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THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS IN UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Emotional intelligence (EI) is still rarely studied in the context of English-speaking skills, particularly in terms of its specific impact on speaking skills among undergraduate students. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and English-speaking skills among EFL students at Islamic Nusantara University in Bandung. A survey design involving 93 English Language Education students was employed, utilizing a quantitative approach selected through purposive sampling. This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey design. The data collection technique employed a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study results indicate that emotional intelligence (EI) has a significant impact on the English-speaking abilities of EFL students, playing a crucial role in enhancing confidence, managing anxiety, and improving speaking skills. An average score of 3.99 reflects students' perception that EI plays a significant role in the success of speaking English. This study's implications highlight the integration of EI lessons into the English learning curriculum to enhance students' confidence and speaking skills, thereby creating a more satisfying learning experience. This research offers valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers to design programs that promote the development of emotional intelligence (EI) in the context of language learning, thereby enhancing students' English-speaking skills.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), English-speaking skills, English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Abstrak:

Kecerdasan emosional (EI) masih jarang dipelajari dalam konteks keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris, terutama dalam hal dampak spesifiknya terhadap keterampilan berbicara di kalangan mahasiswa sarjana. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara kecerdasan emosional (EI) dan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa EFL Universitas Nusantara Islam Bandung. Desain survei yang melibatkan 93 siswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris digunakan, menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif menggunakan desain survei. Teknik pengumpulan

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data menggunakan kuesioner dengan skala Likert 5 poin, yang dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kecerdasan emosional (EI) memiliki dampak yang signifikan pada kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris siswa EFL, memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan kepercayaan diri, mengelola kecemasan, dan meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara. Skor rata-rata 3.99 mencerminkan persepsi siswa bahwa EI memainkan peran penting dalam keberhasilan berbicara bahasa Inggris. Implikasi studi ini menyoroti integrasi pelajaran EI ke dalam kurikulum pembelajaran bahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dan keterampilan berbicara siswa, sehingga menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang lebih memuaskan. Penelitian ini menawarkan wawasan berharga bagi pendidik dan pengembang kurikulum untuk merancang program yang mempromosikan pengembangan kecerdasan emosional (EI) dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa, sehingga meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris siswa.

Kata kunci: Kecerdasan Emosional (EI), keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris, Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL)

INTRODUCTION

Extensive research has explored the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and speaking skills within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, emphasizing EI's vital contribution to improving students' speaking skills and language competence. For instance, Yang and Duan (2023) highlight how emotionally intelligent individuals can manage their emotions effectively, leading to improved verbal interactions. Similarly, Esmaeeli et al. (2018) identified a positive association between strong emotional intelligence and enhanced speaking proficiency, underscoring the importance of emotional factors in language achievement.

Building on these findings, Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018) further highlight that positive emotions significantly enhance fluency in speaking, while Andrienko et al. (2020) discuss the direct contribution of emotional management to effective communication. Supporting these findings, Ozkaral and Ustu (2019) established a positive relationship between EI and communication skills, suggesting that learners with higher EI tend to be more skilled in social interactions. Dubovyk et al. (2020) reinforce this by demonstrating that emotional awareness enables students to adjust their communication in response to the feelings of others, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their interactions. Other scholars have emphasized related constructs, such as social intelligence in public speaking (Alkhuba, 2022) and the link between EI and self-efficacy, with emotionally intelligent students showing higher confidence and lower anxiety in language learning (Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019).

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Additionally, cultivating emotional intelligence is considered crucial for advancing speaking skills (Wang et al., 2024), and constructive feedback has likewise been acknowledged as an important element in boosting oral communication abilities (Chien et al., 2020).

While many researchers have explored the connection between emotional intelligence and different areas of language acquisition, there is still a lack of concentrated research addressing its direct influence on speaking abilities. Studies such as those by Dewaele & Alfawzan (2018) and Andrienko et al. (2020) have examined the broader impact of emotional intelligence on language learning; however, these studies have not thoroughly investigated how EI directly influences speaking skills. Most prior research focused on junior and senior high school students, so the findings may not apply to university-level students with varying characteristics and learning requirements (Miftha Imama & Wilany, 2023; Sulistyawati, 2018). In addition, studies often overlook the exploration of EI in general, failing to consider its specific components (Manalulallaili et al., 2018). Therefore, this research is expected to provide more profound and relevant insights into how various aspects of EI contribute to students' speaking skills, particularly among students of English language education. While previous studies have investigated EI's relationship with language learning, research focusing on its impact on speaking skills remains limited. This study seeks to fill this gap by further exploring the impact of emotional intelligence on verbal communication within educational settings, emphasizing its importance for shaping curriculum and teaching approaches in EFL environments.

