



The Impact of English Slang in Indonesian Efl Students to Enhance Student's Speaking Skill

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Abstract: English speaking proficiency remains a challenge for many Indonesian EFL students due to limited opportunities to practice authentic communication and low self-confidence in using the language. Since English slang is commonly used in everyday communication and digital media, it has the potential to create a more engaging and natural speaking environment for students. This study aimed to investigate the impact of English slang on Indonesian EFL students' speaking skill. A qualitative research design was employed involving 17 tenth-grade students at a vocational high school in Indonesia. Data were collected through observation checklists, speaking performance assessments, students' self-reflection questionnaires, and documentation. The students participated in pair conversations on various topics and were encouraged to use English slang expressions appropriately. The findings indicate that all students actively participated in the activity, used English to communicate, and incorporated slang expressions into their conversations. Most students achieved a rating of Good or Very Good in their speaking performance, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, confidence, and the use of English slang. Self-reflection results also indicate that students felt more comfortable, confident, and motivated when speaking English using slang expressions. In addition, students felt that slang made conversations more natural and helped them express their ideas more easily. These findings suggest that English slang can positively support students' speaking skills by boosting their self-confidence, participation, fluency, and communicative engagement in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: English Slang; Speaking Skill; EFL Students.

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Introduction

The Importance of Speaking Skills in EFL Education in Indonesia. Language is the most effective means of communication for conveying messages, thoughts, feelings, and intentions to others and enables cooperation among people (Khasinah et al., 2024). Language plays a dominant role in various aspects of daily human life. Language and Linguistic are not only defined as communication sources, but also as system of symbols governed by rules that shape human interaction and understanding. Oviogun & Veerdee

(2020) explain that language plays an essential role in constructing knowledge, expressing identity and facilitating communication in society. Furthermore, language mastery is crucial in both academic and social contexts, especially in EFL learning, where students are required to use language actively in speaking.

Speaking skill is a fundamental component in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Indonesia Kulsum et al., (2025), as they enable students to actively communicate and express their ideas in academic and real-life contexts. In many Indonesian

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classrooms, students still experience limited opportunities to practice speaking due to teacher-centered approaches and a focus on grammar and written skills (Indrapurnama et al., 2022). As a result, speaking competence often becomes underdeveloped despite years of English learning. Speaking is essential because it allows learners to engage in meaningful interaction and develop communicative competence. In line with this, the research was conducted by Elisathusilawani et al., (2023) shows that speaking is considered one of the most important yet challenging skills for EFL learners due to factors such as limited vocabulary and lack of practice.

Furthermore, speaking ability is becoming increasingly crucial in the contemporary educational setting where English is a universal language of communication (Rambe & Daulay, 2025). In addition to understanding English, Indonesian students should actively employ it in a variety of communication contexts, including social interactions, presentations, and conversations. However, a lot of students still struggle with psychological issues including anxiety and low confidence, which have a big impact on how well they talk (Cahya & Churnia, 2026). Additionally, effective learning strategies can boost motivation and engagement in speaking activities. Gani et al., (2015) in Muslimin Nur et al., (2022) found that high performance speaking students were better at balancing the use of various learning strategies including memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social (Muslimin Nur et al., 2022). Students' awareness and tactics for developing speaking abilities play a significant part in enhancing their oral proficiency (Hasanah & Pratiwi, 2022). That is why in order to increase students' speaking abilities in Indonesia and create a more engaging learning environment, new teaching strategies are required, such as using interactive methods or informal language like slang.

Common Challenges For Students While trying to communicate in English in EFL class especially in Indonesia, students frequently encounter a number of difficulties that can seriously impair their communication competence. Psychological issues like nervousness, insecurity, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence are some of the main challenges (Cahya & Churnia, 2026). Even when they show proper language proficiency, these issues frequently cause students to be reluctant to engage in speaking activities. Students' speaking challenges are also influenced by linguistic issues such a small vocabulary, incorrect pronunciations, and low level of grammatical comprehension (Mulyaningsih, 2021). These problems make it difficult for students to form sentences and articulate their thoughts in English. These difficulties also compound by a lack of regular speaking practice

and exposure to English outside the classroom. According to a study by Hasnani Shofia, Asmi Rusmanayanti (2021) students' speaking difficulties are mainly influenced by psychological and linguistic aspects, including fear of negative evaluation and lack of vocabulary. Similarly, Kulsum et al., (2025) found that students struggle with fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and confidence which collectively affect their speaking performance in EFL classrooms. Furthermore, during the learning process, instructional and contextual elements also have an impact on students' difficulties speaking English. Students' opportunities to actively practice speaking are limited in many EFL courses due to teacher-centered instructional techniques (Indrapurnama et al., 2022).

