

Problems and needs faced by Pakistani university students when speaking English: A needs analysis approach.

Om Kumar

Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan
omk7341@gmail.com

Mansoor Ahmed Channa

Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan
mansur_ESP@quest.edu.pk

Oksana Ivanovna Aleksandrova

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), Russia
alexandrova-oi@rudn.ru

Ghulam Akbar

Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan
akbarg749@gmail.com

(First received: April 7, 2024; accepted: October 29, 2024)

Abstract

This quantitative study investigated the problems and needs of English-speaking skills among university students at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Nawabshah, Pakistan. A sample of 250 students from various science departments was surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that a significant portion of the students faced difficulties in understanding and using general vocabulary, adapting their language skills to diverse situations, expressing themselves effectively in conversations, conveying complex ideas, and maintaining both short and long conversations. These challenges cut across various age groups and interaction contexts. The study also highlighted that student perceived needs for improvement in several dimensions of their communication skills, including vocabulary usage, adaptability, interaction with different audiences, conveying intricate ideas, and employing technical language. The respondents expressed a strong desire to enhance their speaking abilities, particularly in professional and social settings.

Key words: needs analysis, speaking difficulties, students' needs, speaking needs, university students, English speaking skills.

Resumen

Este estudio cuantitativo abordó problemas y necesidades relacionados con las habilidades del habla en inglés en estudiantes universitarios de Ingeniería, Ciencia y Tecnología en Pakistán. Se encuestó a 250 estudiantes de la Universidad Quaid-e-Awam de varios departamentos de ciencias, utilizando un cuestionario estructurado. Los hallazgos revelaron que un número significativo de estudiantes enfrentaba dificultades para comprender y usar vocabulario general, adaptar sus habilidades lingüísticas a diversas situaciones, expresarse

de manera efectiva en conversaciones, transmitir ideas complejas y mantener conversaciones. Estos desafíos se encontraron en varios grupos de edad y contextos de interacción. El estudio también destacó que los estudiantes percibían necesidades de mejora en varias dimensiones comunicacionales, incluidos el uso del vocabulario, la adaptabilidad, la interacción con diferentes audiencias, la transmisión de ideas intrincadas y el uso del lenguaje técnico. Los encuestados expresaron un fuerte deseo de mejorar sus habilidades para hablar, especialmente en entornos profesionales y sociales.

Palabras claves: análisis de necesidades, dificultades al hablar, necesidades de los estudiantes, necesidades de expresión oral, estudiantes universitarios, habilidades de expresión oral en inglés.

Introduction

English in Pakistan

English is the most widely spoken language in the world, and the official one in over 50 countries (Nishanthi, 2018). In Pakistan, many people speak English as a second language, making it a significant language in the community. Used in government and education, it is one of Pakistan's two official languages, along with Urdu. Pakistan's colonial past has influenced the English language's presence and created an ideology that associates it with status and power (Haidar & Fang, 2019).

In many Pakistani schools, colleges, and universities, English is the language of instruction for courses in subjects like Maths, Science, and Computer Science. In addition, it is the language of the legal system, being present in courts and legal documents. In Pakistan, English is also the primary language of operation for many businesses and organizations, and proficiency in the language is frequently required of job applicants (Aimen & Khadim, 2024; Halo et al., 2024).

Therefore, proficiency in English is essential for Pakistani university students as it allows them to communicate efficiently and engage in their academic and professional endeavours successfully. They can comprehend lectures, take part in group projects and discussions in class, finish homework and tests, and conduct research for their careers. Strong English language proficiency can also benefit students in networking, relationship building, and effective peer and professor communication in a multilingual and multicultural setting. Besides, it enables them to take part in international study programs and research collaborations, as well as access the wealth of knowledge and resources available in English. Additionally, since many professions and industries demand fluency in English, it can improve their chances of landing a job.

Problem statement

This study aims to investigate the problems and needs of students from the Science Faculty at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science, and Technology regarding their speaking skills in English. Despite English being the language of instruction in the Faculty of Science, many students still struggle to speak it fluently.

Objectives

The objectives pursued in this research study have been:

- 1) To investigate the problems faced by students from the Science Faculty at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology (Pakistan) when speaking English in class.
- 2) To identify the speaking needs in English of the Science Faculty students at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan.

Literature Review

Needs Analysis

Needs analysis theory is used to identify the needs of learners in terms of language. It involves identifying the current proficiency level of language the students have and what they want to achieve in order to make progress on their journey from lack of knowledge to mastery of the necessary and desired skills (Khasinah & Elviana, 2022; Dewi & Amariah, 2023). Needs analysis is a process carried out to determine the learners' language and skills development needs in order to achieve their goals. This will entail determining a student's language proficiency level at present, establishing their goals and objectives as well as finding out what language they need to learn so as to accomplish those objectives (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Types of Needs Analysis

Target situation analysis

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) proposed the concept of "necessities, lacks, and wants" in target situation analysis (TSA) as a way to identify the specific language needs of learners in their target situation.

- i. **Necessities:** refer to the language skills and knowledge that students need to possess in order to perform well in their intended environment. These are the fundamental language abilities and knowledge that students must possess in order to carry out the tasks necessary for their career or field.
- ii. **Lacks:** are the language abilities and knowledge that learners currently possess, but are not sufficient for them to function effectively in their target situation.
- iii. **Wants:** refer to the language abilities and knowledge that learners would like to have, but are not essential for them to function effectively in their target situation.

Present situation analysis

Present situation analysis (PSA) is a method for analysing the current situation or context in which a particular piece of written or spoken communication occurs. The goal of PSA is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context in which a piece of communication is produced, in order to inform the development of effective communication strategies (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Hadijah (2014) investigated the speaking ability in English and problems faced by students enrolled in an Islamic Boarding School Program at Stain Samarinda. A mixed methods approach was used, incorporating quantitative data from a speaking test involving 130 students, as well as qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews with selected students who met the criteria. The results showed that the students' ability was classified as low (62.93%), and that the students faced difficulties with grammar (42.20%), pronunciation

(36.60%), vocabulary (35.20%), fluency (36%) and comprehension (34.40%). Reasons for these difficulties included the students' lack of knowledge in the components of speaking skills, as well as personal issues such as shyness, lack of self-confidence, lack of practice, limited preparation time for speaking tests, difficulty in understanding the material found in English textbooks, and a dormitory environment which did not support the use of English as a medium of daily interaction. Moreover, the students preferred to study Islamic content and Arabic, rather than English. This research suggested that students' ability should be increased by providing motivation and teaching them with more suitable and interesting materials in English.

A study conducted by Fitriani, Dea, et al. (2015) at Tanjungpura University in Pontianak, Indonesia in 2015 investigated English speaking issues among students. Questionnaires and video recordings were employed as research instruments, and results demonstrated that students had two main types of difficulties: linguistic and psychological. Grammar was the most prominent linguistic issue (22.16%), while the most prevalent psychological problems were anxiety and lack of self-confidence.

Orang'I (2021) investigated the importance of listening and speaking skills as learning and target needs in a Business English Program for tour guide diploma students in Kenya. The theoretical framework used in the study was based on Munby's (1978) approach and Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Learning-Centred Approach. A descriptive research design was employed and data was collected using questionnaires and interviews and was then statistically analysed using SPSS version 17.0. The results of the study showed that asking and answering questions, expressing oneself, and reacting to speech and lectures were the most important learning needs for speaking skills. Additionally, for listening, the most important needs were obtaining gist and listening for taking notes. As for target needs, speaking with native and non-native speakers, customers, in the office, hotels, airports, travel agencies, tour operations, transportation contexts, and social settings ranked high. Additionally, understanding native and non-native speakers, participating in meetings, presentations, conferences, seminars, discussions, conversations on the phone, and face-to-face conversations were high-ranked target needs for listening.

Channa et al. (2013) conducted research at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan in order to investigate the needs, problems, and wants of Engineering students in using English. The main purposes of this study were to analyse their needs, determine the problems they faced in using English in their academic and professional studies, and explore the students' wants related to the purpose, content and methodology of using English at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan. The findings suggested that there is a need to create an English for specific purposes (ESP) syllabus in order to address language teaching and learning issues and fulfil the needs of learners.

Karnine et al. (2022) aimed to analyse the needs of English language learning skills among undergraduate Engineering students of Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic. A total of 53 students from Electrical and Civil Engineering departments participated in this study, and a survey questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the results, which showed that the students perceived learning English as highly important. The highest needs and order of skills were writing, speaking, listening and reading. However, the students reported facing difficulties with grammar,

pronunciation, idioms and vocabulary, despite their ability level in English being Upper-Intermediate.

Research Methodology

This study is designed as descriptive quantitative research in order to answer the research objectives. Descriptive research is a type of research method that involves the use of techniques such as searching, collecting, classifying, and analysing data in order to describe a phenomenon (Selvamuthu & Das, 2024).

In this research, the population consisted of 250 students of the Faculty of Science of Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology (Pakistan), which has nine departments: Information Technology, English, Mathematics, Computer Science, Physics, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Data Science, and Chemistry.

The research tool for this study was a questionnaire made using Google Forms. Google Forms is an online platform for creating surveys. It was chosen because it is easy to use, accessible to respondents, and allows for electronic data collection and storage. The questionnaire was created based on the study objectives and scope. The data collected through the Google Form questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics including frequency, mean and standard deviation. To facilitate the analysis, SPSS was employed.

This research analyses the problems faced by students from the Science Faculty of Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology when speaking in English and to identify the language needs that they have in order to improve such speaking skills.

Results and Findings

The findings cover the results of the questionnaire, which are divided into three parts. The first part is about the student's personal information, the second part presents the speaking skills problems and the third part is about the student's needs for speaking skills in English.

1. Demographic information

Table 1. Gender of the students

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	173	69.2	1.31	.463
Female	77	30.8		
Total	250	100.0		

The above data indicates that there are more male students than female students in the sample.

Table 2. Age of the students

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Under 20	172	68.8	1.31	.464
Over 20	78	31.2		

Total	250	100.0
-------	-----	-------

The data provides the frequency distribution of students' ages into two categories: There are 172 students who are under the age of 20 and 78 students who are over 20 years.

