

Public Speaking Challenges Among EFL Learners: Evidence from an English Camp Experience

Amiruddin¹⁾, Ines Darasinta ²⁾.

¹⁻²⁾Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry
Banda Aceh

Email: amiruddin@ar-raniry.ac.id

Abstract. Public speaking in English presents significant challenges for EFL learners, particularly in Indonesian university contexts where opportunities for authentic oral communication remain limited. This study explores how university students navigate public speaking challenges through their participation in an English immersion camp. Using a qualitative approach with narrative inquiry design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six participants aged 21-23 years who had completed the Saree English Camp program in Aceh Besar, Indonesia. Thematic analysis was employed to examine participants' experiences before, during, and after the camp. The findings reveal that participants initially faced multidimensional challenges including psychological barriers (anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, low self-confidence), limited linguistic competence (vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar), and lack of supportive speaking environments. The English camp facilitated transformation through its immersive English-only environment, continuous speaking practice, and strong peer support, which collectively reduced anxiety, normalized mistakes, and increased confidence. Participants developed greater willingness to communicate, improved fluency, and more positive attitudes toward speaking English. However, sustaining these improvements post-camp remained challenging due to the absence of supportive English-speaking environments in daily life. This study contributes empirical insights into how immersive learning environments address both linguistic and psychological dimensions of public speaking development, while highlighting the need for sustained practice opportunities beyond intensive programs

Keywords: *Public speaking, EFL learners, Speaking anxiety, English camp, Immersive learning, Qualitative inquiry.*

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking in English represents one of the most complex and anxiety-inducing skills for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly among university students. This complexity stems from the simultaneous demands of linguistic competence including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation and psychological readiness, encompassing confidence, emotional control, and the ability to manage fear when addressing an audience. For many EFL learners, these combined

demands create significant barriers that impede effective public communication (Kang & Lee, 2023; Saito & Dewaele, 2023).

In the Indonesian EFL context, university students often experience limited opportunities to practice English public speaking in authentic situations. English instruction remains predominantly classroom-based and academically oriented, with stronger emphasis on reading, writing, and grammar mastery than on oral communication (Widodo, 2021). Consequently, students may demonstrate adequate receptive skills but struggle with oral tasks, particularly those involving public speaking, presentations, or spontaneous communication. Recent studies indicate that speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and lack of confidence are major factors negatively affecting students' public speaking performance in English (Habiburrahim et al., 2020; Fitria & Yunita, 2023).

Public speaking challenges among EFL learners are not merely linguistic but are strongly influenced by affective factors. Anxiety, low self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes often prevent students from expressing ideas fluently and confidently, even when they possess sufficient language knowledge (Dörnyei, 2020). These affective barriers are intensified in formal classroom settings where students feel evaluated and judged by lecturers and peers. As a result, many students avoid speaking opportunities, which further limits their speaking development and reinforces their fear of public communication (Porter & Castillo, 2023).

To address these challenges, alternative learning environments beyond formal classrooms have gained increasing attention. One such environment is the English camp, designed as an immersive and experiential learning program that emphasizes active participation, peer interaction, and continuous use of English in various communicative contexts (Abulhassan & Hamid, 2021; Yusup & Munawaroh, 2023). Through activities such as communicative games, group discussions, leadership training, and the implementation of English-only policies, English camps aim to create supportive environments that reduce anxiety and encourage learners to take risks in speaking (Lee & Hsieh, 2022; Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2022).

Despite the growing body of research on English camps, several critical gaps remain. Existing studies tend to conceptualize improvement primarily in terms of observable performance outcomes, with limited attention to how learners actively navigate public speaking challenges over time. There is insufficient exploration of the dynamic interaction between psychological barriers, linguistic limitations, and environmental factors within immersive settings (Husnaini et al., 2025; Thayyib et al., 2023). Furthermore, most studies focus on immediate program outcomes rather than the sustainability of learning gains once participants return to non-immersive environments. Finally, there is a lack of contextually grounded qualitative research in the Aceh setting that captures students' lived experiences of public speaking development within a specific socio-cultural and educational context.

