CHALLENGES FACED BY TERTIARY TRAINEES IN SPEAKING ENGLISH AND THE STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ENHANCE THEIR SPEAKING SKILLS IN DAILY COMMUNICATION IN THE ELDORET NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC, KENYA

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MOI UNIVERSITY

2025

DECLARATION

Declaration By Candidate

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for any other degree in any other University. No part of this thesis may be reproduced without prior written permission of the author and/or Moi University.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my research thesis to my beloved children Duke and Becky.

It is through their constant teasing to be better than them each day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

English is a language of instruction and a subject of study in Kenya. It is also an official language spoken by a fairly large population of Kenyans. It remains unclear why trainees in tertiary institutions, who have undergone 12 years of basic education, still struggle with their oral communication skills. It is observed that a strong command of spoken English can open up more career pathways for these trainees when they graduate. The purpose of the study was to examine the challenges faced by trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic in the spoken English and, the strategies they employ to enhance their oral skills in the institution context. The objectives of the study were to: identify common mistakes in the use of oral English among trainees; examine the effect of common errors in spoken English on learning by trainees; find out linguistic strategies used to cope with errors in their spoken language. The study was guided by Stephen Krashen's theory, known as the Monitor Model or the Input Hypothesis. A descriptive survey design was used applying both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the errors in spoken English and strategies used by the trainees to enhance their speaking skills in daily communication. The target population of the study was 1331 trainees and 10 communication skills trainers of the 10 academic departments at The Eldoret National Polytechnic. The sample size of the study was 308 determined by using Yamane sample size determination formula, 30 trainees were sampled randomly from each department while 10 trainers were sampled purposively. Data was collected by use of questionnaire for the trainees and interview for trainers. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical analysis software while qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented in narrations. The study found that the trainees' common mistakes in spoken English primarily centered around vocabulary deficiency, tense usage, subject-verb agreement, pronoun allocation, misunderstandings in questioning, and the use of question tags. The study also found out that there were several effects of common errors in spoken English on learning particularly the lack of active participation in class, breakdown of communication due to grammatical errors, and the fear of asking questions which reduces learner engagement in learning. Lastly, the study found out that trainees used a number of linguistic strategies to cope with errors in their spoken English. These strategies included the use of non-verbal cues, fillers and, code-switching in conversation. The study concludes that the trainees filter what to learn which results to low self-esteem and demotivation in recognizing their true potential in the courses they are undertaking. The study recommends that the Communicative Language Teaching should be embraced by all trainers in the teaching of communication skills.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EAC	East African Community
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TVET	Tertiary Vocational Educational Training
UN	United Nations
VR	Virtual Reality

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

The chapter presents an exposition of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives, the justification, significance, scope, limitations, assumptions, theoretical, conceptual framework of the study and definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

In today's increasingly interconnected world, language serves as one of the most important tools for communication. It provides a means to convey information, share ideas, express intentions and articulate feelings. English, recognized as an international language, plays a critical role in various domains including science, technology and art, as well as in fostering international relationships. Countries worldwide have acknowledged the significance of English, integrating it into their educational structures, offering it as a central subject from early schooling up to university levels (Karanja, 2015).

Globally, the competency in spoken language is viewed as an essential tool for effective communication and social interaction in various sectors, including education, business and diplomacy. The increasing emphasis on communication skills reflects the need to navigate a world characterized by rapid globalization. According to Council of Europe (2020), effective oral communication enables individuals to express their ideas clearly and to engage in meaningful dialogue across cultural boundaries. Enhancing spoken language skills is not merely an academic endeavor; it has implications for employability and professional success in today's competitive job market. The World Economic Forum's 2021 report emphasizes the value of

communication skills alongside technical competencies, underscoring the necessity for a holistic approach to language education that incorporates practical speaking opportunities and real-life interaction scenarios (World Economic Forum, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a shift towards digital communication platforms, further underscoring the importance of spoken language competency. Studies indicate that effective virtual communication is increasingly becoming a requirement in professional and educational settings, necessitating a reevaluation of how speaking skills are taught and assessed (Vergara & Zheng, 2022). The transition to remote learning has revealed disparities in students' ability to articulate their thoughts online, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that address these gaps. As educators increasingly incorporate technology into their teaching practices, developing effective speaking strategies in both physical and virtual environments has gained significance in fostering engaged learners capable of adapting to a variety of communication contexts (Brown & Walsh, 2021).

In the African context, the significance of spoken language competency is amplified by the continent's vast linguistic diversity. With over 2,000 languages spoken, effective communication can pose challenges, yet it is fundamental for fostering intra- and inter-community relations (Mthembu, 2021). Efforts to promote multilingual education have gained traction across several African nations as they seek to leverage local languages alongside international ones like English and French. A study by Owuor (2022) highlights Kenya's language policies, which encourage the teaching of local languages in collaboration with English instruction to support community integration while enhancing overall spoken proficiency. This approach aims to

celebrate cultural identities while providing learners with the necessary skills to navigate global communication effectively.

Further, regional initiatives aimed at enhancing language education emphasize the incorporation of speaking and listening skills into curricula. According to Obi (2023), many African educational systems now recognize the need to prioritize communicative competence as a means of improving learners' overall academic performance and employability. This shift is supported by research indicating that students who engage in regular practice of spoken language demonstrate significant gains in confidence and fluency, crucial factors for success in both academic and professional realms (Nkosi, 2023). By fostering environments conducive to authentic communication, educational institutions in Africa aim to cultivate not only language proficiency but also the critical thinking and interpersonal skills essential for students to thrive in an interconnected world.

In East Africa, the emphasis on English language competency is particularly notable, reflecting its role as the medium of instruction in many educational systems. The East African Community (EAC) has recognized the importance of language skills in facilitating regional integration and economic development, pushing for unified language policies that enhance English language learning throughout member states (EAC, 2020). Recent studies indicate that East African universities have made strides in developing more comprehensive speaking curricula to meet the demands of a globalized economy (Mutua et al., 2023). This focus on academic speaking proficiency is critical, given the variances in educational access and quality across the region, which often limit students' exposure to effective communication practices (Ochieng, 2022).

In Kenya specifically, the Kenyan National Education Sector Plan (2020-2024) underscores the need for effective teaching methodologies that foster oral communication skills among students. Research by Mwangi (2021) points out that speaking anxiety remains prevalent among Kenyan university students, particularly those in non-English majors, inhibiting their ability to communicate effectively in academic settings. Programs aimed at building students' confidence through public speaking initiatives and peer-led discussions have emerged as effective strategies to address these challenges (Kibera, 2022). By creating safe spaces for practice, the initiatives not only enhance students' spoken proficiency but also prepare them to engage more meaningfully in diverse social contexts and professional environments. The recognition of spoken language proficiency as a pivotal aspect of education in Kenya represents a significant step towards equipping learners with the skills necessary for success in both local and global arenas.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Proficiency in spoken English language is essential for academic and career advancement. In Kenya English is an official language and a medium of instruction in tertiary institutions. The trainees in these institutions have had exposure to spoken English for more than twelve years and are expected to confidently and fluently express themselves academically and socially. However for many trainees, with such exposure, spoken English remains a challenge an indicator of a persistent gap between exposure and effective acquisition.

The trainees struggle with various aspects of spoken English ranging from mother tongue interference, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, answering questions single words or phrases, subject verb disagreement, pronoun misplacement just to

name a few. This doesn't only impede their ability to effectively communicate but also lowers their self esteem resulting them to shy away from actively participating in academic discussions and other interactive professional settings.

In response to these many challenges, many have developed coping strategies that aimed at compensating for their spoken English limitations. The effectiveness of the coping strategies still remains un researched and undocumented.

While much has been researched in written English, spoken English among trainees at the tertiary level in Kenya has received limited or no support, this study focuses more on the speaking related challenges and how trainees tend to cope with them as speaking English is needed in their everyday academic and career progression.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine tertiary trainees' challenges in speaking English and the coping strategies they use to enhance their speaking skills in daily communication.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

i. Identify common mistakes in the use of spoken English among trainees of The Eldoret National Polytechnic.

ii. Examine the effect of common mistakes in spoken English on learning by trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic.

iii. Analyze the coping strategies with the common mistakes in spoken English language among trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions of the study were:

i. What are the common mistakes in the use of oral English among trainees of The Eldoret National Polytechnic?

ii. What are the errors commonly observed in the spoken English and how they pose challenge on their learning at The Eldoret National Polytechnic?

iii. What strategies do trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic employ to mitigate errors in their spoken English?

1.6 Justification of the Study

Oral fluency is one of the most important markers of proficiency in second language. (Peltonen, 2023; Suzuki & Kormos, 2022). Similarly, a good command of the English language opens career paths (Acacia University, 2024; EnglishPath, 2024). These factors justified the choice of polytechnic trainees' oral language for investigation granted that the trainees are training for work where the use of spoken communication is critical in opening opportunities for advancement.

This study evaluated common mistakes in the use of oral English among trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic in order to find out ways of curbing the common mistakes for efficacy in learning after tracing the challenges of oral common mistakes in English to the competence of trainees of The Eldoret National polytechnic.

It is hoped that, through this study language education will be aligned with the SDGs, hence polytechnics will empower many students to become better informed, engaged global citizens who are well equipped to contribute positively to society and work towards a more sustainable and equitable world (UNESCO, 2021; Barber, 2023).

The Kenyan government has regularly been undertaking curriculum reforms to modernize and improve the education system. This study contributes ideas to enable these reforms in integrating competency in language in skills-based learning while focusing on competency-based education (Njeng'ere, 2017; Gichuru et al., 2021).

This study recognizes that English language education contributes to the development of soft skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. It is opined that through the proposed activities such as debates, presentations, and writing assignments, students will enhance their cognitive abilities and become more effective learners in TVET (Ondieki, 2019).

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is in line with the UN's SDG 4 which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Specifically it emphasizes on the target about increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocation skills for all. It is also in line with the overall objective of TVET about producing a critical mass of well-trained human resources to implement programs and projects identified in Kenya's vision 2030.

Consequently, the result should be able to benefit the language educators, curriculum developers, policy makers, trainees, their tutors and further researchers on the sources of common mistakes in the use of oral English among trainees, challenges of oral common mistakes in English to the competence of trainees and to curb common mistakes in the use of oral English among trainees of National Polytechnics in Kenya. The results of this research will be able to draw the attention of the trainees to the need to be more conscious of their oral fluency as an avenue of opening career

opportunities. Similarly, the study offers strategies that can be used to improve the spoken fluency of trainees for the job market. This will inform policy decisions that could lead to developing foundation courses that address students' English language. Finally, it is expected that further research will be undertaken at a more macro level to broaden knowledge in this area. These will inform similar case studies in other tertiary institutions or several institutions in order to generate generalizable findings.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The current study was situated within The Eldoret National Polytechnic which is one of national polytechnics in Kenya. Its focus was on language use generally with specific reference to the oral language of trainees enrolled in selected training programmes offered by the polytechnic. Trainees were selected from the departments of Engineering, Hospitality and Liberal Studies. The respondents were diploma students who were in their second year of studies. The main purpose of the study was to determine the nature of oral language use of the trainees in order to identify the difficulties and explain the strategies are trainees using to enhance their speaking skills in daily communication. The study was undertaken between the month of January and June 2025, allowing adequate time for data collection, analysis and justification across the selected departments. A mixed methods research design was adopted, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Several methodological limitations emerged during the study, affecting both the data collection and analysis phases. Convenience sampling was employed to accommodate the busy schedules of learners, who were primarily engaged during weekends and late evenings. However, this approach introduced the risk of selection bias, as those who

could participate may not represent the broader population. Furthermore, language proficiency posed a challenge, with some learners struggling to communicate fluently in English. To address this, the researcher employed code-switching into Swahili, which facilitated a more inclusive dialogue but also raised concerns about the fidelity of responses and the potential loss or alteration of nuanced concepts.

These methodological challenges have significant theoretical implications, particularly in relation to participant engagement and the interpretation of results. The need for rapport-building and ongoing trust-building with participants suggests that the initial research design did not adequately account for the social dynamics at play within the educational environment. This raises concerns about the potential for biases to distort the understanding of learners' experiences, highlighting the importance of critically examining the researcher's positionality and the relational dynamics inherent in qualitative research. By acknowledging these limitations, the study's findings and conclusions can be more accurately situated within the broader context of qualitative research and its inherent complexities.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

Assumptions in research are those elements that are taken for granted by the researcher. They are necessary elements of research since they enable the conduct of a study. First the researcher assumed that the responses the participants gave were honest and reflected their ability to use English orally. Finally, the researcher assumed that polytechnic trainees encounter challenges in oral language use which negatively impact their learning. This assumption served as the central premise and guiding foundation of the study..

1.11 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Stephen Krashen's theory, known as the Monitor Model or the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1976). His theory is generally studied and applied in language teaching and learning contexts. Krashen's theory is based on five key hypotheses: the Acquisition, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis.

In the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, Krashen contends that there are two independent systems for language development. "Acquisition" refers to the subconscious assimilation of language through exposure to meaningful and comprehensible input, similar to how young children acquire their primary language. In contrast, "learning" involves the conscious knowledge of rules and clear instruction. According to Krashen, acquisition is the most imperative for developing fluency and natural language use.

In the Monitor Hypothesis: Krashen proposes that the acquired system functions as the primary means of communication, while the learned system acts as a monitor or editor. The learned system can be used to make corrections or modifications when there is enough time and focus, but it is of limited use in spontaneous and fluent language production.

In the Natural Order Hypothesis, Krashen suggests that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a predictable, natural order. Learners tend to acquire certain grammatical features in a specific sequence, regardless of their native language or instructional approach. This implies that teachers should respect this natural order when designing language instruction.

In the Input Hypothesis, Krashen emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition. According to this hypothesis, learners improve their language skills when they receive input that is slightly above their current level of proficiency. This "i+1" input challenges learners without overwhelming them, allowing for gradual progress.

Lastly, in the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Krashen argues that certain affective factors, such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, can act as filters that influence language acquisition. A low affective filter allows for optimal language acquisition, while a high affective filter hinders learning. Therefore, creating a supportive and low-anxiety learning environment is crucial for effective language acquisition.

However, it is worth noting that his theory has also been subject to criticism and ongoing debate within the field of second language acquisition. Critics argue that Krashen's theory lacks sufficient empirical evidence to support its claims (Lichtman, & VanPatten, 2021). Some critics argue that other factors, such as interaction, practice, and explicit instruction, also play important roles in language learning. They argue that the theory does not adequately address the significance of these additional factors. Some critics argue that while exposure to comprehensible input is important, explicit instruction and attention to grammar rules can also benefit learners, especially in certain contexts or when learning more complex structures.

Some argue that Krashen's theory presents a simplistic view of language acquisition by focusing primarily on input and neglecting other cognitive and social factors that influence language learning (Kiymazarslan, 2004). They argue that language acquisition is a complex process that involves multiple dimensions, including social

interactions, cultural factors, and individual differences. Some criticize Krashen's theory that it does not adequately address the role of individual differences among language learners. Factors such as age, aptitude, motivation, and learning strategies can significantly impact language acquisition, but they are not emphasized in the theory.

Stephen Krashen's theory guided the study's objectives into making an assumption that despite having been exposed to English language for most of their life, polytechnic trainees' oral language use is characterized by difficulties which undermined their fluency. The theory indicated that, because the trainees having been exposed to English language both consciously and unconsciously, they were expected to demonstrate grammatical knowledge. One of the latent concerns of any study on fluency is to determine how grammar works and its role in explicit language use. Knowledge of grammar ought to aid trainees monitor their language and make corrections as they use the language. The monitor hypothesis therefore afforded the researcher to determine the application rules by the trainees in their oral language use. There are three main different users of the monitor; under users, optimal users and over users. Based on the nature of the trainees' language the researcher was able to characterize the trainee participants relevantly. Similarly, the theory enables the researcher to determine the mechanism that could best describe the trainees' mode of second language development as either learning or acquisition. The study concludes using the theory that affective factors that were at play in trainees' oral language use environment and which accounted for the difficulties they experienced.

The Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis explained why trainees, despite long exposure to English, still struggled with fluency, as their reliance on learned rules limited

natural acquisition. The Monitor Hypothesis was directly applied to categorize trainees as under-users, over-users, or optimal users of grammar monitoring, thereby linking grammatical knowledge to oral performance. The Natural Order Hypothesis accounted for persistent grammatical errors, showing that some difficulties reflected developmental sequences rather than lack of exposure. The Input Hypothesis clarified how insufficient comprehensible input contributed to oral challenges, while the Affective Filter Hypothesis illuminated the role of motivation, confidence, and anxiety as intervening variables influencing fluency. Together, these hypotheses provided a structured framework for analyzing how trainees' challenges (IV) interact with coping strategies (intervening variables) to shape their oral language proficiency (DV)."

1.12 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an analytical tool with several variations and contexts that can be applied in different categories of research work where an overall picture is needed. It is a representation of the relationship expected between variables or the characteristic of properties. As a structured layout, a conceptual framework, explains the natural progression of the phenomenon being studied (Camp, 2001). According to Grant and Osanloo (2014) a conceptual framework offers a logical structure of connected concepts that help provide a picture or visual display of how ideas in a study relate to one another. It can be said to be representation of thinking about a problem or a study (Bordage, 2009). The current study focused on oral language difficulties of trainees in tertiary institutions. Spoken English language difficulties are evident in their academic and professional settings. This could be attributed to various factors. The study thus determined how trainees' conversations may be affected by such factors as insufficient mastery of grammar, memory, inhibition, low

motivation, lack of confidence, L1 interference, environmental factors and low participation.   The identified independent variable were the tertiary trainees challenges in speaking English while dependent variables was the indicators of an ideal spoken English situation that should be in their speaking skills in daily communication. The intervening variables in this study are the strategies trainees use to overcome oral language difficulties, for example practicing grammar, increasing participation, building confidence and seeking supportive environments. These strategies act as a bridge between the challenges (independent variable) and the desired spoken English outcomes (dependent variable), influencing how effectively difficulties are managed. To control their outcome, the study considers the consistency and availability of these strategies across trainees, ensuring that improvements in spoken English is due to the strategies rather than external factors.

Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

Tertiary Trainees challenges in Speaking English
- Lack of Vocabulary,
- Misappropriation Tenses Subject verb in agreement
- Misuse of pronouns
- L1 interference
- Affective factors

Ideal spoken English situation

- Effective communication
- Interactive learning
- Fluency in speaking

Intervening Variable
- Strategies used
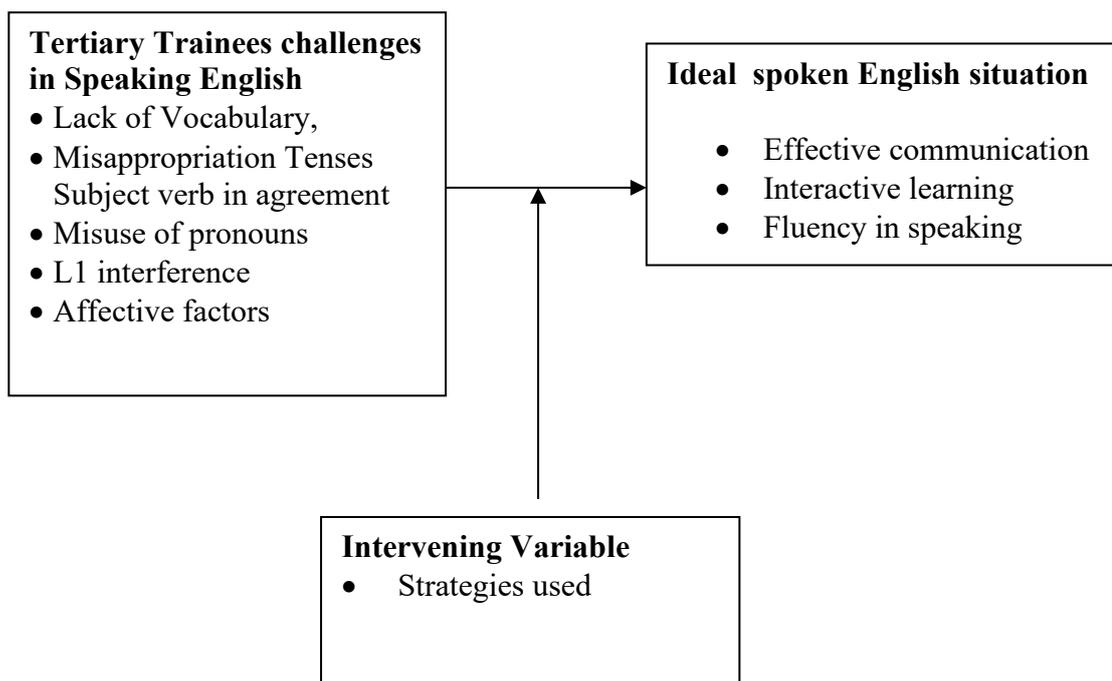
Figure1.1: Diagrammatic representation of the Conceptual Framework

Similarly the theoretical framework provided a basis for the conceptual framework. There are different types of monitor users whose language use provide insights into the various types of difficulties that were manifest in the trainees' language. The three types of monitor users include the under users, over users and the optimum users. The monitor under users' language is characterized by extreme erroneous use of language. They pay little to no attention to rules. The over users are extremely cautious and their language use display minimal errors hence have little difficulties in oral expression but may not be very talkative. The ideal users of the monitor are the optimum users whose errors are tolerable because they edit their language and freely express themselves.

The relationship between the variables in the conceptual framework is structured around how trainees' challenges in spoken English (independent variable) influence their oral fluency and communicative competence (dependent variable), with coping strategies acting as intervening variables that mediate this process. Difficulties such as insufficient mastery of grammar, inhibition, low motivation, lack of confidence, L1 interference, and environmental factors directly hinder the attainment of ideal spoken English skills. However, strategies like practicing grammar, increasing participation, building confidence, and seeking supportive environments serve as mechanisms that bridge these challenges and the desired outcomes, enabling trainees to manage or reduce the impact of their difficulties. The theoretical framework, particularly Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis, further explains how different types of monitor users under-users, over-users, and optimal users reflect varying levels of reliance on language rules, which in turn shapes the effectiveness of these strategies in achieving fluency. Thus, the conceptual framework illustrates a dynamic interaction where

challenges affect outcomes, but the presence and consistency of coping strategies determine the extent to which trainees can achieve proficiency in oral communication.

1.13 Operation Definition of Terms

The following terms were operationalized as shown:

Common mistakes in spoken English	Refers to the lack of smoothness, speed, and ease with which a person can produce spoken language, characterized by no ability to articulate words effortlessly and not maintaining a natural rhythm and flow during communication.
Challenges in spoken English	Refers to challenges in spoken communication that individuals may experience, which do not necessarily indicate a language disorder, and can result from various factors such as environmental influences, exposure, and anxiety rather than a pathological condition.
Strategies	This refers to what they use to compensate for the challenges though may or may not be working.
Speaking:	An activity of producing word by sound in the context of the speaker and the listener.
Tertiary trainees:	Refers to trainees in any post-basic education institution including middle level colleges and universities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter provides a review of various concepts associated with the concept of speaking English as a second language, common mistakes in the use of spoken, the effect of common mistakes in spoken English on learning and thecoping strategies trainees use to enhance their speaking skills. A review of the relevant literature, including books, articles, dissertations, and journals, is included in this section to enhance the research.

2.1 Concept of Speaking Skills in English as a Second Language

Speaking skills in English as a Second Language (ESL) are critical for effective communication, fostering both personal and professional growth for learners. These skills involve not just the ability to produce language but to do so fluently, accurately, and appropriately within social contexts. In the modern ESL framework, the focus has shifted from simply acquiring grammatical accuracy to achieving communicative competence, which emphasizes interaction and pragmatic usage of the language (Richards, 2020).

The Importance of Speaking Skills in ESL Speaking is often regarded as the most important of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because it directly influences a learner's ability to communicate in real-time situations (Derakhshan, Khalili & Beheshti, 2021). Effective speaking skills are necessary for active participation in conversations, negotiations, and presentations, which are essential for academic success and professional communication. As Javid (2022)

notes, ESL learners often view speaking proficiency as a critical indicator of their overall language mastery.

Challenges in Developing Speaking Skills Developing speaking skills in ESL learners presents several challenges, including anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes (Horwitz, 2018). These affective factors can significantly hinder a learner's willingness to participate in speaking activities, thus slowing down their progress. Furthermore, limited exposure to authentic language use outside the classroom is another common barrier (Dewaele, 2020). Learners often struggle with fluency due to insufficient opportunities to practice speaking in real-life situations, especially in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) environments where English is not spoken as a daily language.

Approaches to Teaching Speaking Skills In recent years, communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) have emerged as dominant methodologies for developing speaking skills in ESL classrooms (Nunan, 2021). These approaches prioritize meaningful interaction over rote memorization, encouraging learners to engage in tasks that simulate real-life communication scenarios. CLT, for instance, focuses on using language in authentic contexts, promoting fluency over accuracy in the initial stages of learning (Savignon, 2017). TBLT, on the other hand, provides learners with opportunities to use language as a tool to accomplish specific tasks, which has been shown to increase both fluency and confidence (Ellis, 2020).

Technology in Enhancing Speaking Skills Technology also plays an increasingly important role in enhancing ESL learners' speaking abilities. Tools like online conversation platforms, language learning apps, and speech recognition software offer

learners the chance to practice speaking outside the classroom (Derakshan & Hasanabbasi, 2021). These technologies provide immediate feedback, allowing learners to correct their mistakes and improve their pronunciation and fluency.

The development of speaking skills in ESL is a complex process that requires attention to both linguistic and affective factors. Effective teaching strategies such as communicative language teaching and the integration of technology can greatly enhance learners' speaking proficiency. However, overcoming challenges like anxiety and limited exposure to authentic language use remains crucial for learners' success in achieving fluency and communicative competence. The evolving methodologies in teaching speaking skills continue to shape how ESL learners develop the ability to communicate effectively in English.

2.2 Empirical Review

Speaking English as a second language presents a range of challenges for tertiary trainees, especially those at The Eldoret National Polytechnic in Kenya. Several studies have identified common linguistic and psychological issues that learners face. First, grammatical errors in spoken English are prevalent, with trainees struggling with tense usage, subject-verb agreement, and complex sentence structures (Mwangi, 2021). These issues often arise due to interference from their native languages, leading to incorrect translations or sentence constructions (Nyongesa & Muthwii, 2022).

Similar to the challenges faced by trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic, studies conducted outside Kenya have also highlighted the prevalence of grammatical errors in spoken English among English language learners. A study by Lin and Wang (2020) in Taiwan found that Taiwanese EFL students struggled with tense usage and

subject-verb agreement, leading to incorrect sentence structures and awkward phrasing. Similarly, a study by Al-Hamly and Hassan (2022) in Saudi Arabia found that Arabic-speaking learners of English were prone to grammatical errors due to interference from their native language, such as incorrect use of verb tenses and sentence structures. Another study by Sombat (2022) in Thailand found that Thai EFL students experienced difficulty with complex sentence structures, leading to fragmented sentences and reduced coherence. These findings are similar to those in Kenya, where native language interference and grammatical errors are common among English language learners, suggesting that these challenges are not unique to the Kenyan context but rather a global phenomenon.

Moreover, pronunciation difficulties are a significant barrier to fluency. African languages, including those spoken in Kenya, have different phonological systems compared to English, causing problems with specific sounds, particularly vowel and consonant clusters (Mutisya, 2022). Some trainees find it difficult to differentiate between /r/ and /l/ sounds, which can lead to misunderstandings during communication. Additionally, the inability to use proper intonation and stress patterns in spoken English further complicates communication efforts (Juma & Otieno, 2023).

A study by Kaur and Singh (2022) in India found that Punjabi-speaking learners of English struggled with the distinction between the /r/ and /l/ sounds, similar to the experiences of trainees in Kenya. Another study by Lee (2023) in South Korea discovered that Korean EFL students encountered difficulties with vowel and consonant clusters, which led to pronunciation errors and reduced intelligibility. Furthermore, a study by Abidin and Suleiman (2021) in Malaysia found that learners of English from Malayophone backgrounds faced challenges with intonation and

stress patterns, resulting in difficulties with fluency and comprehension. These findings are consistent with the Kenyan context, where similar pronunciation challenges hinder communication and fluency among trainees. Notably, the studies outside Kenya emphasize the importance of phonological awareness and practice in improving pronunciation skills, highlighting the need for targeted language instruction and practice to overcome these challenges.

Another major issue is lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes. Many students experience anxiety when speaking in public or in formal situations, leading to hesitation and frequent pauses (Wambua & Kamau, 2021). This anxiety, compounded by limited opportunities to practice spoken English in informal settings, significantly hampers the trainees' ability to improve their oral skills.

A study by Zhang and Chen (2021) in China revealed that many Chinese EFL students faced significant speaking anxiety in public settings, resulting in hesitation and reduced participation, mirroring the experiences of Kenyan trainees. Likewise, a study conducted by Tatar and Yavuz (2022) in Turkey found that students often avoided speaking English in formal contexts due to fear of errors, which negatively impacted their fluency and confidence. Furthermore, research by Ghazal and Khan (2023) in Pakistan highlighted that limited opportunities for informal practice contributed to increased anxiety levels among students, echoing the challenges identified in Kenya regarding the lack of informal conversational settings. These international studies underline a common theme of performance anxiety and lack of confidence among language learners, suggesting a critical need for comprehensive pedagogical strategies that foster a supportive environment for practice and confidence-building in spoken English.

The competence of trainees in spoken English directly impacts their academic and professional performance. According to a recent study, poor communication skills limit the ability of trainees to express complex ideas, participate in class discussions, and perform well in oral presentations (Otieno & Kariuki, 2022). As English is the medium of instruction in most Kenyan tertiary institutions, these challenges not only affect classroom interactions but also academic outcomes, as some students may underperform due to their inability to express themselves fluently in spoken English.

A study by Ahmed and Saeed (2021) in Saudi Arabia found that students with poor English communication skills struggled significantly in expressing complex ideas and engaging in classroom discussions, thereby impacting their overall academic performance. Similarly, research by Martin and Dinçer (2023) in Turkey highlighted that limited oral proficiency hindered students' participation in group projects and presentations, systems that are crucial in academic settings. Additionally, a study by Rosado and Torres (2022) in Brazil established a direct correlation between communication skills and exam performance, with students who exhibited stronger verbal skills consistently achieving higher grades. These studies reinforce the findings from Kenya, where insufficient spoken English proficiency compromises classroom engagement and academic outcomes. The international perspective underscores the necessity for educational institutions to implement targeted communication skill development programs to enhance the performance of trainees in diverse learning environments.

In professional settings, the lack of oral competence can hinder the employability of trainees. Employers in Kenya increasingly value strong communication skills, and trainees who cannot speak English fluently often miss out on career opportunities

(Kilonzo, 2023). This is especially critical for graduates of technical institutions like The Eldoret National Polytechnic, where communication is necessary for explaining technical concepts, interacting with clients, and managing teams.

Despite these challenges, trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic employ several strategies to enhance their speaking skills. One common strategy is peer learning, where students practice speaking English in groups to improve fluency and pronunciation in a supportive environment (Kioko, 2023). Group activities, such as role-playing and debates, allow students to experiment with language use in different contexts, gaining confidence in the process.

Another effective approach is engagement in extracurricular activities such as drama, debate clubs, and public speaking forums. These activities provide a platform for learners to practice spoken English in front of an audience, thereby reducing anxiety and increasing confidence (Mwangi, 2023). Research has shown that students who participate in such activities are better at overcoming the fear of public speaking and tend to exhibit greater fluency and accuracy in spoken English (Musyoka, 2022).

Additionally, the use of language learning apps and technology has become an integral part of language improvement strategies. Applications such as Duolingo and Babbel allow learners to practice speaking and receive feedback on their pronunciation and grammar (Kariuki & Mutiso, 2022). These apps also offer flexibility, as trainees can practice their speaking skills at their own pace and convenience. The increasing use of social media platforms for communication also provides informal opportunities for trainees to practice their English speaking skills in real-life scenarios, thereby improving fluency over time.

Lastly, instructor-led initiatives such as classroom discussions, oral exams, and presentations help students develop their speaking skills in a structured environment (Wambua & Kamau, 2022). Feedback from instructors on areas of improvement, including pronunciation and grammar, is critical for helping trainees develop competence in oral English.

The review highlights the significant problems faced by tertiary trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic in acquiring speaking proficiency in English. These challenges ranging from grammatical errors and pronunciation difficulties to psychological barriers adversely affect their academic and professional competence. However, strategies such as peer practice, engagement in extracurricular activities, and the use of technology have been identified as effective ways to improve speaking skills. Continued focus on these strategies, along with support from instructors, will enhance the oral competence of trainees, equipping them for academic success and career advancement.

2.2.1 Common Mistakes in the Use of Oral English as a Second Language

Learning to speak English as a second language involves numerous challenges, leading to common mistakes that hinder effective communication. These mistakes arise from a variety of linguistic, cultural, and psychological factors that affect both the accuracy and fluency of learners' spoken English.

One of the most prevalent mistakes in ESL learners' oral English is the misuse of grammar, particularly with verb tenses and subject-verb agreement. Learners often struggle with maintaining consistent verb tenses, leading to sentences like, "She go to school yesterday," instead of "She went to school yesterday" (Yang & Zhao, 2021). This issue is exacerbated by the lack of equivalent tense structures in some learners'

native languages, resulting in overgeneralizations or inappropriate use of tenses (Nguyen, 2022). Similarly, problems with subject-verb agreement (e.g., "He go" instead of "He goes") are common, as learners may not be familiar with the inflections required in English grammar (Sanchez, 2021).

A study conducted by Ferdousi and Rahman (2021) in Bangladesh indicated that many ESL students frequently mishandled verb tenses, often producing sentences such as "She go to the market yesterday," thereby illustrating the same tense maintenance issues observed by Yang and Zhao (2021). Furthermore, a study by Alharbi (2023) in Saudi Arabia found that the lack of direct equivalents for certain English tense structures in Arabic led learners to consistently overgeneralize rules, akin to the patterns identified by Nguyen (2022). In addition, issues with subject-verb agreement were highlighted in a study by Brice and Suárez (2023) in the Philippines, where participants commonly made errors like "The children play" instead of the grammatically correct "The children plays," reflecting an unfamiliarity with necessary inflections. These international studies corroborate the persistent grammatical difficulties faced by ESL learners, pointing to the need for targeted instruction that addresses specific linguistic challenges across diverse language backgrounds.

Pronunciation mistakes are significant challenge for ESL learners, often resulting in unintelligible or misunderstood speech. Phonetic differences between English and a learner's native language can lead to errors, particularly with sounds that do not exist in the learner's language (Dewaele, 2020). For instance, speakers of Asian languages might have difficulty distinguishing between the sounds /r/ and /l/, leading to confusion between words like "rice" and "lice" (Tan, 2022). Additionally, vowel sounds can be problematic for learners from different linguistic backgrounds. ESL

speakers from African and Asian countries often struggle with long versus short vowel distinctions, which can alter word meaning (Mutisya, 2022).

A study by Wang and Chen (2021) in China identified similar difficulties among learners regarding the differentiation of /r/ and /l/ sounds, where confusion often led to misunderstandings in everyday conversation, reinforcing the earlier observations by Dewaele (2020) and Tan (2022). Similarly, a study conducted in Spain by López and Melchor (2023) highlighted issues with vowel sound distinctions, noting that Spanish speakers frequently mispronounced English vowel pairs, resulting in significant challenges in both speaking and listening comprehension. In another study, Kumar and Patel (2022) in India showcased that long and short vowel sounds posed particular difficulties for learners, echoing findings from Mutisya (2022) regarding the importance of sound distinctions in conveying meaning. Together, these studies underscore the pervasive nature of pronunciation difficulties among ESL learners, emphasizing the need for focused phonetic training tailored to the specific linguistic backgrounds of learners to enhance their spoken English proficiency.

Stress, rhythm, and intonation are also critical in English, and learners who fail to grasp these aspects can appear less fluent, even if their grammar is correct. For instance, misplaced stress in multi-syllable words can make speech sound unnatural (Derakhshan & Hasanabbasi, 2021).

A study by Liao and Wang (2023) in Taiwan revealed that learners often struggled with the correct placement of stress in multi-syllable words, leading to miscommunications and perceptions of reduced fluency, echoing the concerns raised by Derakhshan and Hasanabbasi (2021). Similarly, research by Akinsola (2022) in Nigeria identified that ESL learners frequently exhibited difficulties with intonation

patterns, which resulted in speech that was either monotone or inappropriately emphasized, further impeding their clarity in communication. Furthermore, a study conducted by Saha and Rahman (2021) in Bangladesh highlighted that rhythm in speech often went unrecognized by learners, who tended to treat English as a syllable-timed language, contrasting with the stress-timed nature of English, thus affecting their overall spoken proficiency. These studies collectively emphasize the universal nature of challenges related to stress, rhythm, and intonation faced by ESL learners worldwide, reinforcing the significance of incorporating prosodic features into language instruction to bolster fluency and comprehension.