Table 3. Departments

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information Technology	40	16.0	4.42	2.586
English	40	16.0		
Mathematics	10	4.0		
Computer Science	61	24.4		
Physics	19	7.6		
Artificial Intelligence	12	4.8		
Cyber Security	16	6.4		
Data Science	37	14.8		
Chemistry	15	6.0		
Total	250	100.0		

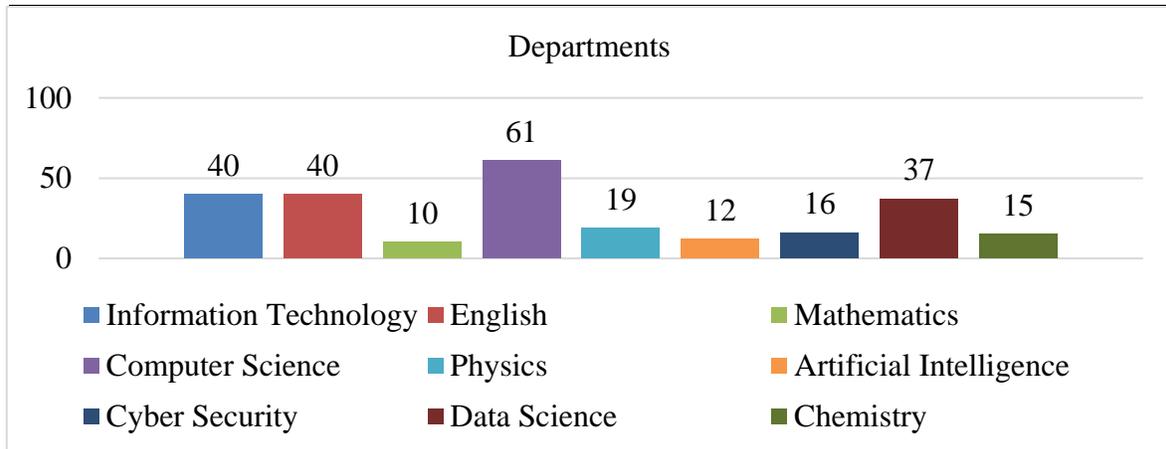


Figure 1. Departmental distribution

The data provides the frequency distribution of students among the nine different university departments.

Table 4. Is English important in your subject teaching?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	226	90.4	1.16	.524
No	7	2.8		
Neutral	17	6.8		
Total	250	100.0		

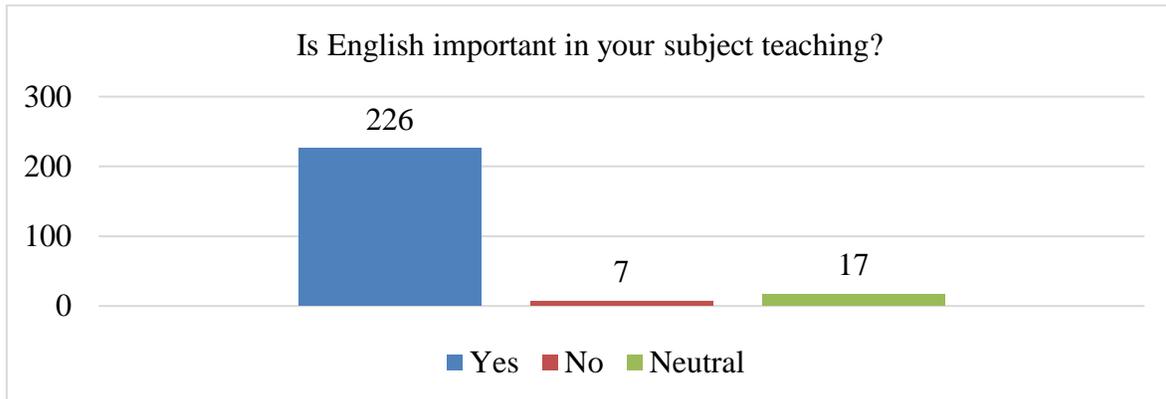


Figure 2. Significance of English in subject teaching

The data provides the frequency distribution of responses to the question regarding the importance of English in subject teaching.

Table 5. If you have answered yes, how often do you use English in the classroom?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Regular	107	42.8	1.91	.907
Often	67	26.8		
Occasionally	68	27.2		
Seldom	8	3.2		
Total	250	100.0		

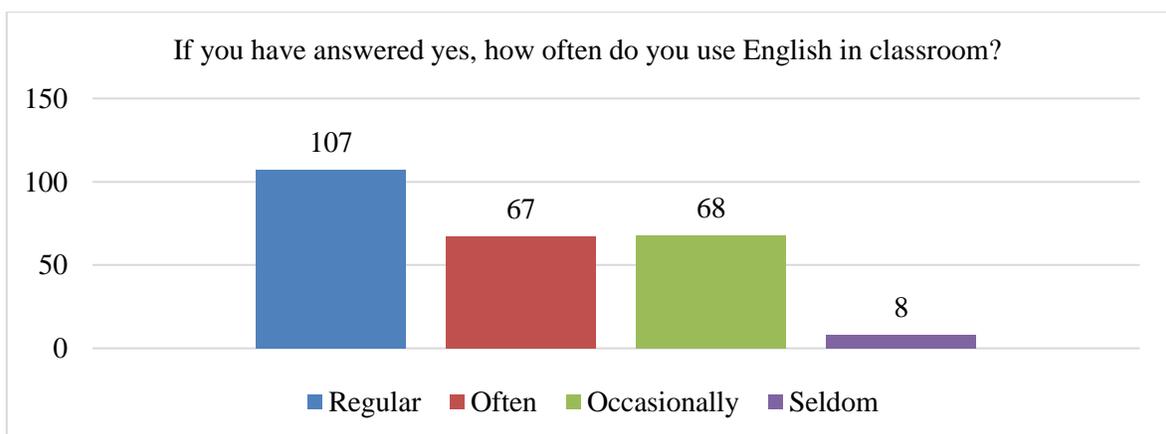


Figure 3. Frequency of English usage in the classroom

The data provides the frequency distribution of responses regarding how often English is used in the classroom among respondents who answered "Yes" to the previous question.

Table 6. Please choose your current level of English proficiency

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Beginner	58	23.2	2.77	1.271
Elementary	47	18.8		
Lower Intermediate	54	21.6		
Upper Intermediate	76	30.4		
Advanced	15	6.0		
Total	250	100.0		

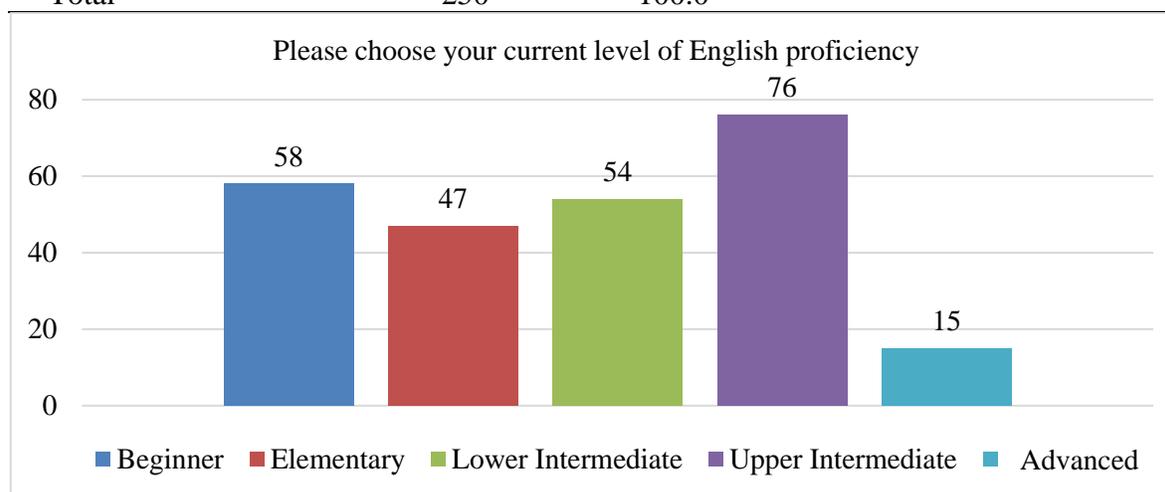


Figure 4. English proficiency self-report

The data reflects the self-reported English proficiency levels of the 250 respondents, categorizing them into five groups: beginners (58 respondents), elementary (47 respondents), lower intermediate (54 respondents), upper intermediate (76 respondents), and advanced (15 respondents). This distribution showcases a varied spectrum of English proficiency levels within the surveyed population, ranging from those at the early stages of learning to individuals with advanced language skills.

2. Problems with speaking skills

Table 7. Do you find it difficult to understand and use general vocabulary?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	51	20.4	2.39	1.056
Agree	98	39.2		
Neutral	63	25.2		
Disagree	28	11.2		

Strongly Disagree	10	4.0
Total	250	100.0

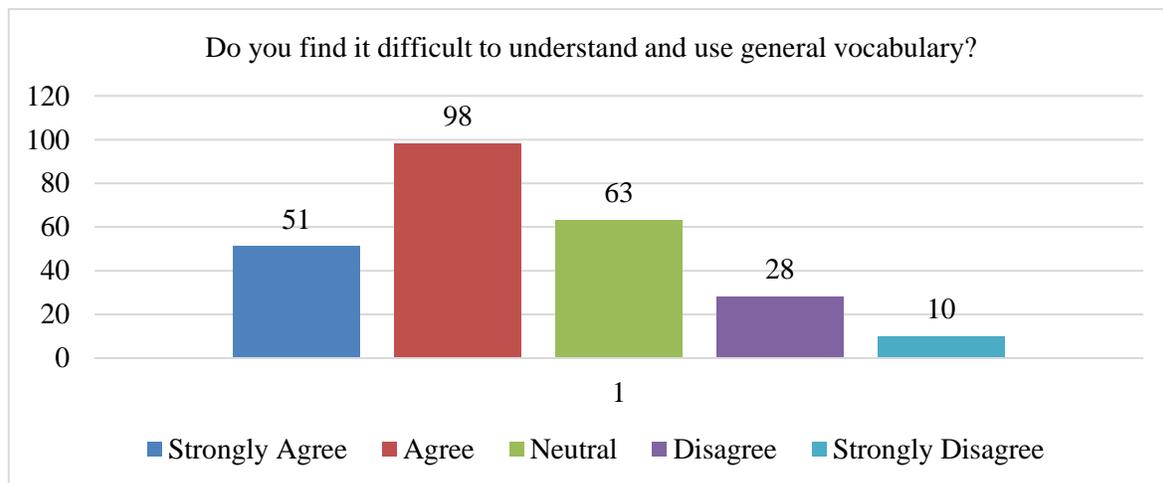


Figure 5. Difficulty in General Vocabulary Comprehension

The data presents a snapshot of respondents' perceptions regarding the ease or difficulty of understanding and using general vocabulary. Among the 250 respondents, 51 strongly agree that they find it challenging, while 98 simply agree. A considerable portion, 63 respondents, remains neutral on the topic, neither affirming nor negating this difficulty. In contrast, 28 respondents disagree with the notion of finding it difficult, and 10 strongly disagree. This distribution of responses highlights the diverse range of opinions within the surveyed population, shedding light on the varying levels of confidence in understanding and utilising general vocabulary.

