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Exploring Challenges of Speaking English Among Secondary School Students in Abudwak District, Galmudug State, Somalia.

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by secondary school students in Abudwak District, Galmudug State, Somalia, concerning their proficiency in English speaking. Utilizing the study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, the research collected data through questionnaires and interviews, which were then analysed using version 25.0 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The sample consisted of 208 participants selected randomly from a total of 635 secondary students across the three most prominent schools in the district. The findings indicated that students' English speaking abilities were significantly affected by three main issues: psychological factors (including self-doubt, shyness, anxiety, and nervousness), linguistic challenges (such as poor grammar and a limited vocabulary), and environmental influences (related to both family and school contexts).

Keywords: Exploring, Challenges, English speaking, Secondary school students, Abudwak

1. Introduction

Language is one of the most useful tools we have as humans and without it we could not think thoughts expressible to others, nor could we engage in the activities that commonly take place in the society we build ourselves (Elisathusilawani, 2023). Language plays a crucial role in learning, and if the learner is handicapped in the language of instruction, then learning may not take place at all as the instructor or teacher and the learner will not be communicating as English has become a necessity due to its status as an international language widely used in the world (Anggrisia & Robah, 2023).

Mastery of English is needed as it is used in international communication by the majority of people. In Somalia, English is learnt as a foreign language (EFL) since it is not used by Somali people in their daily communication. EFL learners are said to be proficient in English when they master four skills of communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among the four skills that should be mastered by the learners, speaking is considered one of the most important language abilities (Normawati et al., 2023). Many people use language daily in their work and social life, and it is the primary language used for communication particularly speaking (P. Orge et al., 2024). Speaking is a crucial aspect of English learning (Elisathusilawani, 2023). According to (Riadil, 2020), speaking is the most important skill that causes someone is having background knowledge an also many of foreign language learners are interesting in learning speaking. From his point of view, it is stated that speaking is the most essential skill rather than the others skills because someone who is able to speak in foreign language means that she/he is knowledgeable

However, in Somalia speaking activities in class and outside class is a challenge for students from different educational backgrounds in general and those from remote areas like Abudwak district, Galmudug, Somalia. The use of English in nonnative country can be divided into two English as the second language and English as foreign language. In Somalia, English is taught as foreign language in the schools started from elementary schools. Unfortunately, in the real condition, it is still difficult for Somali students to speak and practice their English ability in daily conversation even though they have been studying English for over ten years in schools and universities. The problems that appear in student's speaking are psychological, linguistic and environmental and overuse of mother tongue which they confront and affect their English speaking performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Importance of Speaking

Among the four foundational language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking is a foundational pillar of human interaction, serving as the cornerstone of effective communication and is often considered the most complex and essential for achieving fluency and communicative competence. Speaking skills involve both the ability to produce accurate language and the confidence to use it in interactive settings. Speaking emerges as particularly pivotal, underpinning successful interpersonal communication. For students aiming to master the English language, the ability to speak proficiently carries immense importance, as it empowers them to engage with fellow learners and native speakers alike (Anggrisia & Robah, 2023).

By speaking we do not mean merely uttering words through mouth. It means conveying the message through the words of mouth. This skill is also neglected by students in the classroom; they do not get any chance either in the classroom or outside to speak English. Learning to speak also demands a lot of practice and attention (Deaariesfitriani & Rahayuapriliaswati, n.d.).