This study addresses these gaps by examining university students' experiences in navigating public speaking challenges through their participation in Saree English Camp. The research is guided by two questions: (1) What are the perceived public speaking challenges experienced by EFL students? and (2) How does the English camp facilitate students in navigating these challenges? By employing narrative inquiry and foregrounding participants' voices, this research aims to present an authentic and contextualized understanding of public speaking development within an immersive learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Speaking in EFL Contexts

Public speaking is widely recognized as one of the most demanding aspects of speaking competence in EFL contexts. Unlike casual conversation, public speaking requires speakers to organize ideas systematically, maintain audience engagement, manage linguistic accuracy, and demonstrate confidence simultaneously (Kang & Lee, 2023). For EFL learners, these demands are further complicated by limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments and restricted opportunities to practice speaking beyond the classroom.

In EFL settings such as Indonesia, English is primarily learned as an academic subject rather than a daily communication tool. Students often possess theoretical knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but lack practical speaking competence, particularly in public or formal contexts (Widodo, 2021). Public speaking tasks such as presentations, speeches, and group discussions trigger emotional pressure, causing learners to focus more on avoiding mistakes than conveying meaning effectively. Saito and Dewaele (2023) emphasize that public speaking competence should be viewed as a multidimensional construct involving linguistic ability, discourse management, interactional skills, and affective readiness.

Public Speaking Challenges among EFL Learners

EFL learners face a wide range of challenges when engaging in public speaking activities. Linguistically, learners often struggle with limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, grammatical hesitation, and lack of fluency (Mahmud & Nur, 2021). These limitations become more visible during public speaking, where learners are expected to speak continuously and coherently in front of an audience.

However, psychological challenges are often more dominant than linguistic difficulties. Research indicates that fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and fear of being judged significantly affect learners' willingness to speak publicly (Habiburrahim et al., 2020). In Indonesian and Acehnese contexts, public speaking challenges are closely related to students' previous learning experiences, which emphasize accuracy and examinations rather than communicative competence. Consequently, students become overly cautious and hesitant, resulting in avoidance behaviors such as silence, minimal responses, or reliance on memorized scripts (Porter & Castillo, 2023).

Speaking Anxiety, Confidence, and Motivation

Speaking anxiety, motivation, and confidence are three interrelated psychological factors that significantly influence EFL learners' speaking performance. Speaking anxiety refers to feelings of tension, nervousness, and fear experienced when learners are required to speak in English. It is one of the most common affective challenges among Indonesian EFL learners and has been shown to negatively affect

learners' fluency, coherence, and willingness to communicate (Habiburrahim et al., 2020).

Research in the Aceh context highlights how speaking anxiety affects students' English performance. Habiburrahim et al. (2020) found that anxiety among Acehnese university students leads to noticeable difficulties in constructing sentences, organizing ideas, and maintaining fluency during speaking tasks. Participants reported feeling afraid of making mistakes, lacking confidence, and viewing peers as more competent, all of which intensified their anxiety. These emotional barriers caused students to withdraw from classroom interactions and avoid opportunities to practice speaking.

Motivation is another major factor contributing to speaking performance. Dörnyei (2020) explains that motivated learners show more persistence, effort, and resilience in speaking English, even when encountering linguistic limitations. Learners with high integrative and intrinsic motivation tend to willingly participate in speaking activities, seek new opportunities to practice, and develop a stronger willingness to communicate (WTC). Confidence plays a crucial role as well, acting as an emotional foundation that influences both anxiety and motivation. Fitria and Yunita (2023) and Siregar and Manik (2023) confirm that learners with strong confidence levels show better fluency, clearer pronunciation, and more active speaking engagement.

English Camps as Immersive Learning Environments

English camps are increasingly recognized as alternative learning environments that provide intensive and immersive exposure to the English language. Unlike conventional classroom instruction, English camps emphasize experiential learning, authentic communication, and continuous interaction among participants (Abulhassan & Hamid, 2021). These environments reduce formality and create a supportive atmosphere in which learners feel encouraged to speak without fear of excessive correction or evaluation.