Despite these findings, many EFL students face a high level of anxiety and low confidence when speaking in English. Psychological factors, such as a lack of motivation, anxiety, and shyness, often hinder students from speaking (Miftha Imama & Wilany, 2023). Anxiety is an effective factor that has a significant impact on foreign language learning, especially in speaking skills, as it can hinder students' oral performance. This anxiety is caused by a lack of motivation, discomfort in Communication, shyness, comparisons with classmates, and a lack of preparation and vocabulary (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). More anxious students tend to be reluctant to communicate, which suggests that EI can play an essential role in reducing anxiety and increasing confidence when speaking (Ozkaral & Ustu,

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2019).

To provide a theoretical foundation, EI must be clearly defined in terms of language learning. Emotional Intelligence (EI) represents one's ability to learn practical skills based on personal and social competencies (Goleman, 2009). Personal competency consists of three areas: self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation, whereas social competency involves two areas: empathy and social skills (Candilas et al., 2023; Chintya & Sit, 2024; Krishnan & Awang, 2020). EI enables individuals to understand themselves, build harmonious relationships, manage impulses, endure challenges, and develop empathy, which is crucial for cooperation and collective progress in society (A. S. Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018). Additionally, emotional intelligence plays a key role in self-regulation, resilience, impulse control, and perseverance. It also involves maintaining a balanced mood, managing anxiety to prevent cognitive disruptions, and fostering hope and empathy as essential components of emotional well-being (Chintya & Sit, 2024).

This research provides both practical and evidence-based insights into how emotional intelligence (EI) contributes to the enhancement of English-speaking abilities. Practically, it emphasizes the need to integrate EI into the curriculum to boost students' confidence, reduce anxiety, and enhance fluency. For educators and curriculum developers, the findings guide the design of emotionally supportive learning environments. Empirically, the study supports prior research on the link between EI and language proficiency, particularly in speaking. Future studies should use qualitative or longitudinal methods and involve diverse learners for broader insights.

Although prior research has established a link between emotional intelligence (EI) and language learning, few studies have concentrated explicitly on English speaking skills as a primary variable. Research designs were often general and did not target EFL learners specifically. Instruments varied and were sometimes unstandardized, while data collection and analysis were mostly limited to basic correlational methods. These gaps highlight the need for more focused research with clear variables, appropriate participants, validated tools, and deeper analysis. This research examines explicitly the relationship between emotional intelligence and English-speaking abilities in EFL university students, aiming to provide more

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targeted insights into how EI influences verbal communication in language learning contexts.

Speaking skills, as one of the four language skills, play a crucial role in the development of language fluency for EFL learners (Nurhayati & Nuraida, 2020). Speaking is the ability to communicate verbally in a language. These abilities include pronunciation, vocabulary use, grammar, fluency, and the ability to produce coherent and relevant speech in various contexts (Brown, 2006). Speaking is expressing ideas through spoken words, where verbal expressions manifest thoughts formed at the conceptual level (Rahman, 2022). As an essential skill, speaking is fundamental for Communication, enabling individuals to engage in conversations effectively (Desnaranti & Putra, 2022). It allows students to express their knowledge, convey important messages, and demonstrate their abilities. Through speaking, individuals can spontaneously share opinions, ideas, and thoughts (Harahap & Rozimela, 2021). Moreover, speaking skills are crucial in career growth, confidence-building, and professional success. They are crucial for effective communication in interviews, debates, public speaking, and presentations, making them indispensable in today's world (Rao, 2019).

Given this context, this study explores the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and English-speaking skills among English education students enrolled in speaking courses who are preparing to become future educators. Practical communication skills in English are essential for EFL students to deliver teaching materials effectively and serve as an example for their students in the future (Daud Jiwandono, 2021). Lecturers with good EI can enhance learning effectiveness because effective teaching involves emotional and intellectual effort (Satya Gumelar et al., 2024). At the higher education level, mastery of English, particularly in speaking, is a crucial requirement for achieving academic success, as students are expected to demonstrate their abilities through presentations, speeches, and discussions (Anggraini et al., 2022). Additionally, EI is recognized as a vital factor underlying the importance of social and emotional learning in the classroom, with students who have high EI often achieving better academic success (Candilas et al., 2023).