Numerous researchers have explored the challenges faced by students in developing their English-speaking skills. These evidences highlight significant studies conducted across various countries. (Eno, 2017) investigated English as Second Language (EFL) learning in Somalia and identified a notable weakness in students' English speaking abilities. (Eno, 2018) conducted a research entitled "The Challenges of ESL/ELF" found out that there is a gap in the educational approach to English speaking in Somalia, which impacts the understanding of foreign language learning as English and the need to empower prospective participants of the opportunities in the world marketplace and in the academic arena make knowledge of English a prerequisite tool. Similarly, (Zakarneh & Mahmoud, 2021) examined the teaching and learning of English speaking in secondary schools in Mogadishu, Somalia, revealing that the poor quality of the learning environment contributes to deficiencies in English language acquisition. In Kenya, (Muralidhar, n.d.), conducted a research about the factors affecting secondary students' speaking skills and revealed a marked underperformance in English speaking. (Md. Akhtar Hossain, Meherun Nessa, 2015) researched the challenges of learning English at the secondary level in Bangladesh, reporting that students struggle with speaking and lack the confidence to communicate in English. (Ayop & Namocot, 2023), investigated

English speaking difficulties and indicated various obstacles and the most dominant hindering factors experienced by students that inhibit their ability to speak English in class are lack of practice, lack of central knowledge , insufficient vocabulary, low motivation, fear of mistakes and unfamiliar word pronunciation.

2.2. Socio-Cultural Barriers

Socio-cultural factors influence English language acquisition, especially in speaking. Abudwak's linguistic environment predominantly involves Somali, which limits students' exposure to English outside the classroom. The speaker foundation assumes an indispensable job in English speaking skills, and it could be a dialect capacity that is horrifying by social and cultural segments (Kakita & Palukuri, 2020). Our usual educational experiences are enriched by learning in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms because we learn from others whose beliefs are different than ours. We learn to communicate effectively and respectfully with individuals of varied backgrounds (Madibekovna & Seitzhapparovna, 2016).

However, due to limited access to English learning programs, native English speakers, and conversational practice, students in Abudwak have restricted opportunities to improve their spoken English as many studies have shown that regions with limited exposure to the target language experience slower acquisition rates of language proficiency.

2.3. Pedagogical Challenges in English Instruction

Pedagogical Challenges are hindrances that deter the achievement of learning objectives in the course of learning, teaching and assessment and associated requirements for professional development (Kimotho, 2016).

According to (Saleh et al., 2023), nowadays, the world imposes rapid changes in all domains and at all levels which created the urgent need to respond to these changes immediately. The education sector, like other sectors, has been affected by these growing changes. Many challenges have been imposed on all elements of the educational system, especially on teachers. Teachers face several challenges, which resulted from the weakness of their preparation to teach the second language as a foreign language. The weakness in the pedagogical content knowledge may cause many challenges.

However, English language needs well qualified teachers, teaching materials and teaching methods that suits to the needs of non-native speakers. Abudwak and similar districts face shortages of trained English language teachers that can improve the quality of students' language performance especially speaking skills.

2.4. Overuse of Mother tongue

Although the first language of a child is part of his personal, social and cultural identity and brings about reflection and learning of successful social patterns of acting and speaking, it is considered that it can be a main obstacle to the learning of target language (Olu Oyewole, 2017). (Voicu, 2012) investigated the influence of overusing mother tongue on the students' speaking performance and found out that the use of mother tongue by students and as well as the teachers during the English classes is a hindrance for students' English speaking performance.

As a result, Somali people use their mother tongue (Somali) for day-to day activities such as telling stories, singing songs, watching TVs, talking together at meal times, family outings, family celebrations, staying in touch with families and friends, talking on telephones and writing emails. Similarly, in everyday life, Somali people overuse the mother language in everywhere like schools, universities, homes, playgrounds, markets and social meeting places.

2.5. Psychological Factors and Student Confidence

Psychological factor does negatively effect on students' English speaking performance. Most of the problems that the students were complaining to be the causes of their reluctance from speaking English were: Fear of making mistakes, feeling shy, feeling hesitated and lack of confidence while speaking English (Haidara, 2016). Haidara mentioned that for some students only feel shy if it happens that they make mistakes while presenting something in front of the class or while interacting with lecturers using English. A research by (Nijat et al., 2019) highlights that some psychological factors such as shyness and anxiety and lack of self-confidence are considered as the main root causes which affect students when practicing their speaking and when they are interrelating to each other. He indicates that speaking is one of the most anxiety-inducing aspects of language learning. This anxiety can stem from fear of judgment by peers, pressure to speak correctly, and unfamiliarity with English sounds and pronunciation. However, speaking a foreign language or a second language requires

confidence, and a lot of practice. Young learners in Somalia may experience a lack of self-confidence due to limited practice opportunities and fear of making mistakes.

3. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the challenges students face in their English speaking skills. The research involved a sample of 208 participants, both male and female, selected from a total of 635 secondary school students across the three top schools in Abudwak District. Data collection included structured questionnaires, which were translated into Somali, as well as face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher and trained assistants. The questionnaires were designed to collect quantitative data, while the open-ended interviews offered qualitative insights into the speaking challenges encountered by secondary students. Data analysis was performed using version 25.0 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), enabling examination through descriptive statistics and qualitative interpretation.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

According to Table 1, data was collected from three prominent secondary schools in Abudwak District, with the largest group of respondents from Shire Jama' secondary school, comprising 116 students (55.8%). Ibrahim Egal secondary school followed with 52 respondents (25%), while Sunlight secondary school had 40 participants (19.2%). The presence of teachers during the evaluation process ensured that students understood the questionnaire, contributing to a formal setting for data collection.

Table 1: School name

School name	Frequency	Per cent
Shire Jama'	116	55.8
Sunlight	40	19.2
Ibrahim Egal	52	25.0
Total	208	100.0

Table 2 reveals the age distribution of the participants, showing that a significant majority, 155 students (74.5%), were aged between 15 and 19 years. This is followed by 46 respondents (22.1%) in the 10 to 14 age range, and only 7 students (3.4%) aged 20 to 25.

Table 2: Age of the participants

Age	Frequency	Per cent
10 – 14	46	22.1
15 – 19	155	74.5
20 – 25	7	3.4
Total	208	100.0

Table 3 indicates that the sample was inclusive of all secondary grades, with the highest representation in Form II, accounting for 86 students (41.3%), followed by Form III with 62 students (29.8%), Form I with 34 students (16.3%), and Form IV with 26 students (12.5%).

Table 3: Class of the participants

Class	Frequency	Per cent
Form one	34	16.3
Form two	86	41.3
Form three	62	29.8
Form four	26	12.5
Total	208	100.0

Table 4 highlights the employment status of the respondents, showing that a vast majority, 187 students (89.9%), were unemployed, while only 21 students (10.1%) were employed. This information is crucial, as employment status may impact students' learning opportunities and their ability to engage in English-speaking activities.

Table 4: Number of employed participants

Employed students	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	21	10.1
No	187	89.9
Total	208	100.0

It was a must to get the information from all the grades of secondary level from form one to form four so that accurate and inclusive representatives of different secondary levels could be found. Table 4 shows that the respondents composed all the levels of the secondary students, that is 86 (41.3%) of the respondents which is the highest percentage were form II, 62 (29.8%) of the respondents were form III, 34 (16.3%) of the respondents were form I, and 26 (12.5%) were form VI.

4.2. Results of Study Factors

Table 5: English speaking skills is very important to communicating effectively

Importance of speaking skill	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	159	76.4
Agree	32	15.4
Neutral	13	6.3
Disagree	1	.5
strongly disagree	3	1.4
Total	208	100.0

Table 4 presents data on the perceived importance of English speaking skills for effective communication among respondents. A significant majority, 76.4% (159 out of 208), strongly agree that these skills are crucial, indicating a strong consensus on their importance. Additionally, 15.4% (32 respondents) agree with the statement, while 6.3% (13 respondents) are neutral, showing some ambivalence. Only a tiny fraction of respondents disagree, with just 0.5% (1 respondent) stating they disagree and 1.4% (3 respondents) strongly disagreeing. Overall, more than 91% of respondents recognize the importance of English speaking skills, suggesting that focusing on enhancing these skills could be valuable for improving communication effectiveness.