Table 8. Do you struggle to express yourself effectively in both short and long conversations?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	64	25.6	2.23	1.010
Agree	100	40.0		
Neutral	57	22.8		
Disagree	23	9.2		
Strongly Disagree	6	2.4		
Total	250	100.0		

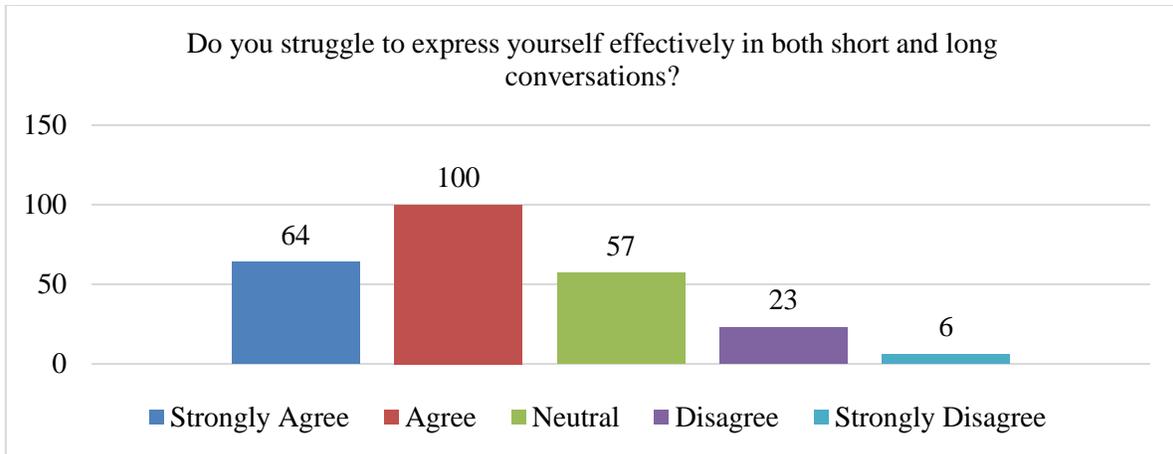


Figure 6. Difficulty in effective communication

The data reflects respondents' perceptions about their ability to express themselves effectively in conversations of varying lengths. Among the 250 respondents, 64 strongly agree that they struggle, while 100 simply agree with this notion. In a significant portion, 57 respondents remain neutral, neither affirming nor negating the challenge of effective self-expression. In contrast, 23 respondents disagree with the idea of struggling, and only 6 strongly disagree. This distribution of responses underscores the diversity of opinions and experiences among the surveyed individuals regarding their proficiency in expressing themselves effectively in both short and long conversations.

Table 9. Do you find it challenging to convey complex ideas or information in your speech?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	64	25.6	2.18	.957
Agree	105	42.0		
Neutral	59	23.6		
Disagree	17	6.8		
Strongly Disagree	5	2.0		
Total	250	100.0		

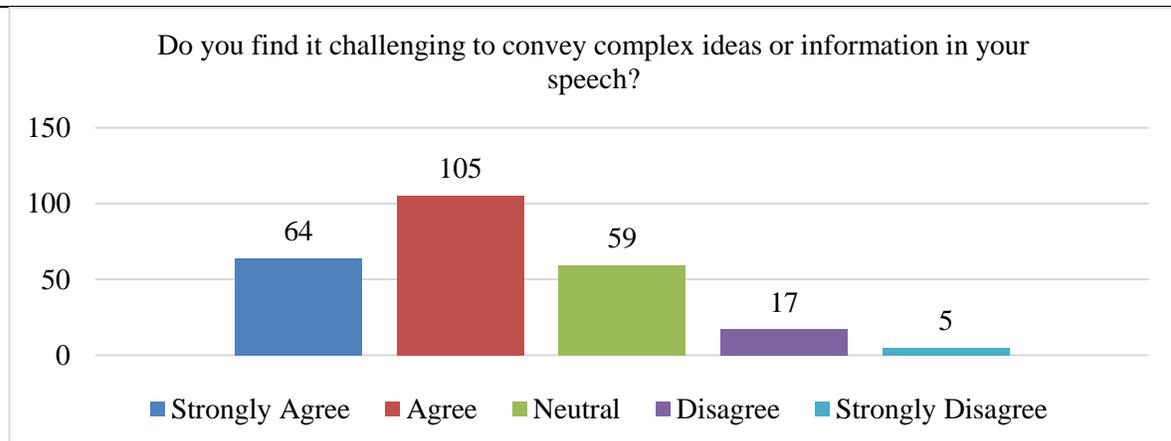


Figure 7. Difficulty in communicating complex ideas or information

The data reflects the respondents' perceptions of the challenges they encounter when conveying complex ideas or information in their speech. Among the 250 respondents, 64 strongly agree that they find it challenging, while 105 simply agree with this notion. A portion of 59 respondents remains neutral, neither affirming nor negating the difficulty of communicating complex ideas. In contrast, 17 respondents disagree with the idea of facing challenges, and only 5 strongly disagree. This distribution of responses highlights the diverse range of opinions and experiences among the surveyed individuals regarding their ability to convey complex information effectively in speech.

Table 10. Do you encounter challenges when speaking in seminars?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	71	28.4	2.12	.981
Agree	109	43.6		
Neutral	46	18.4		
Disagree	18	7.2		
Strongly Disagree	6	2.4		
Total	250	100.0		

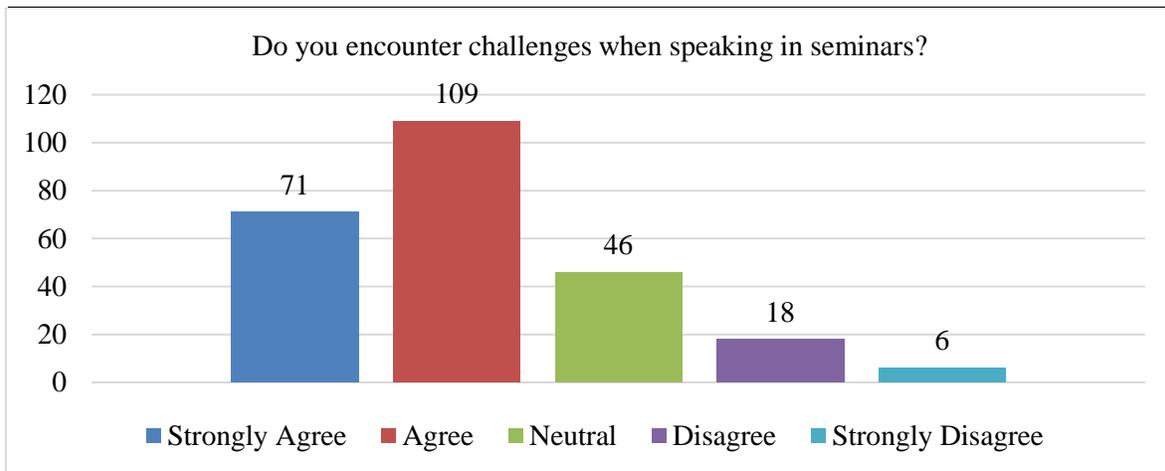


Figure 8. Challenges when speaking in seminars

The data reveals respondents' perceptions of challenges when speaking in seminars. Among the respondents, 71 strongly agree that they face difficulties in seminar presentations, while 109 respondents simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 46 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying these challenges. In contrast, 18 respondents disagree with the idea of facing difficulties, and 6 strongly disagree.

Table 11. Do you have problems when presenting reports in front of the class?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	64	25.6	2.32	1.131

Agree	97	38.8
Neutral	45	18.0
Disagree	32	12.8
Strongly Disagree	12	4.8
Total	250	100.0

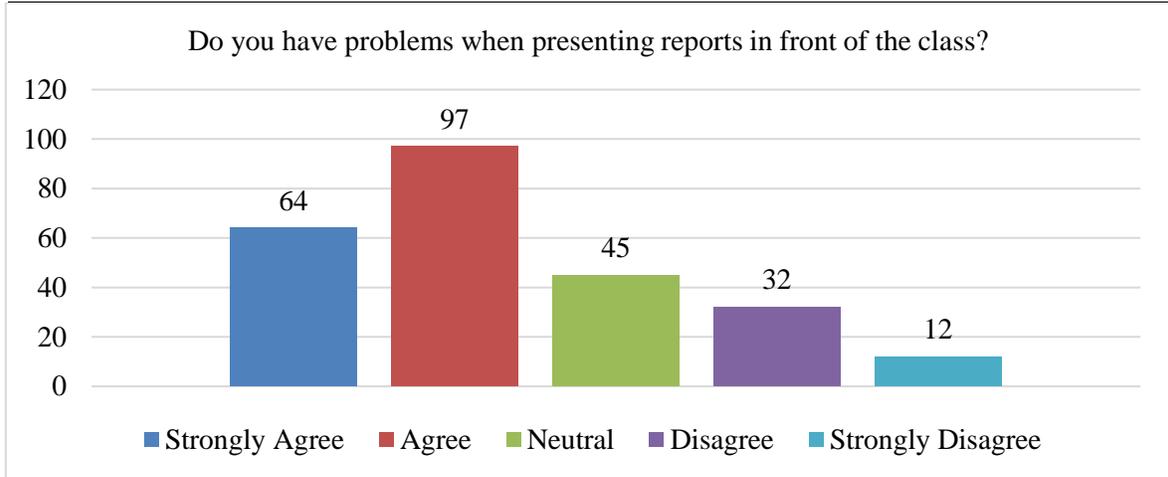


Figure 9. Difficulties in delivering classroom reports

The data reflects respondents' perceptions of challenges when presenting reports in front of their class. Among the respondents, 64 strongly agree that they face difficulties in class presentations, while 97 respondents simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 45 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying challenges in report presentations. In contrast, 32 respondents disagree with the idea of facing difficulties, and 12 strongly disagree.