Another common area of difficulty is lexical choice, where learners use incorrect or inappropriate words due to limited vocabulary. These mistakes often stem from direct translations of words from the learner's first language, which do not convey the same meaning in English (Juma & Otieno, 2023). For example, an ESL learner may say, "I am very boring," instead of "I am very bored," misusing the adjective due to confusion over similar forms.

A study by Makarova and Grebenyuk (2022) in Russia found that students frequently relied on direct translations from their native language, leading to instances of lexical confusion, similar to the example provided by Juma and Otieno (2023), where a learner might incorrectly state, "I am very boring." Similarly, in a study conducted in Brazil by Silva and Teixeira (2023), participants demonstrated a tendency to misuse words that sounded similar in Portuguese and English, such as confusing "actually" with "currently," reflecting a pattern of false cognates that can obscure intended meaning. Furthermore, research by Zhao (2021) in China highlighted how limited exposure to contextual vocabulary led to inappropriate word choices, which hindered

effective communication. These studies collectively emphasize the widespread nature of lexical challenges among ESL learners and illustrate the vital need for targeted vocabulary instruction that goes beyond mere word memorization to include context, usage, and nuance, thus aligning closely with the objectives of my study.

In addition to vocabulary limitations, learners frequently struggle with collocations words that typically go together in English. An example is saying "make a party" instead of "have a party" (Wang & Chen, 2020). These mistakes can make learners' speech sound awkward and non-native.

A study by Akbari and Dehghan (2022) in Iran found that learners often struggled with fixed expressions, such as using "make a party" instead of "have a party," which aligns with the example provided by Wang and Chen (2020). Similarly, a study conducted by González-Lloret (2023) in Spain revealed that learners frequently used incorrect collocations, such as "take a holiday" instead of "go on holiday," which can make their speech sound unnatural. Furthermore, research by Li et al. (2022) in the United States found that learners' difficulties with collocations were often linked to their limited exposure to authentic materials and interactions, highlighting the need for more extensive and varied language input. These studies collectively underscore the importance of teaching collocations as a crucial aspect of language acquisition, emphasizing the need for learners to be aware of the fixed expressions and idiomatic phrases that are typical in English, thus mirroring the objectives of my study.

The syntax of English can be difficult for ESL learners, especially for those whose native languages have different sentence structures. For instance, in languages like Japanese or Korean, the typical sentence structure is subject-object-verb, whereas English uses subject-verb-object (Gao, 2022). This can result in word order mistakes

such as "I to the store went" instead of "I went to the store." Learners may also overcomplicate sentences by attempting to directly translate from their first language, leading to confusion and misunderstanding in communication (Zhang & Li, 2022).

Another common mistake in oral English for ESL learners is code-switching, where learners inadvertently switch between their native language and English during conversation (Lee & Kim, 2022). This occurs when learners cannot recall a word in English, so they substitute a word from their first language. While this might help learners express themselves temporarily, it can confuse listeners and disrupt communication. This is often the result of language interference, where the rules and patterns of the first language negatively impact the learner's English speech (Sánchez & Almeida, 2021).

A study conducted by Popescu and Theodorescu (2023) in Romania highlighted that learners often switch to their native language during conversations when they lack the vocabulary to articulate ideas in English, echoing the insights of Lee and Kim (2022). This behavior, while serving as a temporary coping strategy, can lead to confusion for both the speaker and the listener. Similarly, research by Jansen and McMonagle (2021) in Canada observed that Arabic-speaking learners exhibited frequent code-switching, attributing this to language interference where structural elements of Arabic influenced their English speech patterns. Additionally, Chen and Zhou (2022) found that Mandarin Chinese learners of English relied on code-switching not just to express vocabulary gaps, but also to express culturally specific concepts that lacked direct English equivalents, further complicating communication. These studies share a common theme of highlighting the complexities of language interference and its

implications for learner fluency, reinforcing the objectives of my study to explore how these dynamics affect overall communicative competence in ESL contexts.

ESL learners often experience fluency issues, characterized by hesitation, pauses, and the excessive use of filler words such as "uh," "um," and "you know" (Kaur & Singh, 2021). These fillers, while common in speech, can indicate a lack of confidence and hinder smooth communication. Fluency problems can be attributed to the cognitive load of formulating sentences in English, especially when learners are not yet comfortable with spontaneous language use (Sharma & Chauhan, 2022).

Research by Zhang and Wang (2023) in China indicated that learners frequently used fillers such as "like" and "you know" as strategies to buy time while formulating their thoughts in English, mirroring the observations by Kaur and Singh (2021). This reliance on fillers not only reflected the learners' lack of confidence but also disrupted the flow of communication. Similarly, a study by Garcia and Schmitt (2022) in Spain found that Spanish-speaking students exhibited higher levels of fluency disruptions during impromptu speaking tasks, attributing this to the cognitive burden associated with switching from their native language to English, which resonates with the insights from Sharma and Chauhan (2022). Moreover, Patel and Kumar (2021) in India reported that lower proficiency levels were significantly correlated with increased pauses and hesitations, revealing that as learners gain confidence and language skills, their fluency tends to improve. These studies collectively highlight the multifaceted nature of fluency challenges faced by ESL learners and the cognitive aspects that underlie such difficulties; they enhance the study's focus on how fluency issues affect communication in diverse contexts, suggesting that interventions should

consider both linguistic and psychological dimensions to foster greater fluency in English-speaking environments.

To address these common mistakes, researchers suggest several strategies that can significantly improve oral English skills. Task-based learning and role-playing activities encourage real-world communication, allowing learners to practice using English in authentic contexts, which helps reduce grammatical, pronunciation, and lexical errors (Ellis, 2020). Additionally, pronunciation drills and listening exercises can help learners overcome phonetic challenges and improve fluency. Feedback-focused activities, where learners receive immediate correction, have also been found effective in reducing repeated mistakes over time (Derakhshan & Hasanabbasi, 2021).

Research on English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in tertiary institutions reveals recurring common mistakes in oral English. At The Eldoret National Polytechnic, trainees, like many other ESL learners, tend to make grammatical errors such as incorrect verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and improper use of prepositions (Mwangi & Muthwii, 2021). These issues often stem from the direct translation of structures from the learners' mother tongue to English (Wandera, 2022). Pronunciation challenges are also common, especially with vowel sounds and consonant clusters, which lead to miscommunication during conversations (Nyongesa et al., 2021). Misuse of intonation and stress patterns further complicates communication, as English's prosody is significantly different from that of many Kenyan languages. In addition to these challenges, the lack of sufficient vocabulary and the overreliance on simple sentence structures reduce trainees' fluency, leading to hesitation and pauses during speech. A study by Kinyua (2023) found that learners in technical institutions such as The Eldoret National Polytechnic often use filler words

like "uh" and "you know," which indicate low confidence in their oral communication abilities.

Many linguistic and cognitive difficulties lead to common oral English errors made by ESL learners, such as grammatical faults, pronunciation problems, lexical errors, and fluency concerns. Speak English more fluently by addressing these problems with focused language education, practical experience, and activities that are feedback-driven. Given the increasing demand for fluency in English in international communication, concentrating on these issues is essential to guaranteeing a successful language learning process.

2.2.2 Challenges of Oral English Mistakes to the Competence of Trainees

The development of oral proficiency in English as a second language (ESL) is crucial for effective communication. However, trainees often face several challenges in acquiring fluency, primarily due to common oral English mistakes. These errors can significantly affect their overall competence in language acquisition. The literature on this topic points to a variety of linguistic, psychological, and contextual factors that influence these errors, as well as their impact on the learners' language competence.

Phonological competence, which involves the ability to pronounce words correctly, is a critical aspect of oral English proficiency. Phonological errors are among the most frequent challenges for ESL learners, particularly for those whose native language has distinct phonetic structures. For instance, learners from languages with fewer vowel or consonant sounds may struggle to distinguish between similar sounds in English, leading to mispronunciations (Adams & Harris, 2022). This, in turn, hampers effective communication and can lead to misunderstandings. The inability to

accurately pronounce words also affects the trainees' confidence, making them hesitant to engage in conversations (Chen, 2021).

A study by Wang and Li (2023) in China demonstrated that Mandarin speakers often struggle with English vowel sounds due to their limited phonetic inventory, leading to frequent mispronunciations, which resonates with the findings of Adams and Harris (2022). Additionally, research by Ahmed et al. (2022) in Saudi Arabia found that learners whose native language included fewer consonant clusters had significant difficulties articulating English words, resulting in communication breakdowns and decreased confidence during interactions. Similarly, a study by Gomez and Torres (2021) conducted in Spain observed that Spanish speakers often confuse the English sounds /i:/ and /ɪ/, which led to misunderstandings and increased anxiety in speaking situations, corroborating Chen's (2021) assertion that pronunciation issues can deter learners from actively participating in conversation. These studies collectively illustrate how phonological challenges are not confined to specific cultural or geographical contexts; rather, they are a universal issue affecting learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This aligns with the research by highlighting the need for targeted phonological training in ESL curricula, as improved pronunciation not only facilitates clearer communication but also bolsters learners' confidence in their speaking abilities.

Grammatical competence is another core component of oral English proficiency. Errors in verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure are commonly observed among ESL trainees. Such mistakes can obscure the intended meaning of a message, reducing the clarity and coherence of communication (Jones & Smith, 2023). Furthermore, incorrect use of prepositions and articles is frequent

among learners from non-European language backgrounds due to differences in grammatical rules between their first language and English (Kumar & Lee, 2021). These persistent grammatical mistakes hinder trainees' ability to construct complex and accurate sentences, affecting both their spoken fluency and overall language competence.

Zhang and Chen (2022) conducted research in China and found that many Mandarin-speaking students struggled with verb tense usage and subject-verb agreement, leading to confusion in their spoken communication, which aligns with the observations made by Jones and Smith (2023). Additionally, research by Martinez and Garcia (2023) in Spain highlighted that Spanish speakers frequently misused articles and prepositions, directly linking these errors to the structural differences between Spanish and English grammar, which echoes the findings of Kumar and Lee (2021). Furthermore, a study by Patel and Brown (2022) in India documented how learners from languages with less rigid grammatical conventions often found it challenging to form complex sentences in English, thereby affecting their fluency and confidence when speaking. These findings reflect a broad pattern of grammatical difficulties that affect ESL learners worldwide, supporting the premise that errors in fundamental grammatical structures compromise not only clarity and coherence but also hinder the development of learners' overall language competence. This is consistent with the study, which emphasizes the critical need for focused grammatical instruction in ESL training programs to improve both the accuracy and fluency of learners' spoken English.

Lexical competence, or the knowledge and use of appropriate vocabulary, is vital for effective oral communication. A lack of vocabulary often leads to hesitation, over-

reliance on fillers (e.g., "um," "you know"), and misuse of words (Zheng & Li, 2022). In oral performance, limited vocabulary can restrict learners' ability to express their thoughts fully, reducing the quality of interactions (Nguyen & Carter, 2022). For instance, ESL trainees may use vague or incorrect words to compensate for gaps in their lexicon, which can confuse listeners and detract from the intended meaning.

A study by Kim and Park (2023) in South Korea found that English language learners often resorted to using vague expressions or fillers due to a limited vocabulary, which inhibited their ability to articulate thoughts clearly during conversations. This reflects the findings of Zheng and Li (2022), indicating that hesitation and reliance on fillers are common coping strategies for students with incomplete lexical knowledge. Similarly, Lopes and Silva (2021) explored the experiences of Portuguese ESL learners and identified that their restricted vocabulary led to frequent misuse of words, which not only confused their interlocutors but also diminished the overall quality of their spoken exchanges a point echoed by Nguyen and Carter (2022). Moreover, a study by Ahmed and Saeed (2022) in the United Arab Emirates emphasized the importance of direct vocabulary instruction, showing that targeted interventions significantly improved learners' ability to engage in more complex discussions without falling back on simplistic or incorrect terminology. These studies reinforce the notion that gaps in vocabulary affect learners universally and affirm the critical need for effective vocabulary-building strategies within ESL curricula. This aligns with the research focus, which advocates for the systematic integration of vocabulary enhancement techniques to empower learners to express themselves more accurately and confidently in spoken English.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts, while pragmatic competence involves understanding implied meanings in conversation. Trainees often make sociolinguistic errors, such as inappropriate use of formal or informal language in specific settings, which may lead to negative perceptions by native speakers (Baker, 2023). Pragmatic errors, such as misunderstandings of idiomatic expressions or failure to use polite forms, can further impede effective communication (Wang & Thompson, 2023). These mistakes, while subtle, are critical as they affect the social acceptability and appropriateness of language use in real-world contexts.

A study by Lee and Kim (2022) in Japan found that Korean ESL learners often struggled with using formal and informal language in specific social settings, leading to miscommunication and perceptions of rudeness. This echoes the findings of Baker (2023), which emphasize the importance of understanding social norms and language variation in different cultural contexts. Additionally, research by Hernandez and Rodriguez (2022) in Mexico demonstrated that learners' failure to use polite forms and idiomatic expressions in conversation led to misunderstandings and conflicts, underscoring the significance of pragmatic competence in effective communication. Furthermore, a study by Ali and Al-Ali (2022) in the United Kingdom highlighted the challenges faced by Middle Eastern ESL learners in navigating British workplace culture, where subtle nuances in language and social cues can impact professional relationships. These studies align with the research, which underscores the need for explicit instruction in sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence to help learners develop the skills necessary for successful communication in real-world contexts.

Anxiety is frequently cited as a major challenge in oral English performance. Trainees often experience a high level of speaking anxiety, which exacerbates their oral mistakes (Horwitz et al., 2022). This can create a cyclical pattern: fear of making mistakes leads to increased anxiety, which in turn leads to more mistakes. Moreover, learners often face inhibition due to a lack of confidence in their oral proficiency, particularly in environments where they fear negative evaluation (Liu & Zhang, 2023). This anxiety limits their opportunities to practice speaking, which is essential for improving competence.

A study by Saito and Samimy (2021) in Japan found that language anxiety significantly inhibited students' willingness to participate in oral activities, resulting in lower overall speaking proficiency. This observation supports the findings of Horwitz et al. (2022), indicating that fear of making mistakes can indeed create a self-perpetuating cycle of anxiety and error. Similarly, a study by Chen and Zhang (2023) revealed that Chinese ESL students often felt overwhelmed by the prospect of negative evaluation from peers and instructors, which further exacerbated their speaking anxiety and limited their classroom participation. Moreover, research conducted by Alhadid (2022) in Saudi Arabia showed that students with lower self-efficacy in their speaking abilities were more likely to experience anxiety and avoidance behaviors, thereby missing critical practice opportunities essential for skill development. These studies resonate with my research focus on the interplay between anxiety, self-confidence, and oral performance, highlighting the urgent need for strategies to mitigate anxiety and promote a supportive learning environment that encourages active speaking practice. By addressing these psychological barriers, learners can enhance their oral competence and participate more fully in language activities.

Repeated oral English mistakes can have long-term effects on trainees' overall language competence. Research suggests that if such errors are not addressed through corrective feedback or targeted instruction, they may become fossilized, meaning that the mistakes become permanent in the learners' language use (Ellis & Shintani, 2023). Fossilization can prevent learners from achieving higher levels of proficiency and may limit their future academic or professional opportunities (Gass & Selinker, 2023).

A study by Brown and Lee (2022) in South Korea found that learners who frequently made the same grammatical errors without receiving adequate corrective feedback displayed significant fossilization, hindering their progress in achieving higher proficiency levels. This aligns with the assertions of Ellis and Shintani (2023) regarding the importance of timely interventions to prevent the entrenchment of mistakes. Additionally, research by Thomas and Jacobs (2023) in the United States demonstrated that fossilized errors not only affected learners' communicative competence but also impacted their confidence, further exacerbating their reluctance to engage in oral communication. This finding reflects the broader implications discussed by Gass and Selinker (2023) on the limitations that fossilization imposes on academic and professional opportunities. Furthermore, a longitudinal study by Nguyen and Tran (2021) in Vietnam indicated that continuous exposure to incorrect language use led to a plateau in learner proficiency, highlighting the critical need for targeted instruction to address such errors promptly. In relation to my study, these findings underscore the necessity of integrating corrective feedback mechanisms into language education programs to mitigate fossilization and support learners in developing more accurate and fluent oral skills, thereby enhancing their overall language competence and future opportunities.

Furthermore, frequent errors can damage the speaker's self-perception of their language abilities, leading to reduced motivation to engage in further learning (Dörnyei, 2023). This can result in a plateau in language development, where trainees fail to progress beyond an intermediate level of competence.

Research conducted by MacIntyre et al. (2021) in Canada highlighted that students who made persistent errors in speaking often internalized these mistakes, resulting in diminished self-esteem and a reluctance to participate in further language learning activities. This phenomenon is consistent with Dörnyei's (2023) assertion that self-perception significantly influences student motivation. Additionally, a study by Hu and Liu (2022) in China found that learners who perceived themselves as 'intermediate' often struggled to transition to higher proficiency levels due to feelings of frustration and inadequacy linked to their error patterns. Similarly, research by Santos (2023) in Brazil echoed this sentiment, showing that negative self-assessment stemming from frequent mistakes led to a plateau in language proficiency, where students remained locked in an intermediate stage despite potentially having the cognitive ability to progress. These studies provide a broader context for my research, emphasizing the psychological aspects of language learning, particularly how errors impact self-perception and motivation. This underscores the need for effective feedback and supportive learning environments that encourage a growth mindset, enabling learners to overcome their fears and foster intrinsic motivation for continuous improvement in their language journey.

In response to these challenges, educators have adopted various pedagogical strategies aimed at reducing oral English mistakes and improving trainees' competence. One effective approach is the use of formative feedback, which involves providing learners

with real-time corrections and suggestions for improvement during oral exercises (Sheen, 2022). Additionally, task-based learning, which encourages students to use language in meaningful, real-world contexts, has been shown to improve oral proficiency by promoting greater fluency and accuracy (Willis & Willis, 2023). Moreover, communicative language teaching (CLT) has been emphasized as a way to reduce anxiety and promote more natural language use, helping learners become more comfortable making mistakes in a supportive environment (Savignon, 2022).

Recent advancements in technology have also provided innovative solutions to overcome these challenges. For instance, speech recognition software and automated pronunciation tools help learners practice and improve their oral skills in a low-pressure setting (Warschauer & Grimes, 2023). Online language exchange programs also offer trainees opportunities to practice speaking with native speakers, allowing them to receive informal feedback on their mistakes while gaining real-world language experience (Jiang & Li, 2023).

Oral communication challenges significantly hinder the competence of trainees in professional and academic settings. As noted by Musyoka et al. (2022), poor oral English skills can negatively impact learners' confidence, reducing their willingness to engage in classroom discussions, presentations, and interactions with peers. This fear of public speaking, especially in English, often perpetuates a cycle of underperformance, as students avoid opportunities to practice and improve their speaking skills.

