

INVESTIGATING FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILLS AT PAAET, KUWAIT

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ABSTRACT: *The study aims to identify the difficulties encountered by EFL undergraduate students with their English-speaking skills in the English department at the College of Basic Education, Public Authority of Applied Education and Training (PAAET). The study was conducted using the descriptive approach which contained a questionnaire comprising 27 items applied to a sample of 420 female students. The results found that students encountered moderate difficulties among the five factors. Students ranked the factors according to which contributed to the development of their English-speaking skills the most in the following order: preference of native speakers as teachers, followed by English language proficiency, teaching methodologies, environmental influences, and emotional influences. The results also indicated that there is a significant relationship between the factors that influence the development of English-speaking skills and demographic variables such as year of study, major GPA, and grade in conversation class.*

KEYWORDS: L1, L2, mother-tongue interference, code-mixing, code-switching

INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are among the most productive skills when learning any foreign language. Jesa (2010) defined speaking skills as, “The ability to choose appropriate vocabulary and structures in all contexts” (p.10). Nanthaboot (2014) believed that speaking skills involve, “The ability to share information fluently and accurately, including the ability to choose appropriate vocabulary and structures in all contexts (p.11). Given these definitions, speaking skills are important because they allow learners to successfully communicate information and share their ideas.

In the Arab world, students studying English as a foreign language may struggle with developing their English-speaking skills. Arabic is the official language of Kuwait, while English is practiced as a foreign language. All courses in Kuwait’s public schools are taught in Arabic, with the exception of a one full-year course of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Students are

expected to take one EFL class per year. When English is taught, there tends to be a strong emphasis on reading, writing, and listening. Al-Lawati's (2002) study found that the speaking tasks are least emphasized given their exclusion from textbooks and exams. This disincentivizes teachers from dedicating time to strengthen this skill. Thus, this research will investigate the factors that influence the development of students' English-speaking skills in the English department at the College of Basic Education, Public Authority of Applied Education and Training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research explores the factors that influence the development of students' English-speaking skills in the English Department at the College of Basic Education. Research globally has investigated the factors influencing the development of English-speaking skills in EFL classrooms. In Kuwait, however, only a few studies have explored this issue further (AlRowayeh, 2017; AlShammari, 2018; AlNouri, 2019). Our study will contribute to the existing literature in Kuwait. While multiple factors affect the development of English-speaking skills, the literature acknowledged five primary factors: the preference of native speakers as teachers, English language proficiency, teaching methodologies, environmental influences, and emotional influences.

Preference of Native Speakers as Teachers

English teachers in public schools are usually non-native, Arab speakers that have studied English as a foreign language. The majority of students in public schools are non-native, Arab speakers as well. Native speakers of English tend to teach in private schools where English is the main language of instruction. Given that most EFL teachers and students in public schools are non-native Arab speakers, they tend to use their native language, Arabic, in the classroom. Non-native speakers teaching EFL tend to rely on code-mixing and codeswitching during their lessons. A study conducted in a university in Thailand found that the Thai language is used 70-80% of the time in an English classroom (Shabir, 2017). Studies have found that the use of a native language impairs language learning because students are not receiving enough exposure to the target language. Littlewood (1981) argued that teachers use their native language for classroom management purposes. For instance, students that do not understand concepts in English may ask for the concept to be repeated in Arabic. According to Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal (2014), "Communicating in L1 makes it difficult for students to improve their speaking skills as it reduces the chances of using the target language to communicate" (p.23). Many teachers use L1 because it accelerates the learning process and allows them to clarify content. Al-Hosni (2014) argued that using L1 to clarify meanings, "Indirectly and unconsciously conveys the message that English is not helpful as a mode of instruction. It also indicates that teachers have low expectations of their students' ability to understand English" (p.27). It is recommended that

students hear the target language instead of immediately using L1 as it reduces needed language practice. Jieyin & Gajaseni's (2018) study revealed that undergraduate students prefer being taught by native speakers of English, especially for lessons related to English-speaking skills. According to Jieyin & Gajaseni (2018), "Native speakers are often considered linguistic role models for their learners. Native speakers of English could provide an authentic language environment, and the English-only classes could provide students more opportunities to practice English" (p.144).

English Language Proficiency

Students require ample exposure of the English language. Exposure, meaning, a sufficient vocabulary, correct pronunciations, and real experiences with using the language. Ambigapathy et al. (2014) found that students at a university in Thailand could not communicate effectively due to their limited vocabulary and uncertainty about grammatical usage. Having an ample vocabulary and familiarity with the English language allows for fluid conversations in English. Students may show a desire to express their interests in English but do not have the specific vocabulary to do so. When students cannot find the right words, it obstructs the conversation and may cause them to switch to L1. For instance, talking about political affairs requires political terminology. Students might not be able to remember specific terminology and apply them in conversations. Students learn vocabulary items that are presented in their textbooks, even though they may have little relevance to their interest or daily communicative needs. There's excessive focus on the descriptive aspect of language while neglecting the relevance of language in authentic situations. Sunitisarn et al. (2017) noted that the lack of vocabulary causes students to code-switch, code-mix, or use body language to express their ideas. Furthermore, Littlejohn and Hicks (1996) described that foreign language learners first think in their native language and then, "Translate what they want to say and thereafter learn how to say those things in English" (p.142). The phenomena of constructing sentences in L1 and then translating it into L2 is known as mother-tongue interference. Sunitisarn et al. (2017) found that thinking in L1 before producing output in L2 negatively impacts the development of a student's foreign language speaking skills. In Jordanian universities, 45.3% of students swapped English with Arabic to communicate (Al-Jamal & AlJamal, 2014). Ellis (1994) and several authors maintained that L1 has no essential role in teaching English as a foreign language and that too much L1 might deprive learners of valuable input in L2. Thus, it is widely recommended that learners avoid excessively mixing L1 and L2 while in a foreign language classroom.