Table 12. Do you find it challenging to engage in dialogue and discussions?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	57	22.8	2.37	1.098
Agree	96	38.4		
Neutral	57	22.8		
Disagree	28	11.2		
Strongly Disagree	12	4.8		
Total	250	100.0		

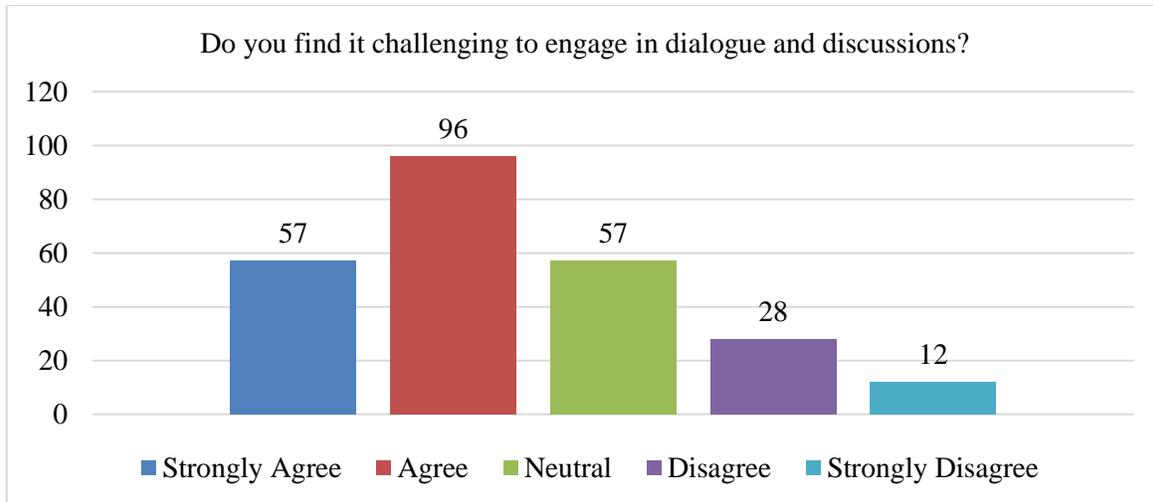


Figure 10. Obstacles in engaging in dialogue and discussions

The data reveals respondents' perceptions of challenges when it comes to engaging in dialogue and discussions. Among the respondents, 57 strongly agree that they find it challenging, while 96 respondents simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 57 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying challenges in engaging in dialogue. In contrast, 28 respondents disagree with the idea of facing difficulties, and 12 strongly disagree. This distribution of responses emphasizes the diversity of opinions and experiences within the surveyed population regarding the challenges encountered when participating in dialogues and discussions.

Table 13. Do you face difficulties in delivering both short and long lectures?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	62	24.8	2.36	1.133
Agree	91	36.4		
Neutral	54	21.6		
Disagree	30	12.0		
Strongly Disagree	13	5.2		
Total	250	100.0		

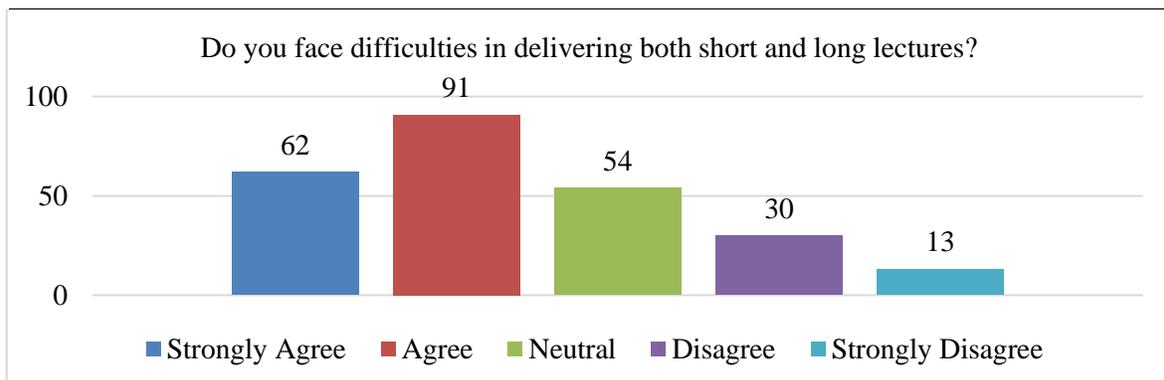


Figure 11. Difficulties encountered in short and long lecture delivery

The data reveals respondents' perceptions of difficulties when delivering both short and long lectures. Among the respondents, 62 strongly agree that they face challenges in lecture delivery, while 91 respondents simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 54 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying difficulties in delivering lectures. In contrast, 30 respondents disagree with the idea of facing difficulties, and 13 strongly disagree.

Table 14. Do you encounter challenges in effectively communicating during viva exams?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	59	23.6	2.42	1.125
Agree	83	33.2		
Neutral	64	25.6		
Disagree	32	12.8		
Strongly Disagree	12	4.8		
Total	250	100.0		

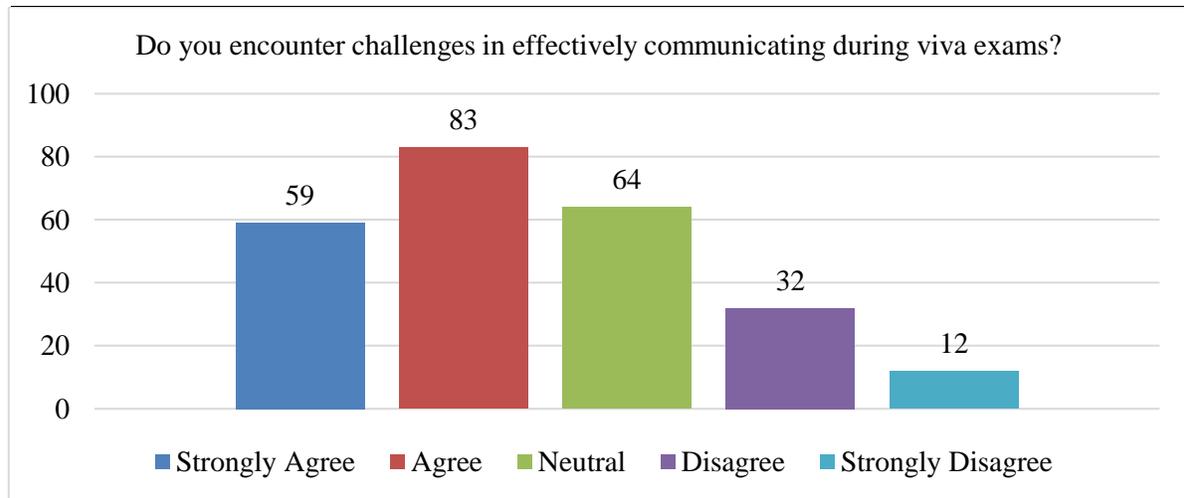


Figure 12. Difficulties encountered in viva exams

The data presents respondents' perceptions of challenges when it comes to effectively communicating during viva exams. Among the respondents, 59 strongly agree that they encounter difficulties, while 83 respondents simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 64 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying challenges in viva exam communication. In contrast, 32 respondents disagree with the idea of facing difficulties, and 12 strongly disagree.

Table 15. Do you have difficulties when dealing with presentations in class?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	57	22.8	2.40	1.123

Agree	93	37.2
Neutral	54	21.6
Disagree	34	13.6
Strongly Disagree	12	4.8
Total	250	100.0

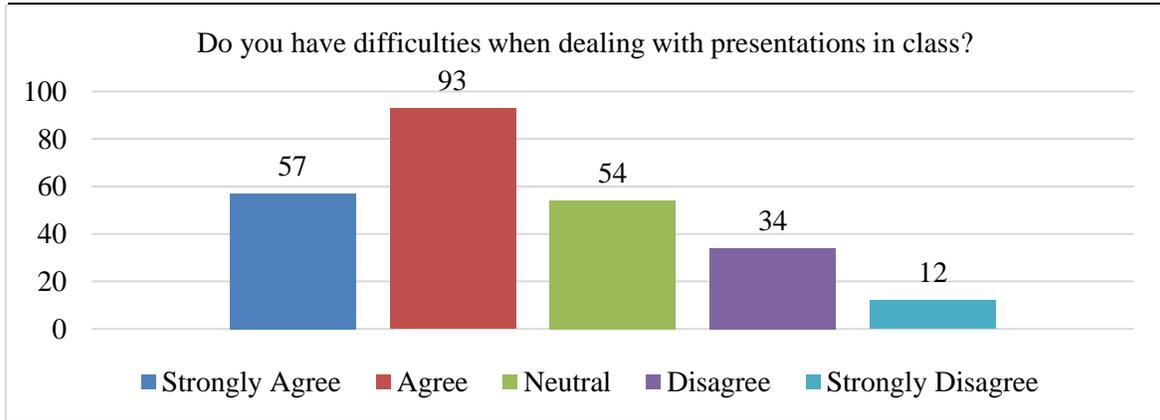


Figure 13. Difficulties when dealing with presentations in class

The data reflects respondents' perceptions of difficulties when dealing with presentations in class. Among the respondents, 57 strongly agree that they encounter challenges, while 93 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 54 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying difficulties in class presentations. In contrast, 34 respondents disagree with the idea of facing challenges in presentations, and 12 strongly disagree.

