

**EXPLORING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF GROUP DISCUSSION
IN IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS**

THESIS

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THESIS

Has Been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis *Munqasyah* Defense as One the
Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree in the field of English Language
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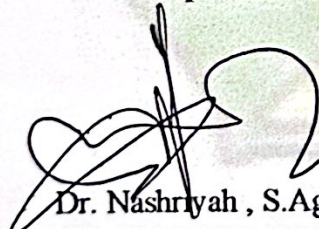
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Adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila ada kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

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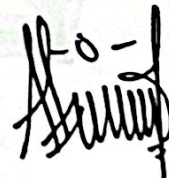
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Kurniatun Ainin

ABSTRACT

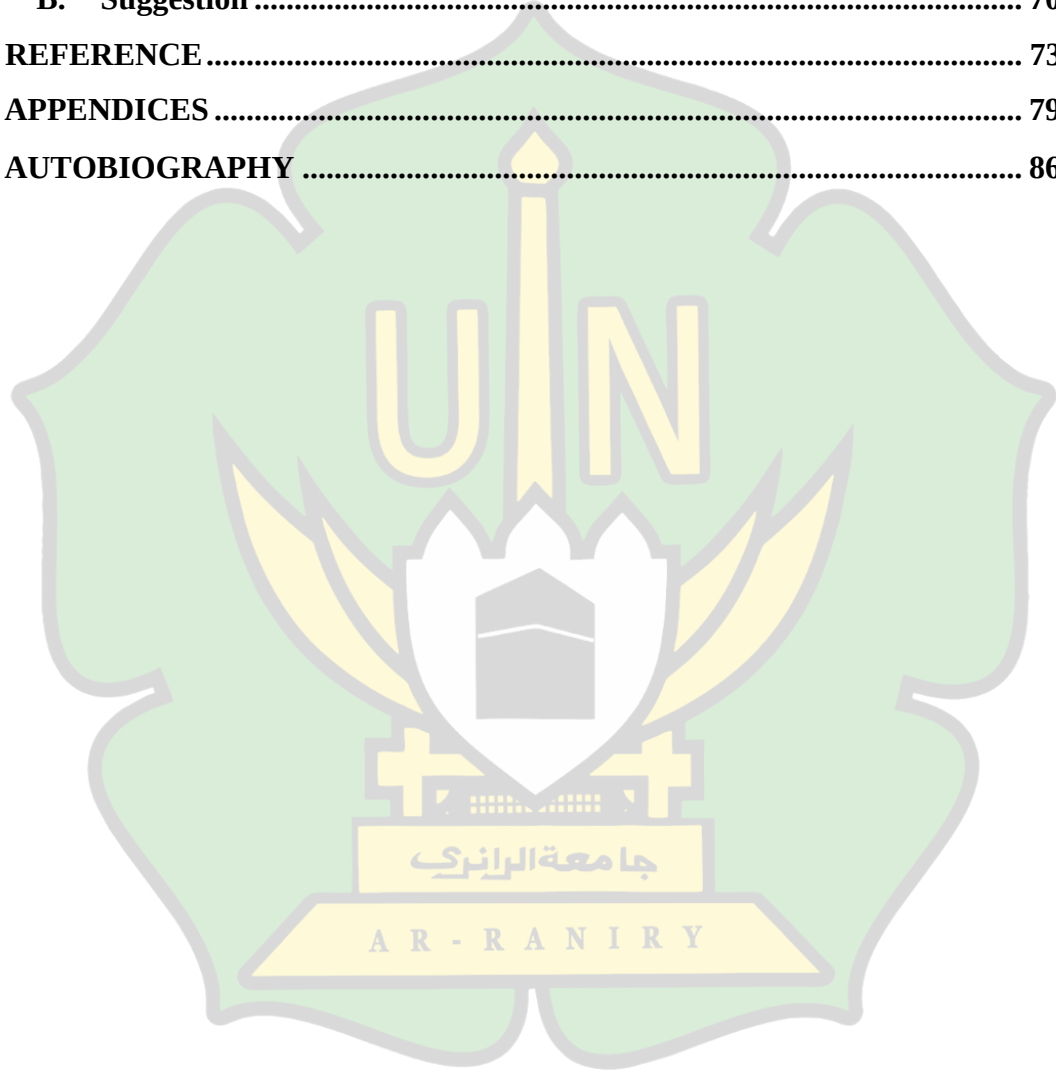
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This study explored students' perceptions of group discussion in improving English speaking skills among students of the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. A descriptive qualitative design was employed, with data collected through semi-structured interviews with twelve participants selected using purposive sampling and analyzed thematically. The findings showed that eight participants had positive perceptions, as group discussions provided opportunities to practice speaking, interact with peers, receive feedback, and learn in a supportive environment. Two participants had negative perceptions due to limited speaking opportunities, limited vocabulary, pressure to respond quickly, and discomfort, while two others had mixed perceptions, acknowledging the benefits of speaking practice but perceiving slow improvement. The effectiveness of group discussion was influenced by vocabulary, preparation, understanding of the topic, and equal participation. To overcome challenges, participants prepared before discussions, used simple English, and sought help from peers. Overall, group discussion was perceived as useful for improving English speaking skills, although its effectiveness varied among students. The findings suggest that lecturers should create supportive and interactive discussions that provide sufficient opportunities for students to participate actively in English.

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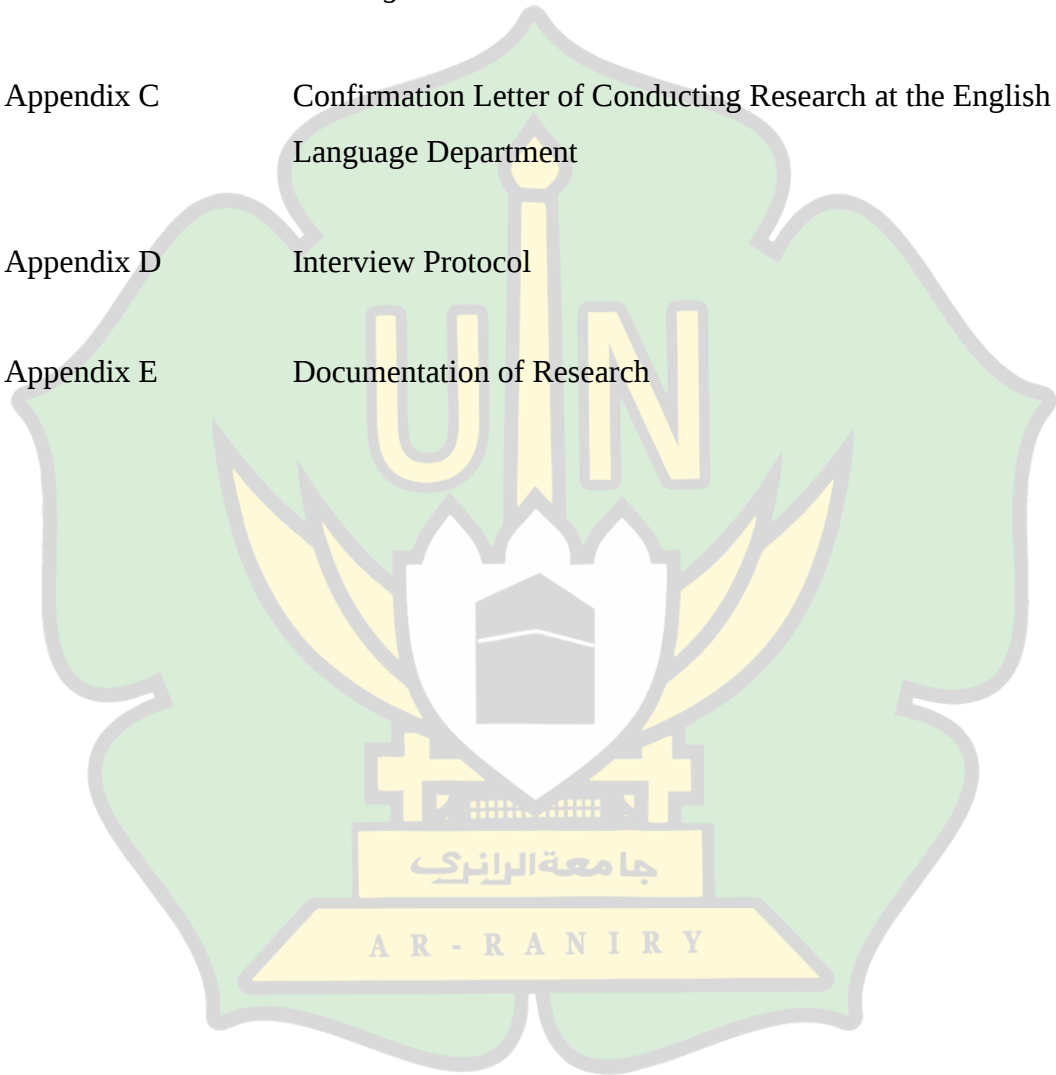
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains in detail the five elements that will help us to understand the context of the topic to be discussed in this study. The related elements include the background of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and terminologies

A. Background of study

Speaking is one of the most important skills in learning English because it enables students to communicate ideas, opinions, and information effectively. For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), speaking is often considered the most difficult skill because it requires them to use vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency at the same time. Therefore, developing English speaking skills has become one of the main goals of English language learning, especially at the university level. Furthermore, Nunan (2003) states that speaking is one of the most challenging productive skills because learners must integrate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency simultaneously while communicating.

However, many EFL students still experience difficulties in speaking English. They often have limited vocabulary, worry about making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes, and feel nervous when speaking in front of others. These problems make some students reluctant to participate actively in classroom discussions, even though regular speaking practice is essential for improving their

speaking skills. As a result, teachers need to create learning activities that provide students with more opportunities to communicate in English in a comfortable and supportive environment. Hughes (2003) explains that speaking performance depends on several components, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Students who have limited vocabulary, insufficient grammatical knowledge, inaccurate pronunciation, or low fluency often find it difficult to communicate their ideas effectively in English. As a result, many students are reluctant to participate actively in speaking activities during classroom learning.

Considering these challenges, English teachers need to implement learning strategies that encourage students to practice speaking in meaningful and supportive learning environments. One of the learning strategies that is widely used in English classrooms is group discussion. Through group discussion, students are encouraged to exchange ideas, solve problems collaboratively, express opinions, and interact actively with their peers. Brown (2001) explains that group discussion creates opportunities for meaningful interaction, allowing learners to use English in authentic communication. Similarly, Harmer (2007) states that discussion activities encourage students to negotiate meaning, share experiences, and communicate naturally while working together with their classmates. Therefore, group discussion is considered one of the effective collaborative learning strategies for improving students' speaking skills.

Several previous studies have shown that group discussion has positive effects on students' English speaking skills. Rosadi et al. (2020) found that small-

group discussion creates a supportive learning environment that encourages students to speak more actively. Likewise, Hadijah and Musfirah (2022) reported that students become more motivated to participate in speaking activities when they work collaboratively with their classmates. Sudiro et al. (2022) also found that group discussion increases students' participation by providing more opportunities to communicate in English. Similarly, Setyawan et al. (2024) concluded that continuous participation in group discussions contributes to the improvement of students' speaking performance, particularly in terms of fluency and confidence.