Teaching Methodologies

English classes in Kuwait's public schools emphasize reading, writing, and grammar skills, as outlined in Kuwait's national curriculum. These core skills are strongly emphasized because they are meant to mimic questions found on exams. Al-Lawait's (2002) study found that English-speaking tasks are disregarded given their exclusion from textbooks and exams. As such,

teachers do not find it necessary to integrate English-speaking activities in their lessons. Al-Abri (2008) recommended using songs, rhymes, and stories to encourage the use of conventional language. Curriculum planners should design tasks to encourage speaking and, consequently, should assess speaking on exams. Furthermore, AlQaysi's (2016) study, based in Malaysia, found that EFL classes place emphasis on teaching the form of English rather than teaching meaning. For example, students will memorize vocabulary items and grammar rules. AlQaysi (2016) noted, "The results show that Arab students in the Intensive English Unit use several types of vocabulary memorization strategies. Also, they use simple methods which do not need deep learning strategies to learn new words" (p.190). This will limit learning because students memorize formulas and patterns instead of conceptualizing the meaning. Even as students are in English classes, they do not receive sufficient training. For instance, Soomro & Farooq (2018) found that even while discussions occur in class, students just passively nod their heads. According to Soomro & Farooq (2018), "Students do not pay attention to discussions even inside the class, nor are they able to point out their own strengths and weaknesses; these factors make it difficult to achieve target competency" (p.323). Students do not utilize class discussions which are designed for language and speaking practice. The focus of class discussions, of course, is to improve the oral production of students (Al-Hosni, 2014).

Al-Hosni (2014) surveyed teachers on the integration of English-speaking activities in their lessons. Teachers reported that they did not have enough time, especially since their supervisors expect them to complete their lessons. If teachers fixated on speaking activities, they would not have enough time to delve into content. Even when teachers want to, they do not have enough time to clarify pronunciation points, especially in larger classes (Khan et al., 2018). Larger classes are not appropriate settings for foreign language learning because students are not given individualized training and feedback (Bahanshal, 2013). Arabic classes, however, allocate lessons exclusively for speaking along with reading, writing, and translation lessons (Haron, 2013). AlHosni's (2014) study also revealed, "Teachers discussed that speaking is integrated into reading and writing. They discussed the implicit inclusion of speaking skills as gained through reading and writing" (p.27). Chaney (1998) addressed the common misconception that cognitive skills involved in writing automatically transfer to analogous oral communication skills. Focusing on the form of language does not ensure that it will be utilized; speaking activities ensure that language is put into use. Plus, learners view drills or dialogue practice as nonessential communicative domains while their native language remains the appropriate medium for discussing matters of immediate importance (Littlewood, 1984). As opposed to studying drills and forms, language is most effective when contextualized (Brown, 2000).

Environmental Influences

Students need regular exposure to the English language both in and out of the classroom. The social milieu promotes EFL learners' enthusiasm, motivation, goals, and proficiency levels,

especially in natural situations (Al-Wreikat & Abdullah, 2010). Family is often called the first environment because it is where children receive their education, guidance, and training (Malihah et al., 2019). In countries where English is practiced as a foreign language, English is usually not practiced enough at home. While English is practiced as a foreign language, it is only utilized in professional and academic atmospheres. Paakki (2013) asserted that the lack of practice of a foreign language can cause the inability to remember and use vocabulary in authentic situations. A study conducted in Omani schools found that students only meet and use English in their textbooks (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012). It is recommended that students use English in places beyond the classroom. Students are encouraged to use English in authentic situations that arise, such as in malls, grocery stores, or abroad. It is also recommended that students seek English content such as films, videos, and podcasts. Listening to English content expands the vocabulary of learners, thus improving their English-speaking skills (Nazim & Hazarika, 2017). English content can also clarify pronunciation points. Schools and universities should accommodate language learners with the proper facilities, equipment, and training needed to improve their skills. Mohammed (2017) recommended equipping universities with language laboratories containing audio-visual equipment, language software, and pronunciation checkers. Teacher training, syllabus development, and the use of effective teaching methods are recommended too (Al-Hosni, 2014). Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal's (2014) study reported that, "Students felt that their universities do not offer courses for teaching speaking. Difficulties such as large class number; no focus on speaking; absence of motivation, and the use of Arabic" (p.23). Adding that, "Some students were motivated to practice English on their own by watching movies and listening to music" (p.23). Above all, the motivation to learn a foreign language will drive a learner to regularly use a foreign language. Students are motivated by reasons that vary according to personal need for acquiring a foreign language (Al-Wreikat & Bin Abdullah, 2010).

Emotional Influences

According to Willis (1996), learners need opportunities to express what they think or feel and to be immersed in a constructive surrounding, without feeling threatened. Those who study a foreign language tend to feel insecure about expressing themselves publicly using a foreign language. They fear mistakes related to their pronunciation, word choice, and grammar. This may reduce their public use of a foreign language. According to Babpoor et al. (2018), students shy away from volunteering or engaging in class discussions. They even shy away from speaking in English, sometimes completely avoiding it. Intentionally avoiding the use of English during class activities was a common thread found in the literature. Students may avoid participating in class discussions due to the fear of making mistakes publicly, fear of criticism, or shyness (Ur, 1996). Low or uneven participation, dictated by large class size, tends to prevent students from engaging in discussion, even when they want to. Plus, mother-tongue interference is common because students feel comfortable speaking in their native language in front of larger audiences (Kadi & Madini, 2019). Krashen (1988)'s theory of affective filter postulates that the motivation,

self-confidence, anxiety, and personality traits shape a language learner. Thus, learners with high motivation and self-confidence along with low anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation and self-confidence, along with anxiety, introversion, and inhibition form an affective filter. An affective filter is a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being used for language. When the learner lacks confidence, the filter 'rises' and prevents language acquisition. Krashen (1988) stated:

These attitudinal factors relate directly to acquisition and not learning, since they tend to show stronger relationships to second language achievement... Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective Filter--even if they understand the message, the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. Those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, but they will also have a lower or weaker filter (p.22).