In English camp settings, learning occurs through daily interactions, collaborative tasks, and informal conversations. Activities such as communicative games, group discussions, leadership projects, and motivational sessions allow

learners to practice speaking in meaningful and contextualized situations (Yusup & Munawaroh, 2023). This immersive exposure helps learners develop fluency and spontaneity, which are essential components of public speaking competence. Furthermore, English camps promote peer-supported learning, as participants share similar goals of improving speaking ability and overcoming anxiety. Studies have shown that immersive environments like English camps significantly enhance learners' willingness to communicate and confidence in speaking (Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2022; Lee & Hsieh, 2022).

English-Only Policy and Speaking Development

An English-only policy is a fundamental feature of immersive programs, requiring participants to use English exclusively during activities and daily interactions. Although initially challenging, such policies encourage learners to rely on available linguistic resources and develop strategic competence to maintain communication (Mahmud & Nur, 2021). In public speaking contexts, English-only policies play a crucial role in reducing dependence on the first language and promoting automaticity in language production. Saito and Dewaele (2023) argue that continuous use of English helps learners become more comfortable expressing ideas spontaneously. Moreover, English-only environments normalize linguistic imperfection—when all participants are required to speak English regardless of proficiency level, mistakes are perceived as natural rather than embarrassing, helping lower anxiety and build confidence (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three interrelated theoretical perspectives: Experiential Learning Theory, Willingness to Communicate (WTC), and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes learning through direct experience, reflection, and active engagement, aligning with English camp activities that allow learners to acquire speaking skills through real-life practice (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2021). The WTC theory explains how learners' readiness to speak in a second language is influenced by confidence, motivation, and anxiety. In immersive environments, increased exposure and peer support enhance learners' willingness to

communicate (Dewaele et al., 2022). The Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that emotional factors such as anxiety and self-confidence can either facilitate or hinder language acquisition. English camps aim to lower the affective filter by creating supportive and non-threatening environments, thereby enabling learners to engage more fully in public speaking activities (Saito & Dewaele, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a narrative inquiry design to explore university students' experiences in navigating public speaking challenges during their participation in Saree English Camp, Aceh Besar, Indonesia. Qualitative research was selected because the study aims to understand meanings, perceptions, and emotional experiences rather than to quantify speaking ability. Narrative inquiry is particularly appropriate because the research focuses on participants' personal stories and reflections across time before, during, and after the English camp. This design allowed the researcher to capture emotional changes, personal growth, and internal struggles related to public speaking that may not be visible through quantitative measures. By using narrative inquiry, the study prioritized participants' voices and lived experiences, analyzing narratives as holistic accounts that reflect individual journeys of anxiety reduction, confidence development, and public speaking growth.

Participants

The participants consisted of six university students who had completed Saree English Camp, selected using purposive sampling to ensure all participants had relevant experiences related to the research focus. Inclusion criteria included active involvement in camp activities, experience with English-only communication, and willingness to reflect on public speaking challenges and development. Participants ranged from 21 to 23 years of age, representing both UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh and Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh at semester levels 6 to 10. The decision to involve

six participants was based on the nature of narrative inquiry, which emphasizes depth over breadth, enabling the researcher to explore each narrative extensively.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted via WhatsApp Video Call and face-to-face meetings, depending on participant location and availability. Each interview lasted 30 to 60 minutes and was conducted in English to allow participants to express their speaking experiences more clearly. The interview protocol followed three phases: (1) exploring public speaking experiences before the camp, including emotional responses and perceived difficulties; (2) examining experiences during the camp, particularly regarding the English-only policy, anxiety, motivation, and peer support; and (3) reflecting on speaking development and the sustainability of improvements after the camp. Before interviews began, the researcher explained the study purpose, interview procedures, and data usage, obtaining verbal or message consent for voluntary participation.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Thematic Narrative Analysis, integrating principles of narrative inquiry with Braun and Clarke's thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The analysis proceeded through five phases: (1) familiarization with data through repeated listening and reading of transcripts; (2) initial coding of significant statements and experiences related to speaking development; (3) thematic development by grouping related codes into broader categories reflecting patterns across participants; (4) narrative construction by writing detailed descriptions for each participant highlighting critical moments with representative quotations; and (5) reflection through memo-writing to ensure interpretations remained grounded in participants' actual words and experiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-Camp Public Speaking Challenges

The analysis revealed that participants faced multidimensional challenges before joining the English camp. These challenges fell into three interconnected

themes: psychological barriers, limited linguistic competence, and lack of speaking practice and supportive environment.