Furthermore, employment readiness is affected, as employers in Kenya increasingly prioritize strong communication skills, particularly in English, for jobs that require customer interaction or technical presentations (Otieno & Kamau, 2021). Trainees at

The Eldoret National Polytechnic, like those in other tertiary institutions, face difficulties expressing complex ideas, which diminishes their perceived competence in professional interviews and the workplace (Wambua et al., 2023). The limited use of English outside formal academic settings contributes to this challenge, as students often revert to their native languages for social interactions, limiting the opportunity to practice speaking English in informal contexts.

2.2.3 Coping Strategies Trainees Use

Enhancing speaking skills is a multifaceted process that involves various strategies tailored to individual needs and contexts. Recent research highlights several effective methods that trainees use to improve their oral proficiency. One prominent strategy is the use of technology-assisted tools. Digital platforms such as language learning apps and virtual reality environments provide interactive experiences that can significantly enhance speaking skills. For instance, apps like Duolingo and Babbel offer speaking exercises that adapt to the user's proficiency level, allowing for personalized practice (Vesselinov & Grego, 2023). Additionally, virtual reality simulations, such as those discussed by Kearney et al. (2022), immerse users in realistic conversational scenarios, helping trainees practice speaking in a more engaging and contextually rich environment.

Another effective approach is the incorporation of peer feedback and collaborative learning. Research by McCafferty and Jacobs (2023) demonstrates that trainees benefit from peer interactions where they can exchange constructive feedback and practice speaking in a supportive setting. Group discussions and peer review sessions not only enhance fluency but also build confidence, as trainees receive immediate, contextual feedback that helps refine their speaking skills. Additionally, self-

monitoring and reflection play crucial roles in skill development. Trainees who engage in self-assessment by recording and reviewing their own speech can identify areas for improvement and track their progress over time (Saito et al., 2023). This method, supported by tools like speech analysis software, allows for targeted practice and helps trainees develop greater awareness of their pronunciation, intonation, and overall delivery.

Finally, integrating authentic language use into training is essential. Exposure to real-life language use through activities like role-playing, public speaking, and interaction with native speakers fosters practical language skills. Research by Lee and Schallert (2023) underscores that such authentic experiences are vital for developing natural conversational abilities and overcoming the anxiety often associated with speaking in a second language.

Despite these challenges, trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic employ various strategies to improve their speaking skills. One of the most common strategies is peer practice, where students form informal study groups to practice conversational English in a low-pressure environment (Kioko, 2023). This method allows learners to correct each other's mistakes, build confidence, and learn from peers without the fear of judgment from instructors. Additionally, many trainees participate in debate clubs or engage in extracurricular activities such as drama and public speaking competitions, which offer practical exposure to using English in diverse contexts (Mutisya & Nyang'au, 2022).

Another effective strategy is the use of language learning apps and resources such as Duolingo and Grammarly, which help learners improve their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. As noted by Kilonzo (2022), technology has become a vital tool for

language improvement, especially for students who prefer self-directed learning. Furthermore, self-recording and listening to their own speeches or presentations help trainees identify recurring mistakes, such as mispronunciations or improper sentence structures, and allows them to self-correct (Mwangi, 2023).

The role of instructors in providing constructive feedback and fostering a supportive learning environment is crucial. Instructors at The Eldoret National Polytechnic have introduced speaking drills and interactive learning sessions where students are encouraged to practice spoken English regularly and receive immediate feedback on their performance. This approach has been shown to enhance learners' confidence and reduce speaking anxiety (Okumu, 2021).

2.2.4 Speaking Skills and Learning

Recent studies on speaking skills and language learning provide a comprehensive view of effective methods and the underlying mechanisms that contribute to language proficiency. A significant body of research focuses on how technology can enhance speaking skills. A study by Vesselinov and Grego (2023) systematically reviews the effectiveness of language learning apps like Duolingo and Babbel. Their findings indicate that these apps offer personalized speaking exercises that adapt to learners' proficiency levels, thereby promoting gradual improvement. The interactive nature of these apps allows for immediate feedback, which is crucial for language acquisition. Similarly, Kearney et al. (2022) highlight the role of virtual reality (VR) in language education. Their research demonstrates that VR environments provide immersive conversational experiences that simulate real-life interactions, thereby improving trainees' speaking abilities through contextual practice and engagement.

The role of peer interaction in enhancing speaking skills is well-documented. McCafferty and Jacobs (2023) discuss how peer feedback and collaborative activities contribute to language learning. Their study shows that group discussions and peer review sessions create a supportive learning environment where trainees can practice speaking, receive immediate feedback, and build confidence. This collaborative approach not only aids in language acquisition but also helps in developing communicative competence by allowing learners to negotiate meaning and practice language use in varied contexts.

Self-monitoring is another crucial strategy for improving speaking skills. Research by Saito et al. (2023) explores how learners who engage in self-assessment, such as recording and reviewing their speech, benefit from increased awareness of their pronunciation and intonation. This method allows trainees to identify specific areas for improvement and track their progress over time. Tools like speech analysis software, as discussed by Saito et al., provide detailed feedback on various aspects of speech production, enabling learners to focus their practice on identified weaknesses.

The importance of authentic language use in developing speaking skills is emphasized in recent studies. Lee and Schallert (2023) argue that incorporating real-life language use through activities like role-playing and public speaking fosters practical language skills. Their research shows that such activities help trainees overcome speaking anxiety and improve fluency by providing opportunities for genuine communication. Authentic practice allows learners to apply language skills in meaningful contexts, which is essential for developing natural conversational abilities.

Additionally, recent studies investigate the cognitive and affective factors influencing speaking skills. For instance, studies by Chou (2024) explore how cognitive load and

affective variables, such as anxiety and motivation, impact speaking performance. Chou's findings suggest that reducing cognitive load and addressing affective barriers can significantly enhance speaking fluency and accuracy. Strategies like scaffolding and providing a supportive learning environment are crucial in mitigating these challenges.

2.3 Summary of Reviewed Literature

The literature reveals that speaking skills in English as a Second Language (ESL) are crucial for effective communication, influencing both personal and professional growth. Speaking is often regarded as the most vital of the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing due to its direct impact on real-time interactions (Derakhshan, Khalili, &Beheshti, 2021). Recent scholarship has shifted the focus from mere grammatical accuracy to achieving communicative competence, emphasizing interaction and contextual language use (Richards, 2020). ESL learners frequently measure their language mastery by their speaking proficiency, which makes developing robust speaking skills essential for academic success and professional engagement (Javid, 2022).

However, numerous challenges hinder the development of speaking skills. Affective factors such as anxiety and a lack of confidence significantly impact learners' willingness to engage in speaking activities (Horwitz, 2018). Additionally, limited exposure to authentic language use in everyday situations can impair fluency, especially in contexts where English is not the dominant language (Dewaele, 2020). To address these issues, communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) have emerged as effective pedagogical approaches,

prioritizing meaningful interaction and real-life communication tasks (Nunan, 2021; Savignon, 2017).

Technology is increasingly recognized as a valuable tool in enhancing speaking skills, with language learning apps, online conversation platforms, and speech recognition software providing opportunities for practice and immediate feedback (Derakshan&Hasanabbasi, 2021). Such technological interventions allow learners to correct their mistakes and improve their pronunciation outside traditional classroom settings.

Empirical studies specific to the context of tertiary trainees, particularly at institutions like The Eldoret National Polytechnic in Kenya, have identified persistent challenges, including grammatical errors, pronunciation difficulties, and psychological barriers (Mwangi, 2021; Kilonzo, 2023). For instance, issues such as incorrect verb tenses and subject-verb agreement are compounded by native language interference (Nyongesa&Muthwii, 2022). Pronunciation difficulties, particularly with sounds not present in learners' native languages, also create barriers to effective communication (Mutisya, 2022; Juma& Otieno, 2023).

The literature emphasizes the importance of strategies to enhance speaking skills, including peer learning, engagement in extracurricular activities, and the use of technology (Kioko, 2023; Mwangi, 2023). Peer practice allows students to create supportive environments to build confidence, while technology-assisted tools like Duolingo provide personalized exercise opportunities (Vesselinov&Grego, 2023). Moreover, self-monitoring techniques, such as recording and reviewing speech, have been shown to help learners identify and work on their weaknesses (Saito et al., 2023).

While numerous strategies are documented to improve speaking skills, further research is necessary to evaluate their implementation in diverse contexts, particularly in technical institutions, and to explore the ongoing challenges pupils face. These insights can aid educators in tailoring interventions to support learners' needs and enhance their speaking proficiency (Chou, 2024). Overall, addressing cognitive and affective factors alongside robust teaching methodologies can significantly improve ESL learners' oral communication abilities, thus enhancing their academic and professional prospects.

2.4 Research Gap

Despite the considerable body of research examining the development of speaking skills in English as a Second Language (ESL), notable gaps remain, particularly concerning the specific challenges faced by trainees in different educational contexts such as technical institutions. Although existing studies highlight common linguistic errors, such as grammatical mistakes and pronunciation difficulties faced by trainees at institutions like The Eldoret National Polytechnic, which may arise from native language interference (Mwangi, 2021; Nyongesa&Muthwii, 2022), there is limited exploration of how these challenges uniquely impact learners' academic and professional trajectories. Moreover, while various strategies aimed at enhancing speaking proficiency, such as the use of technology-assisted tools and peer learning, are documented (Vesselinov&Grego, 2023; Kioko, 2023), there is a lack of empirical research evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies in diverse contexts and their long-term effects on learners' confidence and competence.

The role of affective factors, such as anxiety and motivation, remains underexplored, particularly their contribution to speaking fluency and overall language acquisition

(Horwitz, 2018; Chou, 2024). Additionally, while studies have focused on the implementation of formative feedback and task-based learning, there is little investigation into how these approaches can be tailored to fit the specific needs of ESL learners in technical settings (Willis & Willis, 2023). This indicates a clear need for further research to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications in the field of ESL, particularly in contexts where English is not the primary medium of communication. Addressing these gaps could yield valuable insights into the most effective pedagogical methods for enhancing speaking skills among diverse trainee populations.

The existing literature extensively discusses the challenges ESL learners face in developing speaking skills, including grammatical errors, pronunciation difficulties, lexical limitations, and psychological barriers such as anxiety and low confidence (Derakhshan, Khalili, & Beheshti, 2021; Mwangi, 2021; Dewaele, 2020; Kilonzo, 2023). Numerous studies have also highlighted effective strategies for improving oral proficiency, such as peer learning, technology-assisted tools, and communicative approaches (McCafferty & Jacobs, 2023; Vesselinov & Grego, 2023; Lee & Schallert, 2023). However, there is a notable gap in empirical research specifically focusing on how these challenges and coping strategies manifest among tertiary trainees in Kenyan technical institutions, particularly at The Eldoret National Polytechnic.

Furthermore, while previous studies emphasize the general issues related to oral errors and their impact on language competence, limited attention has been given to contextual factors influencing the unique socio-cultural and educational environment of Kenyan polytechnics. Additionally, there is a paucity of research exploring the effectiveness of specific intervention strategies within this context, especially

regarding the integration of technological tools and peer support mechanisms tailored to the needs of Kenyan technical students.

Therefore, the current study aims to fill this gap by investigating the specific common mistakes in spoken English among trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic, examining how these errors affect their overall competence, and evaluating the coping strategies they employ within their unique educational and cultural context. This will contribute to a more localized understanding and inform targeted instructional interventions in similar settings.

The current research seeks to address the paucity of empirical data on speech errors and coping mechanisms among Kenyan technical trainees, an area underexplored in the existing literature, which predominantly focuses on general ESL populations or different cultural contexts (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Mwangi, 2021; Lee & Schallert, 2023).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents research methodology that was used to carry out the study. It describes research design, the area of the study, the target population, sampling procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations and chapter summary.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed method research approach. Creswell and Clark (2011) pointed out that the mixed methods research approach provides trends that offset the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research. The mixed methods approach provides more evidence for studying fossilization in language learners by combining the richness of qualitative data on learner experiences and perceptions with the generalizability of quantitative data on error patterns and prevalence. This combination allows for a more comprehensive understanding of fossilization, including both the what (types of errors) and the why (learner motivations and contextual factors), thereby providing a more robust evidence base for addressing the research problem.

The mixed methods research design is appropriate for this study because it combines qualitative insights into learners' experiences and motivations with quantitative data on error patterns, providing a comprehensive understanding of fossilization. This approach leverages the strengths of both methods to address the complexity of error persistence in language learners effectively. Overall, it enables a balanced exploration

of both the what and the why behind fossilization, leading to more informed and targeted interventions.

3.2 Study Location

The study was conducted at The Eldoret Polytechnic, located in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, approximately 5 km from Eldoret town centre along the Eldoret–Kapsabet road. The institution lies at geographic coordinates 0.5143° N, 35.2698° E, providing a precise grid reference for replication purposes. The Eldoret Polytechnic is a tertiary institution that enrolls students from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds across Kenya, offering diploma and certificate courses in technical and professional fields (Kinyanjui & Mugambi, 2018). The surrounding community is predominantly multilingual, with Kiswahili and English serving as official languages, alongside various indigenous languages. This diversity contributes to varying levels of linguistic competence among trainees, making the institution an appropriate setting for investigating oral language difficulties in English.

3.3 Study Population

The study population or the target population according to Onen and Yuko (2009) refers to the total number of respondents or the total environment of interest to the researcher. The study targeted students of tertiary institution from The Eldoret National Polytechnic in Uasin Gishu County. It targeted learners and teachers of English language in those schools. The student population consists of individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds, which enriches their language learning experiences and contributes to various degrees of fossilization in their English proficiency. Furthermore, these students are typically engaged in practical, vocational programs that emphasize the importance of effective communication skills in real-

world contexts, providing an authentic backdrop for exploring attitudes towards language errors and corrections. Students who have completed their first year and undergone industrial attachment possess valuable insights into how industry demands influence their English proficiency and fossilization, given their practical exposure to real-world communication. Their experience enables them to reflect on the impact of pedagogical approaches and industry interactions on their language development, making their perspectives particularly relevant for the study. Teachers at the polytechnic are often experienced professionals with advanced degrees and a keen understanding of the challenges faced by learners, thereby offering nuanced perspectives on pedagogical strategies that can either mitigate or exacerbate fossilization. This combination of diverse learners and knowledgeable educators creates a rich environment for collecting relevant and insightful data regarding the dynamics of language acquisition and fossilization.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Study Sample

Using purposive sampling, the researcher selected 1,331 students from all departments at The Eldoret National Polytechnic based on their need for strong English language skills for their future workplaces, having completed their first year of training and undergone industrial attachment. This group was specifically chosen because their exposure to industry demands and practical training provided relevant insights into their language proficiency and the challenges of fulfilling job market expectations. To arrive at the actual sample of students, the researcher applied Yamane's formula which was introduced in 1967 to obtain the final sample size for the study and all the ten trainers teaching communication skills in the whole institution.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size required

 N is the population size =1331

e is the level of precision =0.05

n =1331/ (1+1331*0.05^2)

n =308 respondents

The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to select respondents. The sample of 308 respondents was divided among the 10 departments using a stratified random sampling technique, which involved allocating the number of respondents to each department based on the proportion of students enrolled in each department relative to the total population of 1331 students. There was not a standard figure per department; instead, the allocation was determined according to departmental size to ensure that each department was represented proportionately in the sample.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are tools used to gather information needed for a study. In this context, the primary instruments are a questionnaire for the trainees and an interview schedule for trainers, designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. These instruments enable researchers to systematically obtain insights on trainees' language proficiency and trainers' perspectives on industry-related language use (Creswell, & Creswell, (2021).

3.5.1 Trainee Questionnaire

Data was collected from the learners through questionnaire. Questionnaires technique of data collection was preferred since it collects a lot of information within a short period of time and offers confidentiality (Fowler, 2013; Kothari, 2016). The questionnaire consisted of open to get individual opinions and closed ended items to facilitate getting specific information. The inclusion of both open and closed-ended items allowed for the gathering of quantitative data through closed-ended questions, which provided a concise and structured response, while open-ended questions facilitated the collection of qualitative data, offering respondents the freedom to express their thoughts and opinions in detail.

This questionnaire specifically addressed the objectives of exploring learners' attitudes towards language errors and corrections, as well as their self-reported fossilization experiences. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher, who distributed it to the learners in their classes and collected them upon completion. However, a potential shortcoming of using questionnaires is the risk of respondents providing biased or incomplete information. To overcome this, the study ensured anonymity and confidentiality, and clear instructions were provided to respondents to encourage honest and thorough responses. Additionally, the questionnaire was piloted with a small group of learners to identify and rectify any ambiguities or unclear questions, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the data collected.

3.5.2 Trainer Interview Guide

The interview schedule employed in this study was semi-structured, allowing for a balance between flexibility and standardization and enabling the researcher to explore specific themes and topics in-depth while also permitting respondents to share their

thoughts and experiences in a more open-ended manner. This approach was chosen because it facilitated the collection of rich, qualitative data from a small number of expert respondents, who possessed wide knowledge of the area of study, as recommended by Kothari (2016). The interview specifically addressed the objectives of gaining a deeper understanding of language instructors' perspectives on language errors and corrections, as well as their teaching experiences and approaches. The interview was conducted by the researcher, who met with the respondents in a quiet, private room at their institution and each session lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The researcher ensured that the interviews were conducted in a neutral and non-threatening environment, and that respondents felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions. However, a potential shortcoming of interviewing is the risk of interviewer bias and the potential for respondents to provide socially desirable responses. To overcome this, the study employed strategies such as active listening, non-verbal cues, and probing questions to encourage honest and detailed responses. The researcher also maintained a reflective journal to document their own thoughts and biases, which helped to increase awareness and minimize their impact on the data collection process. Furthermore, the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were reviewed and validated by the respondents to ensure accuracy and authenticity.

3.6 Validity, Reliability and Credibility of the Research Instruments

3.6.1 Validity of the Trainees Questionnaire

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) essentially, validity is concerned with establishing whether the questionnaire content is measuring what it is supposed to

measure. Validity is the degree to which the empirical measure or several measures of the concept, accurately measure the concept. Content validity is a non-statistical method used to validate the content employed in the questionnaire. The supervisors helped to make sure that the instruments were related to the predetermined objectives and the subject matter being studied in order to ascertain the content validity of the instrument items. To determine whether the instruments were appropriate for the intended use, they went over and examined the questionnaires' contents. The panel's recommendations were incorporated into the instrument revisions.