Variables

It's worth examining the relationship between the factors that influence a learner's English-speaking skills with demographic variables such as year of study, major GPA, and grades received in English conversation classes. The literature suggests that a student's year of study can impact their English-speaking skills. Yimam (2019) explored the factors affecting English-speaking skills among first-year students in Ethiopia. Yimam (2019) found that students at any year of study may struggle with their English-speaking skills, but first-year English majors struggled the most because their exposure to the English language was limited in high school. As such, it can be inferred that a student's English language proficiency rises significantly as the student progresses with their studies. This holds true for English majors especially; as they receive more training in the target language, they will feel accustomed to it. However, students that are not majoring in English tend to demonstrate "Gradual disengagement in studying English owing to a growing disinterest, or the choice to prioritize their main field of study" (Rudd & Honkiss, 2020, p.134). Andrade's (2009) study reported that fourth year students felt that their English had improved naturally through the study of general education courses and major courses, even if they weren't majoring in English. Fourth-year students noted that they received adequate exposure in their general education classes that allowed them to strengthen their English. Furthermore, several studies found that students with advanced and intermediate levels of English tend to perform better, academically (Graham, 1987). Plus, Xu's (1991) study found that a student's length of English training had a significant impact on their GPAs and overall academic performance. Therefore, there is a strong need for universities to invest in instructional reforms and improved English classes for students given that it will improve their English language proficiency.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Educators in Kuwait may overlook the importance of English-speaking skills. The EFL curriculum emphasizes reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary while neglecting other academic skills such as speaking and listening. A successful curriculum would account for all the skills needed. This research calls for the recognition and integration of English-speaking skills in the EFL curriculum. It is believed that the strengthening of students' English-speaking skills will enhance a students' English language proficiency at large. Furthermore, teachers should be provided with training sessions on how to teach oral skills. Doing so will strengthen the English language proficiency of students and teachers, as well as strengthen the national curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

The current research adopted the descriptive approach to examine the factors that influence the development of students' English-speaking skills in the English Department at the College of Basic Education. The descriptive approach is relevant to the study because it describes the phenomenon under study and analyzes its data. It also indicates the relationships between its components, viewpoints raised, the processes included, and its effects. The researchers used a self-report survey methodology with several statistical tools.

A) Participants

The sample included female students at the English Department in the College of Basic Education, Public Authority of Applied Education and Training (PAAET). The College of Basic Education is a four-year full-time teacher training program. The participants were randomly selected to answer the survey online on Microsoft Forms through their instructors. The study sample consisted of 420 female students with varying levels in terms of year, major GPA, and grade in conversation class, as demonstrated in the following table. They are enrolled in a program designed to graduate teachers to teach English as a foreign language in Kuwait's primary schools. The participants are taught by instructors in the Curriculum and Instruction Department and English Department.

Table 1. Distribution of the Study Sample According to Demographic Variables

Variable		N	Percentage
Year	Year 1	15	3.60%
	Year 2	88	21.00%
	Year 3	186	44.30%
	Year 4	131	31.20%

Major GPA	1.00-1.99	28	6.70%
	2.00-2.99	188	44.80%
	3.00-3.99	190	45.20%
	4.00	14	3.30%
Grade in Conversation Class	A	150	35.70%
	B	140	33.30%
	C	94	22.40%
	D	32	7.60%
	F	4	1.00%

B) Study Tool

The study tool included a questionnaire that, initially, consisted of 27 items divided into five domains. The survey questions were adopted from Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal (2014) and Al-Mahrooqi (2012). Items that met the goal of the study were selected from both questionnaires. The other items were added by the researchers of this study. The first domain is “preference of native speakers as teachers” and includes four items. The second domain is “English language proficiency” and entails five items. The third domain is “teaching methodologies” consisting of six items. The fourth domain is “environmental influences” and includes five items. Finally, the fifth domain is the “emotional influences” comprising seven items. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale as follows: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

C) Validity of the Questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was verified using external validity and internal consistency. Regarding external validity, the questionnaire was presented to a group of arbitrators specialized in English studies. The questionnaire was amended according to their suggestions. The validity and content of the questionnaire was approved by the arbitrators. Regarding internal consistency, the questionnaire was confirmed by calculating the correlation coefficient between each item and the total degree of the dimension it belongs to. The correlation coefficient between each dimension and the total degree of the questionnaire obtained from the pilot study was applied to a sample consisting of 45 students in the English department. The statistical package (SPSS) was used to calculate correlation coefficients using Pearson Correlation. The following two tables display the results.

Table 2. Correlations Between Each Item and The Questionnaire's Total Degree

Items	Correlations	Items	Correlations	Items	Correlations
1) Preference of Native Speakers		10	0.710**	19	0.503**
1	0.820**	4) Environmental Influences		20	0.555**
2	0.774**	11	0.781**	5) Emotional Influences	
3	0.719**	12	0.755**	21	0.648**
4	0.444**	13	0.627**	22	0.725**
3) Teaching Methodologies		14	0.765**	23	0.821**
5	0.619**	15	0.473**	24	0.760**
6	0.477**	2) English Language Proficiency		25	0.728**
7	0.595**	16	0.620**	26	0.528**
8	0.401**	17	0.682**	27	0.469**
9	0.706**	18	0.427**		

(**) Correlation is significant at the (0.01) level

The previous table indicates the correlation between each item and the total degree of the dimension it belongs to. It is statistically significant at the level of significance of (0.01). The correlation between the first domain's items and the total degree of the dimension ranged between (0.444-0.820). The correlation between the second domain's items and the total degree of the dimension ranged between (0.472-0.682). The correlation between the third domain's items and the total degree of the dimension ranged between (0.401-0.710). The correlation between the fourth domain's items and the total degree of the dimensions ranged between (0.473-0.781). Finally, the correlation between the fifth domain's items and the total degree of the dimensions ranged between (0.469-0.821). This indicates the internal consistency and thus the validity of the construction.

Table 3. The Correlations Between Each Domain and The Questionnaire's Total Degree

Domain	Correlations
Preference of Native Speakers	0.626**
English Language Proficiency	0.599**
Teaching Methodologies	0.643**
Environmental Influences	0.545**
Emotional Influences	0.486**

Correlation is significant at the (0.01) level (**)

The table above indicates that the correlation between each dimension and the total degree of the questionnaire are high, significant at the significance level of (0.01), and ranged between (0.486-0.643). This asserts the internal consistency and the validity of the construction.

D) Reliability of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire's reliability coefficient was calculated by finding Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for each dimension of the questionnaire through the statistical package (SPSS) after applying it to the pilot sample as displayed in the following table.