Psychological Barriers in Public Speaking

All participants experienced significant psychological barriers that influenced their engagement in public speaking. These barriers operated at emotional, cognitive, and behavioral levels, creating a complex web of anxiety that prevented effective communication. MQ explicitly stated, "I feel nervous... and I'm afraid to be judged," indicating that anxiety was socially oriented not merely about making mistakes, but about how those mistakes were perceived by others. LM described feeling "shy and afraid of making mistakes," showing that the anticipation of error led to reduced participation even when participants possessed the ability to communicate.

NK further illustrated this intensity: "I felt very nervous and not confident, especially in front of many people," indicating that audience size amplified psychological pressure. BD described a behavioral consequence: "When I didn't know how to say something, I just became silent." This response reveals that psychological barriers directly shape behavior silence becomes a coping mechanism to avoid embarrassment or failure. MT confirmed this pattern: "I was afraid of making mistakes and didn't feel confident."

These findings align with Habiburrahim et al. (2020), who found that anxiety among Acehnese university students leads to difficulties in constructing sentences, organizing ideas, and maintaining fluency. The results also support Widodo's (2021) emphasis that Indonesian EFL learners often experience fear of making mistakes and being judged, reducing their willingness to speak. From a theoretical perspective, the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, as cited in Saito & Dewaele, 2023) explains these findings high anxiety and low confidence act as a "filter" that blocks language input and limits production. Participants' fear of negative evaluation increased their affective filter, preventing them from fully utilizing existing linguistic knowledge.

Limited Linguistic Competence

Participants experienced significant challenges related to limited vocabulary range, pronunciation accuracy, and grammatical control. Importantly, these

limitations functioned as cognitive constraints disrupting real-time communication. NK articulated: "I knew what I wanted to say, but I didn't know the English words," highlighting the gap between conceptual knowledge and linguistic realization. LM stated, "Sometimes I didn't know the right word to say," reflecting lexical retrieval failure that leads to disfluency. MT emphasized multiple difficulties: "My vocabulary was limited, and I had problems with pronunciation and grammar."

AG introduced another dimension: "It was hard to catch what others said," indicating that linguistic competence affects comprehension as well as production. These limitations contributed to increased cognitive load during speaking instead of focusing on meaning and interaction, participants allocated mental resources to searching for appropriate vocabulary and monitoring pronunciation, resulting in slower speech, hesitation, or communication breakdown.

These findings are consistent with Mahmud and Nur (2021), who highlight that limited vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties are common obstacles in EFL contexts. The study extends previous research by showing how linguistic limitations interact with psychological factors when participants struggle to find words or form sentences, they become more aware of their limitations, increasing anxiety and reducing confidence. This connection aligns with the argument in Chapter II that public speaking in EFL contexts is a multidimensional skill involving both linguistic and cognitive demands (Kang & Lee, 2023).

Lack of Speaking Practice and Environment

The findings reveal that participants' challenges were strongly influenced by the lack of speaking practice and absence of a supportive communicative environment. Most participants reported that their English use was highly limited and confined primarily to formal classroom settings. LM stated, "I rarely spoke English, only when answering the teacher's questions," indicating speaking was treated as a task-based activity rather than natural communication. NK explained, "I almost never used English outside the classroom," suggesting English was not integrated into daily life.

MT confirmed: "I rarely practiced speaking in real conversation," highlighting the absence of authentic communicative practice. MQ raised a critical point: "I don't really have friends to speak English with," reflecting the lack of interlocutors essential for language development. This absence created conditions where speaking became rare and unnatural, errors felt more "visible," and confidence could not develop due to limited repetition. The absence of a speaking environment reinforced psychological barriers when participants rarely speak English, each speaking event becomes high-pressure, increasing anxiety and fear of mistakes, leading to avoidance behavior and further reducing practice opportunities.

This finding strongly supports Widodo's (2021) argument that English learning in Indonesia is predominantly classroom-based and academically oriented, with emphasis on grammar and written skills rather than oral communication. From the perspective of Experiential Learning Theory (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2021), participants' previous environments did not provide sufficient experiential learning opportunities speaking was a limited classroom activity rather than continuous communicative practice. The findings also relate to WTC (Dewaele et al., 2022) without a supportive environment and available interlocutors, learners have fewer chances to initiate or sustain communication, reducing confidence and reinforcing reluctance to speak.

