exposure to English outside the classroom, which may influence their speaking anxiety. Future research could consider these factors to provide a more holistic view of the challenges students face in developing speaking skills. Cultural factors, such as the level of emphasis on formal language use in Indonesian culture, could play a significant role in students' anxiety, as they may feel extra pressure to speak "correctly" in formal contexts.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should explore the long-term effects of aligning teaching strategies with students' learning styles on reducing speaking anxiety and improving language proficiency.

Investigating the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as the integration of digital tools or immersive language programs (e.g., language exchange programs or virtual reality-based speaking practice), could offer more practical solutions to address speaking anxiety. Additionally, studies examining the impact of peer interactions and classroom dynamics on anxiety levels would further inform teaching practices that foster a supportive learning environment. It would be especially useful to explore the role of cultural influences on students' attitudes toward speaking in English, which could provide valuable insights for adapting teaching strategies in diverse EFL contexts.

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