Table 4. Reliability Coefficients for The Questionnaire's Domains

Domain	No. of Items	Alpha
Preference of Native Speakers	4	0.81
English Language Proficiency	5	0.77
Teaching Methodologies	6	0.79
Environmental Influences	5	0.76
Emotional Influences	7	0.75
Total Questionnaire	27	0.80

Based on the previous table, the dimensions of the questionnaire are characterized by a degree of statistically significant reliability. The reliability correlations of the questionnaire reached (0.80), and the reliability correlations of the dimensions ranged between (0.75-0.81). Thus, the results obtained when applied to the study sample are credible. To determine which factors strongly affected students' English-speaking skills, the degree of significance was used along with a five-point Likert scale. From the five-point scale, the responses were divided into three levels as follows. An arithmetic mean that ranges between (3.67-5) indicates that the item and factor have a high significance. An arithmetic mean that ranges between (2.34-3.66) indicates that the item

and factor have a moderate significance. An arithmetic mean that ranges between (1.00-2.33) indicates that the item and factor have a low significance.

E) Statistical Treatment

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to input data to be treated in order to answer the questions of the study, including tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, One Way ANOVA, and the Scheffe Test. The following section displays the results of the study after conducting the statistical analysis of the data. To answer the research questions, the responses of the study sample were collected and processed statistically using the statistical package (SPSS) to get the arithmetic means and standard deviations of each item in the questionnaire. The following section presents and discusses the results.

RESULTS

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What factors influence the development of students' English-speaking skills in the English Department at PAAET?
2. Are any of the following variables (year of study, major GPA, and grade in conversation class) linked to the factors that influence the development of students' English-speaking skills?

First Question: What factors influence the development of students' English-speaking skills in the English Department at PAAET?

Table 5. Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations of All Domains

Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation	Order According to Mean	The Level
Preference of Native Speakers	3.74	0.57	1	High
English Language Proficiency	3.65	0.46	2	Moderate
Teaching Methodologies	3.39	0.54	3	Moderate
Environmental Influences	3.35	0.69	4	Moderate
Emotional Influences	3.03	0.75	5	Moderate
Total Questionnaire	3.43	0.33	-	Moderate

According to the table above, ranging from most to least significant, the preference of native speakers as teachers was found to be a highly influential factor that affected the development of students' English-speaking skills, with a mean of (3.74). English language proficiency, teaching

methodologies, environmental influences, and emotional influences were found to be moderately influential factors in the development of students' English-speaking skills, earning means of, respectively, (3.65), (3.39), (3.35), (3.03).

Table 6. Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations: The Preference of Native Speakers

#	Items	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%	Mean	Std. Dev	Order	Level
1	I prefer learning English with a native speaker of English.	36.67	32.38	26.67	4.29	0.00	4.01	0.90	2	H
2	Being taught by a native speaker of English can make students more fluent in English.	42.38	32.38	21.43	3.33	0.48	4.13	0.89	1	H
3	I am motivated to speak in English with native speakers of English.	29.05	38.10	28.57	4.29	0.00	3.92	0.86	3	H
4	I feel anxious when I am taught by native speakers of English.	4.29	22.38	40.95	23.33	9.05	2.90	0.99	4	M
The general mean of the domain							3.74	0.57	-	H

The data indicates that “the preference of native speakers as teachers” was a factor that had a strong influence on the development of students' English-speaking skills as demonstrated by an arithmetic mean of (3.74) and a standard deviation of (0.57). The dimension includes four items, three of which scored high in terms of significance. The second item, “Being taught by a native speaker of English can make students more fluent in English” scored the highest in the domain with a mean of (4.13). While the fourth item, “I feel anxious when I am taught by native speakers of English” scored the lowest in the domain with a mean of (2.90).

Table 7. Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations: English Language Proficiency

#	Items	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD %	Me an	Std. Dev	Order	Level
5	I have an ample vocabulary to talk about common topics such as the news	22.38	33.33	34.29	8.57	1.43	3.67	0.96	3	M
6	I have enough knowledge about grammar that can help me speak more accurately.	23.33	39.52	30.00	6.19	0.95	3.78	0.91	2	H
7	I use Arabic when I cannot describe something in English during class.	7.62	38.57	34.76	16.67	2.38	3.32	0.92	5	M
8	I use body gestures when I cannot describe something in English.	12.86	43.33	32.86	8.57	2.38	3.56	0.91	4	M
9	My English is easily understood by others.	22.86	51.43	21.43	3.81	0.48	3.92	0.80	1	H
The general mean of the domain							3.65	0.46	-	M

The data indicates that “English language proficiency” was a factor that had a moderate influence on the development of students’ English-speaking skills as demonstrated by an arithmetic mean of (3.65) and a standard deviation of (0.46). The dimension includes five items, two of which earned a high degree. The ninth item, “My English is easily understood by others” earned a high degree along with a mean of (3.92). While the seventh item, “I use Arabic when I cannot describe something in English during class” earned the lowest in the domain with a mean of (3.32).

Table 8. Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations: Teaching Methodologies

#	Items	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%	Mean	Std. Dev	Order	Level
10	Our teachers use efficient tools and facilities to improve our speaking skills.	4.76	29.52	44.29	18.57	2.86	3.15	0.88	5	M
11	I use Google Translate or social media apps to help with my English-speaking skills.	23.33	37.14	28.10	7.62	3.81	3.68	1.03	2	H
12	Our teachers always speak in English during class	12.38	35.24	30.00	19.05	3.33	3.34	1.03	4	M
13	Our teachers speak in Arabic when we do not understand a phrase in English.	16.19	47.62	26.19	8.57	1.43	3.69	0.89	1	H
14	Our teachers use different activities, such as games, to encourage speaking in English.	8.57	32.38	27.62	25.71	5.71	3.12	1.07	6	M
15	Our teachers provide opportunities to practice speaking in English during class.	11.90	33.33	39.05	11.90	3.81	3.38	0.97	3	M
The general mean of the domain							3.39	0.54	-	M

The data indicates that “teaching methodologies” was a factor that had a moderate influence on the development of students’ English-speaking skills as demonstrated by an arithmetic mean of (3.39) and a standard deviation of (0.54). The dimension includes six items. The thirteenth item, “Our teachers speak in Arabic when we do not understand a phrase in English ” had the highest mean in the domain (3.69). While the fourteenth item, “Our teachers use different activities, such as games, to encourage speaking in English” earned the lowest mean in the domain (3.12).