Table 16. Do you face problems when speaking with your classmates?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	47	18.8	2.79	1.241
Agree	61	24.4		
Neutral	60	24.0		
Disagree	61	24.4		
Strongly Disagree	21	8.4		
Total	250	100.0		

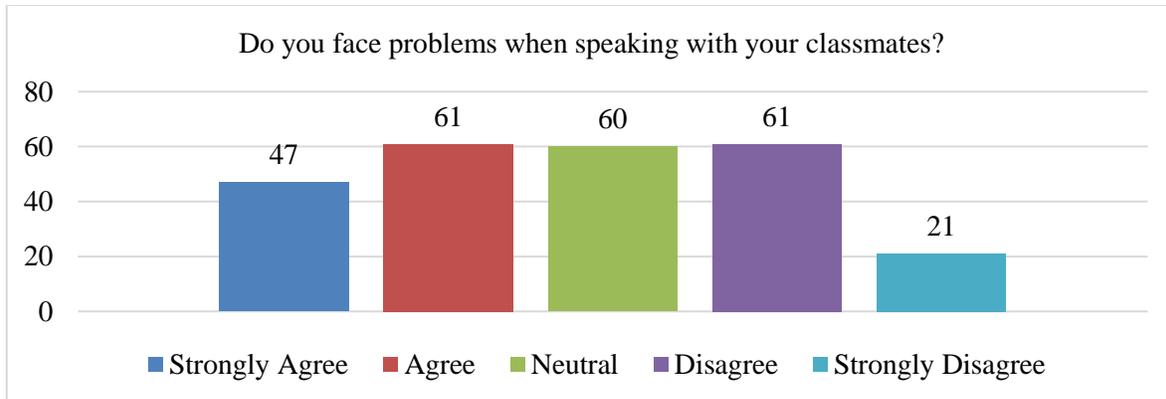


Figure 14. Difficulties encountered in conversations with classmates

The data reveals respondents' perceptions of difficulties when speaking with their classmates. Among the respondents, 47 strongly agree that they face problems, while 61 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 60 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying difficulties in communication with classmates. In contrast, 61 respondents disagree with the idea of facing problems, and 21 strongly disagree.

Table 17. Do you encounter challenges when speaking with your teachers?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	58	23.2	2.43	1.118
Agree	82	32.8		
Neutral	65	26.0		
Disagree	34	13.6		
Strongly Disagree	11	4.4		
Total	250	100.0		

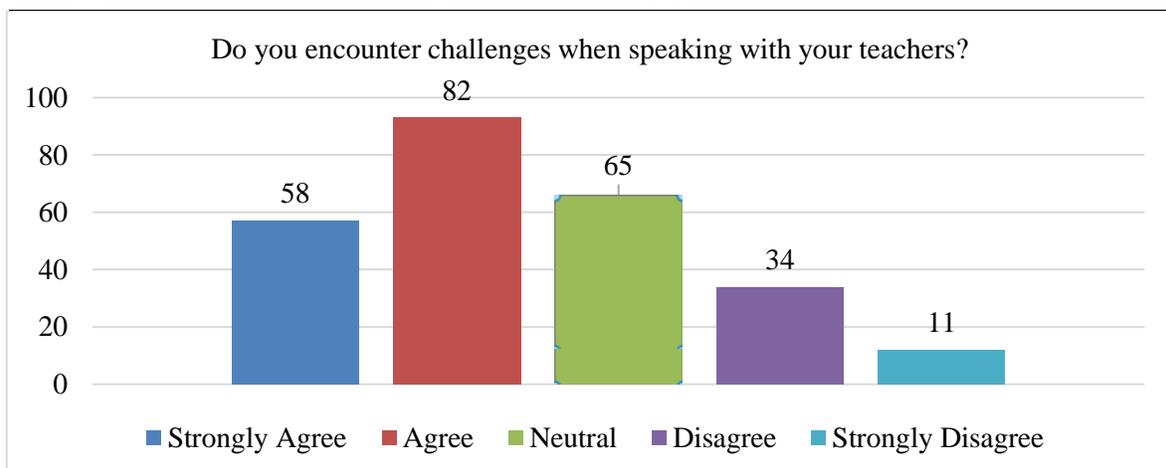


Figure 15. Obstacles faced when interacting with teachers

The data reveals respondents' perceptions of challenges when speaking with their teachers. Among the respondents, 58 strongly agree that they encounter difficulties, while 82 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 65 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying challenges in communication with teachers. In contrast, 34 respondents disagree with the idea of facing difficulties, and 11 strongly disagree.

Table 18. Do you find it challenging to actively participate in discussions?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	52	20.8	2.44	1.115
Agree	97	38.8		
Neutral	53	21.2		
Disagree	36	14.4		
Strongly Disagree	12	4.8		
Total	250	100.0		

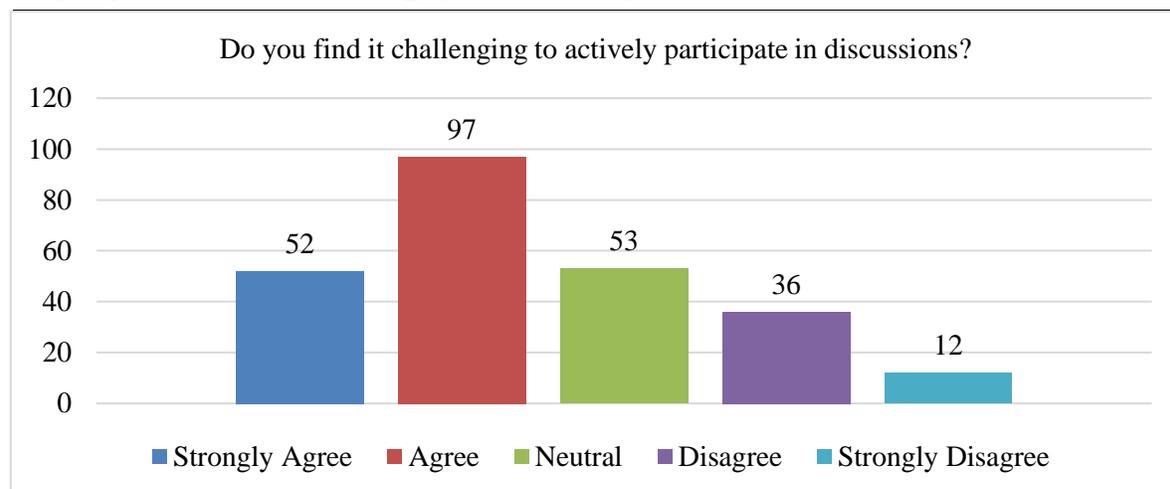


Figure 16. Challenges in active participation in discussions

The data presents respondents' perceptions of challenges when it comes to actively participating in discussions. Among the respondents, 52 strongly agree that they find it challenging, while 97 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 53 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying difficulties in actively participating in discussions. In contrast, 36 respondents disagree with the idea of facing challenges, and 12 strongly disagree.

3. Learners' needs in terms of speaking skills

Table 19. Do you need to improve your general vocabulary?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	110	44.0	1.77	.860
Agree	100	40.0		
Neutral	31	12.4		
Disagree	5	2.0		

Strongly Disagree	4	1.6
Total	250	100.0

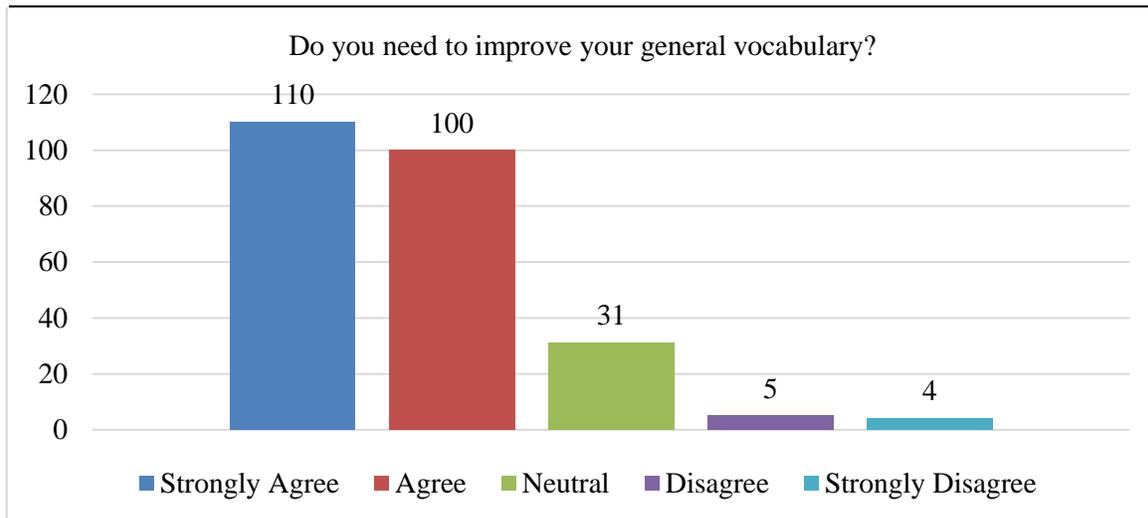


Figure 17. Interest in improving general lexicon

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need for improvement in their general vocabulary. Among the respondents, 110 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 100 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 31 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 5 respondents disagree with the idea of needing improvement, and 4 strongly disagree.