However, previous studies have not fully explained students' experiences when participating in English group discussions. There is still limited information about how students feel about group discussions, what difficulties they face when speaking English in groups, and how they deal with these difficulties. This shows that more attention is needed to understand students' experiences in group discussions. Therefore, this study focuses on students' perceptions, challenges, and strategies when participating in group discussions to develop their English speaking skills.

Understanding students' perceptions is important because students' experiences and opinions can provide valuable information about how group discussion works in real classroom situations. By listening to students' perspectives, teachers can better understand which aspects of group discussion support speaking development and which aspects still need improvement. This information can help teachers design speaking activities that encourage greater participation and create a more effective learning environment.

Based on this gap, this study aims to explore students' perceptions of group discussion in improving English speaking skills. In addition, this study investigates the challenges students face during group discussions and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of students' learning experiences and provide useful recommendations for English teachers who use group discussion as a strategy to develop students' speaking skills.

B. Research Questions

For the purpose of orienting the research, the following was asked in the study:

1. How do the students perceive the role of group discussions in improving their English speaking skills?
2. What challenges do the students face during group discussion activities in speaking English?
3. What strategies do the students use to overcome the challenges they face during group discussions?

It is hoped that answers to these questions will shed some light on the negative aspects of group discussions from the perspective of the students as well as the methods they have used to get past any obstacles they may have encountered during these heated debates.

C. Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to find out how students feel about using group discussions to improve their speaking English ability. Furthermore, this study sought to identify the factors that, in the opinion of the students, might support or undermine the effectiveness of this approach.

1. To explore students' perceptions of how group discussions contribute to improving their English speaking skills.
2. To identify the challenges that students encounter during group discussion activities in speaking English
3. To investigate the strategies employed by students to overcome the challenges they face during group discussions

D. Research Terminology

1. Students' Perceptions

Students' perceptions refer to how students understand, experience, and evaluate their learning activities. Rosdiana and Taufiqulloh (2025) found that students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes were related to their engagement, motivation, classroom interaction, and instructional strategies. In this study, students' perceptions refer to students' views and experiences of group discussion in improving their English speaking skills.

2. Group Discussion

Prawitna et al. (2026) describe small group discussion as a strategy that can be used to enhance EFL students' speaking skills. Their study found that the strategy supported students' confidence, motivation, participation, and speaking development. Elsani and Fahriany (2025) also identify small group

discussion as a motivational strategy that can support students' participation and speaking performance. In this study, group discussion refers to an instructional strategy in which students work in small groups to exchange ideas, express opinions, interact with peers, and practice speaking English.

3. English-Speaking Skills

English-speaking skills refer to students' ability to communicate ideas, opinions, and information through spoken English. Recent research by Prawitna et al. (2026) focuses on speaking development through aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, and grammar, while Hadijah and Musfirah (2022) also identified fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension as aspects related to students' speaking development. In this study, English-speaking skills refer to students' ability to express ideas and communicate orally using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension.

E. Significance of the study

Relevance of the Research There are various reasons why this study is important.

a) For Learners

It helps students understand how group discussions can support the improvement of their English-speaking skills while also reducing speaking anxiety and encouraging greater confidence in communication.

b) For Teachers of English

The findings can help teachers design more interactive and supportive speaking activities that encourage students to participate actively in English discussions.

c) For Upcoming Studies

This study contributes to the existing literature by using a qualitative approach to explore students' perceptions, challenges, and strategies related to improving English speaking skills through group discussions.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the theoretical concepts and previous studies related to the topic of the study. It presents the concepts of English speaking skills, group discussion, students' perceptions, challenges faced during group discussions, strategies for overcoming these challenges, and previous studies relevant to the present research.

A. English Speaking skill

1. Definitions and Components of English-Speaking Skill

Speaking is an important skill in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, and information orally. Brown (2004) explains that speaking involves producing language to communicate meaning, while Harmer (2007) emphasizes that speaking allows learners to communicate ideas effectively in different situations. Recent research also confirms the importance of speaking in EFL learning because it enables learners to communicate effectively in academic and social contexts (Afrizal et al., 2025).

Speaking can be understood as both a productive and interactive skill. Nunan (2003) describes speaking as a productive skill through which learners express thoughts, feelings, and opinions orally. Meanwhile, Brown (2004) explains that speaking is an interactive process involving the production, reception, and processing of information. This interactive nature means that learners need not only to produce language but also to respond to other speakers during communication.

Speaking also requires learners to use their language knowledge while communicating in real time. Harmer (2007) emphasizes that speakers need to organize their ideas, select appropriate language, and respond to others according to the situation. Recent research by Lestari and Andiansyah (2024) also shows that Indonesian EFL learners may need communication strategies when interacting in English because limitations in communicative competence can lead to communication difficulties.

Speaking ability consists of several components that work together to support effective oral communication. Hughes (2003) identifies pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension as important aspects of speaking performance. This multidimensional view is also reflected in recent research. Afrizal et al. (2025) assessed students' speaking performance using comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

a. Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way learners produce sounds and words when speaking. Hughes (2003) explains that appropriate pronunciation is important because unclear pronunciation can affect listeners' understanding of a speaker's message. Recent research also shows that pronunciation remains an important area of difficulty for Indonesian EFL learners. Nazri (2025) found that pronunciation difficulties were one of the main communication barriers experienced by Indonesian EFL learners.

b. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words that learners know and use when communicating. Brown (2004) explains that vocabulary is necessary for learners to express their ideas and communicate meaning. Limited vocabulary can therefore restrict learners' ability to express themselves orally. This issue is also supported by Daflizar (2024), who examined the relationship between Indonesian EFL students' self-perceived speaking skills and vocabulary proficiency.

c. Grammar

Grammar refers to the rules and structures used to organize words into meaningful sentences. Harris (1974) explains that grammatical knowledge helps speakers organize language so that their messages can be understood. Grammar therefore contributes to the accuracy and clarity of spoken communication. More recent evidence from Nazri (2025) shows that grammatical errors remain one of the main barriers experienced by Indonesian EFL learners when speaking English.

d. Fluency

Fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly and maintain the flow of communication. Hughes (2003) considers fluency an important aspect of speaking performance because excessive pauses and hesitation may interrupt communication. Recent research by Afrizal et al. (2025) also includes fluency as one of the components used to assess students' speaking performance.

e. Comprehension

Comprehension refers to the ability to understand what other people say and respond appropriately during oral interaction. Harris (1974) emphasizes that understanding is necessary for successful communication because speakers and listeners need to understand one another. Recent speaking assessment research also includes comprehension as an important component of students' speaking performance (Afrizal et al., 2025).

These components are interconnected in speaking performance. A learner may have sufficient vocabulary but still experience difficulties if pronunciation, grammar, fluency, or comprehension is limited. Recent research on Indonesian EFL learners similarly indicates that speaking difficulties can involve several linguistic aspects simultaneously, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency (Abrar et al., 2024).

2. Importance of English-Speaking Skill

English-speaking skills are important because they enable learners to communicate ideas, exchange information, and interact with other people. Brown (2004) explains that speaking demonstrates learners' ability to use language knowledge in communication, while Harmer (2007) emphasizes the importance of speaking for meaningful interaction. Recent research by Afrizal et al. (2025) similarly describes speaking as an important ability for effective communication in academic and social contexts.

In academic contexts, speaking skills help students participate in classroom discussions, express opinions, ask questions, and present ideas. Harmer (2007) emphasizes the importance of interaction and active participation in language learning. Therefore, students need opportunities to use English orally during classroom activities.

Speaking skills are also important beyond the classroom because learners may need English to communicate in social and professional situations. Nunan (2003) explains that speaking enables learners to express thoughts, feelings, and opinions through oral communication. In this sense, speaking skills can support learners in communicating in different contexts.

However, developing English-speaking skills can be challenging for EFL learners. Tanveer (2007) explains that language anxiety can become a barrier to oral performance. Recent Indonesian research supports this issue. Daflizar (2024) investigated speaking anxiety among Indonesian tertiary EFL students, while Abrar et al. (2024) found that learners experienced linguistic challenges such as limited vocabulary, grammatical problems, fluency problems, and pronunciation difficulties, as well as psychological challenges such as anxiety, low motivation, and insecurity.

Recent research also shows that Indonesian EFL learners continue to face difficulties in speaking because of both linguistic and psychological factors. Saragih et al. (2024) identified pronunciation, vocabulary gaps, grammar, lack of practice, and anxiety as common challenges in developing English speaking among young Indonesian learners. Similarly, Nazri (2025) found grammatical errors,

pronunciation difficulties, and limited vocabulary among the main barriers to speaking English.

Because of these challenges, learners need sufficient opportunities to practice speaking through meaningful interaction. Brown (2004) emphasizes meaningful communication, while Harmer (2007) highlights interaction as an important part of language learning. Recent studies also support interactive activities for speaking development. For example, Artayani (2024) explains that group discussion can encourage students to express their ideas and support speaking development.

Research on small-group discussion also provides empirical support for speaking development. Patricia et al. (2025) found that small group discussion significantly improved the speaking performance of Indonesian secondary school students in a quasi-experimental study. Therefore, interactive activities such as group discussion can provide learners with opportunities to practice English and develop their speaking skills.

Importance of English Speaking Skill

B. Group Discussions

1. Definition of Group Discussion

Group discussion is an instructional strategy in which students work together in small groups to discuss a particular topic, exchange ideas, express opinions, and respond to other group members. In English language learning, group discussion provides students with opportunities to use English through interaction with their classmates. Brown (2001) explains that interaction is an important part of language learning because it provides learners with opportunities to use language for

meaningful communication. Similarly, Harmer (2007) states that discussion activities encourage students to exchange ideas and interact with others.

Group discussion places students in an active role during the learning process. Students are not only expected to listen to the lecturer but also to contribute ideas, ask questions, and respond to their group members. Kagan (2009) emphasizes the importance of cooperation and active participation in small-group learning. More recent research by Zuhro and Setia Budi (2024) also found that students viewed small group discussion positively because it provided opportunities for interaction and speaking practice.

In the present study, group discussion refers to a classroom strategy in which students work in small groups to discuss a topic, question, or problem using English. Students can express their opinions, share ideas, ask questions, agree or disagree with others, and respond to their group members. Artayani (2024) found that group discussion provided EFL students with opportunities to express their ideas and practice speaking through interaction with their classmates.

The small-group setting is important because it can provide students with more opportunities to participate in oral communication. Students can take turns speaking, listen to other members, and respond to different ideas. Recent research by Mawsally et al. (2026) found that peer interaction, equal speaking opportunities, and peer support were important aspects of small group discussion in supporting students' participation in English-speaking activities.

Therefore, in this study, group discussion is positioned as an instructional strategy or classroom activity, not as a learning platform or a general teaching method. It is used to provide students with opportunities to interact, exchange ideas, and practice English speaking with their classmates. This understanding is consistent with recent research that examines small group discussion as a strategy for supporting EFL students' speaking development (Prawitna et al., 2026).