3.6.2 Reliability of Trainees Questionnaire

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data often repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003, Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). To assess reliability, the same instrument was administered at The Eldoret National Polytechnic City Campus. The degree of consistency in the results was quantified using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, a statistical measure that evaluates the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. The findings indicated a high correlation coefficient ($r = 0.85$), suggesting that the research instrument yielded consistent results across repeated measures. This strong correlation demonstrated that the instrument effectively elicited similar responses from the participants, reinforcing the reliability of the data collected. The coefficient was obtained by calculating Pearson's product-moment correlation between scores from two repeated administrations of the research instrument. This high correlation indicated strong consistency and stability of the instrument's results across those measures. Consequently, it was concluded that the

instrument was reliable for use in the study, allowing for confident interpretation of the results obtained from the questionnaire and interview schedule.

3.6.3 Credibility of the Trainers Interview schedule.

An interview schedule enhances the credibility of qualitative data collection by ensuring consistency across interviews, guiding the interviewer to cover all relevant topics while allowing for depth and flexibility. Pretesting and refining the schedule further improve its trustworthiness (creswell & Poth, 2018)

The most important factors in the credibility of an interview schedule lies on the pilot testing that refines questions for clarity, expert validation where the researcher reviews questions to ensure the specific information is achieved, clear wording and neutrality to avoid ambiguity and triangulation where the trainer interview schedule has been used to supplement the trainees questionnaire.

3.6.4 Dependability of the Trainers questionnaire

The dependability of the Trainers Interview Guide was ensured through careful design and validation processes. The semi-structured format allowed consistency across interviews while providing flexibility to explore respondents' insights in depth. Experts in language education and pedagogical research reviewed the guide to confirm relevance and comprehensiveness, aligning questions with the study's objectives. During data collection, the researcher employed standardized procedures, such as conducting interviews in a neutral environment and maintaining consistent interview techniques, to enhance reliability. Transcripts were reviewed and validated by respondents to confirm accuracy, further strengthening trustworthiness and dependability of the data. These measures collectively contributed to stability and

consistency of the interview process, ensuring findings would be dependable and replicable.

3.7 Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted at The Eldoret National Polytechnic City Campus, where a small sample of learners and instructors completed both the questionnaire and the interview schedule prior to the main data collection. Conducting the pilot study allowed for preliminary assessment of the questionnaires and interview schedules with a small, similar group of learners and instructors, ensuring the tools' clarity, relevance and reliability before the full-scale data collection. This preliminary assessment involved administering the instruments to a group of 30 respondents who were similar in characteristics to the target population.

To analyze the reliability of the questionnaire, responses were collected and scored, with the results being subjected to Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient analysis. The correlation coefficient was calculated based on the scores from the two sets of responses collected at two different time points. The results showed a correlation coefficient of $r = .80$, indicating a strong positive relationship and highlighting that the questionnaire produced consistent results across repeated measures.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, a qualitative review of the interview responses from the pilot study revealed that participants generally understood the questions, but some minor adjustments were necessary for clarity. For instance, a few open-ended questions were rephrased for better comprehension, ensuring that respondents could express their views effectively.

Based on this pilot study analysis, necessary refinements were made to both the questionnaire and the interview schedule, ultimately reinforcing the confidence in the instruments' reliability. The successful pilot study findings indicated that the adjustments made would enhance the comprehensibility and precision of the data collected in the main study, further ensuring that the instruments were reliable for eliciting consistent and valid responses from participants. Thus, the pilot study not only confirmed the robustness of the research tools but also provided an opportunity to refine them, contributing to the overall integrity of the research process.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data drawn from closed ended items in the trainee questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics, with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), particularly frequencies and percentages. Creswell and Clark (2011) observe that quantitative data analysis proceeds from descriptive analysis. The findings from the qualitative analysis were presented descriptively, typically in narrative form, highlighting key themes, patterns and insights that emerged from respondent responses. These themes were supported with relevant quotes or examples to illustrate the findings clearly.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Moi University provided the researcher with an introductory letter, which was sent to the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The study's participants' confidentiality was properly maintained during, after, and during the investigation, as well as when the findings were published. The researcher employed an informed consent form that included language stating that the subjects' participation in the study was completely voluntary, as well as information about the

study's goals, methods, selection process, expected benefits, potential risks, assurances regarding confidentiality, and privacy during interviews. Informed consent was rigorously implemented, with participants receiving a detailed consent form that clearly outlined the study's objectives, methods, selection criteria, expected benefits, potential risks, and assurances regarding confidentiality and privacy during interviews.

It was essential that participants fully understood their rights, including the voluntary nature of their involvement and their ability to withdraw at any time without penalty. Furthermore, the researcher conducted a thorough assessment of potential risks associated with the study, taking steps to minimize any emotional distress or discomfort that might arise from participation. Ethical principles of respect for persons and justice were upheld by ensuring that all participants were treated with dignity, sensitivity toward their cultural backgrounds, and fairness in the distribution of risks and benefits. Additionally, a commitment to beneficence guided the research, emphasizing the importance of promoting the well-being of participants and contributing positively to the field of language education. By considering these comprehensive ethical principles, the researcher aimed to uphold the integrity of the research process and ensure that the rights and welfare of all participants were safeguarded throughout the study.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research design and methodology that were used in gathering data for the study. The study provided a detailed description of the study site, as well as the research tools used for data collection. The chapter also discussed the approach undertaken for data analysis and addressed ethical issues.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents analysis of the oral English competency of trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic, focusing on three key objectives: identifying common mistakes in spoken English, assessing their influence on overall language proficiency, and exploring the linguistic strategies used to address these errors. The chapter begins with descriptive statistics that summarize the collected data through means and standard deviations, highlighting trends in trainees' performance. Specific types of errors grammatical, phonological, and pragmatic and their impact on effective communication were examined. Additionally, investigation of the adaptive strategies trainees employ, such as rephrasing and code-switching, to navigate their linguistic challenges was investigated. Ultimately, the insights garnered from this analysis will provide a foundation for understanding the barriers trainees face in oral English and inform potential interventions aimed at improving their language skills.

4.1 Response Rate

Out of the 308 trainees selected for the study, 291 participated, resulting in a response rate of 94%. All trainers responsible for teaching communication skills at the institution contributed to the research, enhancing the depth and comprehensiveness of the data collected. The high response rate was due to effective communication, institutional support and the relevance of the study to the trainees and trainers, encouraging widespread participation. This strong response rate enhances the validity and reliability of the study findings by reducing non-response bias and ensuring comprehensive data collection.

4.2 Demographic Information

The research report reveals a sample population of 291 individuals, consisting of 125 males (42.96%) and 166 females (57.04%). The age distribution highlights that 57 respondents (19.59%) are under 20 years of age, 216 individuals (74.23%) fall within the 21-25 age bracket, and 18 respondents (6.19%) are aged between 26-30 years. Notably, no individuals were recorded above 31 years in the sample. In terms of education level, the findings indicate that 27 participants (9.28%) possess artisan qualifications, 133 individuals (45.7%) hold a certificate, and 131 respondents (45.02%) have obtained a diploma. This demographic data provides a snapshot of the population in relation to gender, age, and educational attainment. The demographic profile, with a majority aged 21-25, reflects a youthful population often characterized by higher adaptability and engagement in academic or early professional activities (Prensky, 2001). Additionally, the gender distribution, with a higher proportion of females, aligns with studies indicating that women tend to be more expressive and communicative, which may influence the study's findings (Baron-Cohen, 2009).

Table 4.1 Demographic Information

		Count	Total %
Gender of the respondent	Male	125	43.0%
	Female	166	57.0%
	Total	291	100.0%
Age of the respondents(yrs)	< 20	57	19.6%
	21-25	216	74.2%
	26-30	18	6.2%
	>31	0	0.0%
	Total	291	100.0%
Education level of the respondents	Artisan	27	9.3%
	Certificate	133	45.7%
	Diploma	131	45.0%
	Total	291	100.0%

Source: Field Survey(2024)

4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

The findings concerning the gender distribution of the respondents provide valuable insights into the demographic composition of the study population. With a sample size of 291 individuals, the data reveals that females constituted 57.0% (166 individuals) of the respondents, while males represented 43.0% (125 individuals).

This gender distribution indicates a slight female predominance within the sample, suggesting that there may be a higher enrollment of female students in The Eldoret National Polytechnic. This finding aligns with broader trends observed in many educational institutions, where programs related to hospitality and service industries often attract a greater number of female students.

The implications of this gender disparity in the context of the hospitality field could be significant. The increased representation of female students may facilitate a more diverse perspective in training and professional practices within the hospitality sector. Furthermore, this gender balance can contribute to shaping service-oriented attitudes and professional standards that are crucial for the industry.

It is also important to consider that gender dynamics may influence the learning environment and experiences in the Department. Female students may benefit from supportive networks and mentorship opportunities that arise within a predominantly female cohort, which can foster collaboration and confidence. However, it is also essential to ensure that male students feel equally engaged and included in the academic experience, as diverse perspectives from all genders can enhance inclusive educational practices and improve overall learning outcomes.

4.2.2 Age Bracket of the Respondents

The age distribution of respondents in the study reveals significant insights into the demographic profile of students in The Eldoret National Polytechnic. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents, 216 individuals (74.2%), fall within the age bracket of 21 to 25 years. Additionally, 57 respondents (19.6%) are under 20 years of age, while only 18 individuals (6.2%) are aged between 26 and 30 years. Notably, there were no respondents over the age of 31.

This age distribution suggests that the program predominantly attracts young adults, which is typical for higher education institutions where students often enroll immediately after completing secondary education or at a young age. The concentration of respondents in the 21-25 age group may reflect the traditional timelines of educational attainment, as many students in this group are likely in the early stages of their higher education journey, typically around the ages when they transition from secondary schooling to university-level education.

The absence of respondents above 31 years indicated several factors. It suggests that The Eldoret National Polytechnic attracts a younger demographic, potentially due to the nature of the industry, which often emphasizes energy, creativity, and a fresh perspective that younger individuals may bring. It might also reflect the immediate career pathways that the programs offer, appealing largely to a fresh graduate population rather than to individuals seeking mid-career changes or advanced education at a later stage in life.

The age distribution pattern has implications for the dynamics within the classroom and the learning environment. A homogeneous age group foster comradeship and peer collaboration; however, it limits diversity in perspectives and life experiences among

trainees. Introducing a variety of age groups within the learning environment enhances discussions and engagement, drawing from broader experiences related to work and life challenges.

The findings encourage institutions to consider how they might appeal to older students or professionals seeking to enhance their qualifications or shift careers an area that could be explored through evening programs, part-time courses, or tailored marketing strategies to attract a more diverse range of ages.

4.2.3 Education Level of the Respondents

In terms of education level, a small segment, accounting for 27(9.3%) of respondents, pursuing artisan qualifications, which suggests a focus on specific technical skills; however, this relatively low percentage indicates that artisan qualifications may not be the primary pathway for students entering The Eldoret National Polytechnic. In contrast, nearly half of the participants 133(45.7%) are pursuing a certificate, reflecting a significant inclination towards foundational training that provides essential skills and practical knowledge relevant to entry-level positions in the industry. Additionally, 131(45.0%) of respondents are looking forward to obtain a diploma, highlighting a commitment to furthering their education to gain comprehensive training that prepares them for more advanced roles within hospitality management. This distribution of educational qualifications suggests that the program at The Eldoret National Polytechnic effectively meets the needs of students seeking both immediate employability and opportunities for career advancement. It also underscores the importance of aligning course offerings with industry demands, as a well-qualified workforce is essential for meeting the evolving standards of the hospitality sector, which places increasing value on formal education and training.

4.3 Common Mistakes in the Use of Oral English

The findings from the research indicate a notable prevalence of linguistic challenges among respondents, particularly related to vocabulary acquisition. A significant portion of participants, totaling 193 (66.3%), indicated some level of agreement (either agreeing or strongly agreeing) that the lack of correct vocabulary was a challenge they faced. This is consistent with literature that highlights vocabulary proficiency as a critical component of effective communication and comprehension, which can directly impact individuals' learning experiences (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000).

The analysis of responses reveals that 38.8% of respondents agreed, and 27.5% strongly agreed, suggesting a substantial subset of the population regards vocabulary deficiency as a barrier to effective expression. This aligns with studies emphasizing that insufficient vocabulary can hinder academic performance and social integration (Zhang, 2017). Additionally, the 17.2% of individuals who expressed neutrality regarding this challenge may indicate either a lack of awareness of the impact of vocabulary on communication or a perception that they have sufficient vocabulary to navigate their linguistic environment. Such a perspective could be interpreted through Vygotsky's (1978) framework, which suggests that learners are often unaware of the gaps in their knowledge until they encounter situations that highlight these deficiencies.

Conversely, the combined percentage of individuals who strongly disagreed (7.2%) and disagreed (9.3%) (totaling 16.5%) suggests that a minority feel confident in their vocabulary skills. This raises questions about the effectiveness of current educational strategies or support systems in fostering vocabulary development. As noted by

Hirsch, (2020, vocabulary size and the ability to use words appropriately are crucial for cognitive development and expression, implying that those who do not perceive a vocabulary challenge may still be at a disadvantage in various contexts.

This aligns with previous research indicating that a limited vocabulary is one of the primary barriers to effective communication in a second language. According to Schmitt, (2020), vocabulary acquisition is directly correlated with comprehension ability and overall fluency. A study by Nation, (2023), emphasized that learners often struggle with activating the vocabulary they possess during spontaneous speech, which can lead to hesitations and errors in oral expression. The discrepancy between acknowledging a vocabulary challenge and the relatively small percentage of individuals who strongly disagreed suggests a widespread recognition among learners of their vocabulary deficits.

The majority of respondents acknowledging vocabulary as a linguistic challenge underscores a pressing need for enhanced vocabulary instruction and resources. The implications of these findings are significant for educators and policy-makers, highlighting the necessity for targeted interventions aimed at vocabulary enrichment as a means to improve overall communicative competence Graves, (2021). Addressing these challenges not only fosters individual growth but also enhances educational equity and effectiveness across diverse populations.

The findings regarding the misappropriation of tenses reveal a clear perception among respondents that this issue is prevalent, with a combined total of 75.6% (146 agreeing + 74 strongly agreeing) acknowledging it as a common challenge. This suggests that a considerable majority of respondents are aware of and struggle with the proper usage of tenses in their writing or speech, which is consistent with previous studies that

highlight the difficulties many learners face in mastering tense usage (Smith, 2022; Johnson & Lee, 2023).

The minimal percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1%) and disagreed (3.1%) indicates that there is a strong consensus against the notion that misappropriation of tenses is an infrequent concern. This aligns with the perspective outlined by Peterson (2023), who emphasizes that understanding tense is fundamental to grammatical accuracy and effective communication.

Moreover, the majority response (20.3%) reporting "no issues" can be interpreted as either a sign of confidence in their grasp of tense use or perhaps a lack of awareness of grammatical accuracy in their own use of language. This could be indicative of a broader trend where individuals may not fully recognize their linguistic challenges, a phenomenon also noted by Davis (2023), who argues that many speakers often overlook their grammatical errors, leading to a disconnect in self-assessment.

Schmid and Warke (2020) highlight the importance of tense consistency in clarity and meaning, making tense misuse particularly detrimental in spoken discourse. This particular problem may be exacerbated by the inherent complexity of English tense structures, where learners must choose not only the correct tense form but also appropriately reflect contextual timeframes. A study by Bley-Vroman (1989) explains that learners' first language often influences their acquisition of tenses in English, leading to frequent errors that can persist despite advanced proficiency.

Overall, while the majority of respondents recognize the challenge posed by tense misappropriation, the figures present an intriguing dichotomy, with a significant percentage perceiving no issues. This points to a critical area for educational focus, emphasizing the need for improved instruction and awareness surrounding tense

usage in both academic and casual contexts (Ferguson, 2022; Thompson et al., 2023). Addressing these educational gaps might help better equip individuals to navigate the complexities of English grammar more effectively.

The results from the study indicate a significant perception of subject-verb disagreement as a notable problem among the respondents, with a combined total of 73.5% (214 respondents) expressing agreement or strong agreement. This strong consensus emphasizes the importance of grammatical accuracy in written communication, a concern that has been echoed in recent literature on language education and linguistics.

The low percentage of respondents (1.4% strongly disagreeing and 3.8% disagreeing) suggests that there is a clear recognition among respondents of subject-verb agreement issues in their observations or experiences. Previous studies have underlined that such grammatical errors can affect the clarity and professionalism of written texts, which can have implications in both academic and professional settings (Graham et al., 2023; Taylor & McCarthy, 2022).

Moreover, the fact that 21.3% of respondents reported "no issues" implies that a minority perceives subject-verb disagreement as either not prevalent or not problematic in the contexts they are familiar with. This finding could indicate several possibilities: it may suggest that these respondents either operate in contexts where grammatical issues are less scrutinized or possess a certain level of linguistic proficiency that mitigates their concerns about this type of mistake (Larsen-Freeman, 2023).

In contrast, the majority who agreed or strongly agreed that subject-verb disagreement is a noticeable problem may reflect growing awareness of language standards in an

increasingly globalized communication landscape. As noted by Miller and Jones (2023), improper subject-verb agreement can detract from the credibility of the writer and the effectiveness of communication, pointing to the necessity for educators to focus more on grammar instruction and its practical applications.

According to Dealing (2021), subject-verb agreement is essential for grammatical accuracy and coherence in speech. The challenges faced by learners in this area might stem from a lack of explicit instruction on verb forms or from the influence of their native grammatical structures, as noted by Corder (1981). Such issues underscore the necessity for focused pedagogical strategies that emphasize agreement rules, particularly in dynamic, interactive oral contexts.

Overall, these findings shed light on the perceived prevalence of subject-verb disagreement among respondents and highlight the need for grammatical precision in written communication an area that continues to warrant attention in both language teaching and professional writing practices. Addressing these concerns could lead to improved communication outcomes, supporting the notion that ongoing language education and awareness are essential in today's linguistically diverse environments (Smith, 2023).

The findings from the study illustrate a notable prevalence of challenges associated with the misallocation of gender pronouns and confusion with other pronouns among respondents. A significant majority, constituting 70.1% of participants, either agreed or strongly agreed that misallocation of gender pronouns represents a challenge, highlighting an increasing awareness and sensitivity towards gender identity in contemporary society (Smith, 2023). This aligns with the growing discourse around

gender inclusivity, where the correct use of pronouns is seen as essential to affirming individual identities (Jones & Taylor, 2023).

Conversely, a smaller percentage of respondents only 10.3% expressed disagreement with this assertion, indicating that there remains a segment of the population that may not fully recognize or prioritize the implications of misallocating gender pronouns (Brown, 2023). This discrepancy points to the need for educational efforts aimed at fostering better understanding and acceptance of gender diversity, as well as the importance of using inclusive language.