Table 20. Do you need to practice expressing yourself effectively in both short and long conversations?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	92	36.8	1.93	.933
Agree	106	42.4		
Neutral	34	13.6		
Disagree	14	5.6		
Strongly Disagree	4	1.6		
Total	250	100.0		

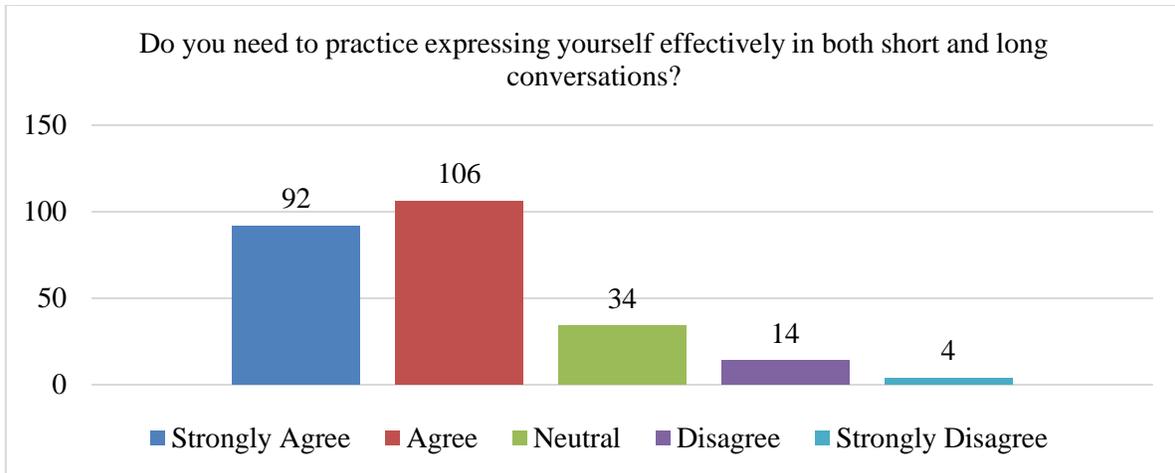


Figure 18. Desire to improve communication in various conversation lengths

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to practice expressing themselves effectively in both short and long conversations. Among the respondents, 92 strongly agree that they need practice, while 106 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 34 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for practice. In contrast, 14 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to practise, and 4 strongly disagree.

Table 21. Do you need to enhance your skills in conveying complex ideas or information in your speech?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	106	42.4	1.80	.866
Agree	103	41.2		
Neutral	31	12.4		
Disagree	6	2.4		
Strongly Disagree	4	1.6		
Total	250	100.0		

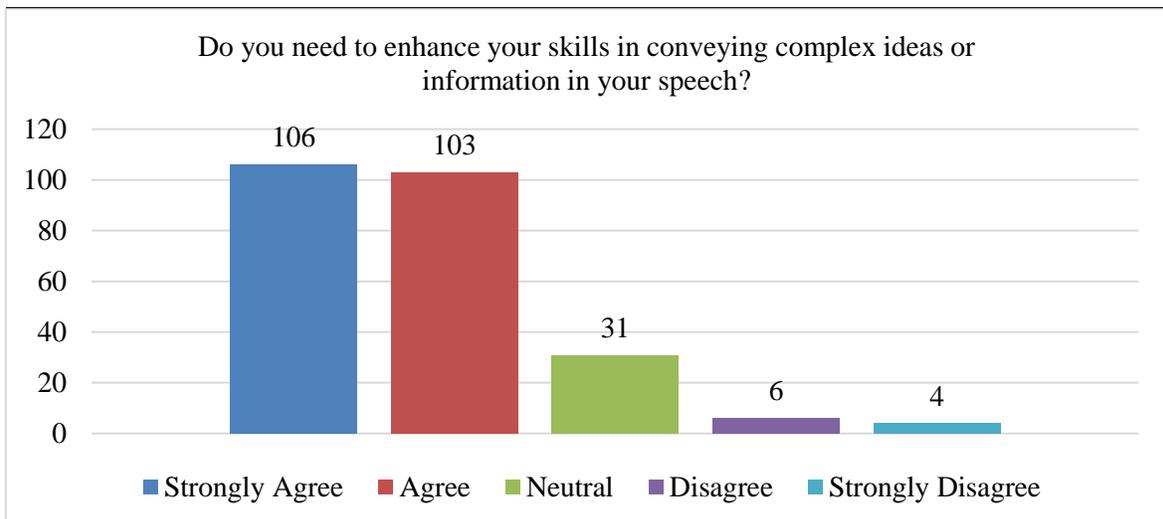


Figure 19. Need to strengthen verbal communication abilities for complex ideas

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to enhance their skills in conveying complex ideas or information in their speech. Among the respondents, 106 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 103 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 31 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 6 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to enhance their skills, and 4 strongly disagree.

Table 22. Do you need to learn and enhance your ability to effectively speak in seminar settings?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	94	37.6	1.92	.925
Agree	102	40.8		
Neutral	40	16.0		
Disagree	9	3.6		
Strongly Disagree	5	2.0		
Total	250	100.0		

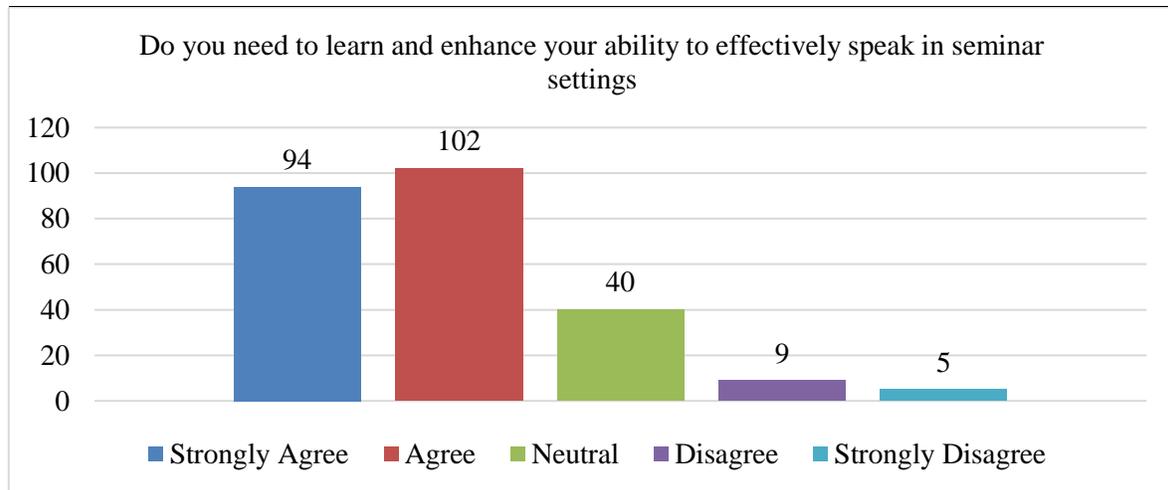


Figure 20. Need to improve speaking skills in seminar settings

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and enhance their ability to effectively speak in seminar settings. Among the respondents, 94 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 102 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 40 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 9 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and enhance their skills for speaking in seminar settings, and 5 strongly disagree.

Table 23. Do you need to learn and improve your skills in presenting reports in front of a class or audience?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	86	34.4	1.95	.921

Agree	110	44.0
Neutral	40	16.0
Disagree	8	3.2
Strongly Disagree	6	2.4
Total	250	100.0

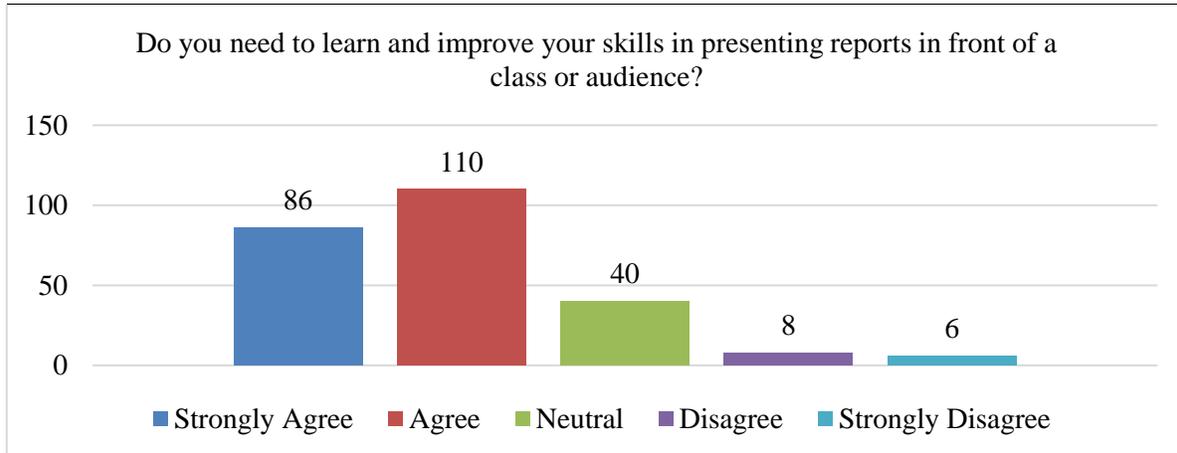


Figure 21. Need to enhance report presentation skills

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and improve their skills in presenting reports in front of a class or audience. Among the respondents, 86 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 110 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 40 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 8 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and improve their presentation skills, and 6 strongly disagree.

Table 24. Do you need to learn and develop your skills in engaging and participating in dialogues effectively?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	81	32.4	1.98	.909
Agree	115	46.0		
Neutral	37	14.8		
Disagree	13	5.2		
Strongly Disagree	4	1.6		
Total	250	100.0		

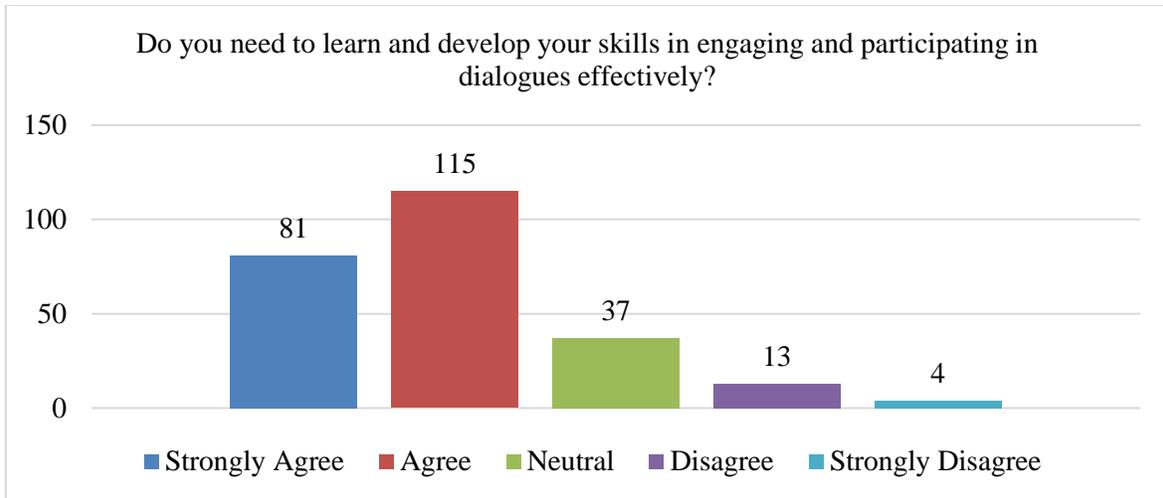


Figure 22. Desire to enhance dialogue engagement skills

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and develop their skills in engaging and participating in dialogues effectively. Among the respondents, 81 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 115 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 37 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 13 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and develop their dialogue skills, and 4 strongly disagree.