The Transformative Role of English Camp

The findings demonstrate that Saree English Camp functioned as a transformative immersive learning environment that enabled participants to gradually navigate and overcome their public speaking challenges through continuous interaction, practice, and social support.

English Camp as an Immersive Learning Environment

The English camp created a setting where English was used as the primary and continuous medium of communication, fundamentally reshaping participants' speaking behavior. The implementation of the English-only policy required participants to use English in almost all interactions a policy participants consistently interpreted as constructive pressure encouraging active language use. MQ described

this as "forced to speak English in a positive way," reflecting a shift in perception from viewing being forced as negative to understanding it as motivational. LM stated, "It pushed us to practice English more," indicating the policy increased speaking frequency, a crucial factor in developing fluency.

The immersive environment also influenced participants' cognitive processing instead of translating from Indonesian, participants began to formulate thoughts directly in English. AG explicitly stated, "It forced me to think in English," representing a significant milestone in second language acquisition that reduces cognitive delay and allows more spontaneous communication. The immersion reduced dependence on the first language, encouraging participants to use simpler expressions, paraphrase ideas, and negotiate meaning essential components of communicative competence.

Moreover, the immersive setting redefined English from an academic subject to a functional communication tool. This fundamentally changed participants' engagement with the language they used English to express ideas, interact socially, and participate in activities. Importantly, the immersive setting reduced psychological pressure because all participants shared the condition of learning and practicing, creating collective participation that normalized mistakes, encouraged risk-taking, and reduced speaking anxiety.

These findings align with Abulhassan and Hamid (2021), who emphasize that English camps create less formal, more supportive environments compared to traditional classrooms. The results support Experiential Learning Theory (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2021) the camp provided opportunities to learn through direct experience rather than passive instruction, enabling participants to transform prior knowledge into actual speaking performance. The findings also confirm the Affective Filter Hypothesis the camp environment helped lower participants' affective filter by reducing anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, allowing more free engagement in communication.

The Role of Social Support in Learning

Social support played a central role in facilitating participants' speaking development. This support came from both peers and mentors, functioning as psychological and interactional foundations that enabled more confident speaking engagement. MQ stated, "The environment was supportive, and it boosted my confidence," indicating confidence was socially constructed through interaction. NK explained, "Everyone was trying to speak English together," reflecting collective participation where shared struggle reduced feelings of isolation and created learning based on mutual understanding rather than competition.

MT further emphasized, "I was motivated by friends and instructors," showing motivation reinforced through external social influence. AG noted, "We motivated each other to keep speaking," indicating support was reciprocal among participants, creating more opportunities for practice and feedback. Social support operated at multiple levels emotional (reducing anxiety and embarrassment), motivational (encouraging persistence), interactional (providing communication opportunities), and corrective (offering feedback non-threateningly).

One important implication is that social support helped redefine mistakes as natural learning processes rather than failure. This shift reduced psychological burden and increased willingness to take risks—participants attempted new vocabulary, spoke despite uncertainty, and continued interaction even after making errors. The supportive environment functioned as a bridge between psychological and linguistic development: while immersion increased exposure, social support ensured participants were emotionally ready to take advantage of that exposure. Without this support, the English-only policy alone might have increased pressure rather than confidence.

These findings extend Ozturk and Gurbuz's (2022) research by highlighting that the effectiveness of English camps lies not only in activities but also in the social dynamics they create. The shared goals and mutual support created a sense of belonging that encouraged risk-taking—consistent with WTC theory (Dewaele et al., 2022), where

supportive environments increase learners' readiness to speak even when not fully confident in linguistic ability.

Development of Speaking Confidence and Ability

As a result of the immersive environment and strong social support, participants experienced significant development in speaking confidence and ability across psychological, behavioral, and linguistic levels. MT stated, "I became more confident and could speak more smoothly," reflecting both psychological improvement (confidence) and performance improvement (fluency). NK explained, "I became more used to expressing my ideas," indicating increased familiarity with speaking. BD described development in terms of courage: "I became more brave to speak," highlighting a shift in risk-taking behavior. AG stated, "I started to enjoy speaking English," showing a change in affective orientation speaking was no longer perceived as stressful but as enjoyable.