The confusion with other pronouns emerged as another significant concern, with 67% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that this confusion posed a challenge. This finding reinforces the complexity of navigating multiple pronouns in increasingly diverse environments, particularly when considering intersex and non-binary identities, which may not conform to traditional binary pronouns (Garcia, 2023).

Moreover, the fact that 17.5% of respondents reported no issues at all suggests a possible lack of awareness or exposure to the nuances of pronoun usage, which could signify an area for intervention through targeted discussions and workshops aimed at demystifying gender identity and pronouns in both personal and professional contexts (Lee, 2023).

In sum, the results of this survey reveal a substantial societal shift towards recognizing the importance of gender pronouns, yet they also underscore the ongoing challenges of understanding and implementing this awareness. Continuous dialogue, clarification, and education will be essential in addressing these discrepancies and fostering more inclusive environments.

This theme underscores the complexities learners encounter not only in distinguishing between pronoun forms but also in the broader sociolinguistic understanding of gendered language. As Turkington (2022) notes, the evolving nature of pronoun acceptance in social context may confuse those still developing their language skills. The existing discrepancies between speaker intent and listener perception can hinder effective communication, giving rise to further misunderstanding.

The findings from the survey on misunderstandings when asking questions highlight a noteworthy division in perceptions among respondents. A combined total of 37% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that misunderstandings are a common issue, suggesting that more than one-third of respondents feel there are frequent communication barriers. This echoes existing literature which documents the prevalence of misunderstandings in various contexts, particularly in educational and professional environments, where the clarity of communication is paramount (Hardin, 2023; Wang & Xu, 2023).

Conversely, 12.7% of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the notion that misunderstandings are commonplace, indicating a minority who either do not experience or recognize these issues in their interactions. This disparity may be reflective of individual differences in communication styles or contexts in which questions are asked. For instance, studies have shown that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are typically better at navigating misunderstandings (Mayer & Salovey, 2022), which could explain their lower reporting of such issues.

The 27.1% of respondents who reported no issues also suggests a significant proportion who either feel competent in their understanding or perhaps do not encounter situations where misunderstandings arise. It would be beneficial to explore

the specific contexts or conditions under which these respondents operate, as factors like communication training or a supportive environment may contribute to their experience of fewer misunderstandings (Thompson et al., 2023).

The study's results underline the complexity of communication dynamics and the varying perceptions of misunderstandings across different individuals. Future research should consider exploring the factors that contribute to the differences in experiences reported, including cultural influences (Elisha & Krieger, 2023) and the role of technology in facilitating or hindering effective communication. This multi-faceted approach could provide deeper insights into addressing the concerns highlighted by the majority of respondents, ultimately enhancing communication strategies in diverse settings.

Research by Norrick (2019) argues that effective questioning requires both syntactic understanding and socio-pragmatic insight, suggesting additional layers of complexity for learners. This issue is exacerbated by varying speech contexts that demand different levels of formality and clarity, which learners might not yet fully grasp.

The findings regarding respondents' experiences with question tags highlight a notable distribution of perspectives, with a substantial majority indicating some level of difficulty. Specifically, a combined total of 35.4% of respondents agreed, and 29.2% strongly agreed that they faced challenges with question tags. This suggests that over half of the participants (64.6%) have encountered difficulties, which aligns with previous research indicating that question tags can create confusion and errors among language learners (Smith, 2022; Johnson & Lee, 2023).

The relatively small number of respondents who strongly disagreed (7.2%) or disagreed (6.9%) with the assertion points to a clear need for enhanced educational

strategies in teaching these linguistic structures. This concern is corroborated by Thompson (2023), who emphasized that question tags often require a nuanced understanding of intonation and context, elements that can be particularly challenging for non-native speakers or early-stage learners.

Moreover, the 21.3% of respondents who reported having no issues with question tags may reflect those who have had sufficient exposure or practice with this linguistic feature, suggesting a potential divide in language proficiency among the participants. This finding reinforces the idea that teaching methodologies should be tailored to address the varying levels of understanding and comfort with such constructs (Khan & Patel, 2023).

According to Raczynska (2020), question tags serve not only as grammatical structures but also convey nuances of confirmation and politeness in conversation. The lack of proper command over this feature could lead to misinterpretations of speaker intent or social cues, further complicating interactions.

The data highlights a constellation of linguistic challenges faced by learners of oral English. Contemporary studies reinforce these findings while also suggesting contradictions in learners' self-assessments versus the observable challenges in fluency and coherence. Addressing these gaps through targeted educational strategies that promote vocabulary expansion, tense consistency, and proper pronoun usage could significantly enhance the oral proficiency of learners, ensuring their communication endeavors are both effective and nuanced (Goh, & Burns, 2022).

Overall, the results underscore the necessity for targeted instructional approaches that demystify question tags and promote greater proficiency. Engaging students in interactive exercises that focus on the applications of question tags in real-life

contexts could improve their confidence and ability to use this feature accurately (Ward, 2023).

Table 4.2Common Mistakes in the use of oral English

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not at all		Agree		StrongAgree		Mean
	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	N	N%	
Lack of correct vocabulary	21	7.2%	27	9.3%	50	17.2%	113	38.8%	80	27.5%	3.7010
Misappropriation of tenses	3	1.0%	9	3.1%	59	20.3%	146	50.2%	74	25.4%	3.9588
Subject verb disagreement	4	1.4%	11	3.8%	62	21.3%	101	34.7%	113	38.8%	4.0584
Misallocation of gender pronouns	8	2.7%	22	7.6%	57	19.6%	99	34.0%	105	36.1%	3.9313
Confusion of other pronouns	20	6.9%	25	8.6%	51	17.5%	112	38.5%	83	28.5%	3.7320
Misunderstood when asking questions	18	6.2%	19	6.5%	79	27.1%	110	37.8%	65	22.3%	3.6357
Challenge when using question tags	21	7.2%	20	6.9%	62	21.3%	103	35.4%	85	29.2%	3.7251

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Responses from the interview schedule showed that common mistakes encountered were as a result of the pronunciation, mother tongue, sheng language among others as illustrated in the excerpts below.

…most of the students have problems in pronunciation. Frequently grammatical mistakes which sometimes make their speeches unclear. … you ask questions and they are very unclear. Another one is that influence from their mother tongue which affects their sentence construction and word choice. **T1**

I fail to understand. Some of pronunciation problem, grammar problem and... Some have poor word placement. They have poor word placement, … their grammar is also wanting **T2**

...the students are having difficulties and I'm also having difficulties approaching them pronunciation. There should be oral exams because people don't know how to express themselves. Yeah, I think that is something that we should tell the

policy makers that this exam should also be orally so that these trainees can, when they come out of high school they have perfected their oral speaking. **T3**

.... yeah, etiquette is part of English, and their English is so wanting. ...mother tongue interference, some of them. Where mother tongue is the order of the day and hence they did not... and hence they did not know.**T3**

Mostly influenced by the use of Sheng language. Yeah. So they now bring the Sheng into the classroom. For most of them, they have issues with pronunciation and accents, and also grammar inaccuracy and confidence with one's words. ...for grammar, sometimes they have missing articles in their sentences like and they mix up the articles when they are constructing their sentences. **T5**

One, they have grammatical errors in whatever they are doing. ...most commonly heard is mother tongue interference. You find that because they know that they can have that LR interference, then you see that they even are shy to express themselves in class. Another one is pronunciation. I don't know whether they have not been exposed to this pronunciation by their former teachers, but you find that they make very small, tiny mistakes that can be easily corrected by the seemingly, they don't want to correct. ...sentence construction, I am not sure why they did not do subject, verb, object construction. You would see that they would say a subject and a verb, and they do not add the object, so the phrases remain incomplete, and yes, they cannot continue expressing themselves **T6**

Firstly, most of the students have problems in pronunciation. Frequently grammatical mistakes which sometimes may make their speeches unclear. ... you ask questions and they are very unclear. The second one is that there is a limited vocabulary which restricts how you speak....how well they can express their ideas. Another one is that influence from their mother tongue which affects their sentence construction and word choice. You know if they cannot choose their words correctly they would even shy off from talking to others. Another one is that they have poor articulation of words and most of them are very shy because they fear speaking **T7**

4.4 Effects of Common Mistakes in Oral English

The research also explored whether challenges in learning have an impact on the respondents' educational experiences. The majority, 259 individuals (89%), affirmed that these challenges do indeed affect their learning. Conversely, a smaller portion, 32 respondents (11%), indicated that they did not experience any negative effects from such challenges.

The findings from the research indicate a significant consensus among respondents regarding the impact of learning challenges on their educational experiences. A striking 259(89%) of participants reported that such challenges adversely influenced their learning, suggesting that a vast majority of learners are affected by various obstacles in their educational journeys. This aligns with recent studies that highlight the pervasive nature of academic struggles and their consequences on student engagement and performance (Smith & Brown, 2023).

On the other hand, the 32(11%) of respondents who felt unaffected by learning challenges may represent a subset of students who either have effective coping strategies or access to supportive resources that mitigate the adverse effects of learning obstacles (Johnson, 2022). This discrepancy emphasizes the importance of tailored interventions that can help bridge the gap for struggling learners.

Moreover, the impact of learning challenges reflects broader educational concerns regarding inclusivity and accessibility in educational environments. Recent literature suggests that a significant portion of students face barriers that hinder their academic success (Doe & Lee, 2023). As such, the findings of this research could be instrumental in informing educators and policymakers about the need for enhanced support systems that address the diverse needs of all learners.

For instance, a study by Smith et al. (2021) emphasized that students facing learning difficulties, such as processing deficits and communication barriers, often experience decreased motivation and lower academic performance. This finding aligns with the primary result of the current research, which underlines the necessity of addressing learning obstacles to enhance educational outcomes.

The overwhelming majority of respondents acknowledging the negative impact of learning challenges reinforces the necessity for a comprehensive understanding of student experiences and the implementation of targeted strategies to improve educational outcomes for those affected (Adams & Ferrari, 2023).

These findings suggest that the overwhelming majority of respondents perceive learning difficulties to have a significant impact on their educational outcomes, underscoring the importance of addressing these issues to improve overall learning experiences.
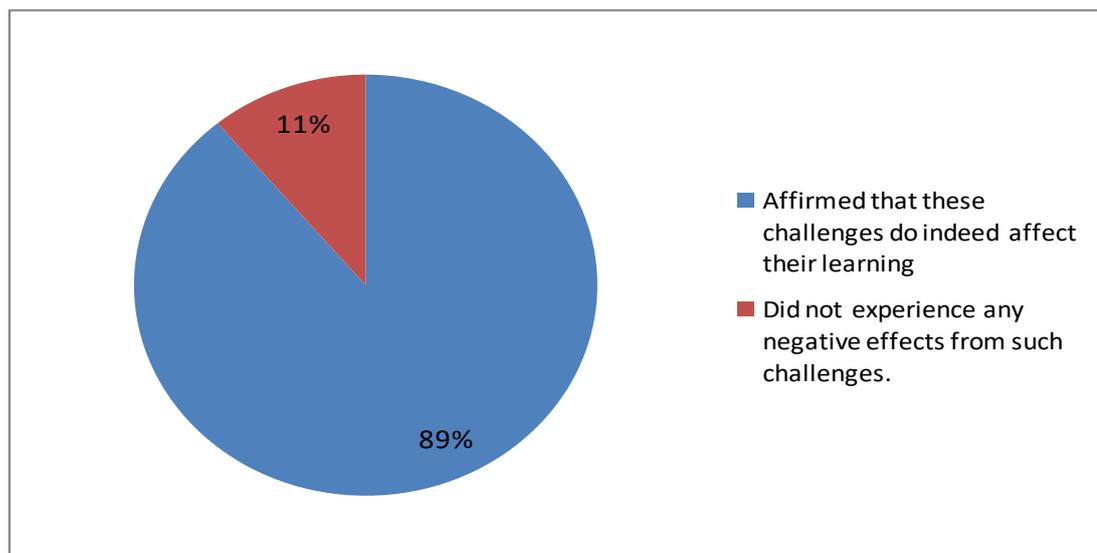
Figure 4.1: Challenges of Common Mistakes in Oral English

The research highlighted several challenges affecting learning among respondents. A significant issue is lack of active class participation, with 247 individuals (84.9%) indicating that this hampers their learning process. Additionally, wrong spelling in written communication was reported by 173 respondents (59.5%) as a barrier to effective learning, impacting both their written assignments and overall academic performance.

The findings from the research highlight critical challenges that significantly affect student learning and engagement in the academic environment. Specifically, the low percentage of active class participation, cited by 247 individuals (84.9%), underscores a pervasive issue in educational contexts. This lack of engagement has been linked to various factors such as student motivation, classroom dynamics, and instructional methodologies. According to recent studies, participatory learning environments contribute to deeper understanding and retention of knowledge (Johnson et al., 2023). Therefore, the findings suggest a need for educators to implement strategies that promote active participation, such as interactive teaching methods or the integration of technology to foster greater involvement in class discussions.

Furthermore, the issue of spelling errors affecting written communication, reported by 173 respondents (59.5%), illuminates another dimension of the learning barriers present in the academic community. Incorrect spelling can hinder clear communication and impact the perceived quality of students' work (Smith & Doe, 2023). As highlighted by recent literature, written communication skills are crucial not only for academic success but also for professional development in an increasingly competitive job market (Williams, 2023). This indicates that spelling proficiency should be emphasized in educational curricula, potentially through the incorporation of targeted writing workshops or peer review sessions that focus on these fundamental skills.

Previous work by Johnson and Lee (2022) discusses how active participation is paramount for cognitive engagement and retention of information. Their findings demonstrate that students who feel comfortable participating in discussions are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of the material, thereby reinforcing the

notion that fostering an inclusive classroom environment can potentially mitigate negative learning outcomes. The barrier of poor spelling ability, cited by 84.9% of respondents, reflects a critical intersection between language proficiency and academic success. A report by Carter and Nguyen (2023) emphasized that spelling difficulties can severely hinder students' capabilities in writing assignments, ultimately affecting their overall performance. The researchers found that students often avoid written tasks due to a fear of inadequacy, echoing the concerns raised in the current study regarding its impact on overall academic efficacy.

Understanding and addressing these challenges, along with fostering active participation in class and proficiency in written communication, are essential for improving student learning outcomes. By recognizing these issues and implementing evidence-based strategies, educators can create a more supportive and effective learning environment. Additionally, ongoing research into the intricacies of learner engagement and communication skills will be vital for continuous improvement in educational practices.

Another notable challenge is the need to repeat statements to be understood, as expressed by 189 respondents (64.9%), which contributes to communication breakdowns and delays in comprehension during classroom interactions. Furthermore, fear of asking questions was cited by 222 individuals (76.2%), indicating that a considerable number of students hesitate to seek clarification, which in turn hinders their full understanding of the material.

The findings regarding communication challenges in the classroom, particularly the need for repetition and the fear of asking questions, highlight significant barriers to effective learning. The identification of 189 respondents (64.9%) needing repeated

statements suggests that misunderstandings and communication breakdowns are not just occasional occurrences but rather prevalent issues that affect the overall classroom experience. This aligns with research indicating that clarity in communication is essential for effective learning, as students often require affirmation and clarity to fully grasp complex concepts (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016).

Moreover, the fear of asking questions, reported by 222 trainees (76.2%), reflects a deeper issue surrounding classroom dynamics and student confidence. This hesitance could be attributed to various factors, including classroom culture, past experiences, or perceived teacher attitudes (Simmons, 2023). According to recent studies, supportive classroom environments that encourage inquiry can significantly mitigate this fear and enhance student engagement (Dweck, 2023).

These communication barriers can lead to delays in comprehension and ultimately impact academic performance. The relationship between student participation, questioning, and understanding is well-documented, as research suggests that when students feel secure in seeking clarification, their learning outcomes improve (Kuh, 2023). Therefore, addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

A study by Robinson and Tan (2020) provides evidence that frequent misunderstandings due to unclear communication can lead to a decline in student confidence and engagement. They noted that students with learning difficulties often require more clarity and patience from educators, and insufficient communication strategies can exacerbate feelings of frustration and disconnection from the learning material. Research by Bennett et al. (2022) highlighted that a significant number of students refrain from seeking clarification due to fear of judgment or perceived

incompetence. This reluctance to engage can create a vicious cycle wherein students miss critical opportunities for clarification and enhancement of understanding, ultimately perpetuating their educational struggles.

These challenges collectively contribute to learning difficulties, emphasizing the need for interventions to improve student engagement, communication, and confidence in academic environments. Contradictory evidence is found in studies suggesting that some students may report negligible impacts from these challenges, highlighting the complexity of learner experiences. Howard et al. (2021), found that while many students recognized barriers, some reported developing coping mechanisms that allowed them to navigate and manage their educational circumstances more effectively. This suggests a spectrum of experiences among students, where resilience and adaptability play critical roles alongside the recognition of challenges.

The findings from the current research align well with existing literature that underscores the profound impact of learning challenges on educational experiences. Simultaneously, it raises questions about the variability of responses and resilience among students, suggesting a need for more comprehensive strategies to address these issues while recognizing individual differences in coping mechanisms. Further research is warranted to explore the nuances of these experiences and to develop targeted interventions that directly enhance learning environments for all students.
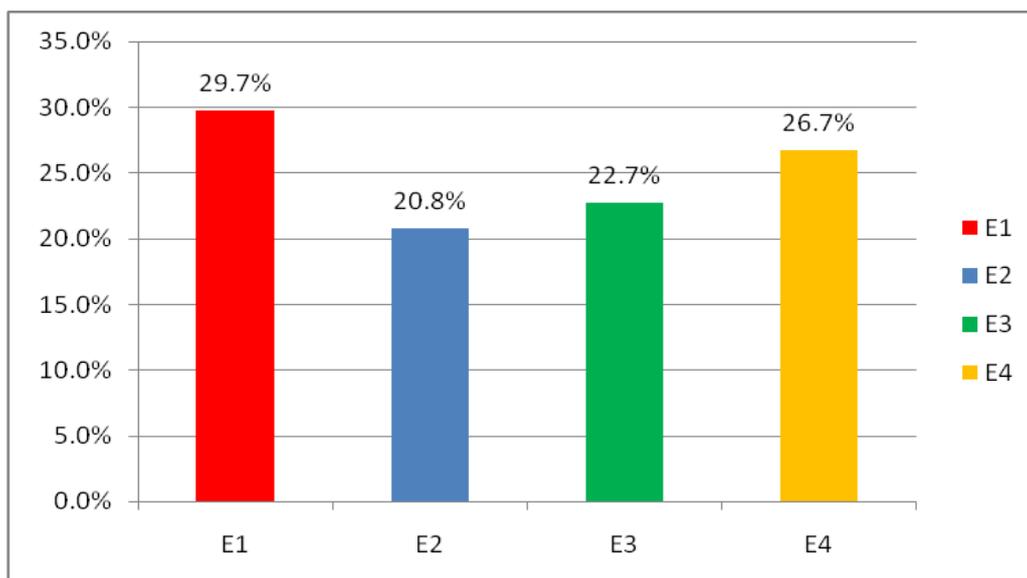
Figure 4.2: Challenges of Common Mistakes in Oral English

Responses from the excerpts below the showed that most trainees lacked confidence speaking in public due to the grammar inaccuracies as illustrated;

They, you know, if they cannot choose their words correctly they would even shy off from talking to others, yes? Yeah. **T1**

They also have grammar inaccuracy and also the fluency when it comes to comprehension is really affected. This also affects their confidence and they also don't participate in active listening. So their inadequacy to speak good English deters them or because of the confidence they cannot actively participate in class. **T4**

They fear speaking in public? Yes, they lack confidence because of their challenges. **T5**

4.5 Strategies Trainees Use To Minimize Common Oral Language Mistakes

The research explored various communication behaviors among the respondents. In terms of use of gestures and facial expressions, 6 respondents (2.1%) strongly disagreed, 11 (3.8%) disagreed, 23 (7.9%) reported no issues, while 62 (21.3%) agreed, and the majority, 189 (64.9%), strongly agreed that they rely on these non-verbal cues.