To comprehensively analyze this relationship, the study investigates how EI affects students' speaking performance, emphasizing five key factors: emotional awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. It also examines the connection between EI

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and fundamental speaking components, including grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. Beyond EI's direct impact on speaking skills, this research considers psychological factors that affect communication in foreign languages. The findings will contribute to language education and educational psychology as a reference for future studies. Additionally, this study offers practical implications for educators in developing teaching methods incorporating EI and provides recommendations for policymakers to integrate EI training into language curricula.

The following research questions have been developed to direct the investigation in alignment with the study's objectives:

1. What is the importance of the role of emotional intelligence in supporting English speaking skills among undergraduate EFL students?
2. How does emotional intelligence impact the English-speaking ability of undergraduate EFL students?

METHOD

Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to gather data from EFL students enrolled in the English Language Education program at Nusantara Islamic University, Bandung. The survey design includes distributing a survey or questionnaire to a small group, called the sample, to identify patterns in the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, or characteristics of a larger group, called the population (Creswell, 2012). The independent variable is emotional intelligence, which is measured by emotional awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2009). The dependent variable is English speaking skills, evaluated across five aspects: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Brown, 2006).

Participant

This study involved 93 undergraduate students from Universitas Islam Nusantara, specifically from the Bandung English Language Education program. They were selected based on the criterion of having attended English lectures for at least one semester, ensuring

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relevant experience for the research objectives. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, ensuring the inclusion of individuals with experiences pertinent to the study's focus on emotional intelligence and English language skills. The inclusion criteria outline the target population's essential characteristics relevant to the research question (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). This method ensures that the data collected is meaningful and relevant. The participants included male and female students, with English proficiency levels categorized as Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced.

This approach is beneficial in educational research, where the goal is often to gain insights from individuals with direct experience with the subject being researched (Creswell, 2012). The characteristics of the respondents are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics (n =93)

| <i>Respondent Characteristics</i> | <i>Category</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Age</i> | <i>18-20</i> | <i>36</i> | <i>38.7</i> |
| | <i>21-23</i> | <i>54</i> | <i>58.1</i> |
| | <i>>24</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>3.2</i> |
| <i>Gender</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>64</i> | <i>68.8</i> |
| | <i>Male</i> | <i>29</i> | <i>31.2</i> |
| <i>Semester</i> | <i>1-2</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>16.1</i> |
| | <i>3-4</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>15.1</i> |
| | <i>5-6</i> | <i>16</i> | <i>17.2</i> |
| | <i>7-8</i> | <i>48</i> | <i>51.6</i> |
| <i>English proficiency level</i> | <i>Beginner</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>7.5</i> |
| | <i>Intermediate</i> | <i>69</i> | <i>74.2</i> |
| | <i>Advanced</i> | <i>17</i> | <i>18.3</i> |

Instrument

This study employs a questionnaire to assess participants' emotional intelligence and English language skills. The questionnaire comprises 15 statements divided into three sections: emotional intelligence, English-speaking ability, and their relationship. Each statement utilizes a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," ensuring a theoretically equal interval between response options (Creswell, 2012).

The questionnaire was validated for reliability and validity, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.864, which indicates high reliability (Creswell, 2012). It ensures that the instrument effectively measures the intended variables.

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Table 2. Case processing summary

| | | N | % |
|-------|----------|----|-------|
| Cases | Valid | 30 | 100.0 |
| | Excluded | 0 | .0 |
| | Total | 30 | 100.0 |

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .864 | 15 |

Table 4. Item-Total Statistics

| | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
|---------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Item 1 | 49.85 | 45.347 | .493 | .856 |
| Item 2 | 49.70 | 46.300 | .367 | .862 |
| Item 3 | 50.37 | 45.147 | .459 | .858 |
| Item 4 | 49.12 | 47.540 | .282 | .865 |
| Item 5 | 50.33 | 43.442 | .545 | .853 |
| Item 6 | 50.11 | 43.097 | .629 | .849 |
| Item 7 | 50.75 | 42.536 | .640 | .848 |
| Item 8 | 50.13 | 41.918 | .664 | .846 |
| Item 9 | 50.16 | 42.963 | .601 | .850 |
| Item 10 | 50.12 | 42.518 | .608 | .850 |
| Item 11 | 49.55 | 45.663 | .500 | .856 |
| Item 12 | 49.83 | 44.122 | .450 | .859 |
| Item 13 | 50.05 | 46.486 | .330 | .864 |
| Item 14 | 50.19 | 42.658 | .645 | .848 |
| Item 15 | 49.57 | 46.400 | .316 | .865 |