2. Benefit of Group Discussion

Group discussion can provide students with more opportunities to practice speaking English. During the discussion, students can express their opinions, ask questions, respond to their classmates, and share information. Harmer (2007) emphasizes that interaction gives learners opportunities to use language for meaningful communication. Recent research by Zuhro and Setia Budi (2024) also found that students considered small group discussion useful for developing their speaking skills because it provided opportunities for interaction and speaking practice.

Another benefit of group discussion is its contribution to students' speaking performance. When students participate in discussions, they need to organize their ideas and communicate them orally while responding to other group members. Patricia et al. (2024) found that small group discussion improved the speaking performance of Indonesian secondary school students. This finding indicates that group discussion can provide useful opportunities for students to practice oral communication.

Group discussion can also encourage students to participate more actively in speaking activities. Instead of only receiving information from the lecturer, students have opportunities to contribute their own ideas and communicate with their classmates. Artayani (2024) found that group discussion could encourage EFL students to express their ideas and support their speaking development.

In addition, group discussion allows students to learn from their peers. Students can hear different ideas and expressions from other group members and can ask for clarification when they have difficulty understanding or expressing something. Mawsally et al. (2026) found that peer support and interaction were important aspects of small group discussion because they helped students participate in speaking activities.

Group discussion can also provide a more manageable environment for students to practice speaking. Students who may feel uncomfortable speaking in front of the whole class can first express their ideas in a smaller group. Elsani and Fahriany (2025) found that small group discussion supported students' motivation and participation in speaking activities. Similarly, Prawitna et al. (2026) reported that small group discussion supported improvements in students' speaking skills, motivation, and participation.

Group discussion can also give students opportunities to practice several aspects of speaking, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. During interaction, students need to select appropriate words, construct sentences, pronounce words clearly, understand their group members, and maintain the flow of communication. Hadijah and Musfirah (2023) found positive

perceptions of small group discussion for developing several aspects of speaking, including fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension.

Based on the explanations above, group discussion can support English-speaking development by providing students with opportunities to practice speaking, express ideas, interact with peers, and participate actively in communication. Recent studies by Artayani (2024), Patricia et al. (2024), Elsani and Fahriany (2025), and Prawitna et al. (2026) provide empirical support for the use of small group discussion in developing students' speaking skills.

C. Students' Perceptions

Students' perceptions refer to the way learners understand, interpret, and evaluate their learning experiences. In a classroom context, students may develop different perceptions of the same learning activity because their experiences, expectations, and personal characteristics are not always the same. Robbins and Judge (2019) explain that perception involves the process through which individuals select, organize, and interpret information to give meaning to their environment. Therefore, students' perceptions can provide useful information about how they understand and respond to a particular learning activity. In English language learning, students' perceptions are important because speaking activities require learners to participate actively and communicate with others. Students may consider a speaking activity useful when it gives them opportunities to practice English and interact with their classmates. On the other hand, they may perceive the activity negatively when they experience anxiety, limited language ability, or difficulties participating. Recent research by Rosdiana and Taufiqulloh (2025)

found that Indonesian university students' perceptions of EFL speaking classes were influenced by several aspects, including engagement, motivation, anxiety, instructional strategies, and interaction with peers and teachers.

In relation to group discussion, students' perceptions can show how learners experience the activity and how they evaluate its contribution to their speaking development. Zuhro and Setia Budi (2024) found that students generally had positive perspectives toward small group discussion because it provided opportunities to interact with classmates and practice speaking. Similarly, Elsani and Fahriany (2025) reported that students perceived small group discussion as a useful activity that could support motivation and participation in speaking activities.

In this study, students' perceptions refer to the students' views and experiences of group discussion as an instructional strategy for improving English speaking skills. These perceptions include how students evaluate the opportunities provided by group discussion, interaction with peers, support received during discussions, and the difficulties they experience while speaking English. This definition is appropriate for the present study because the first research question focuses specifically on how students perceive the role of group discussions in improving their English speaking skills.

1) Positive Perceptions

Students may develop positive perceptions when group discussion provides them with meaningful opportunities to use English. In a small-group setting, learners can express opinions, respond to classmates, ask questions, and exchange ideas. Zuhro and Setia Budi (2024) found that students viewed small group discussion positively because it provided opportunities to interact with peers and practice speaking. This suggests that the amount of speaking practice provided by group discussion can influence students' positive views of the activity.

Another reason students may perceive group discussion positively is peer interaction. During a discussion, students can exchange ideas and learn from the way their classmates use English. They may also receive assistance when they have difficulty finding vocabulary or expressing an idea. Mawsally et al. (2026) found that peer support, equal speaking opportunities, and positive interaction were important aspects of students' experiences in small group discussion.

Students may also perceive group discussion positively because it can create a more comfortable environment for speaking. Instead of speaking only in front of the entire class, students can first communicate with a smaller number of classmates. Elsani and Fahriany (2025) found that small group discussion could support students' motivation and participation in public speaking activities. This indicates that the classroom environment created through group interaction may influence students' willingness to participate.

Therefore, positive perceptions in this study are understood as students' views that group discussion is useful, supportive, and helpful for practicing English

speaking. Such perceptions may be reflected in students' experiences of increased speaking opportunities, peer interaction, support, and participation.

2) Negative Perceptions

Not all students necessarily experience group discussion positively. Some learners may perceive the activity as difficult when they have limited vocabulary, difficulty expressing ideas, or anxiety about speaking English. Daflizar (2024) found that speaking anxiety among Indonesian tertiary EFL students was related to students' self-perceived speaking skills and vocabulary proficiency. This suggests that students' language ability and psychological experiences can influence how they view speaking activities.

Negative perceptions can also emerge when students do not receive sufficient opportunities to participate. In group discussions, more confident or fluent students may sometimes speak more frequently, while less confident students may remain quiet. Mawsally et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of equal speaking opportunities and clear role distribution in creating positive small-group discussion experiences. Without balanced participation, some students may feel that group discussion does not provide enough opportunities for them to practice speaking.

Fear of making mistakes can further influence students' perceptions. When students are worried about grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, or negative evaluation from their peers, they may hesitate to express their ideas. Que et al. (2024) found that Indonesian EFL students experienced speaking anxiety related to

nervousness, fear of negative evaluation, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and low confidence.

Thus, negative perceptions do not necessarily mean that group discussion itself is ineffective. Instead, they may show that the benefits of group discussion depend on students' language ability, psychological conditions, and the way the discussion is organized. This distinction is important for the present study because the participants reported both positive and negative experiences of group discussion.

D. Challenges Faced During Group Discussions

Although group discussion provides students with opportunities to practice English speaking, students may still experience difficulties during the activity. These difficulties can come from students' language ability, psychological condition, and the interaction that occurs within the group. Recent research on Indonesian EFL learners shows that speaking difficulties commonly involve vocabulary limitations, pronunciation problems, anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes (Tristasari & Yuliati, 2025). Therefore, participating in a group discussion does not always mean that students can communicate easily, especially when they have limited English proficiency or feel uncomfortable speaking in front of others.

One challenge that students may experience is difficulty expressing their ideas in English. Students may understand the topic but have difficulty finding appropriate vocabulary or constructing sentences to communicate their thoughts. Limited vocabulary can make students hesitate and interrupt the flow of their

speech. Daflizar (2024) found that vocabulary proficiency was related to Indonesian EFL students' self-perceived speaking skills and speaking anxiety. This suggests that students' vocabulary knowledge can influence their ability and willingness to participate in English-speaking activities.

Students may also experience difficulties with grammar, pronunciation, and fluency when participating in discussions. Because students need to respond to their group members in real time, they may have limited time to organize their sentences and select appropriate words. Farah (2024) found that Indonesian university students experienced speaking anxiety related to limited vocabulary, lack of grammar mastery, pronunciation difficulties, unfamiliarity with speaking tasks, fear of making mistakes, and low motivation. These difficulties can make students hesitate before speaking and may reduce their participation during group discussions.

Psychological factors can also become challenges during group discussion. Students may feel nervous or anxious because they are afraid of making mistakes or being negatively evaluated by their classmates. Que et al. (2024) found that Indonesian EFL students experienced speaking anxiety related to nervousness, fear of negative evaluation, lack of vocabulary, fear of grammatical errors, and low self-confidence. The students also used regular practice, relaxation, and positive thinking to manage their anxiety. This finding shows that students' emotional conditions can influence their willingness to speak and participate in English communication.

Challenges can also come from the group itself. Students may have different levels of English proficiency, confidence, and willingness to participate. Some students may speak more frequently, while others may remain quiet because they are less confident or need more time to formulate their ideas. Mawsally et al. (2026) found that equal speaking opportunities, peer support, and clear group roles were important features of positive small-group discussion experiences. Therefore, the way group members interact can influence students' opportunities to practice English during discussion.

This issue is also directly supported by Utari (2024), who specifically investigated the benefits and challenges of small group discussion for supporting students' English-speaking skills. The study found that students experienced challenges such as lack of confidence, insufficient knowledge of the discussion topic, and unsupportive group members. These findings are particularly relevant to the present study because they show that challenges in group discussion are not limited to language problems but can also involve students' confidence, preparation, and relationships with group members.

Students may also experience difficulty when they have limited opportunities to practice English or when classroom activities do not provide sufficient interaction. Tristasari and Yuliati (2025) reported that students' speaking difficulties were associated not only with linguistic problems but also with limited opportunities for practice and fear of making mistakes. Similarly, Halim et al. (2025) identified anxiety, low confidence, limited exposure to authentic English

input, instructional limitations, and limited classroom opportunities as barriers to speaking development among Indonesian EFL learners.

Based on the discussion above, the challenges experienced by students during group discussions can involve language difficulties, psychological difficulties, and group-related difficulties. Language difficulties include limited vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Psychological difficulties include anxiety, nervousness, low confidence, and fear of making mistakes, while group-related difficulties may include unequal participation, lack of preparation, and unsupportive group members. These challenges are closely related to the present study because the second research question focuses on the challenges students face when participating in group discussions to improve their English-speaking skills.

E. Overcoming Challenges in Group Discussions

Students do not simply experience difficulties during group discussions; they may also develop different strategies to deal with those difficulties. These strategies allow students to continue participating even when they have limited vocabulary, feel nervous, or have difficulty expressing their ideas. Lestari and Andiansyah (2024) explain that EFL learners use communication strategies to manage communication problems and maintain interaction when they face limitations in their English ability.

One strategy is preparation before the discussion. Students may prepare ideas, review vocabulary, or make short notes about the topic before they begin speaking. Preparation can help students organize their thoughts and reduce

uncertainty during the discussion. Mawsally et al. (2026) found that students used small-group discussion as a preparation space where they could understand the material, exchange ideas, rehearse their speaking, and prepare for oral performance.

Another strategy is simplifying language. When students do not know a particular word or grammatical structure, they may use simpler vocabulary or shorter sentences to communicate their meaning. This allows them to continue the conversation instead of stopping completely. The use of communication strategies is important for EFL learners because communication can continue even when their linguistic resources are limited (Lestari & Andiansyah, 2024).

Peer support is another strategy that can help students deal with speaking difficulties. Students may ask classmates for vocabulary, clarification, or assistance when they cannot express an idea. Mawsally et al. (2026) found that peer support and positive interaction helped students participate more actively and feel more prepared during speaking activities.