The development occurred across three interconnected dimensions. Psychologically, participants became more confident, less anxious, and more willing to take risks; fear of making mistakes significantly reduced, and speaking was no longer perceived as high-pressure. Behaviorally, participants spoke more frequently, participated more actively in conversations, and showed greater initiative, gradually replacing silence and avoidance with active engagement. Linguistically, improvements in fluency, vocabulary usage, and pronunciation emerged through repeated practice, enabling participants to express ideas more effectively.

Importantly, improvement came from continuous language use in meaningful interaction rather than formal instruction. Participants learned by doing through conversations, activities, and social engagement. This supports the argument in Chapter II that the effectiveness of English camps lies in creating conditions where participants use language frequently, focus on meaning rather than accuracy, and accept mistakes as natural learning processes. The findings also demonstrate that confidence is not fixed but can be constructed through experience when placed in environments that encourage participation and reduce fear, learners' perception of their own ability changes.

Sustainability of Speaking Development

While the English camp contributed positively to participants' confidence and ability, a critical issue emerged: the difficulty of sustaining improvements after the program ended. Several participants reported that confidence and speaking habits gradually declined once they returned to everyday environments lacking supportive English-speaking contexts. MQ stated, "After the camp, my confidence decreased because the environment was not supportive," revealing that confidence, built during the camp, is context-dependent rather than stable. BD explained, "After going back, we didn't have people to speak English with," highlighting the loss of interlocutors essential for maintaining practice.

This finding suggests the English camp created a temporary communicative ecosystem where all elements necessary for language development were present: frequent speaking opportunities, shared commitment, supportive peer interaction, and enforced English use. However, once participants returned to original environments, this ecosystem was no longer available, and conditions enabling improvement were disrupted. Participants' everyday environments did not require English use, allowing reliance on the first language and reducing motivation and frequency of use.

Several patterns emerged: decreased speaking frequency, reduced confidence over time, limited opportunities to maintain fluency, and gradual loss of gains. This demonstrates that speaking ability in a foreign language context is highly dynamic and susceptible to regression when not continuously practiced. The finding highlights the distinction between short-term improvement and long-term development while the English camp initiated change, it did not automatically guarantee sustained progress.

This finding addresses a critical gap identified in Chapter II, where most studies focus on short-term improvements without examining sustainability (Husnaini et al., 2025). The results extend previous research by showing that language improvement achieved through immersive programs is not entirely stable but situated within specific social and communicative contexts. When these contexts are removed, conditions supporting language use and confidence are diminished. However, the

impact was not entirely lost participants retained increased awareness of speaking ability, prior experience of successful communication, and more positive attitudes toward English, suggesting the camp created a foundation for future development even if immediate sustainability was limited.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how university students navigate public speaking challenges through participation in Saree English Camp. The findings reveal that public speaking challenges among EFL learners are multidimensional, involving psychological, linguistic, and environmental factors that interact dynamically throughout the learning process. Before joining the camp, participants experienced significant psychological barriers including anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, low self-confidence, and avoidance behavior often more dominant than linguistic limitations. Limited linguistic competence in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar created cognitive difficulties, while lack of speaking practice and supportive environments intensified these challenges.

The English camp played a transformative role by providing an immersive learning environment with continuous speaking practice, English-only policy, and strong social support from peers and mentors. This integration created a low-anxiety, high-engagement context where participants gradually reduced fear of mistakes, grew confidence, and developed fluency. The development occurred across psychological, behavioral, and linguistic dimensions, with participants becoming more willing to speak and expressing ideas more effectively. However, sustaining improvements post-camp remained challenging due to the absence of supportive English-speaking environments, indicating that speaking development requires continuous practice and environmental support.

This study contributes empirical insights into how immersive learning environments address both linguistic and psychological dimensions of public speaking development. It extends previous research by examining processes, mechanisms, and sustainability of speaking development through participants'

narratives, rather than focusing solely on observable outcomes. The findings have practical implications for educators and camp organizers in creating supportive environments that encourage risk-taking and meaningful communication.

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