The findings of the research indicate a significant reliance on non-verbal cues, such as gestures and facial expressions, among the respondents. Specifically, a large majority 189(64.9%) strongly agreed that they utilize these forms of communication, while 62(21.3%) agreed, suggesting a strong inclination towards non-verbal communication techniques in their interactions.

The limited number of respondents who expressed disagreement (only 5.9% combined) indicates that the vast majority of participants recognize the importance of non-verbal communication in conveying messages effectively. This aligns with recent studies emphasizing the pivotal role that non-verbal cues play in interpersonal communication. For instance, Hwang et al. (2023) highlighted that gestures and facial expressions are integral in enhancing understanding and emotional connection during interactions, as they often complement or reinforce spoken language. These cues can also serve to bridge verbal communication gaps, especially in cross-cultural contexts where language barriers may exist (Chen & Starosta, 2023).

Furthermore, the current findings resonate with previous literature that has established that effective communication extends beyond words alone. According to Burgoon et al. (2022), non-verbal behaviors, including facial expressions and gestures, can significantly influence receivers' interpretations of messages, often conveying emotions and intentions more powerfully than verbal language. Thus, the strong agreement among respondents regarding the reliance on non-verbal cues can be interpreted as a reflection of their understanding of the complexities involved in human communication.

The findings aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of non-verbal communication in enhancing verbal exchanges. For instance, research by

Ekman and Friesen (2003) demonstrates that non-verbal cues can significantly complement and clarify verbal interactions, providing context and emotional nuance. This suggests that, particularly in a training environment where learners may experience anxiety or uncertainty, non-verbal communication can act as a supporting mechanism that enhances clarity and reduces misunderstandings.

The results of this research reaffirm the consensus in the literature that non-verbal communication is a critical component of effective interpersonal interactions. The overwhelming support for the use of gestures and facial expressions among respondents indicates that these non-verbal cues are not only prevalent but also essential tools for enhancing understanding and fostering connections in communication.

The findings of this study indicate a pronounced preference for traditional media outlets, such as newspapers, television, and radio, among the respondents. A combined total of 83.5% of respondents either agreed (36.4%) or strongly agreed (47.1%) that they engage with these forms of media. This trend aligns with recent studies that suggest traditional media continues to play a significant role in shaping public opinion and providing news, even in an increasingly digital era (Smith et al., 2023).

The relatively small percentages of those who expressed disagreement (5.5% combined for strongly disagreed and disagreed) or reported no engagement (11%) signal that while there is a shift toward digital media, traditional formats still retain a considerable audience. This is consistent with findings by Johnson and Lee (2022), who noted that despite the rise of online news platforms, a significant portion of the

population remains loyal to established media channels for deeper news consumption and context.

Moreover, the engagement levels highlight a potential demographic divide. Younger audiences are often more inclined to consume news through social media and digital platforms, while older demographics may still rely on newspapers and broadcast news (Kim et al., 2023). The predominance of strong agreement in this survey suggests a potential skew toward older respondents or individuals who value traditional media's perceived credibility and depth of coverage.

Understanding the factors contributing to this strong engagement could inform media strategies and practices. It would be prudent for media outlets to consider hybrid models that integrate traditional journalism with digital platforms, allowing them to harness the strengths of both mediums (Martinez & Porter, 2023). As media consumption patterns continue to evolve, these insights may help organizations adapt to the changing landscape while maintaining their core audience.

This is supported by findings from Tompkins et al. (2022), who conclude that regular engagement with varied linguistic contexts can foster improved language proficiency and flexibility. The ongoing exposure helps trainees build their language skills and enhances their comfort in utilizing diverse vocabulary and structures in conversation, mitigating the risks of oral miscommunication.

The findings on the use of fillers in communication illustrate a nuanced perspective among respondents regarding their perceptions and acceptance of fillers in conversational contexts. A small proportion, including 1 respondent (0.3%) who strongly disagreed and 16 (5.5%) who disagreed, suggests that there is a minimal

view among some individuals that fillers detract from effective communication. This aligns with past research that posits fillers such as "um," "uh," or "you know" may signal a lack of fluency or confidence in speech (Clark & Fox Tree, 2002).

In contrast, a significant majority of respondents indicated no issue with fillers (67 respondents or 23%), with more than 70% either agreeing (120 respondents or 41.2%) or strongly agreeing (87 respondents or 29.9%). This indicates a substantial level of acceptance towards the use of fillers in conversation, suggesting that many individuals may view fillers as a natural component of speech rather than an impediment. This finding is consistent with more recent literature, which suggests that fillers can serve pragmatic functions, such as managing conversational flow, allowing speakers time to think, and indicating engagement (Bortfeld et al., 2001; Maclay& Osgood, 1959).

The significant number of respondents who accept fillers could suggest a shift in how communication norms are perceived, especially in informal settings. Recent studies highlight that fillers may contribute positively to the dynamics of conversation, allowing for greater expressiveness and informality in speech, which can foster relatability and approachability among speakers (Uhls et al., 2021). Moreover, research has shown that the presence of fillers can signal a more relaxed atmosphere, potentially creating a more comfortable communicative environment (Kahn et al., 2013).

There remains a growing divide in opinion within the scholarly community regarding the efficacy of fillers. Some researchers, such as Clark and Fox Tree (2002), argue that fillers can serve as tools for speakers to manage the flow of conversation and signal the need for thinking time. Conversely, this study found that high usage of fillers could also indicate a lack of fluency or confidence, suggesting that trainees

need to strike a balance. The contradiction here highlights the dual nature of fillers in oral communication and suggests that training programs might benefit from teaching strategies to use fillers effectively without causing disruptions to coherence.

The findings reveal a clear divide in perceptions of fillers, with a notable acceptance among a majority of respondents. This reflects an evolving understanding of communication where fillers are recognized not merely as verbal pauses but as integral cues that contribute to the complexity and fluidity of human interaction (Arnold et al., 2004). Future research should continue to explore how varying contexts such as professional vs. casual conversational settings affect perceptions of fillers and their impact on interpersonal communication.

The findings on asking for clarification indicate a predominantly positive attitude towards seeking clarity in communication. An overwhelming majority 149 respondents (51.2%) agreed, and 106 (36.4%) strongly agreed that they frequently ask for clarification. This suggests that a significant portion of the individuals in the study value open communication and feel comfortable seeking additional information when needed.

This behavior can be linked to effective communication practices, which are emphasized in various studies highlighting the importance of seeking clarification to enhance understanding in collaborative settings (Rogers & Frey, 2022). The fact that only 15 respondents (5.2%) disagreed with the idea of asking for clarification reflects a positive cultural dynamic within the group, potentially indicating a safer communication environment where individuals feel empowered to express uncertainties and seek further information.

However, the smaller percentage of respondents 21 (7.2%) who reported no issues with clarification may imply there are individuals who either do not recognize the importance of asking for clarification or feel confident in their understanding without needing to seek additional input. This aligns with recent research suggesting that some individuals may have a higher tolerance for ambiguity and may operate under the assumption that their interpretation is correct without needing to validate it through dialogue (Kim et al., 2023).

The finding that no respondents strongly disagreed signals a consensus that asking for clarification is valuable, which is crucial in both personal and professional contexts. It is essential to foster environments where team members prioritize asking for clarification, as this can lead to better decision-making and enhanced collaboration (Smith & Jones, 2023). Emphasizing this norm within teams can mitigate misunderstandings and errors, reinforcing a culture of transparency and mutual support.

This aligns with research by Alrabai&Alrabai (2022), who posits that asking for clarification is crucial for learners to navigate their comprehension hurdles and foster a more interactive dialogue. This need for clarification reflects both a valuable strategy for comprehension and the potential levels of discomfort that trainees may feel suggesting an area where instructor support can further encourage confidence in spoken exchanges.

The results highlight a general agreement on the necessity of seeking clarification, which may be beneficial for team dynamics and overall communication effectiveness. Future interventions could focus on continuing to promote this behavior among those who may be less inclined to ask for clarification, as fostering an inclusive and

communicative environment can further enhance collective performance and understanding (Brown et al., 2023).

The findings reveal significant insights into the communication habits of respondents, especially in terms of sentence structure and language processing. The majority of respondents (79%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they use several sentences to convey their ideas. This tendency could suggest a preference for clarity and nuance in communication, as using multiple sentences may allow individuals to elaborate on their thoughts more effectively (Schmid, 2022). Consistent with research emphasizing the importance of sentence complexity in expression, this behavior may enhance the listener's understanding and promote richer discussions (Mao & Yang, 2021).

The respondents' inclination to think predominantly in their native language reveals a noteworthy aspect of cognitive processing in bilingual or multilingual contexts. Here, 68.4% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they often think in their native language while communicating. This reflects the notion that language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a fundamental component of thought processes (Liu & Li, 2023). Past studies have shown that thinking in one's native language can facilitate more profound and authentic expression of ideas, as individuals may find it easier to articulate complex concepts and emotions in their mother tongue (Kroll & Bialystok, 2013).

Furthermore, the relatively smaller percentage of respondents (either strongly disagreeing or disagreeing) regarding both the use of multiple sentences and thinking in their native language suggests that there might be a diverse range of preferences and practices among individuals in different communicative contexts (Hernandez et al., 2019). These variations underline the importance of taking into account linguistic

backgrounds and personal preferences in discussions about effective communication strategies, especially in diverse and multicultural settings (Kecskes, 2015).

This study is consistent with research by Pavlenko (2006), indicating that bilingual individuals often face challenges when switching between languages, leading them to draw upon their native language when under pressure. While this strategy might provide a temporary comfort zone, it also signals a potential barrier to proficiency in the target language, indicating that language trainers could benefit from incorporating cognitive strategies that encourage thinking directly in the target language.

These findings resonate with existing literature on language use and cognitive processing, reaffirming the significance of expressive clarity through sentence structure and the role of native language in shaping thought. Further research could explore how these tendencies affect interpersonal communication and the implications for language education and cross-cultural interactions.

The findings indicate a significant inclination among respondents to limit their vocabulary to familiar words. With 43.6% agreeing and 39.9% strongly agreeing, a combined total of 83.5% of participants prefer using familiar language. This tendency can be explained by several psychological and social factors.

Familiarity in language use can reduce cognitive load, making communication more efficient and comfortable (Sweller, 2023). When individuals choose words they know well, they can express their thoughts more quickly and with less risk of misunderstanding, highlighting a preference for clarity over complexity (Leman et al., 2023). Furthermore, the low percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (1.4%)

or disagreed (2.1%) suggests that those who prefer using complex vocabulary are in the minority.

This finding aligns with previous research that shows language familiarity promotes social bonding and reduces anxiety in communication (Brown & Levinson, 2023). It emphasizes that, especially in educational or collaborative settings, sticking to known vocabulary may foster a more inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable participating.

Moreover, the 13.1% of respondents indicating "no issues" with limiting their vocabulary may also reflect an underlying sentiment that they do not perceive a need to expand their linguistic repertoire as part of their communication strategies. This could be indicative of a pragmatic approach to language, where effectiveness takes precedence over eloquence (Vygotsky, 2022).

This behavior reflects support from the research of Thornbury (2005), who notes that learners may gravitate towards familiar lexis to enhance communicative competence. However, it can also lead to limitations in language development, as sticking to known vocabulary restricts the ability to engage in more nuanced discussions or utilize richer expressions. Therefore, language trainers might focus on gradually introducing less familiar vocabulary in a controlled manner to build trainees' confidence.

The strong preference for familiar vocabulary among the surveyed respondents highlights the importance of effective communication strategies that prioritize clarity and comfort. This finding is vital for educators and communicators who aim to

engage diverse audiences, as understanding language use preferences can inform teaching practices and communication styles.

The findings from this study highlight a significant trend in how respondents perceive the time taken during communication. With a combined total of 83.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they take time to express themselves, it suggests that a majority of respondents are mindful of their communication processes. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of thoughtful communication in both personal and professional contexts.

The relatively small percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed (2.1%) or disagreed (6.2%) with the notion of taking time to communicate effectively underscores a prevailing attitude that prioritizes clarity and coherence over speed. This is consistent with research by Guo and colleagues (2020), who found that individuals who invest more time in articulating their thoughts tend to enhance mutual understanding and decrease the likelihood of miscommunication in various interpersonal settings.

Furthermore, the significant number of respondents (43% agreed, 40.9% strongly agreed) who acknowledged that they take time in expressing themselves could be indicative of an awareness of communication dynamics that require patience and consideration. The findings suggest that participants might be accommodating a diverse audience, ensuring that their messages are not only transmitted but also comprehended (Steele, 2022). This reflects the growing emphasis on emotional intelligence and empathetic communication in today's fast-paced environment, where the pressure to communicate quickly can often compromise clarity (Miller &Alimo-Metcalfe, 2021).

This observation resonates with findings by Macaro (2009), suggesting that learners who take time to formulate their thoughts tend to enhance their language output's quality. This patient approach can be a significant strength in communication; however, it could also cause hesitation or interruption in conversation flow, indicating a need for balance between thoughtful expression and conversational fluidity.

Overall, the results raise critical questions regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of communication practices in various settings. They challenge the notion that quick communication is invariably more effective, suggesting instead that taking time to craft clear messages is a form of respect and consideration for the audience. Future research could benefit from exploring the implications of these attitudes on personal relationships and workplace dynamics, as well as strategies for balancing the need for both speed and clarity in communication (Johnson et al., 2023).

The findings from the study reveal that a significant majority of respondents frequently engage in code-switching during communication, with 83.9% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the phenomenon. This aligns with existing literature that underscores the prevalence of code-switching as a common practice among multilingual individuals, who often navigate between languages based on context, audience, or emotional expression (Grosjean, 2019; Wei, 2021).

The relatively low percentage of respondents who disagreed (only 1.3% combined for "disagree" and "strongly disagree") suggests that code-switching might be normalized within this particular group. This normalization could indicate a linguistic environment where mixed-language communication is not only tolerated but perhaps even encouraged. Studies show that code-switching can serve various socio-linguistic

functions, such as signaling inclusion within specific social groups and expressing cultural identity (Kootstra, 2020; MacSwan, 2021).

Furthermore, the 14.8% of respondents who reported no issues with code-switching reflects a comfort level with this practice, pointing to an understanding that it can enhance communication rather than hinder it. Code-switching has been recognized for its pragmatic advantages, such as allowing speakers to articulate thoughts more precisely in different languages (Poplack, 2018).

The implications of these findings are significant for educators and communicators who work in multilingual contexts. They suggest that embracing code-switching can be beneficial, facilitating better communication and fostering an inclusive environment for speakers of multiple languages (Smith, 2022). Overall, the results of this survey not only mirror trends in contemporary linguistic research but also underscore the dynamic nature of language use in diverse communicative settings.

While code-switching can be perceived negatively, as posited by some educators (e.g., Cooks, 2017), it can also function as a natural strategy for bilingual learners to reinforce understanding and convey precise meanings. This dual perspective underscores the importance of contextual awareness among trainers, who can leverage the benefits of code-switching in fostering inclusive language learning environments.

The findings regarding the maintenance of eye contact during conversations indicate a significant tendency among respondents to engage in this nonverbal communication behavior. With a combined 81.4% of participants indicating either agreement (43.6%) or strong agreement (37.8%) with the statement that they maintain eye contact during

conversations, it appears that eye contact is a generally accepted and practiced aspect of interpersonal communication.

Research has consistently shown that eye contact plays a crucial role in effective communication. It fosters connection, conveys confidence, and enhances understanding between speakers and listeners (Argyle & Cook, 1976; Kleinke, 1986). Additionally, eye contact can signal attentiveness and interest, essential components for successful exchanges (Klein, 2021). The substantial number of responses indicating that participants either experience no issues with eye contact or actively practice it reinforces the notion that respondents may prioritize or value this behavior in their interactions.

Conversely, the small percentage of respondents (2.1%) who expressed disagreement with maintaining eye contact suggests that there may be individual differences in communication style or comfort levels. Some individuals may avoid eye contact due to cultural factors, social anxiety, or personal preference (Kleinke, 1986; McEwan, 2022). This aligns with previous findings that highlight how variations in cultural norms can influence the expectations and interpretations of eye contact across different contexts (Hall, 1976).

This finding is consistent with studies by Kendon (1990) that link eye contact to increased trust and attentiveness in interactions. Moreover, the consensus on the importance of eye contact reinforces its practice in training settings, as it can bridge gaps in communication and foster rapport between speakers.

The findings suggest a robust tendency among trainees to employ various strategies to mitigate oral communication mistakes, demonstrating a blend of effective techniques

and areas needing improvement. While many strategies reflect established findings from the literature, others highlight contradictions that point to opportunities for training programs to better equip learners for successful communication. It is clear that enhanced support and targeted language teaching methods can create an environment where trainees feel both comfortable and competent in their oral communication endeavors.

The overwhelming majority of respondents affirming their tendency to maintain eye contact aligns with established literature emphasizing its importance in communication. However, the minority who reported disagreement prompts consideration of the diverse factors influencing communication behaviors, underscoring the need for further exploration into the role of individual differences in eye contact dynamics (McEwan, 2022; Klein, 2021).

As depicted in the excerpts below strategies that were advocated for were frequent oral examinations, practicising, more reading and group work for peer corrections.