Students may also use strategies to manage anxiety. They may encourage themselves, practice regularly, or try to view mistakes as a normal part of learning. Que et al. (2024) reported that EFL students used coping strategies such as regular practice, relaxation, and positive thinking to manage speaking anxiety. These strategies can help students become more willing to participate in English-speaking activities.

Teacher support can also contribute to students' ability to overcome speaking difficulties. Teachers can provide clear instructions, encourage equal participation, and create a supportive environment in which students are not afraid

of making mistakes. Dilasani et al. (2025) found that positive teacher emotional support could contribute to students' confidence and motivation in developing English-speaking skills.

Therefore, the strategies in this study include preparation, simplifying language, peer support, managing anxiety, and receiving teacher support. These strategies show how students actively respond to difficulties during group discussion. They also directly relate to the third research question of this study, which investigates the strategies students use to overcome the challenges they face during group discussions.

F. Previous Study

Several previous studies have examined group discussion in English language learning, particularly in relation to speaking skills, students' perceptions, motivation, and speaking confidence. These studies provide a basis for understanding how group discussion can support students' opportunities to communicate and practice English. However, the previous studies have different research focuses and contexts from the present study.

Artayani (2024) examined the use of group discussion for EFL students' speaking skills. The study used a qualitative library research approach to investigate how group discussion could be used to support speaking development. The findings indicated that group discussion could encourage student engagement and support speaking development. The study also identified several common speaking problems, including pronunciation, vocabulary, lack of confidence, and the use of the mother tongue. This study is relevant to the present research because both

discuss group discussion and English-speaking development. However, Artayani's study was based on library research, while the present study explores students' own experiences through qualitative data.

Magfira et al. (2024) investigated EFL students' perceptions of the benefits of online group discussion. The study involved 12 postgraduate students and used a qualitative case study design with semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that students had positive perceptions of online group discussion because it supported collaboration, engagement, social interaction, sharing ideas, and communication. This study is closely related to the present research because both explore students' perceptions of group discussion. However, Magfira et al. focused specifically on online group discussion in a research methodology course, whereas the present study focuses on group discussion as a way to improve students' English-speaking skills.

Elsani and Fahriany (2025) investigated EFL students' perceptions of small group discussion as a motivational strategy in a public speaking course at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. The researchers used a qualitative approach and examined students' experiences of small group discussion and its influence on their motivation and speaking performance. This study is relevant to the present research because both examine students' perceptions of small group discussion in an English-speaking context. However, Elsani and Fahriany mainly focused on motivation in a public speaking course, while the present study examines students' perceptions, challenges, and strategies related to improving English-speaking skills.

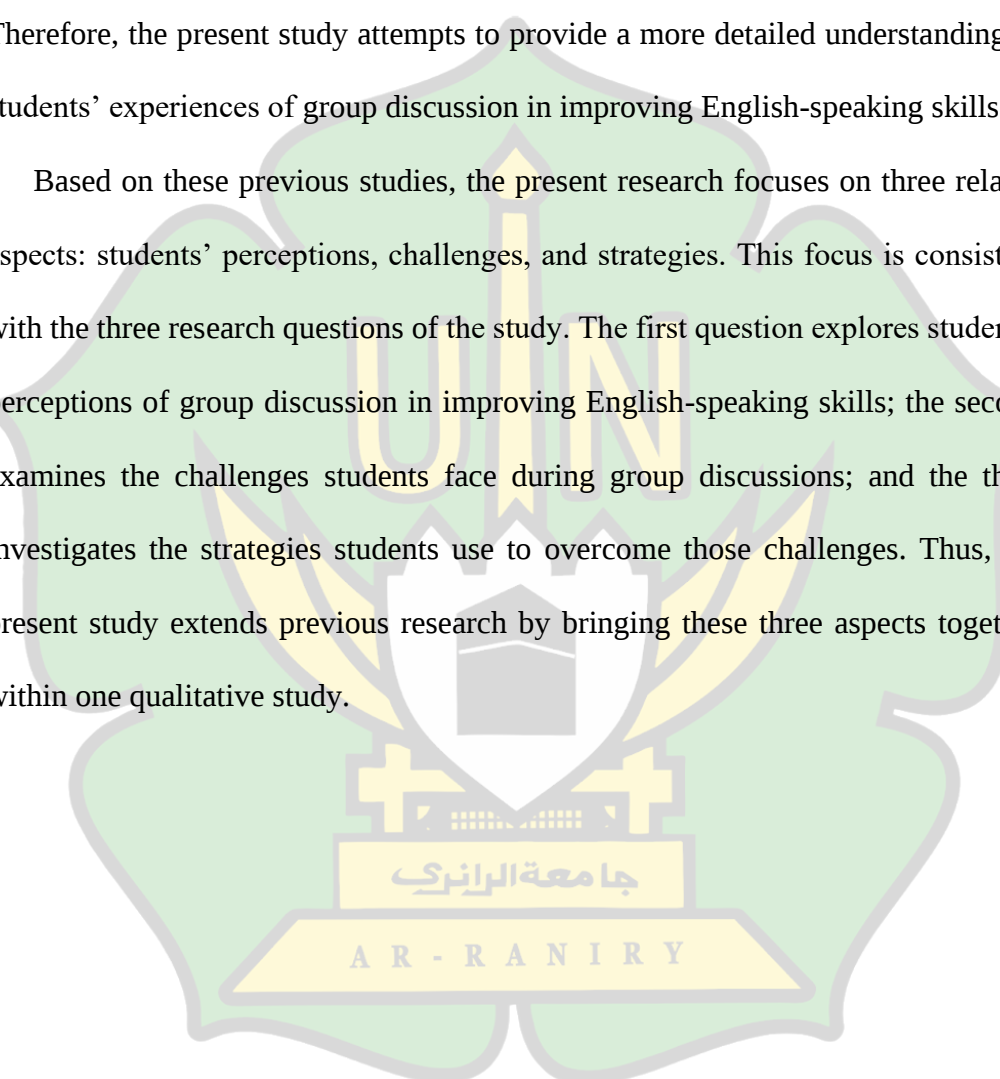
Mawsally et al. (2026) examined EFL learners' perceptions of small group discussion in relation to building speaking confidence in non-formal education. The study used a qualitative descriptive design, classroom observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, with the data analyzed thematically. The findings showed that students perceived small group discussion as a useful preparation activity because it helped them understand the material, exchange ideas, rehearse speaking, and organize their ideas before oral performance. The study also found that peer support, respectful responses, clear role distribution, equal speaking opportunities, and manageable group size contributed to students' confidence. This study is highly relevant to the present research because both explore students' experiences and perceptions of small group discussion using a qualitative approach. Nevertheless, Mawsally et al. mainly focused on speaking confidence, whereas the present study focuses on improving English-speaking skills and also examines the challenges and strategies experienced by students.

The previous studies show that group discussion can provide students with opportunities to express ideas, interact with peers, practice English, and prepare for speaking activities. Artayani (2024) highlights its contribution to speaking development, Magfira et al. (2024) shows positive perceptions of online group discussion, Elsani and Fahriany (2025) emphasizes motivation and participation, and Mawsally et al. (2026) highlights peer support, equal participation, and preparation for oral performance.

However, these previous studies do not completely address the focus of the present research. Some studies focus on the general use of group discussion for

speaking development, while others focus on online discussion, motivation, or speaking confidence. There is still a need to understand how students themselves perceive group discussion, what challenges they experience while participating in the discussion, and what strategies they use to overcome those challenges. Therefore, the present study attempts to provide a more detailed understanding of students' experiences of group discussion in improving English-speaking skills.

Based on these previous studies, the present research focuses on three related aspects: students' perceptions, challenges, and strategies. This focus is consistent with the three research questions of the study. The first question explores students' perceptions of group discussion in improving English-speaking skills; the second examines the challenges students face during group discussions; and the third investigates the strategies students use to overcome those challenges. Thus, the present study extends previous research by bringing these three aspects together within one qualitative study.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology used in this study. It describes the research design, research participants, techniques of data collection, and technique of data analysis. The procedures used by the researcher to conduct the study are also presented in this chapter.

A. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions of group discussion in improving their English speaking skills. Qualitative research is considered appropriate for this study because it focuses on understanding human experiences, thoughts, feelings, and interpretations in depth. In other words, this approach does not rely on numerical data, but instead focuses on meaningful descriptions of what students experience in real learning situations.

The main purpose of using qualitative research in this study is to understand how students experience group discussion activities in English speaking classes and how these activities help them improve different aspects of speaking skills. These aspects include fluency, vocabulary use, pronunciation, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively with others. Since speaking is a complex skill that involves both language knowledge and social interaction, qualitative research allows the researcher to capture these experiences more clearly and deeply.

Qualitative method is suitable for this study because it enables researchers to explore perceptions, challenges, and teaching strategies from the participants'

perspective without relying entirely on quantitative data (Septiana, Khoiriyah & Shaleh, 2024). Descriptive qualitative design focuses on describing phenomena as it is without manipulating variables, making it suitable for investigating

In addition, this study used a descriptive qualitative approach. This means the researcher aimed to describe and explain students' real experiences in a natural classroom setting without manipulating any variables. Through this approach, the researcher was able to explore how group discussion is implemented in speaking classes, how students participate in it, and how they perceive its contribution to their speaking development.

Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on statistical measurement, qualitative research emphasizes meaning and interpretation. Therefore, this study provides a detailed explanation of students' voices, opinions, and experiences regarding group discussion as a learning strategy to improve English speaking skills.

B. Research Participants

The participants of this study were students from the English Education Study Program (PBI) at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. They were chosen because they had direct experience in participating in English speaking classes where group discussion was used as one of the main learning activities. Participants were selected based on their knowledge or experience related to the research topic, ensuring that the data obtained was relevant and informative (Wan, 2019).

These students were considered suitable participants because they had already experienced speaking English in group discussions, interacted with their

classmates in English, and faced different challenges during the process. Therefore, they were able to provide rich and meaningful information related to the focus of this study.

The selection of participants was based on several criteria:

1. They were active students in the English Education Study Program.
2. They had taken speaking or communication-related courses.
3. They had experience participating in group discussion activities in English classes.
4. They were willing to share their experiences through interviews.
5. They were able to communicate their opinions clearly during the interview process.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to select the participants. Purposive sampling means that the researcher deliberately chose participants who were considered most knowledgeable and experienced regarding the research topic. This technique was chosen because not all students have the same level of experience in group discussion activities.

A total of twelve students were selected as participants. This number was considered sufficient for a qualitative study because the main goal of qualitative research is not to generalize findings, but to gain deep and detailed understanding of participants' experiences. With twelve participants, the researcher was able to collect varied perspectives, including different levels of speaking ability, confidence, and learning experiences.

These variations were important because they helped the researcher understand how group discussion affects different students in different ways when improving their English speaking skills.