Communication anxiety is another important problem that might have a negative impact on students' motivation to speak and demonstrate their fluency as students frequently struggle to continue interaction and organize their thoughts (Cahya & Churnia, 2026). According to Sawitry et al., (2026) students encounter significant challenges such low self-confidence, limited vocabulary, and pronunciation issues. Riandini (2025) emphasized that two major elements influencing students' speaking performance are lack of desire and fear of judgment. It is necessary to address both internal and external elements. By addressing these elements simultaneously, teachers can create a more supportive and engaging learning environment that encourages students to speak more actively. This integrated approach is essential for developing students' language proficiency and confidence in using English.

Based on the researcher's preliminary observation conducted at SMK NW Renco, several problems related to students' speaking skills were identified. Most students were reluctant to speak English during classroom activities because they lacked confidence, were afraid of making mistakes, and had limited vocabulary to express their ideas. Classroom interactions were generally dominated by the teacher, while students tended to provide short responses and rarely initiated communication in English. In addition, students were more familiar with English expressions obtained from social media than with the formal expressions presented in textbooks, yet these authentic language resources had not been integrated into classroom speaking activities. These conditions indicate the need for a more contextual and engaging instructional strategy that encourages students to communicate more confidently and actively in English.

The Potential of Slang as a Contextual and Engaging Learning Strategy. The use of slang has significant potential as a contextual and engaging learning strategy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, particularly in enhancing students'

communicative competence. Slang represents a form of authentic language that reflects real-life communication, especially in informal contexts (Rohman, 2026). By integrating slang into language learning, students are introduced to natural expressions that are commonly used by native speakers, which helps bridge the gap between textbook language and real-world interaction (Mamajonovna, 2025). Moreover, slang can increase students' motivation and engagement, as it is often associated with modern culture, social media and youth identity. According to Lutviana & Mafulah (2021), the use of slang in EFL classrooms especially in online learning contexts serves as an alternative communication strategy that makes interaction more dynamic and relatable. Similarly, Mamajonovna (2025) highlights that incorporating slang and idiomatic expressions into teaching can make language learning more authentic and meaningful, as it enriches learners' vocabulary and cultural understanding.

Slang is an informal variety of language commonly used in everyday communication, particularly among young people. In EFL learning, slang provides authentic language exposure that helps students understand real-life communication beyond textbook expressions (Dossary, 2025). As learners are increasingly exposed to English through social media and digital platforms, integrating slang into classroom activities can make language learning more contextual and meaningful.

Previous studies have shown that the use of English slang can enhance students' motivation, confidence, vocabulary, and classroom engagement (Fauziyah et al., 2025; Rohman, 2026). Slang-based learning activities also encourage students to participate more actively in speaking tasks and develop pragmatic competence through authentic communication contexts (Mamajonovna, 2025). However, most previous studies focused on students' perceptions, social media usage, or literature reviews rather than examining students' actual speaking performance.

Therefore, this study investigates the implementation of English slang in speaking activities among Indonesian vocational high school students. The novelty of this study lies in examining English slang as a pedagogical strategy to improve speaking skills through classroom observation, speaking performance assessment, and students' self-reflection, providing a more comprehensive understanding of its contribution to EFL speaking instruction.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design involving 17 tenth-grade EFL students at SMK NW Renco selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through classroom observation, speaking

performance assessment, self-reflection questionnaires, and documentation. Students participated in pair conversations using English slang on everyday topics. Their speaking performance was assessed using an analytic rubric covering fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, confidence, and the appropriate use of English slang. The research instruments were reviewed by an English lecturer and an English teacher to ensure content validity, while data credibility was strengthened through method triangulation. Data were analyzed descriptively following Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative analysis procedures, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to identify students' speaking performance and their perceptions of using English slang in speaking activities.

Result and Discussion

The study involved 17 tenth-grade EFL students at SMK NW Renco. Classroom observation revealed that all students actively participated in the speaking activities and consistently used English slang during pair conversations. Most students demonstrated confidence (15 students), fluency (15 students), clear pronunciation (14 students), active interaction with peers (17 students), and appropriate responses during discussions (16 students). Fourteen students also showed high motivation and were able to express their ideas with minimal hesitation.

The speaking performance assessment showed generally positive results. Based on the assessment of fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, confidence, and use of English slang, six students (35.3%) achieved the Very Good category, nine students (52.9%) were categorized as Good, and two students (11.8%) were in the Fair category, while no students were classified as Poor. Overall, students demonstrated good fluency, confidence, and appropriate use of English slang, although a few students still experienced difficulties in pronunciation and grammatical accuracy.