Table 9. Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations: Environmental Influences

#	Items	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%	Me an	Std. Dev	Order	Leve l
16	I speak in English with my friends	9.52	25.71	36.19	22.38	6.19	3.10	1.05	4	M
17	I speak in English at home.	7.62	20.48	36.19	25.71	10.00	2.90	1.08	5	M
18	I speak in English with my teachers outside of class.	10.48	33.81	34.76	19.05	1.90	3.32	0.96	2	M
19	I communicate in English outside of the classroom.	9.52	28.57	37.62	20.00	4.29	3.19	1.00	3	M
20	I watch movies, listen to songs, and/or listen to podcasts in English.	50.48	30.48	14.76	3.33	0.95	4.26	0.90	1	H
The general mean of the domain							3.35	0.69	-	M

The data indicates that “environmental influences” was a factor that had a moderate influence on the development of students’ English-speaking skills as demonstrated by an arithmetic mean of (3.35) and a standard deviation of (0.69). The dimension includes six items. The twentieth item, “I watch movies, listen to songs, and/or listen to podcasts in English” received the highest mean in the domain (4.26). While the sixteenth item, “I speak in English at home” received the lowest mean in the domain (2.90).

Table 10. Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations: Emotional Influences

#	Items	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%	Mean	Std. Dev	Order	Level
21	I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking in English in front of the class	24.76	33.33	24.29	13.33	4.29	3.61	1.12	1	M
22	Others who speak better discourage me.	7.62	22.38	28.10	27.62	14.29	2.81	1.16	6	M
23	I cannot speak in class because my self-confidence is low.	9.52	23.33	26.67	27.14	13.33	2.89	1.19	5	M
24	Shyness prevents me from speaking in class.	12.38	29.05	30.00	20.00	8.57	3.16	1.14	4	M
25	My anxiety prevents me from speaking in class.	10.48	29.05	34.76	18.57	7.14	3.17	1.07	3	M
26	It is difficult to find opportunities to practice speaking in English when I am out of the classroom.	12.86	31.90	30.48	19.52	5.24	3.28	1.08	2	M
27	I do not think I will make use of my English-speaking skills.	2.38	13.81	24.76	30.95	28.10	2.31	1.10	7	L
The general mean of the domain							3.03	0.75	-	M

The data indicates that “emotional influences” was a factor that had a moderate influence on the development of students’ English-speaking skills as demonstrated by an arithmetic mean of (3.03) and a standard deviation of (0.75). The dimension includes seven items, six of which were evaluated as “moderately significant” while one item was evaluated as “low significance.” The twenty-first item, “I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking in English in front of the class” earned a mean of (3.61), thereby making it the item to be the most influential in the domain. While item twenty-seven, “I do not think I will make use of my English-speaking skills” earned a mean of (2.31), thereby making it the item to be the least significant across all domains.

Second Question: Are any of the following variables (year of study, major GPA, and grade in conversation class) linked to the factors that influence the development of students' English-speaking skills?

Table 11. Results of Variance Analysis (ANOVA) According to “Year”

Domain	Year	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Preference of Native Speakers	Year 1	15	3.86	0.59	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.95	3	0.65	2	0.113
	Year 2	88	3.76	0.48		135.13	415	0.33		
	Year 3	186	3.67	0.60		137.09	418			
	Year 4	131	3.82	0.58						
	Total	420	3.74	0.57						
Teaching Methodologies	Year 1	15	3.50	0.48	Between Groups Within Groups Total	0.22	3	0.07	0.25	0.863
	Year 2	88	3.38	0.6		123.84	415	0.30		
	Year 3	186	3.40	0.54		124.06	418			
	Year 4	131	3.38	0.52						
	Total	420	3.39	0.54						
Environmental Influences	Year 1	15	3.77	0.76	Between Groups Within Groups Total	2.87	3	0.96	2.05	0.106
	Year 2	88	3.40	0.69		193.85	415	0.47		
	Year 3	186	3.33	0.58		196.72	418			
	Year 4	131	3.32	0.8						
	Total	420	3.35	0.69						
English Language Proficiency	Year 1	15	3.71	0.37	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.68	3	0.56	2.63	0.044
	Year 2	88	3.65	0.42		88.39	415	0.21		
	Year 3	186	3.58	0.5		90.07	418			
	Year 4	131	3.73	0.44						
	Total	420	3.65	0.46						

Emotional Influences	Year 1	15	2.98	0.69	Between Groups Within Groups Total	3.08	3	1.03	1.82	0.14
	Year 2	88	2.87	0.92		234.50	415	0.57		
	Year 3	186	3.08	0.62		237.58	418			
	Year 4	131	3.09	0.8						
	Total	420	3.03	0.75						
Total Degree	Year 1	15	3.56	0.28	Between Groups Within Groups Total	0.52	3	0.17	1.60	0.18
	Year 2	88	3.41	0.32		44.84	415	0.11		
	Year 3	186	3.41	0.28		45.36	418			
	Year 4	131	3.47	0.39						
	Total	420	3.43	0.33						

It is worth noting from the table above that there are no statistically significant differences between the study sample concerning the following domains: preference of native speakers as teachers, teaching methodologies, environmental influences, emotional influences, and the total degree. The degree as given by the variable “year” is calculated as the (f) value, amounting to, respectively, (2), (0.25), (2.05), (1.82), and (1.6). Its significance level is greater than (0.05). There are, however, differences in the domain of English language proficiency. The calculated (f) value is (2.63), and its significance level is less than (0.05). To find the significance of the differences, the Scheffe test was used, and the results are displayed in the following table.

Table 12. Results of The Scheffe Test According to “Year”

Domain	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
English Language Proficiency	Year 1		0.059	0.129	-0.015
	Year 2			0.069	-0.075
	Year 3				-1.44**
	Year 4				

** Correlation is significant at the (0.05) level

The table above indicates that there are statistically significant differences between students in their fourth year and third year of studies regarding their English language proficiency, specifically in favor of fourth-year students.