Note: Item_1= Able to manage emotions well when speaking English. Item_2= Able to understand other people's emotions when communicating in English. Item_3= Calm and confident when speaking English in public. Item_4= Feeling motivated to improve English-speaking skills. Item_5= Able to control nervousness or anxiety when speaking English. Item_6= Confident in speaking English in group discussions. Item_7= Able to speak English fluently without many breaks. Item_8= Comfortable using English in formal and informal situations. Item_9= Able to use appropriate vocabulary when speaking in English. Item_10= Receives positive feedback frequently about English speaking skills. Item_11= Positive emotions help fluency in speaking English. Item_12= Speaks better in English when in a good mood. Item_13= The ability to understand the emotions of others helps in English Communication. Item_14= More confident in speaking English because of the

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ability to manage emotions. Item_15= Emotional intelligence plays an important role in the success of speaking English

Data collecting technique

The data collection process involved distributing the questionnaire to 100 English Language Education program participants. The questionnaire aimed to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, and behaviors related to emotional intelligence (EI) and English-speaking skills. It was administered online via Google Forms over two weeks (14 days). Before completing the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the importance of providing honest responses. A reminder was sent one week after the initial distribution. Out of 100 distributed questionnaires, 93 were completed and submitted. All 93 responses were valid and met the criteria for analysis.

The data obtained from the questionnaire is quantitative, consisting of ordinal data based on the 5-point Likert scale responses. It enables the analysis of trends and correlations between emotional intelligence and English-speaking skills among the participants.

Data analysis technique

The analysis technique used in this study involves descriptive (quantitative) statistics to summarize trends, show score variations, and provide insights into the dataset's characteristics (Creswell, 2012). The analysis used SPSS software version 27.0.1.0, focusing on frequency distribution, percentages, means, and perception levels. Here are some examples of how the level of interpretation affects student perception questionnaire scores:

Table 5. Mean Interpretation of Student Perception

| <i>Mean Range</i> | <i>Level of Perceived</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>0,1 - 1,0</i> | <i>Very Low</i> |
| <i>1,1 - 2,0</i> | <i>Low</i> |
| <i>2,1 - 3,0</i> | <i>Moderate</i> |
| <i>3,1 - 4,0</i> | <i>High</i> |
| <i>4,1 - 5,0</i> | <i>Very High</i> |

The central hypothesis to be tested in this study is: “There is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and English-speaking skills among EFL students in the English Language Education program at Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung” Thus,

this study is expected to provide empirical evidence that supports the importance of EI in improving speaking skills and provide recommendations for developing more effective curricula and teaching methods in English language education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents quantitative data from a questionnaire addressing the research objectives. The questionnaire specifically targeted students' emotional intelligence, English speaking ability, and the relationship between these variables.

Table 6. Students' perceptions of the relationship between emotional intelligence and speaking ability

| Item | SA | | A | | N | | D | | SD | | Mean | Level |
|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|------|-----------|
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | | |
| 1. | 12 | 12,9 | 43 | 46,2 | 37 | 39,8 | 1 | 1,1 | 0 | 0,00 | 3,71 | High |
| 2. | 14 | 15,1 | 56 | 60,2 | 20 | 21,5 | 2 | 2,2 | 1 | 1,1 | 3,86 | High |
| 3. | 3 | 3,2 | 28 | 30,1 | 47 | 50,5 | 14 | 15,1 | 1 | 1,1 | 3,19 | High |
| 4. | 48 | 51,6 | 39 | 41,9 | 5 | 5,4 | 1 | 1,1 | 0 | 0,00 | 4,44 | Very High |
| 5. | 3 | 3,2 | 35 | 37,6 | 39 | 41,9 | 12 | 12,9 | 4 | 4,9 | 3,23 | High |
| 6. | 8 | 8,6 | 36 | 38,7 | 40 | 43,0 | 8 | 8,6 | 1 | 1,1 | 3,45 | High |
| 7. | 3 | 3,2 | 12 | 12,9 | 48 | 51,6 | 24 | 25,8 | 6 | 6,5 | 2,81 | Moderate |
| 8. | 10 | 10,8 | 33 | 35,5 | 40 | 43,0 | 7 | 7,5 | 3 | 3,2 | 3,43 | High |
| 9. | 10 | 10,8 | 29 | 31,2 | 43 | 46,2 | 10 | 10,8 | 1 | 1,1 | 3,40 | High |
| 10. | 11 | 11,8 | 33 | 35,5 | 36 | 38,7 | 12 | 12,9 | 1 | 1,1 | 3,44 | High |
| 11. | 20 | 21,5 | 54 | 58,1 | 19 | 20,4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,00 | 4,01 | High |
| 12. | 19 | 20,4 | 39 | 41,9 | 28 | 30,1 | 5 | 5,4 | 2 | 2,2 | 3,73 | High |
| 13. | 5 | 5,4 | 46 | 49,5 | 34 | 36,6 | 7 | 7,5 | 1 | 1,1 | 3,51 | High |
| 14. | 6 | 6,5 | 36 | 38,7 | 39 | 41,9 | 10 | 10,8 | 2 | 2,2 | 3,37 | High |