Table 3.1 Participant Profiles

Participants	Gender	Age	Semester
JA	Female	21	8
MZ	Male	22	8
IF	Male	22	8
AF	Female	21	8
AN	Male	22	8
ENR	Female	22	8
DSN	Female	22	8
AA	Male	21	8
SR	Female	22	8
HN	Female	21	8
AD	Female	22	8

C. Techniques of Data Collection

The main data collection technique used in this study was semi-structured interviews. This technique was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore students' experiences in depth while still maintaining focus on the main research objectives. According to Maher & Bedwei-Majdoub (2024) a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to adjust the order and phrasing of questions based on the flow of the conversation, thereby promoting a more natural dialogue. A semi-structured interview is used as it provides a balance between guided questions and the opportunity for participants to openly elaborate on their experiences. Through this approach, the researcher can better explore pre-service teachers' experiences, challenges, and strategies.

Semi-structured interviews are flexible in nature. This means the researcher prepared a set of guiding questions, but still allowed participants to freely express their thoughts and experiences. If needed, the researcher could also ask additional questions to clarify or deepen the information given by the participants.

The interviews were conducted individually with each participant. This was done to ensure that every student could speak openly without feeling pressured by others. Individual interviews also helped the researcher gain more honest and personal responses, especially regarding students' feelings, difficulties, and experiences in speaking English during group discussions.

The interview questions focused on several key aspects, including:

1. Students' experiences in participating in group discussion activities.
2. How group discussion helps them improve English speaking skills.

3. Improvements they feel in speaking aspects such as fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication ability.
4. Challenges they face during group discussion activities.
5. Strategies they use to overcome those challenges and continue speaking.

Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the participant's responses. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data collection. In addition, the researcher also took field notes during the interviews to record important expressions, emotional responses, and other relevant observations that could support the analysis.

D. Technique of Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within data. Thematic Analysis is a widely used qualitative data analysis method that enables researchers to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within qualitative data. This method was chosen because it provides a systematic yet flexible approach to understanding students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of group discussions in improving English speaking skills. Through thematic analysis, the researcher was able to organize participants' responses into meaningful themes while preserving the richness and depth of their experiences. Therefore, this method was considered appropriate for addressing the research questions and achieving the objectives of this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The data analysis process was carried out in several steps. First, all interview recordings were transcribed into written form. This step helped the researcher to carefully examine every response given by the participants. Second, the researcher read the transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the data and gain a deeper understanding of the content.

After that, the researcher started the coding process. Coding means identifying important statements or phrases that are related to the research questions. These codes were then organized into categories based on similarity in meaning. For example, statements related to fluency improvement, vocabulary development, or pronunciation practice were grouped together.

Next, these categories were further developed into broader themes. These themes represented the main findings of the study, such as students' perceptions of speaking improvement, benefits of group discussion, challenges faced during discussions, and strategies used by students to overcome difficulties.

After the themes were developed, the researcher reviewed them again to ensure that they accurately reflected the participants' experiences. Finally, each theme was clearly described and supported with direct quotations from participants to strengthen the validity of the findings.

Throughout the analysis process, the researcher tried to remain objective and avoid personal bias. This was important to ensure that the findings truly reflected the students' real experiences and not the researcher's interpretation alone.

BAB IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the interview analysis. Interviews were conducted with a total of 12 students of English Language Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The initials of the interviewees were JA, MZ, IF, AF, AN, DSN, AA, ENR, FI, SR, HN, and AD. This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of group discussions in improving English speaking skills, the challenges they face during group discussions, and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges. This chapter is divided into two main sections: the first section presents the research findings, and the second section provides a discussion that interprets these findings by connecting them to relevant theories and previous studies presented in Chapter II.

A. Findings

After conducting the data collection and data analysis process, I present the following major findings. The findings are organized based on the three research questions of this study: (1) students' perceptions of the role of group discussions in improving English speaking skill (2) challenges students face during group discussions, and (3) strategies students use to overcome those challenges.

A. Students' Perceptions of Group Discussions

The first analysis of the study is to find out students' perceptions of the role of group discussions in improving English speaking skill . Based on the data analysis, this study identified that the majority of students showed positive perceptions, while some students also demonstrated negative and mixed perceptions. It is important to note that some participants expressed more than one perception depending on the situation and context of the discussion.

a. Positive Perceptions

Most participants expressed positive perceptions of group discussions. They explained that group discussions helped them feel more comfortable, less anxious, and more confident in speaking English. Three sub-themes emerged from the positive perceptions: comfort and reduced anxiety, peer support, and gradual confidence building.

1) Increased Opportunities to Practice Speaking

One of the most common positive perceptions expressed by the participants was that group discussions provided more opportunities to practice speaking English. Most participants believed that learning in small groups allowed them to use English more frequently than in whole-class activities. They explained that every member had a chance to express opinions, answer questions, respond to classmates' ideas, and participate actively in discussions. These opportunities encouraged them to practice speaking more regularly, which they believed contributed to improving their English speaking skills.

Participant AF explained that group discussions helped her practice speaking because she had more opportunities to use English during discussions. She stated:

"There are several ways. First, I get many chances to speak, so I get used to using English. Second, my friends often give positive feedback or help me find the right words when I'm stuck. Third, I can listen to how my friends express their ideas and learn from them." (AF)

AF's response shows that group discussions created meaningful opportunities to use English in real communication. Besides speaking more often, she also benefited from interacting with her classmates by learning new expressions and receiving support whenever she had difficulty finding the appropriate words. These experiences helped her become more familiar with speaking English in a natural classroom setting.

A similar opinion was shared by MZ, who believed that small group discussions allowed every student to participate more actively than whole-class discussions. He explained:

"In class, only a few students usually get the chance to speak because of time limits. But in small groups, almost everyone can speak, so we get more practice." (MZ)

According to MZ, one of the main advantages of group discussions was that every student had an opportunity to speak. Unlike whole-class activities where only a few students could participate because of limited time, small group discussions enabled almost all members to express their ideas. As a result, students had more opportunities to practice speaking English throughout the learning process.

Participant DSN also expressed a positive perception regarding speaking practice during group discussions. She stated:

"It helps because I can practice speaking, but the improvement is slow." (DSN)

Although DSN acknowledged that improving speaking skills required time, she believed that regular participation in group discussions gradually helped her develop her speaking ability. Her response suggests that continuous speaking practice played an important role in improving English speaking skills, even if the progress was not immediate.

Similarly, JA explained that she found it easier to speak in small groups because the learning atmosphere was more relaxed than speaking in front of the whole class. She said:

"Honestly, I feel much more relaxed when I'm in a small group discussion. Speaking in front of the whole class makes me really nervous because everyone is looking at me and I feel like I'm being judged. But in a small group, there are only a few friends around, so the pressure is much lower. I don't feel like I'm performing; it feels more like just having a normal conversation." (JA)

She further explained:

"Yes, definitely. I feel more comfortable because the atmosphere is more friendly and less formal. I know my group members, so I'm not afraid of being laughed at if I make a mistake. Also, in a small group, I don't have to wait for a long time to speak. I can just jump in when I have an idea, and people listen." (JA)

JA's responses indicate that the relaxed classroom atmosphere encouraged her to participate more actively in discussions. Because she felt comfortable with her group members, she was more willing to express her opinions and communicate in English. She also pointed out that group discussions provided more opportunities to speak because students did not have to wait long for their turn, allowing conversations to flow more naturally.

Another participant also shared a similar experience by explaining that group discussions encouraged students to become more active because every member was expected to contribute to the discussion. The participant believed that exchanging ideas with friends created more opportunities to speak English during classroom activities. Through regular interaction, students became more involved in discussions and gradually became accustomed to using English to communicate with others.

Overall, the findings indicate that participants perceived group discussions as an effective learning activity because they increased opportunities to practice speaking English. The interview data consistently show that students had more chances to express opinions, respond to others, ask questions, and participate actively when learning in small groups. These repeated opportunities allowed students to use English more frequently in meaningful communication. Although improvement did not occur instantly, most participants believed that regular speaking practice during group discussions contributed to the development of their English speaking skills. Therefore, increased opportunities to practice speaking emerged as one of the most important positive perceptions identified in this study.

2) Learning Through Peer Interaction and feedback

The second positive perception identified in this study is that learning through peer interaction and support helped students improve their English speaking skills. Many participants explained that group discussions allowed them to learn from their classmates by sharing ideas, receiving feedback, and helping each other when they experienced difficulties. They believed that learning together made it easier to continue speaking and improve their communication skills.

Participant MZ explained that support from friends was very helpful during group discussions. He said that when he forgot a word while speaking, his classmates usually helped him remember it. This support allowed him to continue expressing his ideas instead of stopping the conversation. His response shows that learning with peers helped students overcome language difficulties and encouraged them to keep practicing English.

Participant DSN shared a similar opinion. She said:

"Friends support me. They don't laugh when I make mistakes, they actually help." (DSN, interview)

DSN's response shows that a supportive group atmosphere helped her feel more comfortable using English. Instead of criticizing mistakes, her classmates offered help and encouragement. This positive interaction made it easier for her to continue speaking and practice English during group discussions.

Participant AN also explained how interaction with classmates influenced his speaking development. He stated:

"Peer interaction really influences me. If the group is interactive and people like to talk, it really helps improve speaking skills." (AN, interview)

AN further explained that he felt more motivated to participate when his classmates responded positively to his ideas. On the other hand, when other group members were passive or did not respond, he became less motivated to speak. This finding suggests that active interaction among group members plays an important role in encouraging students to participate and develop their speaking skills.

A similar experience was shared by JA. She explained:

"They usually give hints, gestures, or help me find words. Sometimes they also encourage me, so I can continue speaking even when I get stuck." (JA, interview)

JA's response indicates that her classmates provided both language support and encouragement during discussions. When she forgot vocabulary or had difficulty expressing her ideas, her friends helped her continue speaking instead of giving up. This kind of support allowed her to participate more actively and practice speaking English more confidently and naturally.

Another participant, AF, also believed that interaction with classmates helped improve her speaking ability. She explained that her friends often gave positive feedback, helped her find the right words, and became a source of learning during discussions. In addition, listening to the way her classmates expressed their ideas helped her learn new vocabulary and different ways of communicating in English. Through this process, she gradually became more familiar with speaking English in classroom discussions.

Overall, the findings show that peer interaction and support were important parts of group discussions. The participants believed that discussing ideas with classmates, receiving feedback, learning new vocabulary, and helping one another made speaking activities easier and more meaningful. These collaborative learning experiences encouraged students to participate more actively and contributed to the improvement of their English speaking skills.

3) A Supportive Learning Environment for Speaking Development

The third positive perception identified in this study is that group discussions create a supportive learning environment that helps students improve their English speaking skills. Most participants felt that speaking in a small group was more comfortable than speaking in front of the whole class. They explained that the relaxed atmosphere allowed them to express their ideas more freely, participate actively in discussions, and practice speaking English without feeling too much pressure.

Participant JA explained that she felt much more comfortable speaking in a small group than in front of the whole class. She said:

"Honestly, I feel much more relaxed when I'm in a small group discussion. Speaking in front of the whole class makes me really nervous because everyone is looking at me and I feel like I'm being judged. But in a small group, there are only a few friends around, so the pressure is much lower. I don't feel like I'm performing; it feels more like just having a normal conversation." (JA)

JA's response shows that the relaxed atmosphere of group discussions made it easier for her to speak English. Because she did not feel pressured by the attention of the whole class, she was more willing to share her ideas and participate in the discussion. This comfortable environment gave her more opportunities to practice speaking naturally.