Table 6: Students don't get enough time to practice speaking skills inside the class

Not getting enough time	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	106	51.0
Agree	44	21.2
Neutral	25	12.0
Disagree	21	10.1
Strongly disagree	12	5.8
Total	208	100.0

The data presented in Table 6 indicates that a significant portion of students feel they do not receive sufficient time to practice their speaking skills during class. Out of 208 respondents, 51% (106 students) strongly agree with this statement, suggesting a strong consensus on the issue. Additionally, 21.2% (44 students) agree, further emphasizing the concern. In contrast, a smaller percentage of students express neutrality (12.0%, or 25 students), while only 10.1% (21 students) disagree, and a mere 5.8% (12 students) strongly disagree. This distribution highlights that the majority of students (approximately 72.2%) believe they lack adequate opportunities for speaking practice in the classroom, which may impact their overall language proficiency and confidence in communication.

Table 7: Students don't practice speaking skills inside and outside of the class

Lack of speaking practice	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	108	51.9
Agree	32	15.4
Neutral	28	13.5
Disagree	26	12.5
strongly disagree	14	6.7
Total	208	100.0

Table 7 illustrates students' perceptions regarding the lack of speaking practice inside and outside the classroom. The data shows that a significant portion of respondents, 51.9% (108 out of 208), strongly agree that there is insufficient practice of speaking skills, highlighting a major concern among students. Additionally, 15.4% (32 respondents) agree with this view, while 13.5% (28 respondents) remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or indifference about the issue. Conversely, 12.5% (26 respondents) disagree, suggesting that they do not feel a lack of speaking practice, and 6.7% (14 respondents) strongly disagree, indicating that a small

number of students believe practice opportunities are adequate. Overall, the data demonstrates that over two-thirds (67.3%) of respondents perceive a deficiency in speaking practice, suggesting a need for enhanced opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills.

Table 8: Students are often afraid of making mistakes of English speaking

Being afraid of making mistakes	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	134	64.4
Agree	33	15.9
Neutral	11	5.3
Disagree	15	7.2
strongly disagree	15	7.2
Total	208	100.0

Table 8 reveals students' feelings about their fear of making mistakes while speaking English. A substantial majority, 64.4% (134 out of 208), strongly agree that they often feel afraid of making mistakes, indicating a significant source of anxiety among students regarding their speaking abilities. Additionally, 15.9% (33 respondents) agree with this sentiment, further underscoring the prevalence of this fear. In contrast, only 5.3% (11 respondents) are neutral, suggesting ambivalence on the issue. Meanwhile, 7.2% (15 respondents) disagree, and another 7.2% strongly disagree, indicating that a small minority do not share this fear of making mistakes. Overall, the data highlights that nearly 80% of respondents experience apprehension about making errors while speaking, suggesting that this fear could hinder their willingness to practice and improve their English speaking skills.

Table 9: Students are not confident themselves to speak English

Lack of confidence	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	104	50.0
Agree	47	22.6
Neutral	20	9.6
Disagree	23	11.1
strongly disagree	14	6.7
Total	208	100.0

Table 9 illustrates students' levels of self-confidence when it comes to speaking English. Half of the respondents, 50.0% (104 out of 208), strongly agree that they lack confidence in their

speaking abilities, highlighting a significant concern about self-assurance among students. An additional 22.6% (47 respondents) agree with this assessment, further emphasizing the widespread nature of this issue. Meanwhile, 9.6% (20 respondents) remain neutral, indicating uncertainty about their confidence levels. On the other hand, 11.1% (23 respondents) disagree, suggesting they feel somewhat confident, and 6.7% (14 respondents) strongly disagree, indicating that a small number of students are confident in their speaking skills. Overall, the data reveals that over 72% of respondents express a lack of confidence in their English speaking abilities, suggesting that fostering self-assurance could be crucial for encouraging students to engage more actively in speaking practice.