The self-reflection questionnaire also indicated positive responses toward the use of English slang in speaking activities. Sixteen students reported enjoying the activity and feeling more confident when speaking English. All 17 students agreed that slang made conversations feel more natural, helped them feel more comfortable speaking English, encouraged active participation, and motivated them to use English slang in future speaking activities. Only one student reported difficulty understanding several slang expressions. Overall, the findings suggest that students perceived English slang as an engaging and supportive element for improving their speaking performance.

The results of this study show that the speaking activities of Indonesian EFL students had a positive impact by the use of English slang. The findings of the

observation indicated that students showed high levels of confidence, interest, and participation. Through the speaking task, students frequently used English expressions and actively participated during the activity. These findings were strongly supported by the speaking performance assessment. Most students achieved Good or Very Good categories, particularly in fluency, pronunciation, confidence, and use of English slang.

Students were able to appropriately employ informal English expressions in conversation, which were demonstrated by their good performance in the slang-usage criterion. Slang might help students in maintaining the process of communication by offering recognized vocabulary and phrases, according to the frequently positive fluency scores. Additionally, the self-reflection data shows that students were having a positive perception of English slang. Almost all of participants stated that they felt more relaxed speaking English, having more confidence, and felt improved in their ability to express their thoughts. Students also said that using slang made talks more interactive and natural. While some students still had difficulty with pronunciation, accuracy, and comprehension of some slang expression, these issues did not significantly impact conversation. Overall, the results show that integrating English slang into speaking activities might improve student confidence and fluency in the language while also producing a more interesting classroom.

The findings of this study align with findings from previous studies conducted by Yultisa and Mardiah (2018) and Anwar and Swondo (2024). All three research showed that students' speaking development is positively impacted by using English slang. Students in this study successfully used English slang expressions in their communication, showed confidence during talks, and actively participated in speaking practice. Yultisa and Mardiah (2018) found that students' confidence and speaking abilities were significantly improved by English slang. Similarly Anwar and Swondo (2024) found that using American slang combined with TikTok application improved students' vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and motivation.

Although the similarity, this study differs from previous studies in several aspects. First, Yultisa and Mardiah (2018) employed an experimental quantitative design that focused on measuring the statistical effect of English slang on speaking achievement through pre-tests and post-tests. In contrast, this study used a qualitative descriptive approach to explore students' speaking performance and experiences through observation, speaking assessment, self-reflection, and documentation. As a result, this study offers a deeper description of how students communicated and observed the use of English slang during speaking tasks.

Secondly, this study used direct pair-conversation activities without the use of digital platforms, in contrast to Anwar and Swondo (2024) that utilized TikTok as the main learning tool. Therefore, this study focused on students' communicative interaction and speaking performance when utilizing English slang in classroom practice rather than technology-supported learning.

Another important finding that differentiates this study from previous research is identification of the speaking difficulties experienced by students and the role of English slang in overcoming those difficulties. These findings indicate that students often struggle to communicate their ideas in English and feel hesitant and unconfident. However, the use of English slang helps students feel more comfortable, communicate more naturally, and participate more actively in speaking activities. This suggests that English slang functions not only as informal language but also as a communication tool that reduces psychological barriers to speaking.

Despite its positive findings, this study has several kinds of limitations include, only 17 students from one vocational high school participated in the study, which limits the relevance of the results to a larger sample of Indonesian EFL students. Second, the study might not accurately represent the long-term effects of English slang on speaking development because it was completed in a short time. The last, interviews were not used in the study to gather the data. As a result, instead of using in-depth personal experiences, students' opinions were investigated through self-reflection forms.

Conclusion

This study found that the integration of English slang into EFL speaking activities positively influenced students' participation, confidence, fluency, and overall speaking engagement. Observation results showed that all participants actively used English slang during pair conversations, while most students demonstrated confidence, active interaction, and smooth communication with minimal hesitation. The speaking performance assessment also indicated positive outcomes. Most students achieved Good and Very Good scores, particularly in fluency, pronunciation, confidence, and the appropriate use of English slang. Although some students still experienced difficulties with grammatical accuracy and pronunciation, these challenges did not significantly interfere with communication. The self-reflection findings further revealed that students enjoyed the activities, felt more confident, expressed their ideas more easily, and perceived conversations as more natural after using English slang.

These findings suggest that English slang can reduce students' speaking anxiety and encourage more

natural communication, supporting previous studies that highlighted its positive role in EFL speaking development. However, English slang mainly improved communicative confidence rather than grammatical accuracy. This study was limited by its small sample size and short duration, making the findings less generalizable. Overall, English slang can be considered a useful complementary strategy for promoting students' confidence, willingness to communicate, and speaking performance in EFL classrooms.

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