Participant IF shared a similar experience. He explained that after joining several group discussions, he became more comfortable speaking English with his classmates. The repeated opportunities to communicate helped him become more active during discussions and encouraged him to express his ideas more confidently. This experience shows that regular participation in a supportive environment can gradually improve students' speaking ability.

Participant HN also explained that group discussions helped reduce her hesitation when speaking English. At first, she often felt shy and worried about making mistakes. However, after participating in discussions regularly, she became more comfortable speaking because her classmates created a friendly and supportive atmosphere. This encouraged her to participate more actively and continue practicing her English.

A similar opinion was expressed by SR. She explained:

“At the beginning, I was usually quiet because I was afraid of making mistakes. But after joining several group discussions, I started speaking little by little. My friends listened to my ideas and responded to me, so I felt more comfortable. Now I’m more willing to share my opinions in English than before.” (SR, interview)

SR's response shows that a friendly and supportive group atmosphere encouraged her to participate more actively in discussions. At first, she tended to stay silent because she was afraid of making mistakes. However, after participating in several group discussions, she gradually became more comfortable speaking English and sharing her opinions. This suggests that positive interaction with classmates helped her practice speaking more frequently and contributed to the development of her English speaking skills.

Participant AN also believed that the classroom atmosphere influenced students' participation. He explained that when group members were active, respectful, and willing to listen to each other's opinions, he became more motivated to speak. On the other hand, when the discussion was quiet or other members did not respond, he became less interested in participating. This finding suggests that a positive learning environment encourages students to communicate more actively during group discussions.

Overall, the findings indicate that a supportive learning environment is one of the main factors that helps students improve their English speaking skills during group discussions. A relaxed atmosphere, supportive classmates, and active interaction encouraged students to participate more frequently, express their ideas more freely, and practice speaking English without being overly worried about making mistakes. Although many participants mentioned feeling more confident, the findings suggest that confidence was a result of continuous participation in a positive learning environment. Therefore, students perceived that a supportive

classroom atmosphere played an important role in helping them develop their English speaking skills.

b. Negative perceptions

Although most participants had positive perceptions of group discussions, two participants, AA and ENR, shared negative perceptions about their role in improving English speaking skills. They felt that group discussions did not always help them develop their speaking ability because they faced several difficulties during the discussions. These included limited opportunities to speak, difficulty expressing ideas in English, and feeling uncomfortable when interacting with other group members. As a result, they believed that group discussions did not significantly improve their English speaking skills.

“When I speak alone, I can prepare what I want to say. I already know my points, so I don't feel rushed. In a group, I have to respond quickly, and that makes me nervous.” (AA, interview)

Participant AA also said that group discussions did not help him because he did not get enough time to think. He felt like he was always behind the conversation, so he just stayed quiet. He also mentioned that having a role in the group made him more stressed because he felt forced to speak even when he was not ready.

Participant ENR expressed a different but similarly negative perception:

“I actually feel more nervous in group discussions than speaking in front of the class. In small groups, I feel more noticed, especially by friends who have better English skills. My mistakes feel more visible and more personal.” (ENR, interview)

Participant ENR shared a similar opinion. She explained that group discussions were sometimes difficult because she did not have enough vocabulary to express her ideas. Even when she understood the topic, she often could not find the right English words. As a result, she chose to remain silent rather than say something incorrectly.

ENR also explained that discussions often moved too quickly. While she was still thinking about how to express her ideas, the conversation had already continued to another point. This made her feel left behind and reduced her opportunity to participate. Because she rarely had the chance to speak, she felt that group discussions did not help her improve her English speaking skills as much as she had expected.

In addition, ENR felt discouraged when her classmates interrupted her or did not respond to her ideas. She believed that these situations made her less willing to participate in future discussions. Instead of encouraging her to practice speaking, these experiences made her more hesitant to communicate in English during group discussions.

Overall, the findings show that not all students viewed group discussions as an effective way to improve English speaking skills. For AA and ENR, several challenges, such as limited opportunities to participate, difficulty expressing ideas in English, and less supportive group interactions, reduced the benefits of group discussions. Consequently, they believed that group discussions did not make a significant contribution to the improvement of their English speaking skills.

c. Mixed Perceptions

Two participants showed mixed perceptions, meaning they felt both positive and negative at different times. Participant DSN explained that group discussions helped her practice speaking English, but she felt that the improvement was gradual. She said:

"It helps because I can practice speaking, but the improvement is slow." (DSN, interview)

DSN believed that group discussions gave her more opportunities to practice speaking English. However, she felt that her speaking skills did not improve immediately because she still faced several difficulties while communicating in English. She explained that limited vocabulary and pronunciation often made it difficult for her to express her ideas clearly. Because of these challenges, she sometimes stopped speaking even when she wanted to continue the conversation. Therefore, she felt that group discussions were helpful, but improving speaking skills required regular practice and could not happen in a short time.

Participant IF also shared a similar perception. She believed that group discussions could help students improve their English speaking skills, but she explained that the benefits depended on how well students prepared before the discussion and how well they understood the topic. She also mentioned that vocabulary was still the biggest challenge for her. She said:

"Vocabulary is the most challenging because without enough words, I cannot express my ideas." (IF, interview)

This statement shows that IF considered group discussions to be useful for practicing English. However, when she did not have enough vocabulary, she found it difficult to explain her ideas and participate actively in the discussion. As a result, she believed that language limitations could reduce the benefits of group discussions in improving speaking skills.

IF also explained that understanding the discussion topic was another important factor. She stated:

"Understanding the topic is the key to being able to contribute." (IF, interview)

he further explained:

"I read about the topic and learn relevant vocabulary to feel more prepared and confident." (IF, interview)

These responses show that IF usually prepared herself before joining a discussion by reading the topic and learning new vocabulary. He believed that good preparation helped her participate more actively and made it easier to express her ideas. On the other hand, when he was not familiar with the topic, she found it more difficult to contribute to the discussion.

In addition, IF believed that the way a discussion was managed also influenced how much students could improve their speaking skills. He explained:

"A good moderator can organize the discussion well and give everyone a chance to speak." (IF, interview)

According to IF, a discussion becomes more effective when every student has an equal opportunity to participate. He believed that a good moderator could encourage quieter students to speak and make the discussion more interactive. This allowed students to practice speaking English more actively and gain more learning opportunities.

Overall, the findings show that DSN and IF had mixed perceptions of group discussions in improving English speaking skills. Both participants agreed that group discussions provided valuable opportunities to practice speaking English. However, they also believed that simply participating in discussions was not enough to improve speaking skills. Factors such as vocabulary, pronunciation, understanding the discussion topic, preparation before the discussion, and equal participation during the discussion influenced how much they benefited from the activity. Therefore, they perceived that group discussions could improve English speaking skills, but only when these supporting factors were present.

B. Challenges Faced During Group Discussions

The second focus of this study is to identify the challenges that students face during group discussions when speaking English. Based on the data analysis, three main types of challenges were found. These are: limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes and being judged, and unequal participation among group members.

These challenges show that students' difficulties are not only about language ability, but also related to psychological factors and group interaction. Each of these challenges is explained in more detail below.

a. Limited Vocabulary

Limited vocabulary was the most common problem mentioned by the participants. Many students explained that even when they had ideas in their mind, they could not express them in English because they did not know the right words.

Participant MZ explained:

"I lack English vocabulary. Sometimes I know what I want to say but I'm confused about how to say it in English." (MZ, interview)

This statement clearly shows that the main problem is not the idea itself, but the ability to express that idea in English. This situation can make students feel stuck and unsure about speaking.

Participant HN also shared a similar experience:

"I'm afraid of making mistakes. Plus my vocabulary is limited, so it's hard to form correct sentences." (HN, interview)

This shows that limited vocabulary makes students hesitate to speak. As a result, they have fewer opportunities to practice speaking English and improve their speaking skills.

Participant JA explained how vocabulary affects her participation:

"Sometimes I already know what I want to say, but I don't know how to say it in English. This makes me hesitate to speak." (JA, interview)

This indicates that vocabulary limitation can lead to hesitation and silence. Even though students have ideas, they may choose not to speak because they are unsure about their language.

She also mentioned that when the topic is academic or scientific, it becomes even more difficult because she does not know the specific terms. This shows that topic difficulty also affects vocabulary challenges.

Participant AF also explained:

"When there is a lot of new vocabulary, I get confused and it slows down my understanding." (AF, interview)

This means that vocabulary problems not only affect speaking, but also understanding the discussion.

Participant ENR said that if she does not know the vocabulary, she cannot speak at all. Participant DSN also mentioned that she knows what she wants to say, but cannot express it. Participant AD stated that vocabulary is the biggest problem for him, and Participant FI added that vocabulary and pronunciation problems make her stop speaking.

From these findings, it can be understood that limited vocabulary is a major barrier in speaking English. It affects students' ability to express ideas, reduces confidence, and sometimes makes them stop participating completely.

b. Fear of Mistakes and Negative Evaluation

The second challenge is related to students' feelings and emotions. Many participants said that they are afraid of making mistakes and being judged by others when speaking English.

Participant IF stated:

"I'm afraid of being judged badly by friends if my English is wrong. Sometimes I feel embarrassed if someone speaks incorrectly." (IF, interview)

This shows that students are very sensitive to how others see them. They worry that mistakes will make them look less capable.

Participant SR shared her experience:

"I remember staying quiet during a discussion because I was afraid my pronunciation was wrong. After that, I felt disappointed in myself." (SR, interview)

This indicates that fear can lead to silence, and silence can later cause negative feelings like disappointment.

Participant FI also explained:

"When I am not sure about my answer or when I think my English is not good enough, I feel judged." (FI, interview)

This shows that even when no one actually judges them, students may still feel judged because of their own insecurity.

Participant AD added:

"I doubt my English ability. I worry about my grammar and pronunciation, so I hesitate a lot. I often overthink before speaking and sometimes don't speak at all." (AD, interview)

This statement clearly shows that overthinking can stop students from speaking completely.

Participant ENR also mentioned that she prefers to stay silent because she is afraid of making mistakes. Participant JA said that she sometimes feels insecure

when others speak more fluently. Participant MZ also feels embarrassed when he is in a group with more fluent students.

From these findings, it can be concluded that fear of mistakes and negative evaluation is a strong psychological barrier. It reduces students' willingness to speak and can make them avoid participation.

c. Unequal Participation

The third challenge is related to group dynamics, especially unequal participation among group members.

Participant AN stated:

"Some members are passive. They are quieter than they speak. Not everyone uses English either." (AN, interview)

This shows that not all students actively participate in discussions. Some students remain silent or use their first language instead of English.

Participant AN also explained that when he speaks English but others respond in Indonesian, it feels unbalanced. This situation can reduce motivation to continue speaking in English.

Participant SR added that sometimes certain members dominate the discussion. This makes it difficult for others to contribute because they do not get enough opportunity to speak.

Participant AD explained:

"It makes me feel less confident over time because I don't practice speaking, and I feel left behind." (AD, interview)

This shows that unequal participation can negatively affect students' confidence because they do not get enough practice.