Table 10: Students cannot distinguish between active voice and passive voice of the English Language

Active and passive problems	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	83	39.9
Agree	66	31.7
Neutral	24	11.5
Disagree	20	9.6
strongly disagree	15	7.2
Total	208	100.0

Table 10 presents data on students' ability to distinguish between active and passive voice in the English language. A notable 39.9% (83 out of 208) of respondents strongly agree that they struggle with this distinction, indicating a significant challenge in understanding these grammatical concepts. Additionally, 31.7% (66 respondents) agree, reinforcing the perception that confusion between active and passive voice is common among students. In contrast, 11.5% (24 respondents) remain neutral, suggesting some uncertainty about their skills in this area. Only 9.6% (20 respondents) disagree, indicating they do not find this to be a problem, while 7.2% (15 respondents) strongly disagree, suggesting a small minority feel confident in their understanding of active and passive voice. Overall, the data highlights that over 71% of respondents experience difficulties with distinguishing between these two grammatical structures, pointing to a potential area for improvement in language instruction.

Table 11: Students have insufficient vocabulary that they cannot express their thoughts in English

Lack of vocabulary	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	95	45.7
Agree	57	27.4
Neutral	20	9.6
Disagree	24	11.5
strongly disagree	12	5.8
Total	208	100.0

Table 11 illustrates students' perceptions regarding their vocabulary limitations and the impact on their ability to express thoughts in English. A substantial 45.7% (95 out of 208) of respondents strongly agree that they have insufficient vocabulary, indicating a significant concern about their ability to communicate effectively. Additionally, 27.4% (57 respondents) agree with this sentiment, further highlighting the prevalence of vocabulary challenges among students. A smaller portion, 9.6% (20 respondents), remains neutral, suggesting uncertainty about their vocabulary skills. Conversely, 11.5% (24 respondents) disagree, implying they do not feel hindered by vocabulary limitations, while 5.8% (12 respondents) strongly disagree, indicating confidence in their vocabulary. Overall, the data reveals that nearly three-quarters of respo

ndents (73.1%) perceive a lack of vocabulary as a barrier to expressing their thoughts in English, suggesting a need for targeted vocabulary development in language education.

Table 12: By shyness, students are not willing to speak English in front of the class

Shyness	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	93	44.7
Agree	56	26.9
Neutral	15	7.2
Disagree	24	11.5
strongly disagree	20	9.6
Total	208	100.0

Table 12 explores the impact of shyness on students' willingness to speak English in front of the class. A significant 44.7% (93 out of 208) of respondents strongly agree that shyness prevents them from speaking, indicating that this is a considerable barrier to participation.

Additionally, 26.9% (56 respondents) agree with this statement, further underscoring the prevalence of shyness among students. Only 7.2% (15 respondents) are neutral, suggesting some uncertainty about the effect of shyness on their speaking abilities. In contrast, 11.5% (24 respondents) disagree, indicating they do not feel that shyness hinders their willingness to speak, while 9.6% (20 respondents) strongly disagree, suggesting that a small number of students are confident enough to speak despite feelings of shyness. Overall, the data highlights that over 71% of respondents experience shyness as a significant obstacle to speaking English in class, pointing to the need for supportive measures to encourage student participation and reduce anxiety in speaking situations.

Table 13: Students usually have problems with the use of tenses (present, past and future)

Problem of tenses	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	76	36.5
Agree	62	29.8
Neutral	14	6.7
Disagree	33	15.9
strongly disagree	23	11.1
Total	208	100.0

Table 13 examines students' difficulties with the use of tenses in English, specifically present, past, and future forms. A notable 36.5% (76 out of 208) of respondents strongly agree that they encounter problems with tenses, indicating a significant challenge in mastering this aspect of grammar. Additionally, 29.8% (62 respondents) agree with this assessment, suggesting that a substantial portion of students struggles with tense usage. Only 6.7% (14 respondents) remain neutral, expressing uncertainty about their proficiency. Conversely, 15.9% (33 respondents) disagree, indicating they do not perceive tense usage as a problem, while 11.1% (23 respondents) strongly disagree, suggesting a small minority feel confident in their understanding of tenses. Overall, the data reveals that over two-thirds of respondents (66.3%) recognize tense usage as an area of difficulty, highlighting the need for focused instruction to help students improve their grasp of English tenses.