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| Item | SA | | A | | N | | D | | SD | | Mean | Level |
|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|---|-----|----|------|------|-------|
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | | |
| 15. | 26 | 28,0 | 43 | 46,2 | 21 | 22,6 | 3 | 3,2 | 0 | 0,00 | 3,99 | High |

Notes of table 6.

| Items |
|--|
| 1. Able to manage emotions well when speaking English. |
| 2. Able to understand the emotions of others when communicating in English. |
| 3. Calm and confident when speaking English in public. |
| 4. Feel motivated to improve English-speaking skills. |
| 5. Able to control nervousness or anxiety when speaking English. |
| 6. Confident in speaking English in group discussions. |
| 7. Able to speak English fluently without many breaks. |
| 8. Comfortable using English in both formal and informal situations. |
| 9. Able to use appropriate vocabulary when speaking in English. |
| 10. Receives positive feedback frequently about English speaking skills. |
| 11. Positive emotions help fluency in speaking English. |
| 12. Speaks better in English when in a good mood. |
| 13. The ability to understand the emotions of others helps in English Communication. |
| 14. More confident in speaking English because of the ability to manage emotions. |
| 15. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in the success of speaking English. |

The role of emotional intelligence in supporting English-speaking skills.

The study’s results showed that respondents’ high levels of emotional intelligence played an important role in their speaking abilities. Regarding managing emotions when speaking English, 12.9% of respondents strongly agreed, 46.2% agreed, 39.8% remained neutral, and only 1.1% disagreed. With an average score of 3.71, this suggests that most respondents can regulate their emotions effectively when speaking English. Similarly, 60.2% of respondents agreed and 15.1% strongly agreed that they can comprehend other people's feelings when speaking in English, with an average score of 3.86, indicating strong emotional

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awareness.

Regarding confidence and motivation, 3.2% of respondents strongly agreed, and 30.1% agreed that they feel calm and confident when speaking English in public. However, 50.5% were neutral, and 15.1% disagreed, resulting in a moderate average score of 3.19. Meanwhile, motivation to improve speaking skills had the highest average score of 4.44, with 51.6% of respondents strongly agreeing and 41.9% agreeing, demonstrating that motivation is a key factor in speaking development. The ability to manage nervousness or anxiety while speaking English scored an average of 3.23, with 3.2% strongly agreeing and 30.1% agreeing, but 50.5% remaining neutral.

The impact of emotional intelligence on English-speaking ability

In group discussions, 8.6% of respondents strongly agreed, and 38.7% agreed that they feel confident, with an average score of 3.45. However, fluency in speaking English without breaks scored lower at 2.81, indicating that while emotional intelligence supports confidence, fluency remains an area for improvement.

Comfort in using English in formal and informal settings received an average score of 3.43, suggesting moderate adaptability. The ability to use appropriate vocabulary was also rated at 3.40, while receiving positive feedback on speaking ability had an average score of 3.44, showing that respondents acknowledge the role of emotional intelligence but may still struggle with linguistic competence.

The survey results confirm the relationship between emotional intelligence and speaking ability. A total of 21.5% of respondents strongly agreed that positive emotions enhance fluency, while 58.1% agreed, yielding an average score of 4.01. Similarly, a good mood was found to contribute to fluency, with 20.4% strongly agreeing and 41.9% agreeing (average score of 3.73). Emotional intelligence also plays a role in understanding others during communication, as reflected in an average score of 3.51.

Finally, emotional intelligence is considered crucial for success in English speaking, with 28% of respondents strongly agreeing and 46.2% agreeing (average score of 3.99). This supports the conclusion that emotional aspects such as mood, empathy, and emotional

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regulation contribute significantly to effective communication.