Table 13. Results of Variance Analysis (ANOVA) According to “Major GPA”

Domain	Major GPA	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Preference of Native Speakers	1.00-1.99	28	3.63	0.45	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.64 135.69 137.33	3 416 419	0.55 0.33	1.67	0.173
	2.00-2.99	188	3.80	0.64						
	3.00-3.99	190	3.69	0.52						
	4.00	14	3.79	0.45						
	Total	420	3.74	0.57						
Teaching Methodologies	1.00-1.99	28	3.29	0.32	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.10 123.15 124.25	3 416 419	0.37 0.30	1.23	0.297
	2.00-2.99	188	3.44	0.55						
	3.00-3.99	190	3.36	0.53						
	4.00	14	3.50	0.86						
	Total	420	3.39	0.54						
Environmental Influences	1.00-1.99	28	3.14	0.61	Between Groups Within Groups Total	21.33 175.39 196.72	3 416 419	7.11 0.42	16.86	0.0001
	2.00-2.99	188	3.33	0.7						
	3.00-3.99	190	3.33	0.61						
	4.00	14	4.54	0.43						
	Total	420	3.35	0.69						
English Language Proficiency	1.00-1.99	28	3.60	0.32	Between Groups	4.44 85.93 90.37	3 416 419	1.48 0.21	7.16	0.0001
	2.00-2.99	188	3.57	0.44						

	3.00-3.99	190	3.71	0.49	Within Groups Total					
	4.00	14	4.06	0.24						
	Total	420	3.65	0.46						
Emotional Influences	1.00-1.99	28	2.93	0.46	Between Groups Within Groups Total	14.88 223.16 238.05	3 416 419	4.96 0.54	9.24	0.000 1
	2.00-2.99	188	3.17	0.56						
	3.00-3.99	190	2.98	0.88						
	4.00	14	2.16	0.93						
	Total	420	3.03	0.75						
Total Degree	1.00-1.99	28	3.32	0.28	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.03 44.38 45.42	3 416 419	0.34 0.11	3.22	0.023
	2.00-2.99	188	3.46	0.36						
	3.00-3.99	190	3.41	0.3						
	4.00	14	3.61	0.24						
	Total	420	3.43	0.33						

It is worth noting from the table above that there are no statistically significant differences between the study sample concerning the following domains: preference of native speakers as teachers and teaching methodologies. The total degree as given by the variable “major GPA” is calculated as the (f) value, amounting to, respectively, (1.67) and (1.23). Its significance level is greater than 0.05. There are, however, differences among environmental influences, English language proficiency, emotional influences, and the total degree. The calculated (f) values are, respectively, (16.86), (7.16), (9.23), and (3.22), with a significance level less than (0.05). To find the significance of the differences, the Scheffe test was used, and the results are displayed in the following table.

Table 14. Results of The Scheffe Test According to “Major GPA”

Domain	Major GPA	1.00-1.99	2.00-2.99	3.00-3.99	4.00
Environmental Influences	1.00-1.99		-0.182	-0.183	-1.140**
	2.00-2.99			-0.0001	-1.21**
	3.00-3.99				-1.21**
	4.00				
English Language Proficiency	1.00-1.99		0.034	-0.111	-0.457**
	2.00-2.99			-0.145**	-0.491**
	3.00-3.99				-0.345**
	4.00				
Emotional Influences	1.00-1.99		-0.240	-0.051	-0.765**
	2.00-2.99			0.188**	1.005**
	3.00-3.99				0.817**
	4.00				
Total Degree	1.00-1.99		-0.143**	-0.096	-0.293**
	2.00-2.99			0.047	-0.149
	3.00-3.99				-0.196**
	4.00				

** Correlation is significant at the (0.05) level

The previous table indicates that there are statistically significant differences between students with major GPAs of (4.00) and students with major GPAs of (1.00-1.99), (2.00-2.99), and (3.00-3.99), regarding their environmental influences and English language proficiency, in favor of students with GPAs of (4.00). There are differences between students with major GPAs of (4.00) and students with major GPAs of (1.00-1.99) and (3.00-3.99) regarding the total degree of the dimensions, specifically in favor of students with major GPAs of (4.00). Also, there are notable differences between students with major GPAs of (2.00-2.99) and (1.00-1.99) regarding the total degree of the dimensions, specifically in favor of students with major GPAs of (2.00-2.99).

Differences are also present between students with major GPAs of (3.00-3.99) and (2.00-2.99) concerning English language proficiency in favor of students with major GPAs of (3.00-3.99). Finally, there are differences between students with major GPAs of (2.00-2.99) and (3.00-3.99) concerning their emotional influences, in favor of students with major GPAs of (2.00-2.99).

Table 15. Results of Analysis (ANOVA) According to “Grade in Conversation Class”

Domain	Grade in Conversation Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Preference of Native Speakers	A	150	3.76	0.53	Between Groups Within Groups Total	2.53134.80 137.33	4 4154 19	0.63 0.33	1.94	0.102
	B	140	3.81	0.61						
	C	94	3.68	0.59						
	D	32	3.53	0.50						
	F	4	3.75	0.00						
	Total	420	3.74	0.57						
Teaching Methodologies	A	150	3.42	0.57	Between Groups Within Groups Total	3.75120.50 124.25	4 4154 19	0.94 0.29	3.23	0.013
	B	140	3.41	0.55						
	C	94	3.27	0.44						
	D	32	3.46	0.64						
	F	4	4.08	0.48						
	Total	420	3.39	0.54						
Environmental	A	150	3.59	0.71	Between	18.66	4	4.67	10.8	0.00

Influences	B	140	3.27	0.65	n Groups Within Groups Total	178.06 196.72	415419	0.43	7	01
	C	94	3.18	0.62						
	D	32	3.03	0.56						
	F	4	4.20	0.23						
	Total	420	3.35	0.69						
English Language Proficiency	A	150	3.77	0.43	Between Groups Within Groups Total	3.72 86.65 90.37	4 4154 19	0.93 0.21	4.45	0.00 2
	B	140	3.60	0.50						
	C	94	3.56	0.41						
	D	32	3.54	0.53						
	F	4	3.80	0.23						
	Total	420	3.65	0.46						
Emotional Influences	A	150	2.76	0.83	Between Groups Within Groups Total	18.56 219.49 238.05	4 4154 19	4.64 0.53	8.77	0.00 01
	B	140	3.13	0.71						
	C	94	3.24	0.59						
	D	32	3.24	0.66						
	F	4	3.43	0.49						
	Total	420	3.03	0.75						
	A	150	3.46	0.30	Between	1.23	4	0.31	2.87	0.02

Total Degree	B	140	3.44	0.36	n Groups Within Groups Total	44.19 45.42	4154 19	0.11		3
	C	94	3.39	0.29						
	D	32	3.36	0.40						
	F	4	3.85	0.20						
	Total	420	3.43	0.33						

It is worth noting from the table above that there are no statistically significant differences between the study sample concerning the first domain, preferences of native speakers as teachers. The total degree as given by the variable “grade in conversation class” is calculated as the (f) value, amounting to (1.94). Its significance level is greater than (0.05). There are, however, differences concerning teaching methodologies, environmental influences, English language proficiency, emotional influences, and the total degree. The calculated (f) values are, respectively, (3.23), (10.87), (4.45), (8.77), and (2.87) with a significance level less than (0.05). To find the significance of the differences, the Scheffe test was used, and the results are displayed in the following table.