Table14: English teacher does not motivate students on speaking skill in the classroom.

Teacher's motivation	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	51	24.5
Agree	37	17.8
Neutral	9	4.3
Disagree	48	23.1
strongly disagree	63	30.3
Total	208	100.0

Table 14 reveals students' perceptions regarding their English teacher's motivation for speaking skills in the classroom. A total of 208 respondents provided feedback, and the results indicate a notable concern. Specifically, 24.5% (51 students) strongly agree that the teacher does not motivate them in developing their speaking skills, while 17.8% (37 students) agree with this sentiment. Conversely, a significant portion of students—30.3% (63 students)—strongly disagree, indicating that they feel motivated by their teacher. Additionally, 23.1% (48 students) disagree with the notion that the teacher lacks motivation for speaking skills, and only 4.3% (9 students) remain neutral. Overall, the data suggests a divided opinion among students, with about 42.3% (the combined percentage of those who strongly agree and agree) expressing dissatisfaction with the teacher's motivational efforts, while 53.4% (those who strongly disagree and disagree) feel more positively about the teacher's role in encouraging speaking skills. This discrepancy highlights the varying perceptions of teacher motivation in the context of speaking proficiency.

Table 15: English teacher does not put importance on speaking skill if the student speaks English or not.

Teacher's emphasizing on speaking	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	45	21.6
Agree	21	10.1
Neutral	18	8.7
Disagree	58	27.9
strongly disagree	66	31.7
Total	208	100.0

Table 15 presents students' views on whether their English teacher places importance on speaking skills, regardless of whether a student is proficient in English. Among the 208

respondents, 21.6% (45 students) strongly agree that the teacher does not emphasize speaking skills, while 10.1% (21 students) agree with this statement. A smaller portion, 8.7% (18 students), remains neutral on the issue. In contrast, 27.9% (58 students) disagree, indicating that they believe the teacher does value speaking skills, and a notable 31.7% (66 students) strongly disagree, suggesting a strong belief that the teacher does prioritize speaking skills in the classroom. Overall, the data illustrates a split in student perception: approximately 31.7% feel positively about the teacher's emphasis on speaking, while around 31.7% express concern that speaking skills are not sufficiently prioritized. This highlights a significant divergence in students' experiences and perceptions regarding the importance attributed to speaking skills in their English instruction.

Table16: English teacher does not use English when he or she teaches the subject.

Teacher does not use English when teaching	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	45	21.6
Agree	26	12.5
Neutral	16	7.7
Disagree	48	23.1
strongly disagree	73	35.1
Total	208	100.0

Table 16 illustrates students' perceptions regarding their English teacher's use of the English language during instruction. Out of a total of 208 respondents, 21.6% (45 students) strongly agree that the teacher does not use English when teaching the subject, while 12.5% (26 students) agree with this sentiment. A smaller group, comprising 7.7% (16 students), remains neutral on the matter. Conversely, a significant portion of students disagrees with the assertion: 23.1% (48 students) disagree, and 35.1% (73 students) strongly disagree, indicating that they believe the teacher does use English in the classroom. Overall, the results reveal a clear divide in student opinions: nearly 58.2% (the combined percentage of those who disagree and strongly disagree) feel that their teacher actively incorporates English into lessons, while only 34.1% (those who strongly agree and agree) express the opposite view. This disparity suggests that many students feel they are receiving instruction in English, which may positively influence their language learning experience.

Table17: Teacher and students overuse their native language (Somali) inside the class.