Table 25. Do you need to learn and enhance your ability to deliver effective lectures, both short and long?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	87	34.8	2.05	1.044
Agree	98	39.2		
Neutral	40	16.0		
Disagree	16	6.4		
Strongly Disagree	9	3.6		
Total	250	100.0		

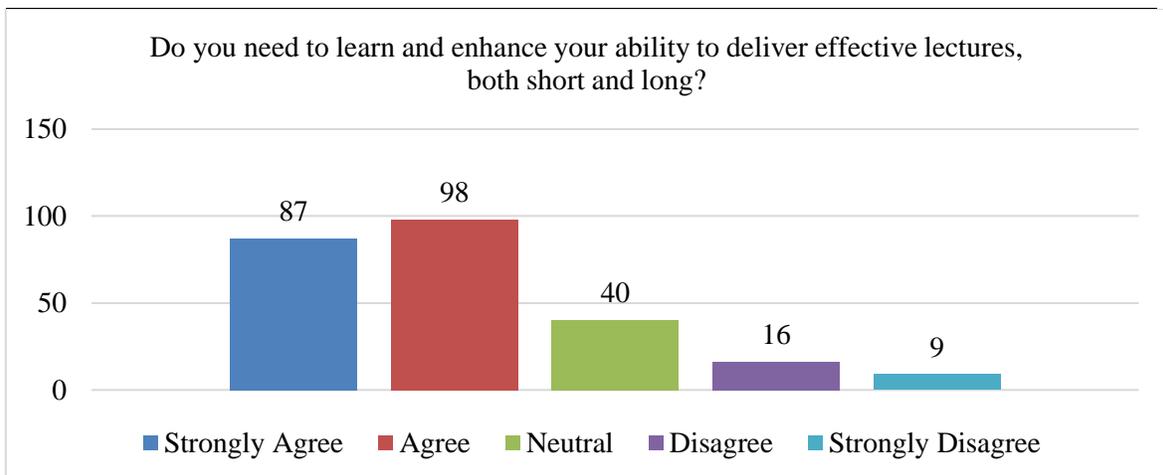


Figure 23. Desire to improve lecture delivery skills

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and enhance their ability to deliver effective lectures, both short and long. Among the respondents, 87 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 98 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 40 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 16 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and enhance their lecture delivery skills, and 9 strongly disagree.

Table 26. Do you need to learn and improve your communication skills for viva exams or oral assessments?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	88	35.2	1.99	.980
Agree	103	41.2		
Neutral	40	16.0		
Disagree	12	4.8		
Strongly Disagree	7	2.8		
Total	250	100.0		

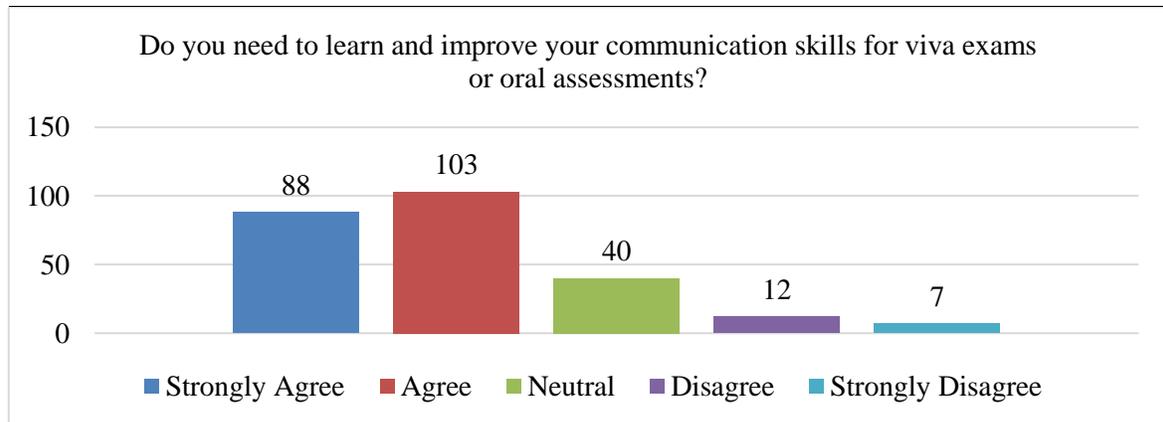


Figure 24. Desire to enhance communication skills for viva exams

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and improve their communication skills for viva exams or oral assessments. Among the respondents, 88 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 103 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 40 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 12 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and enhance their communication skills for viva exams, and 7 strongly disagree.

Table 27. Do you need to learn and improve your skills in delivering presentations in classroom setting?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	85	34.0	1.97	.935
Agree	110	44.0		

Neutral	39	15.6
Disagree	10	4.0
Strongly Disagree	6	2.4
Total	250	100.0

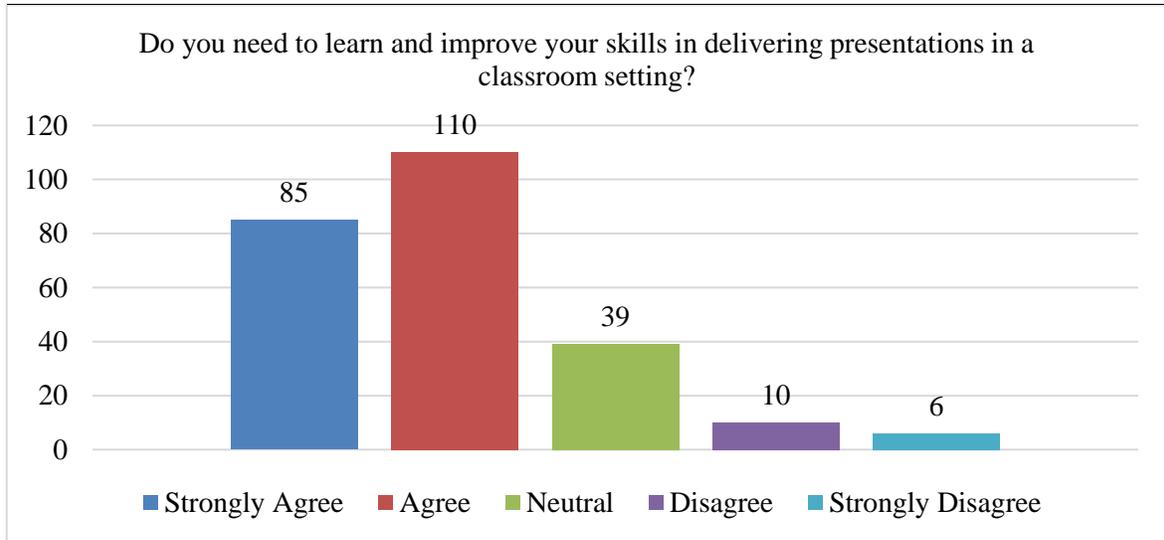


Figure 25. Desire to enhance presentation skills in the classroom

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and improve their skills in delivering presentations in a classroom setting. Among the respondents, 85 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 110 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 39 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 10 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and enhance their presentation skills in a classroom setting, and 6 strongly disagree.

Table 28. Do you need to learn and enhance your communication skills when speaking with your classmates?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	81	32.4	2.15	1.089
Agree	94	37.6		
Neutral	40	16.0		
Disagree	27	10.8		
Strongly Disagree	8	3.2		
Total	250	100.0		

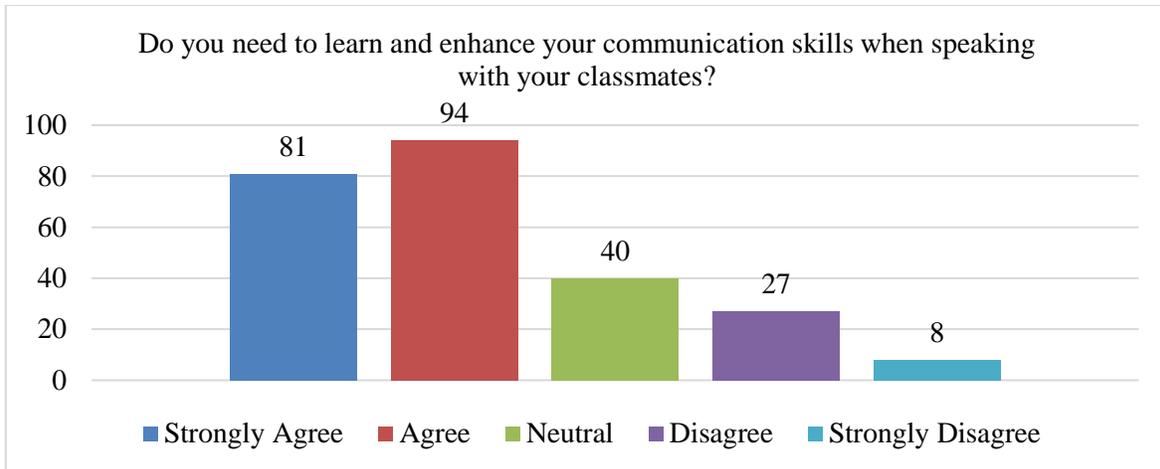


Figure 26. Desire to improve communication skills with classmates

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and enhance their communication skills with classmates. Among the respondents, 81 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 94 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 40 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 27 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and enhance their communication skills when interacting with classmates, and 8 strongly disagree.