Table 16. Results of The Scheffe Test According to “Grade in Conversation Class”

Domain	Grade in Conversation Class	A	B	C	D	F
Teaching Methodologies	A		0.007	0.156**	-0.136	-0.661**
	B			0.148**	-0.144	-0.669**
	C				-0.192	-0.817**
	D					-0.625**
	F					
Environmental Influences	A		-0.326**	0.409**	0.567**	-0.608
	B			0.082	0.240	-0.943**
	C				0.157	-1.017**
	D					-1.175**

	F					
English Language Proficiency	A		-0.167**	0.208**	0.233**	-0.029
	B			-0.041	0.065	-0.197
	C				0.024	-0.238
	D					-0.262
	F					
Emotional Influences	A		-0.370**	-0.480**	-0.481**	-0.668
	B			-0.109	-0.110	-0.297
	C				-0.001	-0.188
	D					-0.187
	F					
Total Degree	A		0.015	0.075	0.101	-0.392**
	B			0.059	0.086	-0.407**
	C				0.026	-0.467**
	D					-0.493**
	F					

** Correlation is significant at the (0.05) level

The previous table indicates that there are statistically significant differences between students with a grade of (B) in conversation class compared to students with a grade of (A) concerning environmental influences, English language proficiency, and emotional influences, specifically in favor of those with a grade of (B). Differences are present between students with a grade of (C) and students with a grade of (A) concerning teaching methodologies, environmental influences, English language proficiency, and emotional influences, specifically in favor of students with a grade of (C). Also, there are differences between students who have earned a (C) and students who have earned a (B) regarding teaching methodologies, in favor of students who have earned a (C). Furthermore, there are differences present between students who have earned a (D) and students who have earned an (A) concerning emotional influences, in favor of students who have earned an (A). There are differences between students who have earned an (A) and students who have earned a (D) regarding their environmental influences and English language proficiency, in favor of

students who have earned an (A). Finally, there are differences between those who earned an (F) and those who have earned a grade of (A), (B), (C), and (D) concerning teaching methodologies, environmental influences, and total degree, in favor of (F).

DISCUSSION

Several studies have investigated the factors influencing the development of EFL students' English-speaking skills. The preference of native speakers as teachers, English language proficiency, teaching methodologies, environmental influences, and emotional influences were all relevant factors that affected the development of their English-speaking skills. Our results found that being taught by native speakers of English had the largest influence on the development of a student's English-speaking skills. The preference of native speakers as teachers earned the highest, with a mean of (3.74). Our findings confirmed that students in PAAET's English Department prefer to be taught by native speakers of English, believing that it will improve their English-speaking skills. The second item, "Being taught by native speakers of English can make students more fluent in English" scored the highest mean (4.13) among the five dimensions. The first item, "I prefer learning English with a native speaker of English" earned a mean of (4.01). The fourth item was the only item in the domain that ranked "moderate" with a mean of (2.90), "I feel anxious when I am taught by native speakers of English." Therefore, students have a desire to be taught by native speakers of English. Many studies have confirmed that native speakers of English can improve a student's English fluency. This is largely because non-native speakers may switch to L1 which hinders the development of the target language (Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014). Shabir's (2017) study, conducted in a university in Thailand, found that Thai is used 70-80% of the time in an English classroom. Code-mixing and code-switching during class negatively affects the development of students' English-speaking skills (Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014; Ellis, 1994; Littlewood, 1981).

English language proficiency received a mean of (3.65), ranking second, indicating that English language proficiency strongly impacts a student's English-speaking skills. Studies (Genesee, 1999; Graham, 1987) have confirmed that students with high English language proficiencies use English more frequently. When students have an ample vocabulary, sufficient grammar knowledge, and are confident that their English is understood by others, they will engage in English frequently. If a student's English is not proficient enough, they may resort to code-mixing, code-switching, or the use of hand gestures to communicate their message. The seventh item, "I use Arabic when I cannot describe something in English during class" earned a mean of (3.32). The eighth item, "I use body gestures when I cannot describe something in English" earned a mean of (3.56). The results suggest that while students in the English department are proficient English speakers, they may struggle occasionally. To improve their speaking skills, students may need to isolate L1 from L2. Ellis (1994) and several authors maintain that L1 and L2 should not be used together when communicating during class. Thus, communicative competencies develop when a communicator has comprehensive knowledge needed to apply language in a specific context.

Teaching methodologies received a mean of (3.39), ranking third, indicating that teaching methodologies have a strong impact on the development of a student's English-speaking skills. The results demonstrated that inadequate EFL teaching methods hinders the development of English-speaking skills. The thirteenth item, "Our teachers speak in Arabic when we do not understand a phrase in English" earned the highest mean in the second dimension, with a mean of (3.68). Students believed that teaching methodologies targeted towards teaching English-speaking are inadequate as demonstrated by the tenth and fourteenth items, earning means of (3.15) and (3.12) respectively. The literature confirmed that EFL teachers are not properly trained to teach oral skills to students (Al-Lawati, 2002; Al-Hosni, 2014; Chaney, 1998). This is because EFL teachers have received their formal education on how to primarily teach reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. Many EFL teacher-training programs do not include communicative competencies. Also, there's a common misconception among EFL teachers that oral communication competence will develop through reading and writing. However, studies negate that conception, noting that students in EFL classrooms tend to memorize forms rather than understand meanings (Littlewood, 1984; Chaney, 1998; Brown, 2000). Similar to our findings, studies found that EFL teachers resort to code-mixing during class (Al-Hosni, 2014; Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014). Therefore, EFL teachers need to improve their teaching choices by refraining from code-mixing, by integrating English-speaking activities when possible, and to use English as the main mode of communication in the classroom.