Participant FI also mentioned that she sometimes feels left behind because she cannot keep up with the discussion.

From these findings, it can be understood that group imbalance can limit students' speaking opportunities, which may reduce their opportunities to practice speaking English and participate actively in discussions.

C. Students' Strategies to Overcome Difficulties

The third focus of this study is to identify the strategies that students use to overcome the challenges they face during group discussions. Based on the data analysis, three main strategies were found: preparation before discussion, simplification of language, and using peer support.

a. Preparation Strategy

One of the most common strategies used by students is preparation before the discussion. Many students said that preparing helps them feel more ready and less nervous.

Participant HN stated:

"I prepare myself before speaking. Preparing vocabulary and understanding the topic." (HN, interview)

This shows that preparation helps students organize their ideas, expand their vocabulary, and participate more actively in speaking activities.

Participant JA also said:

"The most helpful thing is preparing the material and vocabulary because it makes me more ready and less afraid." (JA, interview)

This indicates that preparation can make students more ready to communicate in English during discussions

Participant AN explained his strategy in detail:

"I usually prepare first. If there is a vocabulary limitation, I search for words before speaking. I also arrange what I want to say, including phrases, so my speaking is not messy. I make notes and highlight important points so I don't forget." (AN, interview)

This shows that preparation can be done in many ways, such as searching vocabulary, organizing ideas, and taking notes.

Participant SR also prepared by learning vocabulary, speaking slowly, and using positive self-talk. This shows that preparation is not only about language, but also about mental readiness.

Overall, this finding shows that preparation enables students to express their ideas more clearly during group discussions.

b. Simplification Strategy

Another strategy used by students is simplifying their language. This means using simple words and sentences to keep communicating.

Participant MZ stated:

"Usually, I use simpler vocabulary to explain my ideas. Even if it's not advanced English, I can still communicate." (MZ, interview)

This shows that students do not need perfect English to communicate effectively.

Participant AF also said:

"I try to keep speaking using the words I know, or ask for help from friends. I prepare ideas before speaking and simplify my sentences." (AF, interview)

Participant AD mentioned that simple vocabulary helps him continue speaking. Participant DSN and SR also used similar strategies, including explaining ideas in a different way or mixing languages when necessary.

From these findings, it can be understood that simplification simplification helps students continue speaking English even when they have limited vocabulary. As a result, they can keep practicing and gradually improve their speaking skills.

c. Peer Support Strategy

The last strategy is using peer support. Many students said that they ask for help from their friends when they face difficulties.

Participant JA explained:

"They usually give hints, gestures, or help me find words. Sometimes they also encourage me, so I can continue speaking even when I get stuck." (JA, interview)

This shows that peer support helps students continue speaking even when they face problems.

Other participants like AF, DSN, MZ, AN, and HN also mentioned that they ask for help from friends.

This finding shows that peer support provides students with immediate help during discussions, allowing them to continue speaking, learn new vocabulary, and

practice English more actively. These interactions contribute to the improvement of their speaking skills

A. Discussion

This section explains the main findings of the study by connecting them with the theories that were explained in Chapter II. The discussion is based on the three research questions and focuses on the main themes that appeared from the participants' experiences during group discussions.

1. Students' Perceptions of Group Discussions

The findings of this study indicate that eight out of twelve participants expressed mainly positive perceptions of group discussions in improving their English speaking skills. This finding was based on the analysis of the participants' interview responses. The participants described group discussions as providing opportunities to practice speaking, interact with classmates, exchange ideas, and participate in a more comfortable learning environment. However, the findings also show that not all participants experienced group discussions in the same way. Two participants expressed negative perceptions, while two others demonstrated mixed perceptions. These differences were related to challenges such as limited vocabulary, difficulty expressing ideas, anxiety about making mistakes, and unequal opportunities to participate. Therefore, the findings suggest that group discussions were generally perceived positively by the participants, although their experiences varied depending on the challenges they encountered.

One important reason for the positive perceptions was that group discussions provided participants with more opportunities to practice speaking English. During

the discussions, participants could express their opinions, ask questions, respond to their classmates, and exchange ideas using English. These activities allowed them to actively use English rather than only receive information from the lecturer. This finding is consistent with Zuhro and Setia Budi (2024), who found that students viewed small group discussion positively because it provided opportunities for interaction and speaking practice. Similarly, Patricia et al. (2024) found that small group discussion could improve students' speaking performance by providing opportunities for oral communication. Therefore, the speaking practice provided through group discussions may have contributed to the participants' positive perceptions in the present study.

In addition to speaking practice, peer interaction and support were important aspects of the participants' positive experiences. During group discussions, participants could share ideas, listen to their classmates, and ask for help when they experienced difficulties in expressing their thoughts or finding appropriate vocabulary. This finding is consistent with Mawsally et al. (2026), who found that peer support, equal speaking opportunities, positive interaction, and clear role distribution were important aspects of students' experiences in small group discussion. The present findings similarly suggest that interaction with classmates could help participants participate more actively and feel supported during speaking activities.

Another aspect of the participants' positive perceptions was the more manageable and comfortable environment created by small-group interaction. Some participants felt that speaking in a small group was easier than speaking in

front of the entire class because they could communicate with a smaller number of classmates. This finding is in line with Elsani and Fahriany (2025), who found that small group discussion could support students' motivation and participation in speaking activities. Prawitna et al. (2026) also reported that small group discussion supported students' speaking skills, motivation, and participation. These findings indicate that a supportive and manageable discussion environment may encourage students to participate more actively in English-speaking activities.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that group discussions did not provide the same experience for all participants. Two participants expressed negative perceptions, while two others demonstrated mixed perceptions. Some participants continued to experience difficulties related to limited vocabulary, difficulty expressing ideas, anxiety about making mistakes, and limited opportunities to participate. These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter II. Daflizar (2024) found that speaking anxiety among Indonesian tertiary EFL students was related to students' self-perceived speaking skills and vocabulary proficiency. In addition, Mawsally et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of equal speaking opportunities and clear role distribution in creating positive small-group discussion experiences. Que et al. (2024) also found that Indonesian EFL students experienced speaking anxiety related to nervousness, fear of negative evaluation, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and low confidence. Thus, the negative and mixed perceptions found in the present study may be related not to group discussion itself, but to the difficulties that some participants experienced while participating in the activity.

Overall, the findings indicate that group discussions were generally perceived positively by the participants because they provided opportunities for speaking practice, peer interaction, support, and participation in a more manageable learning environment. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Zuhro and Setia Budi (2024), Elsani and Fahriany (2025), Mawsally et al. (2026), and Prawitna et al. (2026), which highlight the benefits of small group discussion for interaction, motivation, participation, and speaking development. However, the present study also demonstrates that students' experiences were not completely uniform. Therefore, group discussion can support English-speaking development more effectively when students receive sufficient opportunities to participate, supportive peer interaction, and a balanced distribution of speaking opportunities.

2. Challenges Faced During Group Discussions

The second research question explored the challenges experienced by students during group discussions in improving their English speaking skills. The findings indicate that the participants experienced three main types of challenges: language-related difficulties, psychological difficulties, and group-related difficulties. Language-related difficulties were mainly related to limited vocabulary and difficulties in expressing ideas. Psychological difficulties included fear of making mistakes and being negatively evaluated by others. Meanwhile, group-related difficulties involved unequal participation and differences in students' confidence and willingness to participate. These challenges sometimes limited the participants' opportunities to speak and participate actively during group discussions.

The first challenge identified in the findings was limited vocabulary. Several participants explained that they sometimes had ideas to express but could not find the appropriate English words. As a result, they hesitated, spoke less, or remained silent during discussions. This finding is consistent with Daflizar (2024), who found that vocabulary proficiency was related to Indonesian EFL students' self-perceived speaking skills and speaking anxiety. Farah (2024) also found that Indonesian university students experienced speaking difficulties related to limited vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, and low motivation. Therefore, the difficulty in finding appropriate vocabulary may have affected the participants' ability and willingness to express their ideas during group discussions.

The second challenge was psychological difficulty, particularly fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation. Several participants reported feeling nervous when speaking English because they were worried about making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes and being judged by their classmates. This finding is consistent with Que et al. (2024), who found that Indonesian EFL students experienced speaking anxiety related to nervousness, fear of negative evaluation, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and low confidence. Farah (2024) similarly identified fear of making mistakes and low motivation as factors that could contribute to students' speaking difficulties. These findings suggest that students' emotional conditions can influence their willingness to speak, even when they have ideas to contribute to the discussion.

The third challenge was unequal participation among group members. Some participants reported that certain students tended to dominate the discussion, while

others remained quiet or had fewer opportunities to speak. As a result, not all participants received the same amount of opportunity to practice English. This finding is consistent with Mawsally et al. (2026), who emphasized that equal speaking opportunities, peer support, and clear group roles are important features of positive small-group discussion experiences. When participation is not balanced, students who are less confident or less active may have fewer opportunities to practice speaking, which can reduce the benefits they receive from group discussions.

Beyond unequal participation, the findings also indicate that students' confidence, preparation, and relationships with group members could influence their experiences during group discussions. Utari (2024) found that students experienced challenges such as lack of confidence, insufficient knowledge of the discussion topic, and unsupportive group members. Similarly, Tristasari and Yuliati (2025) reported that students' speaking difficulties were associated with linguistic problems, limited opportunities for practice, and fear of making mistakes. These findings suggest that challenges in group discussions are not caused only by students' language limitations but can also be influenced by psychological and group-related factors.

Overall, the findings show that the challenges experienced during group discussions were mainly related to language, psychological factors, and group interaction. Limited vocabulary could make it difficult for participants to express their ideas, while fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation could reduce their willingness to speak. At the same time, unequal participation and unsupportive

group conditions could limit their opportunities to practice English. Therefore, the challenges found in this study do not necessarily indicate that group discussion is ineffective. Rather, they demonstrate that the effectiveness of group discussion depends on students' language ability, confidence, peer interaction, and the way the discussion is organized. Creating a supportive environment and providing equal opportunities to participate may help students overcome these challenges and make better use of group discussions for developing their English speaking skills.

3. Students' Strategies to Overcome the Challenges

The third research question explored the strategies used by students to overcome the challenges they experienced during group discussions. The findings indicate that the participants used several strategies to deal with their speaking difficulties, particularly preparation before the discussion, simplifying their language during communication, and seeking support from their peers. These strategies enabled the participants to remain engaged in the discussions despite difficulties with vocabulary, expressing ideas, and speaking confidently.

The first strategy identified in the findings was preparation before the discussion. Several participants explained that they prepared by reading the discussion topic, learning relevant vocabulary, and organizing their ideas before speaking. This preparation helped them understand the topic and become more ready to express their opinions. It also reduced hesitation because they had already considered what they wanted to say before the discussion began. This finding is consistent with Mawsally et al. (2026), who found that students used small-group discussions as a preparation space to understand the material, exchange ideas,

rehearse their speaking, and prepare for oral performance. Therefore, preparation can help students feel more prepared and reduce uncertainty when participating in English-speaking activities.