Discussion

The importance of the role of emotional intelligence in English-speaking skills

In the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), emotional intelligence (EI) plays a vital role in assessing students' speaking ability (Sulistyawati, 2018). An emotionally intelligent EFL student can manage both their own emotions and those of others and communicate effectively (Yang & Duan, 2023). The survey results showed respondents had high EI, especially in managing emotions when speaking in English. The higher a learner's EI, the better their speaking skills (Esmaceli et al., 2018). EI plays a vital role in verbal Communication, where good understanding and management of emotions directly contribute to improving speaking skills (Andrienko et al., 2020). The ability to understand others' emotions reflects good emotional awareness. Emotional intelligence positively relates to Communication skills (Ozkaral & Ustu., 2019). The basis of EI lies in recognizing and managing a person's emotions. Individuals with a high level of emotional intelligence can recognize their own and other people's feelings, improve communication and forge closer bonds with others (Goleman, 2005). These findings emphasize that EI is beneficial for emotional regulation and essential for developing strong English-speaking skills among EFL learners.

Another aspect of EI is the ability to ascertain and recognize the emotions and personal sentiments of others. This enables students to evaluate the information they are given and use it in real-world scenarios (Dubovyk et al., 2020). This emotional awareness allows students to adjust how they speak according to the reactions and feelings of the interlocutor, which in turn can improve Communication effectiveness. Social intelligence and self-efficacy are essential in public speaking skills (Alkhubaba, 2022). Being able to empathize and comprehend the feelings of others is a crucial aspect of social interactions and successful communication (Görgülü & Uğurlu, 2022). These social-emotional competencies are key in helping EFL learners communicate with confidence and clarity.

EI also influences motivation to learn to speak English. Students highly motivated to enhance their speaking skills often demonstrate good emotional engagement intelligence.

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Emotional intelligence is positively related to students' self-efficacy. Students with high emotional intelligence tend to have more confidence in achieving desired outcomes in learning situations (Sun & Lyu., 2022). In addition, anxiety, as part of emotional intelligence, can be an indicator of self-efficacy. Higher levels of anxiety tend to be associated with lower self-efficacy. Individuals with good emotional intelligence who can manage their emotions effectively tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy in language learning (Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). Higher EI leads to greater belief in one's ability to succeed, which enhances participation in speaking activities and promotes academic resilience.

Positive emotions and a good mood are essential in improving fluency in speaking English for EFL students. Strong positive emotions when talking to peers in fluent English improve speech fluency (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). EI has a substantial impact on speaking fluency, which suggests that the development of students' EI skills is essential for improving speaking competence in English (Wang et al., 2024). In addition, maintaining a positive emotional state is vital for learning a language. Positive emotions can alter the organization of memory so that cognitive material is integrated, and ideas are thought to be more interconnected (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). When learners are emotionally supported, they are more cognitively open and better able to retrieve and use language effectively.

Feedback also plays an essential role in improving students' English-speaking skills. Constructive feedback can give students the information necessary to improve their speaking skills. Feedback from peers and teachers helps students identify and correct grammar and pronunciation errors, ultimately improving their speaking skills. In addition, peer feedback creates a collaborative learning environment where students can give each other feedback and discuss each other's mistakes and strengths, thereby accelerating the learning process and improving their understanding (X. Li & Hu., 2024). Furthermore, giving and receiving feedback also increases student engagement and motivation, encouraging them to be more active in speaking practice. Feedback in the form of praise was shown to have a positive relationship with students' English-speaking performance, further strengthening their motivation and fluency in communicating (Chien et al., 2020). Supportive feedback culture enhances skills and promotes a collaborative environment that fosters growth and confidence.

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The findings of this research align with those of several other studies that emphasize the importance of EI in developing English-speaking skills. For example, research by Surahman & Sofyan (2021) shows that all components of EI are positively related to the ability to speak. They asserted that students with high emotional intelligence exhibit greater engagement and effective social interaction in class, enhancing their speaking abilities. Sulistyawati (2018) states that EI plays a vital role in determining students' proficiency in speaking skills, and Students who are adept at regulating their emotions tend to communicate more successfully. Research by Rahmadani et al. (2024) discovered that psychological elements, including anxiety, low self-confidence, and insufficient motivation, can affect students' speaking abilities. Similarly, Manalulallaili et al. (2018) found that EI is related to and influences speech performance. EI has been recognized as a crucial factor contributing to the successful acquisition of English, particularly in speaking skills. The influence of emotional intelligence on English speaking proficiency is significant.