Environmental influences received a mean of (3.35), ranking fourth, indicating that environmental influences had an average effect on a student's English-speaking skills. Our results found that students were not immersed in an English-speaking environment. The eighteenth, nineteenth, and sixteenth items, earning means of (3.32), (3.19), and (3.10), respectively, indicate that students in the English Department do not receive enough exposure to the target language out of the classroom, thus hindering the improvement of their English-speaking skills. The seventeenth item, "I speak in English at home" scored the lowest in the domain with a mean of (2.92). The twentieth item, "I watch movies, listen to songs, and/or listen to podcasts in English" scored the highest in the domain, with a mean of (4.26). Whether directly or indirectly, this indicates that students are making progress towards the improvement of their English-speaking skills. The literature widely recommended creating one's own means of practicing English (Nazim & Hazarika, 2017; Al-Wreikat & Bin Abdullah, 2010; Al-Jamal & AlJamal, 2014). This may include practicing the language at home, with friends, and with teachers out of the classroom. Genesee (1999) believed that the home language of EFL students benefits their overall academic success as well as higher achievement in academic subjects including literacy. Furthermore, watching English content such as movies, films, and podcasts acts as language practice. The content clarifies pronunciation points, intonations, and stresses in the English language just as well as an instructor could.

Emotional influences received a mean of (3.03), ranking last, indicating that emotional influences have the least impact on a student's English-speaking skills. Students in our study demonstrated mild hesitancy towards using the English language due to emotional factors. Several students reported that they were not confident due to shyness, anxiety, discouragement, and fear of

humiliation. This, in turn, affects their likelihood of using the language. Krashen's (1988) theory of affective filters postulates that emotional factors shape a language learner. Learners with high motivation and self-confidence are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. The twenty-seventh item, "I do not think I will make use of the English language" earned the lowest mean of (2.31). This result indicates that students in the English department strongly believe that they need the language be it for personal, academic, or professional reasons. As such, this will increase their determination to learn the language. Students will only learn a foreign language if they are motivated to do so. Students are motivated by reasons that vary according to personal need for acquiring a foreign language (Al-Wreikat & Bin Abdullah, 2010). The need to learn a foreign language will drive a learner to practice the language.

The second research question examined the relationship between the factors that influence the development of English-speaking skills and demographic variables such as year of study, major GPA, and grade in conversation class. It was found that a student's year of study was significantly linked to their English language proficiency. Fourth-year students outperformed third-year students regarding their English language proficiency. The results may favor fourth-year students because they have accumulated more English training in the classroom compared to third-year students. Similarly, Andrade's (2009) study reported that fourth-year students had a higher level of English language proficiency because they had more exposure to courses, all of which were taught in English. Thus, their English language proficiency naturally improved over time. Furthermore, it was found that a student's major GPA was linked to their environmental influences, English language proficiency, and emotional influences. For instance, our results found that students with GPAs of (4.00) outperformed students with GPAs of (1.00-1.99), (2.00-2.99), and (3.00-3.99) regarding their environmental influences as shown by our results which found that students with a GPA of (4.00) spoke English more frequently at home, with their friends, and out of the classroom compared to their other peers. This aligns with Genesee (1999)'s finding that EFL students that practiced English at home demonstrated higher academic success, especially in literacy subjects. Students with GPAs of (2.00-2.99) had stronger emotional influences that negatively affected their English-speaking skills. For instance, students with GPAs of (2.00-2.99) were emotionally challenged by shyness, discouragement, inhibition, anxiety, and fear of humiliation.

Students that enter the EFL teacher-training program at PAAET are expected to take an English conversation class during their freshman year. The conversation class consists of speaking activities, oral presentations, and public speaking activities, all conducted in English. Our results found that students with lower grades in conversation classes were challenged by the teaching methodologies, environmental influences, emotional influences, and English language proficiency. Students who performed lower in English-speaking classes noted the teaching methods used in conversation classes are inadequate. Plus, students who performed lower in conversation classes had lower English proficiency levels. Our results found that students with lower English language proficiency were inhibited by shyness, the fear of making mistakes, and the fear that their English would not be understood. Even high-achieving students may receive

lower grades in English-speaking classes, not because they do not understand the input but because their affective filter (and reluctance) blocks language acquisition. Krashen (1988) suggests that although students may struggle with higher affective filters, their motivation to learn the target language will lower the affective filter. Krashen (1988) wrote, “The presence of a higher affective filter, however, would predict less success in the long run. However, evidence suggests that instrumental motivation is superior as a predictor of achievement in second-language acquisition in such situations” (p.32).

CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the factors that influence the development of the English-speaking skills of students in the English Department at The College of Basic Education. The results found that the preference of native speakers as teachers was the factor that had the strongest influence on the development of a student’s English-speaking skills. English language proficiency and teaching methodologies followed, respectively, and had strong influences. The factors that had the lowest influence were emotional and environmental factors. The results imply that a student’s institution (preference of native speakers as teachers, English language proficiency, and teaching methodologies) has a larger influence on their English-speaking skills compared to personal factors (environmental and emotional influences). Therefore, EFL instruction in schools and universities must be improved. First, the importance English-speaking skills in the EFL classroom should be recognized by curriculum developers, administrators, and educators. Second, oral activities should be integrated into the curriculum. Third, oral activities should be practiced and assessed within textbooks, projects, assignments, and worksheets. Finally, teachers need to be regularly trained on how to teach oral skills.

The second research question found that a student’s year of study, major GPA, and grade in conversation class were linked to the factors that influence the development of their English-speaking skills. As students receive more exposure to the target language (year of study), they will receive higher grades (major GPA and grade in conversation class). More exposure and higher academic performance can positively influence the development of their English speaking-skills. All our findings supported the improvement of the EFL curriculum through two important factors: efficient teachers and teaching methodologies. According to Al-Fadley et al. (2020), “It’s mandatory to be aware of current teaching techniques and selecting appropriate supplementary materials...and being familiar with the English language culture and English language proficiency are the first two qualities of effective EFL teachers.” Doing so will increase the English language proficiency of students thereby strengthening their English-speaking skills.

Limitations of the study mostly involve the study sample. The current study sample included 420 female participants from the English Department, College of Basic Education. The study could have collected a larger number of participants. A larger pool of participants would have affirmed a consensus. Also, the study sample was limited to female participants. The College of Basic Education segregates classrooms based on gender due to the feminization policy enacted by the

Ministry of Education. Including male participants will diversify participants and the data. Finally, a qualitative study could have been provided stronger results. A qualitative study would involve interviewing EFL teachers. Including the input of teachers is necessary in order to evaluate and compare their perceptions. Because teachers oversee their classrooms and their students, they have a strong understanding of the issues students encounter with their skills.

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