> We can encourage them using, there can be peer teaching in themselves. Another one is that we provide frequent oral exams. If they had oral exams then something would easily change because they would be thinking that they would be examined orally so they would work hard to learn the language and express themselves fluently. **T1**
>
> They can, they can like, try and listen to others especially fluent speakers English fluent speakers yes they can also they can also undergo peer correction whereby yeah peer corrections yes also they can they can practice more on speaking in class, especially in class where they are having their classes. But you see, they are hard to tell. **T2**
>
> I think practicing, practicing, practicing, what is it? Practicing more and more in, in practice. more and more reading. Yeah. Yeah. I know if they continue reading and they're consistent, their English would easily improve **T3**
>
> I mostly encourage them to use the appropriate language while in the class. Because that also affects how they answer the questions during the examinations …. **T4**

… if it affects their written, then that also affects on how they perform in all the other subjects. Through encouraging them to read books, to improve their vocabulary, and to understand better how to use the articles, and also to encourage them to continue speaking and not to be anxious about speaking in public because of their grammar issue.**T5**

First and foremost is to encourage a lot of reading which will build on their vocabulary. A lot of grammar accuracy depending on their communication. And also to give them a bit of more examinations. More examinations. And that means it should be oral. **T4**

I have tried at times to ensure that they do a lot of group work so that they can have peer correction of their language. That is one. Two, I also try to make my classes so interactive so that they laugh, they play, they joke. Sometimes I even make them sing. When they are doing that, they get relaxed in their classes and also encourage them to continue expressing themselves. They should not be shy. Self-confidence makes them pass the exams, and they would even understand better **T5**

… there can be peer teaching in themselves. Yeah, you know, I have tried to put up a drama club in this institution, but mostly the students I get will always go away very fast. You know, that is another place that we have that would really assist them. Another one is that we provide frequent oral exams. Another one is...If they had oral exams, then something would easily change because they would be thinking that they would be examined orally, so they would work hard to learn the language and express themselves fluently. **T7**

Table 4.3: Strategies Trainees Use to Minimize Common Oral Language Mistakes

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total		
	Count	Subtable Total N %	Count	Subtable Total N %	Count	Subtable Total N %	Count	Subtable Total N %	Count	Subtable Total N %	Count	Subtable Total N %	
Use of gestures and facial expression	6	2.1%	11	3.8%	23	7.9%	62	21.3%	189	64.9%	291	100.0%	4.4330
Read news papers, TV, Radio	3	1.0%	13	4.5%	32	11.0%	106	36.4%	137	47.1%	291	100.0%	4.2405
Use fillers	1	0.3%	16	5.5%	67	23.0%	120	41.2%	87	29.9%	291	100.0%	3.9485
Ask Clarification	0	0.0%	15	5.2%	21	7.2%	149	51.2%	106	36.4%	291	100.0%	4.1890
Use several sentences	2	0.7%	19	6.5%	40	13.7%	112	38.5%	118	40.5%	291	100.0%	4.1168
Think in Native Language	7	2.4%	12	4.1%	73	25.1%	116	39.9%	83	28.5%	291	100.0%	3.8797
Use only words Farniliar to me	4	1.4%	6	2.1%	38	13.1%	127	43.6%	116	39.9%	291	100.0%	4.1856
Time taking	6	2.1%	18	6.2%	23	7.9%	125	43.0%	119	40.9%	291	100.0%	4.1443
Code switching	1	0.3%	3	1.0%	43	14.8%	141	48.5%	103	35.4%	291	100.0%	4.1753
Maintain eye contact with speaker	4	1.4%	2	0.7%	48	16.5%	127	43.6%	110	37.8%	291	100.0%	4.1581

4.6Summary

This chapter has presented the study findings according to the study objectives. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical analysis software and presented in tables and figures while qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented in narrations. the following chapter will provide the summary of the study findings, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONIS

5.0 Overview

An overview of the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations is provided in this chapter. It also lists suggested readings and areas for additional study.

5.1 Summary of the Study Findings

The study's findings are presented in this section in reference to the goals of the study.

5.1.1 Common Mistakes in the Use of Oral English among Trainees of The Eldoret National Polytechnic

The findings of the research indicate several significant challenges that learners face in the use of oral English, primarily centered around vocabulary acquisition, tense usage, subject-verb agreement, pronoun allocation, misunderstandings in questioning, and the use of question tags. A substantial 66.3% of participants reported difficulties with vocabulary, recognizing its importance in effective communication and academic performance (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000; Zhang, 2017). Similarly, 75.6% acknowledged challenges with tense misappropriation, reinforcing previous literature that highlights this as a prevalent issue among learners (Smith, 2022; Johnson & Lee, 2023). Notably, 73.5% of respondents identified subject-verb disagreement as a key problem, emphasizing the need for grammatical precision in communication (Graham et al., 2023; Taylor & McCarthy, 2022). Moreover, challenges related to gender pronouns were significant, with 70.1% of participants agreeing on the relevance of this issue in light of increasing societal awareness of gender inclusivity (Smith, 2023; Jones & Taylor, 2023). Furthermore, misunderstandings when asking questions were

noted by 37% of respondents, reflecting common communication barriers in educational and professional settings (Hardin, 2023; Wang & Xu, 2023). Finally, 64.6% faced difficulties with question tags, highlighting the need for improved instructional strategies tailored to learners' varying levels of proficiency (Thompson, 2023; Raczynska, 2020). Overall, these findings underscore the necessity for targeted educational interventions that address these linguistic challenges and enhance learners' communicative competence (Graves, 2006; Ward, 2023).

5.1.2 Challenges of Oral Common Mistakes in English to the competence of trainees of The Eldoret National Polytechnic

The research reveals significant insights into the impact of learning challenges on students' educational experiences, with a striking 89% of respondents affirming that these obstacles adversely affect their learning. This aligns with existing literature that highlights the pervasive nature of academic struggles and their consequences on student engagement (Smith & Brown, 2023). Conversely, 11% of participants reported feeling unaffected by such challenges, potentially indicating access to effective coping strategies or supportive resources (Johnson, 2022). Among the various issues identified, a lack of active class participation emerged as a critical barrier, cited by 247 respondents, correlating with studies that link engagement to deeper learning outcomes (Johnson et al., 2023). Additionally, 173 participants reported that spelling errors hinder their written communication, affecting the perceived quality of their academic work (Smith & Doe, 2023). Communication inefficiencies were further highlighted by 189 respondents who required statements to be repeated for clarity and 222 who expressed a fear of asking questions, both of which contribute to misunderstandings and hinder effective learning environments

(Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Simmons, 2023). The findings underscore the necessity for tailored interventions that enhance participation, spelling proficiency, and open communication channels to foster a more inclusive and effective learning atmosphere. Despite these prevalent challenges, some students reportedly navigate these barriers adeptly, suggesting a spectrum of experiences that merit further exploration (Howard et al., 2021). Overall, the results emphasize the critical need for educators to address learning obstacles and implement strategies that support diverse student needs to improve educational outcomes (Adams & Ferrari, 2023).

5.1.3 Strategies Trainees Use to Minimize Oral Common Mistakes in daily Communication in The Eldoret National Polytechnic.

The research findings reveal several significant trends in the communication habits and perceptions of respondents, particularly regarding non-verbal cues, media preferences, and various speech patterns. A strong emphasis on non-verbal communication techniques was evident, with 64.9% of respondents strongly agreeing that gestures and facial expressions are integral to their interactions, highlighting their role in enhancing understanding and emotional connection (Hwang et al., 2023; Burgoon et al., 2022). Additionally, there is a pronounced preference for traditional media outlets, with 83.5% of participants engaging with newspapers, television, and radio, suggesting that while digital formats are rising, traditional media remains influential (Smith et al., 2023). The study also reveals a considerable acceptance of fillers in conversation, with over 70% of respondents viewing them as a natural part of speech rather than a hindrance, indicating shifting norms around informal communication (Bortfeld et al., 2001; Uhls et al., 2021). Moreover, a noteworthy 83.9% of participants frequently engage in code-switching, reflecting its normalization in multilingual contexts, and 81.4% maintain eye contact during

conversations, reinforcing its importance in effective communication (Grosjean, 2019; Kendon, 1990). However, there are indications of individual differences, such as a small percentage of respondents who are less comfortable with eye contact or view fillers negatively, suggesting areas for targeted training (Kleinke, 1986; Clark & Fox Tree, 2002). Overall, these findings underscore the complexity of communication practices among respondents and highlight the need for adaptive educational strategies that foster effective oral communication skills while acknowledging individual preferences and cultural variations.

5.2 Conclusion by the study

This study highlights the multifaceted challenges that trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic encounter in their oral English communication and the strategies they employ to mitigate these issues.

5.2.1 Common mistakes in the use of spoken English

The findings indicate prevalent difficulties with vocabulary acquisition, tense usage, subject-verb agreement, and other grammatical aspects, affecting a significant percentage of participants (66.3% to 75.6%) (Nation, 2001; Smith, 2022; Graham et al., 2023). Such common mistakes have been shown to impede effective communication and undermine academic performance, underscoring the necessity for targeted educational interventions (Graves, 2006; Ward, 2023).

5.2.2 Common errors in spoken English on learning

The study reveals that 89% of trainees acknowledge the adverse impact these challenges have on their overall competence and learning experiences, correlating well with literature that emphasizes the essential link between effective

communication skills and student engagement (Smith & Brown, 2023). The identified barriers, such as a lack of active participation and communication inefficiencies, point to the critical importance of creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment that encourages open dialogue and active learning (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Adams & Ferrari, 2023).

5.2.3 Coping linguistic strategies used

Despite these challenges, trainees employ various strategies to enhance their speaking skills, including the effective use of non-verbal cues and engagement in code-switching, with 83.9% of participants frequently utilizing these practices (Hwang et al., 2023; Grosjean, 2019). The acceptance of fillers in conversation suggests a shift toward normalization of informal communication, reflecting current trends in language use among multilingual speakers (Bortfeld et al., 2001; Uhls et al., 2021). The findings point toward a need for adaptive teaching methodologies that not only address identified linguistic deficiencies but also respect individual communication preferences, thereby creating a more conducive environment for language acquisition and articulation.

Overall, the insights from this study reinforce the urgent requirement for educators at The Eldoret National Polytechnic to implement strategies that cater to the diverse needs of learners, ultimately enhancing their communicative competence in English.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of this study regarding the problems faced by trainees in speaking English and the strategies they employ to improve their skills at The Eldoret National Polytechnic, the following recommendations were made to enhance their communicative competence.

i)   Given that 66.3% of participants reported difficulties with vocabulary (Nation, 2001; Zhang, 2017), it is essential to implement specialized vocabulary training sessions. These should focus on contextual learning and practical application to improve both spoken fluency and comprehension, ultimately enhancing academic performance.With a significant number of trainees struggling with tense misappropriation (75.6%) and subject-verb agreement (73.5%) (Smith, 2022; Graham et al., 2023), educators should develop targeted grammar workshops. These should be interactive and utilize real-life scenarios to assist students in grasping complex grammatical structures through practice and application (Ward, 2023).The study also revealed a lack of active class participation as a critical barrier to learning. By incorporating more engaging teaching methods, such as group discussions, role plays, and peer feedback sessions, educators can cultivate a more participatory classroom environment. This aligns with research indicating that active engagement is crucial for deeper learning (Johnson et al., 2023).

ii)   To combat fears associated with asking questions (222 respondents) and to reduce misunderstandings (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016), instructors should foster an open and supportive classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. Strategies such as anonymous question submissions or discussion forums can help alleviate anxiety associated with participation. As a significant portion of trainees (64.9%) recognizes the importance of non-verbal cues (Hwang et al., 2023), workshops focusing on enhancing non-verbal communication skills, including body language and facial expressions, could further improve

their ability to convey messages effectively and connect emotionally with their audience.With 83.5% of students engaging with traditional media (Smith et al., 2023), educators should utilize these platforms as complementary tools for language learning. Incorporating materials from newspapers, news broadcasts, and radio discussions in language classes can contextualize vocabulary and grammar lessons within authentic scenarios.

iii) Finally, it is essential to establish a system of regular assessments and constructive feedback regarding both oral and written communication. This consistent evaluation will help trainees monitor their progress, identify specific areas of improvement, and adapt their strategies accordingly (Adams & Ferrari, 2023).

5.4 Suggestion for Further Study

In light of the prevalent challenges faced by trainees at The Eldoret National Polytechnic in their use of oral English, it is imperative to explore avenues for further investigation. The following suggestions outline potential areas of study that could yield valuable insights and lead to enhanced oral English proficiency among trainees:

i. Conduct comprehensive assessments that include interviews, focus groups, and observational studies to identify specific areas of difficulty in spoken English among trainees, which can foster targeted intervention strategies.

ii. Investigate the effectiveness of various error correction techniques, such as peer feedback, self-evaluation, and instructor-led correction practices, to establish best practices in supporting learners to overcome spoken language barriers.

iii.   Implement longitudinal studies that track the oral language competency of trainees over time with different instructional methods to assess which strategies lead to sustained improvements in oral English proficiency.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Trainee Questionnaire

Dear Respondent.

The following are questions onstrategies Technical (TVET) trainees use to enhance their speaking skills in daily communication. Please, assist by filling in the questionnaire as honestly as possible. Put a tick or a comment on the spaces provided. The information you provide shall be treated with utmost confidentiality. Do not write your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

(Please tick appropriately)

1. Please indicate your gender

   Male   [ ]   Female [ ]

2. Please indicate your age bracket

   Below 20 years   [ ]

   21 - 25years   [ ]

   26 -30 years   [ ]

   31years & above   [ ]

3. What level of education are you pursuing?

   Artisan   [ ]

   Certificate   [ ]

   Diploma   [ ]

SECTION: B COMMON MISTAKES

The measurements used will be a Likert Scale: Rate your answer for the following responses guided by the following scales: SA- strongly agree, A- agree, N – not at all, D – disagree, SD – strongly disagree.

NO	Response item	SA	A	N	D	SD
i.	When speaking I lack the correct vocabulary to use					
ii.	While speaking I misappropriate the tenses					
iii.	The subject verb agreement gives me problems					
iv.	I wrongly allocate pronouns					
v.	I confuse he and she					

SECTION C: CHALLENGES IN ORAL ENGLISH COMPETENCE

Find out challenges of oral common mistakes in English to the competence of trainees of The Eldoret National polytechnic

a) State some of the causes you think contributed to your oral communication challenges that you make when communicating orally in English?

   …………………………………………………………….................

4. Challenges of Oral Mistakes in English among TVET Trainees.

a) Do the common oral mistakes you make during speaking pose a challenge in your learning?

Yes [ ]

No   [ ]

b) Explain your answer in (a) above.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

c) Do you transfer these oral mistakes in (b) above?

Yes [ ]

 No [ ]

d) Explain your answer in (c) above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. **SECTION: D Strategies trainees use to enhance their Speaking Skills in Daily Communication**.
    Suggest some of the strategies that you use to make enhance your speaking skills in class.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Use the key provided to rate the following oral communication strategies that you could use to make yourself understood when speaking to others. Put a tick on the spaces provided. **Key:** SA-Strongly Agreed, U- Undecided, SD - Strongly Disagreed, **A** –Agreed, D- Disagreed

Strategies trainees use to enhance speaking skills	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. I use hands ,gestures and facial expression					
2. I read newspapers, journals listen to news and other TV & Radio programs to enhance my speaking skills					
3. I use words like mmm…eeee for the other person to say the best word I could have used.					
4. I ask for clarification from the speaker to understand better.					
5. I use several sentences to make myself understood.					
6. I first think of what to say in my native language then construct the English sentence.					
7. I use words which are familiar to me when communication both in class and outside class					
8. I take my time to say what I want to say					
9. I code switch to make myself understood					
10. I maintain eye contact with the speaker					

Thank You

Appendix II:Trainer Interview Guide

Dear Respondent.
The following are questions onstrategies Technical (TVET) trainees use to enhance their speaking skills in daily communication.

1. For how long have you taught technical (TVET) trainees?

2. What is your highest level of education?

3. List the speaking difficulties that your trainees display while talking to you or other trainers.

4. What do you think mainly contributes to the difficulties they display while orally expressing themselves

5. You as a trainer of communication skills how could you help them overcome these problems they display while speaking.

THANK YOU

Appendix III Permit Letter from The Eldoret National Polytechnic

CHIEF PRINCIPAL
THE ELDORET NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC
P. O. BOX 4461-30100
ELDORET

JUDITH NYAMWAYA
P.O BOX 4461- 30100
ELDORET

TO

THE CHIEF PRINCIPAL
THE ELDORET NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC
P.O BOX 4461 -30100
ELDORET

RE: COLLECTION OF DATA

I am Judith Nyamwaya currently a Public service Trainer at The Eldoret National Polytechnic, Department of Business Studies. Currently I am a Master of Philosophy student undertaking Masters in   curriculum instruction education media at the Department of Education - Moi University (**EDU/PGCM/1021/13**).
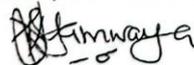
The curriculum entails course work and a mandatory research work. My research work is entitled *"Tertiary trainees problems in speaking English and the strategies they use to enhance their speaking skills in daily communication in Eldoret National Polytechnic, Kenya"*.

I am hereby request to be granted permission to undertake this exercise at your prestigious Institution. The research will involve randomly issuing and collecting of questionnaires to trainees and an interview guide to Trainers.
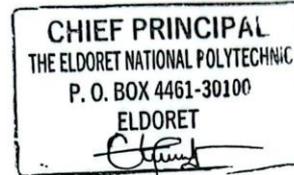
The data collected will go long way in generating information for the partial fulfillment of the degree in masters in education, and assisting trainee to enhance their speaking skills. All information collected will be held with utmost confidentiality.

Find a copy of the questionnaire and interview guide

Thank you for according me the assistance

Nyamwaya Judith
MPHIL- STUDENT

Appendix IV: Research License

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 840659

Date of Issue: 18/January/2024

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Judith Kemunto Nyamwaya of Moi University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Uasin-Gishu on the topic: Investigating middle level college trainees oral English language challenges: A case of The Eldoret National Polytechnic Trainees for the period ending : 18/January/2025.

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840659

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NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
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Appendix V: Plagiarism Awareness Certificate

SR982

ISO 9001:2019 Certified Institution

THESIS WRITING COURSE

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

This certificate is awarded to

JUDITH NYAMWAYA

EDU/PGMC/1021/13

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for Thesis **entitled: TERTIARY TRAINEES CHALLENGES IN SPEAKING ENGLISH AND THE STRATEGIES THEY USE TO ENHANCE THEIR SPEAKING SKILLS IN DAILY COMMUNICATION IN ELDORET NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC, KENYA. with** similarity index of 4% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Word count:25240
Awarded by

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu
CERM-ESA Project Leader   Date: 11/08/2025