The impact of emotional intelligence on English speaking ability

The impact of EI on English speaking ability is evident in increasing student confidence. Although there was variation in confidence levels, many students felt confident in group discussions. This confidence is important for reducing nervousness and improving speech fluency. Students who remain calm when speaking in front of the class can convey words more precisely (Afifah et al., 2024). In addition, the level of anxiety affects students' behavior, where the higher the anxiety felt, the more significant the impact on their performance in speaking. High self-confidence is associated with better EI, so students with higher EI tend to be more confident and calmer in verbal Communication (Harahap & Rozimela., 2021). Students who perceive themselves as capable of regulating their emotions can articulate their thoughts clearly and precisely, exhibiting robust sentence construction (Miftha Imama & Wilany, 2023). It shows that emotional control and self-assurance play an essential role in developing effective speaking abilities.

Regarding the ability to speak fluently, the results showed that many respondents felt they were in the moderate category. It suggests that despite the desire to speak, many feel less confident or unaccustomed to speaking without pauses. EI also has an impact on the ability to

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speak fluently. Learners with better emotional intelligence can better control their emotions, which in turn improves their ability to speak clearly and fluently (Wang et al., 2024). Thus, the anxiety associated with speaking English can be minimized by increasing EI, which can ultimately improve students' speaking skills. Although many students feel less confident or are not used to speaking without pauses, EI can help them overcome anxiety and speak more fluently. Students who experience anxiety in the classroom are less likely to be willing to communicate in a foreign language, making it the most significant negative predictor of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) (Dewaele, 2019). The better students control their feelings, the more confident they are, and the less anxious they are during the presentation (Kelly et al., 2020). Variations in cognitive abilities, language aptitude, learning strategies, motivation, and language anxiety significantly determine learners' success in mastering the target language, particularly in public speaking skills (Chen & Hwang, 2022). Overall, the ability to manage emotions effectively can enhance fluency and reduce communication barriers in language learning.

Students who feel more able to use the correct vocabulary tend to feel more confident in speaking. Lack of vocabulary knowledge is a primary cause that induces speaking anxiety. Students with vocabulary deficiencies often feel unsure and worried about communicating, which can hinder their confidence when speaking in English (Bashori et al., 2021). Difficulties like the fear of making errors, feelings of embarrassment, and diminished confidence can impact students' speaking abilities. In this context, students with vocabulary deficiencies are often more affected by anxiety and fear of being wrong, which can lower their confidence in speaking (Thao & Nguyet., 2019). Students experience fear and anxiety when making mistakes in speaking, such as mispronouncing words, using incorrect grammar, or forming inappropriate sentences (Rahmadani et al., 2024). It suggests that vocabulary mastery and emotional readiness are closely linked to successful and confident communication.

EI significantly impacts the comfort of using English in formal and informal situations. Research shows that Students who possess high emotional intelligence are more capable of effectively managing their anxiety and emotions. The ease of speaking English is

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greatly affected by the supportive relationship between teachers and students and the enjoyment derived from the learning process. In this context, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role as a mediator, allowing students with elevated emotional intelligence to regulate their anxiety and emotions more effectively (Li & Zhang, 2023). These skills enable them to be more confident in English Communication situations, both in formal and informal contexts, thereby increasing their comfort and effectiveness in speaking.

The findings regarding the impact of EI on English-speaking ability align with various previous studies, which show that EI plays an important role in increasing students' confidence and reducing anxiety when speaking. For example, research by L. T. Thao et al. (2023) shows that high EI positively correlates with Communication skills, including public speaking. Students with higher EI tend to be more confident and calmer in verbal Communication, as Kusumawardani & Widodo (2024) revealed, emphasizing the positive relationship between self-confidence and EI. Additionally, good EI helps students manage their emotions and express their thoughts more clearly and effectively, ultimately enhancing their English-speaking skills.

Comparable findings were observed in research conducted by Ozkaral & Ustu (2019), which indicated that classroom anxiety was the most significant negative predictor of the willingness to communicate (WTC) in a foreign language. More anxious students were less likely to want to communicate, which aligns with the finding that emotional intelligence can help reduce anxiety and increase speaking confidence. According to research by Ozkaral and Ustu (2019), students who can control their emotions tend to feel more confident and experience less anxiety during presentations.

Thus, these findings reinforce the argument that EI significantly impacts English-speaking ability, particularly in the context of self-confidence and anxiety management. Previous research has shown that EI contributes to Communication skills and improves the overall learning experience, creating a more supportive environment for students to participate in language learning actively (Kusumawardani & Widodo, 2024; L. T. Thao et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence is a crucial basis for fostering confidence, alleviating anxiety, and improving students' ability to communicate effectively in English.