Table 29. Do you need to learn and improve your communication skills when speaking with your teachers?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	82	32.8	1.99	0.92
Agree	110	44.0		
Neutral	39	15.6		
Disagree	16	6.4		
Strongly Disagree	3	1.2		
Total	250	100.0		

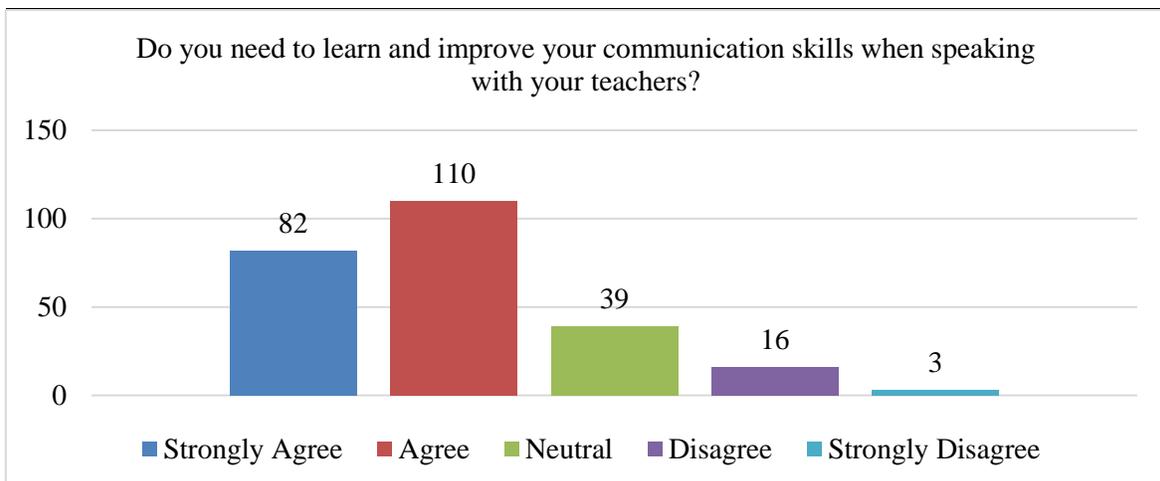


Figure 27. Desire to enhance communication skills with teachers

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and improve their communication skills when speaking with their teachers. Among the respondents, 82 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 110 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 39 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 16 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and enhance their communication skills when interacting with teachers, and 3 strongly disagree.

Table 30. Do you need to learn and enhance your skills in participating in discussions effectively?

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly Agree	86	34.4	1.99	.942
Agree	103	41.2		
Neutral	43	17.2		
Disagree	14	5.6		
Strongly Disagree	4	1.6		
Total	250	100.0		

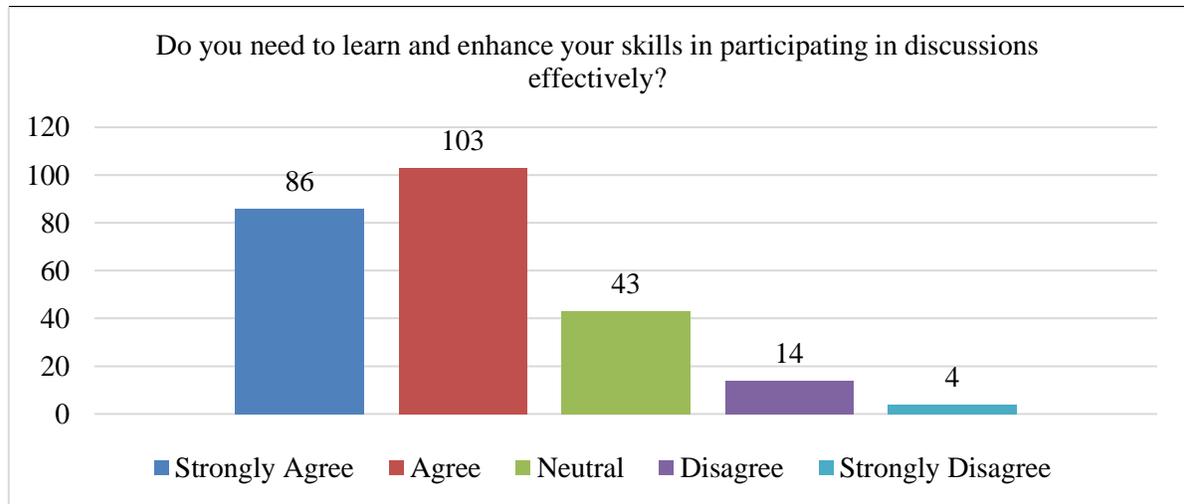


Figure 28. Desire to Improve Discussion Participation Skills

The data reflects respondents' self-perceived need to learn and enhance their skills in participating effectively in discussions. Among the respondents, 86 strongly agree that they need improvement, while 103 simply agree with this notion. Additionally, 43 respondents remain neutral, neither confirming nor denying the need for improvement. In contrast, 14 respondents disagree with the idea of needing to learn and enhance their discussion participation skills, and 4 strongly disagree.

Discussion

In this study, we aimed to investigate the problems faced by students of the Science Faculty at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Nawabshah,

Pakistan, while speaking English in the classroom, and to identify their needs in terms of speaking English. The demographic analysis revealed that the sample consisted of 250 students, with a higher proportion of male students (69.2%) compared to female students (30.8%). The majority of the students were under the age of 20 (68.8%), and the sample represented a diverse range of departments within the Science Faculty.

Students reported difficulties in understanding and using general vocabulary, effectively expressing themselves in both short and long conversations, and conveying complex ideas or information in the spoken language. These challenges may hinder students' ability to communicate effectively in academic and social settings. Difficulties in speaking in seminars, presenting reports, engaging in dialogues and discussions, and delivering lectures further highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance students' public speaking and presentation skills. The reported challenges in effectively communicating during viva exams, dealing with presentations in class, speaking with classmates, and speaking with teachers suggest that students may require additional support and guidance in these specific communication contexts.

Students expressed a strong desire to improve their general vocabulary, practise expressing themselves effectively in both short and long conversations, and enhance their skills in conveying complex ideas or information when speaking in English. These needs indicate a recognition among students of the importance of effective communication skills for academic success and personal development. The desire to learn and enhance their ability to effectively speak in seminar settings, present reports in front of a class or audience, and engage and participate in dialogues further emphasises the need for structured opportunities and support to develop these skills. Additionally, students seek to improve their ability to deliver effective lectures, both short and long, enhance their communication skills for viva exams, and improve their skills in delivering presentations in a classroom setting. These needs suggest that students recognise the value of effective communication in various academic contexts and are eager to develop their abilities in these areas. The expressed desire to learn and enhance communication skills when speaking with classmates and teachers, as well as skills for participating actively in discussions, highlights the importance students place on interpersonal communication and their recognition of the need to improve their abilities in these contexts.

These findings align with previous research in the field, which has identified similar challenges faced by students when speaking English, including linguistic difficulties such as grammar and vocabulary, as well as psychological barriers such as anxiety and lack of confidence (Fitriani, Dea, et al. 2015). Moreover, studies conducted in other educational contexts have also highlighted the importance of speaking skills for academic and professional success, emphasising the need for targeted interventions to address students' speaking needs (Channa et al. 2013; Karnine et al. 2022; Orang'i, 2021).

The implications for language teaching and learning in educational settings are huge as suggested by the results of our investigation. In order to ensure that students improve their speaking skills, educators can come up with more effective language programs and interventions taking into account each student's speech needs and difficulties. Moreover, we advocate that creating a warm learning environment is essential because it encourages students to practise using English.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was aimed at investigating Pakistani university students' problems with speaking English and needs to improve this skill for navigating their studies successfully in their Engineering, Science and Technology courses at Quaid-e-Awam University. The majority of students reported the speaking problems and needs in terms of using general vocabulary, adapting language skills to different situations, expressing themselves effectively in conversations, conveying complex ideas, and maintaining both short and long conversations. Results showed the students' willingness to improve and enhance their speaking skills in English, which has significant implications for language teaching and learning in educational settings, especially at the university level.

Acknowledgments

This publication has been supported by the RUDN University Scientific Projects Grant System, project № 050740–2-000 <<English Teachers' Motivation for Professionalization in Internationally Oriented Universities>>. Peoples' Friendship University of Russian (RUDN University), 6, 117198, Russian Federation.

References

- Aimen, A., & Khadim, U. (2024). Significance of proficiency in the English language within the realm of education in Pakistan. *English Education Journal*, 15(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.24815/eej.v15i1.34863>
- Channa, M. A., Soranastaporn, S., & Engchuan, K. S. (2013). A study of needs, problems and wants of using English of engineering students at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(3), 18–26.
- Dewi, N. N. M., & Amariah, Z. Q. (2023). The function and role of needs analysis in English learning curriculum. *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 2(2), 134–140. <https://doi.org/10.56127/jukim.v2i02.708>
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fitriani, Dea A., Apriliawati, R., & Wardah (2015). A study on student's English speaking problems in speaking performance. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Untan*, 4(9), 1–13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26418/jppk.v4i9.11345>
- Hadijah, S. (2014). Investigating the problems of English speaking of the students of Islamic boarding school program at STAIN Samarinda. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 14(2), 240–247. <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v14i2.16>
- Haidar, S., & Fang, F. (2019). English language in education and globalization: A comparative analysis of the role of English in Pakistan and China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 39(2), 165–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2019.1569892>
- Halo, L. A., Rustamani, S., & Muhammad, N. (2024). Study of linguistic components of Pakistani English: An indigenized English variety. *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 12(1), 287–293. <https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2024.v12i1.2012>
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.

- Karnine, S. M. B. B. V. K. S. V., Preece, A. S. D., & Muhammad, S. S. B. (2022). A Study on needs analysis in English teaching and learning skills for Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic Engineering students pursuing degree. *International Academic Symposium of Social Science 2022*, 63. MDPI. <https://doi.org/10.3390/proceedings2022082063>
- Khasinah, S., & Elviana, E. (2022). Need analysis dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum. *Jurnal MUDARRISUNA Media Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 12(4), 837–850. <https://doi.org/10.22373/jm.v12i4.17208>
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus Design*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nishanthi, R. (2018). The importance of learning English in today's world. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 3(1), 871–874. <https://doi.org/10.31142/ijtsrd19061>
- Orang'i, D. O. (2021). Listening and speaking skills as learning and target needs in Business English program for tour guide diploma students in Kenya. *Joall (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, 6(1), 11–31. <https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v6i1.11437>
- Selvamuthu, D., & Das, D. (2024). Descriptive statistics. In *Introduction to Probability, Statistical Methods, Design of Experiments and Statistical Quality Control*. Springer https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-9363-5_7