The second strategy was simplifying language. When participants could not remember a particular vocabulary item or grammatical structure, they used simpler words and shorter sentences to communicate their ideas. Some participants also explained their ideas in different ways when they did not know the exact English expression. This strategy allowed them to continue the conversation rather than remain silent because of their language limitations. This finding is consistent with Lestari and Andiansyah (2024), who explain that EFL learners use communication strategies to manage communication problems and maintain interaction when their English ability is limited. Thus, simplifying language can help students maintain communication and continue practicing English even when they have limited vocabulary or grammatical knowledge.

The third strategy was seeking peer support. Several participants reported that they asked their classmates for help when they had difficulty finding vocabulary, expressing an idea, or understanding part of the discussion. Their classmates sometimes provided words, explanations, or encouragement that helped them continue speaking. This finding is consistent with Mawsally et al. (2026), who found that peer support and positive interaction helped students participate more actively and feel more prepared during speaking activities. Therefore, peer support not only helped participants solve immediate communication problems but also encouraged them to remain involved in the discussion.

These findings can also be understood in relation to the broader literature on overcoming speaking difficulties. Que et al. (2024) found that Indonesian EFL students used regular practice, relaxation, and positive thinking to manage speaking anxiety and become more willing to participate in English-speaking activities. Dilasani et al. (2025) also found that positive teacher emotional support could contribute to students' confidence and motivation in developing English-speaking skills. Although these strategies were not identified as the main strategies reported by the participants in the present study, the findings from previous research suggest that emotional and instructional support may complement the strategies identified in this study.

Overall, the findings show that the participants actively responded to the challenges they encountered during group discussions. Preparation helped them organize their ideas and become more ready to speak, simplifying language allowed them to maintain communication despite linguistic limitations, and peer support helped them obtain assistance when they experienced difficulties. These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter II, particularly Mawsally et al. (2026) and Lestari and Andiansyah (2024), which emphasize the importance of preparation, communication strategies, and peer interaction in supporting EFL students' participation. Therefore, the participants' use of these strategies helped them manage their speaking difficulties and make better use of group discussions for developing their English-speaking skills.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study and suggestions based on the findings. The study explored students' perceptions of group discussion in improving English speaking skills, the challenges they faced during group discussions, and the strategies they used to overcome those challenges. The conclusions summarize the main findings of the study, while the suggestions provide recommendations for students, teachers, and future researchers.

A. Conclusions

This study explored students' perceptions of group discussions in improving their English speaking skills, the challenges they experienced during group discussions, and the strategies they used to overcome those challenges. Based on the findings, the conclusions are presented as follows.

First, regarding the students' perceptions of group discussions in improving their English speaking skills, the findings showed that most participants had positive perceptions. Eight out of twelve participants expressed mainly positive perceptions, while two participants had negative perceptions and two participants had mixed perceptions. The participants with positive perceptions viewed group discussions as useful because they provided opportunities to practice speaking English, interact with classmates, exchange ideas, receive feedback, and learn in a supportive environment. Some participants also felt more comfortable speaking in a small group than in front of the whole class. However, the findings showed that

the experience was not the same for all participants. The negative and mixed perceptions were mainly related to limited vocabulary, difficulty expressing ideas, fear of making mistakes, and unequal opportunities to participate. Therefore, group discussions were generally perceived positively, but their benefits depended on factors such as students' vocabulary, preparation, understanding of the topic, peer interaction, and equal participation.

Second, regarding the challenges faced during group discussions, three main challenges were identified: limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation, and unequal participation among group members. Limited vocabulary was the most commonly reported challenge. Some participants had ideas to express but could not find the appropriate English words, which caused hesitation and reduced their participation. In addition, some participants felt nervous because they were afraid of making mistakes or being judged by their classmates. Unequal participation was another challenge, as some group members tended to dominate the discussion while others had fewer opportunities to speak. These findings indicate that students' difficulties were not only related to their English language ability but also to psychological factors and group interaction.

Third, regarding the strategies used to overcome the challenges, the participants used three main strategies: preparation before the discussion, simplifying language during communication, and seeking peer support. Preparation included understanding the discussion topic, reviewing relevant vocabulary, and organizing ideas before speaking. Simplifying language involved using familiar vocabulary, shorter sentences, or alternative ways of expressing ideas when

students could not find appropriate words. Peer support involved asking classmates for vocabulary, clarification, explanations, or encouragement. These strategies helped students continue communicating and participating in group discussions despite their speaking difficulties.

Overall, the findings indicate that group discussion was generally perceived as a useful activity for supporting students' English speaking development. It provided students with opportunities to practice speaking, interact with peers, and participate in a more manageable learning environment. However, group discussion did not automatically provide the same benefits for every student. Its effectiveness was influenced by students' language ability, preparation, confidence, understanding of the topic, peer support, and opportunities to participate. The participants' use of preparation, language simplification, and peer support helped them manage these challenges and remain involved in English-speaking activities.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several suggestions are proposed for English lecturers, students, and future researchers.

1. For English Lecturers

English lecturers are encouraged to continue using group discussions as one of the activities to support students' English speaking development. However, lecturers should organize group discussions in a way that provides equal opportunities for all students to participate. Since unequal participation was identified as one of the challenges, lecturers can assign clear roles, encourage less

active students to contribute, and monitor the distribution of speaking opportunities within groups.

Lecturers are also encouraged to create a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable speaking English and making mistakes. Since fear of mistakes and negative evaluation affected some participants' willingness to speak, lecturers can provide constructive feedback and encourage students to view mistakes as a natural part of learning. Providing discussion topics and relevant vocabulary before the activity may also help students prepare and participate more confidently.

2. For Students

Students are encouraged to prepare before participating in group discussions by understanding the discussion topic, reviewing relevant vocabulary, and organizing their ideas. Preparation can help students feel more ready and confident when expressing their ideas in English.

Students are also encouraged to continue speaking even when they do not know advanced vocabulary or cannot form perfect sentences. Using simple vocabulary and sentences can help them maintain communication and continue practicing English. In addition, students should support their classmates by providing help, encouragement, and positive responses when their peers experience difficulties. Such peer support can create a more comfortable environment for everyone to participate.

3. For Future Researchers

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies with participants from different educational levels, institutions, or learning contexts to obtain broader perspectives on students' experiences with group discussions. Future studies may also examine specific aspects of English speaking skills, such as fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, or comprehension, in greater detail.

Future researchers may also use additional data collection methods, such as classroom observation or questionnaires, to obtain a broader understanding of students' participation and experiences during group discussions. In addition, future studies may investigate how factors such as group size, role distribution, peer interaction, preparation, and equal participation influence students' experiences in group discussions.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A : Appointment Letter of Supervisor



**KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR: 1709 TAHUN 2025**

**TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA**

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

- Menimbang : a. bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
- b. bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
- c. bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- Mengingat : 1. Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
2. Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
3. Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
4. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
5. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
6. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
7. Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
8. Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
9. Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
10. Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Kmk.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
11. Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

MEMUTUSKAN

- Menetapkan : Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.
- KESATU : Menunjuk Saudara :
Dr. Nashriyah, M.A.
- Untuk membimbing Skripsi
- Nama : Kurniatun Ainin
- NIM : 220203107
- Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
- Judul Skripsi : Exploring Students' Perception of Group Discussion in Improving English Speaking Skill
- KEDUA : Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;
- KETIGA : Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025;
- KEEMPAT : Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;
- KELIMA : Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh
Pada tanggal : 22 Desember 2025
Dekan,


Safrul Muluk

Tembusan

1. Sekjen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
2. Dirjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
4. Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
6. Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
7. Yang bersangkutan;
8. Arsip.



Appendix B : Recommendation Letter from *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan* to
Conduct the research



**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN**

Jl. Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921

Nomor : B-2633/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/4/2026

Lamp : -

Hal : *Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa*

Kepada Yth,

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

NIM : 220203107

Nama : KURNIATUN AININ

Program Studi/Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Alamat : Cut muetia no 17 Meudang ara , kec Blangpidie ,kab Aceh barat daya

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul ***EXPLORING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF GROUP DISCUSSION IN BUILDING CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK ENGLISH***

Banda Aceh, 20 April 2026

An. Dekan

Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan



Prof. Dr. Buhori Muslim, M.Ag.

NIP. 197508152001121002

Berlaku sampai : 29 Mei 2026

Appendix C : Confirmation Letter from English Education Department



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS

Jln Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh
Email : pbi.ftk@ar-raniry.ac.id. Website : <https://ar-raniry.ac.id>

SURAT KETERANGAN

Nomor: B-439/Un.08/PBI/Kp.01.2/7/2026

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh menerangkan bahwa yang nama tersebut di bawah ini:

Nama : Kurniatun Ainin
NIM : 220203107
Prodi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Alamat : Blangpidie

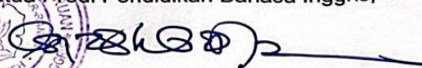
Benar telah melakukan pengumpulan data untuk penelitian pada Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh dalam rangka penyusunan Skripsi yang berjudul:

"Exploring Student Perception of Group Discussion in Improving English Speaking Skill"

Demikianlah Surat Keterangan ini kami buat agar dapat dipergunakan seperlunya.



Banda Aceh, 22 Juli 2026
Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,


Syarifah Dahliana

Appendix D : Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol

Research Project Title : Exploring Student Perceptions of Group Discussion in Improving English Speaking Skills

Time of Interview :
 Date :
 Place :
 Researcher: : Kurniatun Ainin
 Participant Code :
 Position of Participant : Student of English Language Education
 Department, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher
 Training, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

This research aims to explore students' perceptions of group discussion in improving English speaking skills. Specifically, this study investigates how students perceive the use of group discussions in speaking classes, the challenges they encounter during the discussion process, and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges.

The data will be collected through a semi-structured interview. With the participant's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of the data. All information provided by the participant will be kept confidential and used solely for academic research purposes. The participant has the right to decline answering any question or to withdraw from the interview at any time without any negative consequences.

During the interview, the participant will be asked several questions regarding their experiences of participating in group discussions, their perceptions of how group discussions contribute to improving English speaking skills, the difficulties they experience, and the strategies they use to overcome those difficulties.

The interview is expected to last approximately 20–30 minutes.

Interview Questions

1. What are your overall perceptions of using group discussions to improve English speaking skills? Please explain.
2. In your opinion, how does participating in group discussions contribute to improving your English speaking skills?
3. Which aspects of your English speaking skills have improved the most through group discussions? Please explain your experience.
4. Do group discussions provide you with enough opportunities to practice speaking English? Why or why not?
5. How do interactions and feedback from your classmates during group discussions influence your English speaking skills?
6. How does the classroom atmosphere during group discussions affect your willingness to participate in speaking English?
7. What challenges do you usually experience when participating in group discussions in English classes?
8. How do limitations in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, or fluency affect your participation during group discussions? Please explain.
9. Have you ever found it difficult to express your ideas in English during group discussions? Please describe your experience.
10. Do you think unequal participation among group members affects your opportunity to practice speaking English? Why or why not?
11. What strategies do you usually use to overcome the difficulties you experience during group discussions?
12. What kinds of support do your classmates usually provide when you experience difficulties speaking English during group discussions?
13. How do you prepare yourself before participating in a group discussion to improve your speaking performance?
14. Which aspects of your English speaking skills (such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, or expressing ideas) have improved the most through group discussions? Please explain your experience.

LAMPIRAN