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The study collected demographic data, including age, gender, semester, and English proficiency level, to analyze the distribution of respondents. Most respondents (58.1%) were 21-23 years old, followed by 18-20 years old (38.7%), with only a tiny fraction (3.2%) over 24 years old. In terms of gender, female respondents dominated (68.8%). Most respondents were in semesters 7-8 (51.6%), while others were in semesters 5-6 (17.2%) or the previous semester. In terms of English proficiency, the majority (74.2%) identified themselves as being at an intermediate level, while a small percentage reported being at a beginner level (7.5%) or an advanced level (18.3%). These demographic characteristics provide a clearer understanding of respondents' backgrounds and their potential impact on learning outcomes, particularly about the role of emotional intelligence in students' English-speaking skills.

EI considerably affects students' English-speaking abilities, which may differ according to demographic factors, including age, gender, semester, and proficiency level. The age of students plays a vital role in developing emotional intelligence and speaking skills. Younger college students, such as those aged 18-20, may still be in the process of developing their EI, while older college students (21-23 years old) tend to have more experience in social interactions, which can improve their EI (L. T. Thao et al., 2023). Older college students have higher EI levels, contributing to better speaking skills. It suggests that students can develop better emotional skills as they age, improving their speaking abilities (Kunchai, 2024). It indicates that emotional maturity, which often develops with age, can enhance communication competence in language learning.

In terms of gender, research shows that women tend to have higher EI compared to men. It aligns with the findings (Dewaele et al., 2024), Women report higher feelings of anxiety when learning a language, but they also express a greater desire to communicate (Saud, 2019). Thus, although women may experience more anxiety, a higher EI can help them overcome nervousness and communicate more effectively in English.

Students in the higher semesters (7-8) usually have more experience learning English and interacting in an academic context. More experienced students have better speaking skills because they have developed their EI through various social and academic experiences (A. Drigas & Papoutsis, 2020; Rahmadani et al., 2024). As such, students in higher semesters may

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be better able to manage their emotions, which can positively impact their speaking skills.

The level of English proficiency is also closely related to EI. Students who identify themselves as at the intermediate level may have considerable experience in using English but still face challenges that can trigger anxiety. Students with higher EI tend to be more confident in speaking, which helps them overcome challenges related to their proficiency level (Andrienko et al., 2020). Conversely, beginners may find it more difficult to communicate because they lack experience and vocabulary, which can impede their development as EI.

Overall, EI significantly impacts students' English-speaking ability, and this influence varies based on age, gender, semester, and proficiency level. Older college students, women, and those in higher semesters tend to have better EIs, contributing to more effective speaking skills. In addition, higher levels of English proficiency are also positively related to EI, which suggests that EI development should be a focus in English language education to improve students' speaking skills.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

This research emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in supporting students' ability to speak English. EI allows learners to manage their emotions, recognize others' feelings, and adapt their language use to various social situations, contributing to more effective communication and stronger verbal interaction. Additionally, it fosters motivation and self-efficacy, which help reduce anxiety and build confidence.

By managing emotions effectively, students with high EI can articulate their thoughts clearly, participate actively in discussions, and navigate language-related challenges more easily. Overcoming anxiety and fear of mistakes enhances fluency, encouraging a more willing and confident approach to speaking English.

Limitation

This study has several strengths, such as the high reliability of the instrument and the application of systematic statistical analysis to ensure objective findings. However, this study

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has several limitations. First, using a questionnaire may not fully capture the complexity of EI and speaking skills; future research could incorporate interviews or observations to gain deeper insights. Second, the sample may not represent all EFL learners, limiting generalizability. Expanding to diverse contexts would enhance understanding. Third, cross-sectional design limits causal conclusions; a longitudinal study could provide more insightful findings. Lastly, factors like teaching styles and cultural influences were not considered. Addressing these limitations in future research can provide a more comprehensive analysis.

Implication

This study provides both practical and empirical insights into the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in English-speaking skills. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of educators incorporating EI-focused strategies in EFL classrooms, such as fostering positive emotional environments and providing constructive feedback to boost students' confidence and fluency. Integrating EI training into language curricula can also help students manage anxiety and enhance their communication skills.

Empirically, the study reinforces existing research on the connection between EI and language proficiency, supporting the notion that affective factors influence language acquisition. Future research should explore qualitative approaches or longitudinal studies to further examine the long-term impact of EI on speaking skills. Additionally, expanding research to diverse learner populations would enhance the generalizability of these findings.

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