Over-use of Somali language	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	92	44.2
Agree	42	20.2
Neutral	20	9.6
Disagree	23	11.1
strongly disagree	31	14.9
Total	208	100.0

Table 17 summarizes students' perceptions regarding the overuse of their native language, Somali, by both teachers and students in the classroom. Among the 208 respondents, a substantial 44.2% (92 students) strongly agree that there is an over-reliance on Somali, while 20.2% (42 students) also agree with this assertion. In contrast, 9.6% (20 students) remain neutral, indicating no strong opinion on the matter. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of students disagree with the statement: 11.1% (23 students) disagree, and 14.9% (31 students) strongly disagree, suggesting that they believe the use of Somali is not excessive. Overall, the data reveals a significant concern among students about the predominance of their native language in the classroom, with nearly two-thirds (approximately 64.4%) expressing dissatisfaction with the level of Somali used during instruction. This trend may highlight a potential barrier to English language acquisition and suggests a need for a more balanced approach to language use in the classroom.

Table18: Principal and teachers do not hold accountable for students' English speaking

Accountability of the school principal and the English teacher	Frequency	Per cent
strongly agree	96	46.2
Agree	44	21.2
Neutral	17	8.2
Disagree	24	11.5
strongly disagree	27	13.0
Total	208	100.0

Table 18 presents the students' views on whether the school principal and English teachers are held accountable for students' English speaking abilities. Among the 208 respondents, a notable 46.2% (96 students) strongly agree that there is a lack of accountability regarding students' English speaking skills, while 21.2% (44 students) agree with this perspective. A

smaller segment, comprising 8.2% (17 students), remains neutral, indicating a lack of strong opinion on the matter. Conversely, 11.5% (24 students) disagree, and 13.0% (27 students) strongly disagree, suggesting that they believe accountability does exist. Overall, the data reveals a significant concern among students regarding the absence of accountability from both the principal and teachers in fostering English speaking skills, with approximately 67.4% expressing dissatisfaction with the current level of accountability. This perception may indicate a gap in expectations for language proficiency and the support provided by school leadership and teaching staff.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight several critical issues surrounding students' English speaking skills and the factors influencing their development. A significant majority of respondents recognize the importance of speaking skills for effective communication, with over 91% affirming their value. However, many students feel inadequately supported in their speaking practice, as evidenced by the 51% who believe they do not receive enough time for practice in class and over 67% who report insufficient opportunities for speaking both inside and outside the classroom.

Moreover, students express considerable anxiety about making mistakes while speaking, with 80% indicating fear of errors that could hinder their willingness to practice. This lack of confidence is further reinforced by the 72% of students who feel uncertain about their speaking abilities. Additionally, around 71% struggle with distinguishing between active and passive voice and nearly 73% report vocabulary limitations that impede their expression. Shyness also plays a significant role, with over 71% of students indicating it prevents them from speaking up in class.

The data also reveals mixed perceptions regarding the role of teachers in motivating students. While a significant portion feels their teachers do not adequately emphasize speaking skills, a notable percentage believes that teachers actively support their speaking development. However, concerns about the overuse of the native language and a perceived lack of accountability from school leadership further complicate the educational environment.

6. Recommendations

To address the findings, several recommendations can be made. First, schools should increase speaking practice opportunities by incorporating more speaking activities into the curriculum, allowing students ample time to practice both in and outside the classroom. This can include group discussions, presentations, and interactive activities that promote verbal communication. Second, it is essential to create a supportive environment where teachers foster a safe space for students to practice speaking without fear of making mistakes, encouraging a culture of constructive feedback to help reduce anxiety and build confidence. Third, focusing on vocabulary development is crucial; implementing targeted vocabulary-building exercises will enable students to expand their linguistic repertoire and express their thoughts more effectively. Additionally, teachers should address shyness by employing strategies that encourage participation from shy students, such as pair work or small group discussions, to help them gradually build confidence in speaking. Furthermore, professional development for teachers should emphasize the importance of motivating students in their speaking skills and using English consistently in the classroom. Establishing clear accountability measures for both teachers and school leadership regarding student language proficiency can enhance the overall educational experience. Finally, promoting a balanced use of the native language and English during instruction will facilitate comprehension while supporting English language acquisition.

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