

The Correlation between Students' Proficiency Score and Their Speaking Ability

Fitri Ayu Wulandari¹, Bambang Suroso²

^{1,2}Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

DOI:

[10.30595/pssh.v13i.891](https://doi.org/10.30595/pssh.v13i.891)

Submitted:

September 02, 2023

Accepted:

October 29, 2023

Published:

November 14, 2023

Keywords:

Correlation, EPT, Speaking Ability

ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out whether there is a correlation between students' EPT scores and their speaking abilities, using the grades of the 5th semester speaking course on students' study result cards or KHS in the English Language Education Study Program at a private university in Purwokerto. The population of this study were 35 students who had been selected based on students who had taken the Speaking in Academic Communication course and had taken the English Proficiency Test. This study was quantitative with data collection using documents and the instrument was human instrument. Based on the analysis, it was found that the correlation value is 0.196. Therefore, there is no significant correlation between students' EPT scores and their speaking.

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Corresponding Author:

Fitri Ayu Wulandari

Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto

Email: fitriayuwulandari3@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 English Proficiency Test (EPT)

English Proficiency Test (EPT) is a form of English test which consists of listening comprehension, written expression, and reading comprehension. Ability tests or language tests are needed to measure a person's language skills, especially since English still occupies a position as a foreign language in Indonesia. Rahmadani (2019) stated that "In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. Since, in daily life, the environment does not use full English to communicate even in informal or formal situations, except in the special event". However, English is still the most widely used language in various countries. many companies require workers who can speak English, this is also confirmed by Yuyun, et al., (2018) that "In recent years, an increasing use of English as International Language (EIL) has been significantly proved in many fields around the world". Therefore, to respond to the phenomenon many universities implement English proficiency tests for students. One of the study programs at the university in Purwokerto that holds English proficiency is English Language Education Study Program, which is called EPT (English Proficiency Test).

There are several English proficiency tests such as TOEFL, TOIEC, and IELTS. The TOEFL type was utilized at the institution where this study was carried out as the name EPT. The EPT organized by the study program has a minimum score criterion that must be achieved by students, namely 500. This score is used as a condition for taking thesis examinations and for participating in international programs. EPT is carried out on a paper basis and is usually held after each semester's final examination. The EPT consists of three parts, the first is listening comprehension which takes

35 minutes to complete. This section consists of 50 questions divided into three parts, namely part one on Understanding Conversation with 30 questions, part two on Understanding Longer Conversation with eight questions, and part three on Understanding Short Talks with 12 questions.

The audio utilized for the EPT will typically be played once. The second part of EPT is Structure and Written Expression which takes 25 minutes and it is divided into two parts, namely questions about Structure with 15 questions and Written Expression with 25 questions. In the last section, Reading Comprehension, takes 55 minutes to complete. The total time to complete EPT is 115 minutes with a total of 140 questions and a score of 310-677.

TOEFL ITP is used in this institution as the English proficiency test and to determine a person's level of ability in English, therefore The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level is used as explained in Cambridge University Press (2013), Little (2007) stated "The CEFR makes it easier for all of us to talk about language levels reliably and with shared understanding". The following are CEFR Levels:

Tabel 1. CEFR Level

	Level	General description	Cambridge English
Proficient user	C2 Master	Highly proficient – can use English very fluently, precisely and sensitively in most contexts	Cambridge English: Proficiency
	C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	Able to use English fluently and flexibly in a wide range of contexts	Cambridge English: Advanced
Independent user	B2 Vantage	Can use English effectively, with some fluency, in a range of contexts	Cambridge English: First/First for Schools
	B1 Threshold	Can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts	Cambridge English: Preliminary/Preliminary for Schools
Basic user	A2 Waystage	Can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts	Cambridge English: Key/Key for Schools Cambridge English: Flyers
	A1 Breakthrough	Can communicate in basic English with help from the listener	Cambridge English: Movers Cambridge English: Starters

Tabel 2. CEFR Level

CEFR Level	Score TOEFL: ITP
A1	Up to 337
A2	333 – 459
B1	460 – 542
B2	543 – 626
C1	627 – 667
C2	No C2 level for the TOEFL: ITP

1.2 Speaking Ability

However, students, particularly those in the English Language Education Study Program, also undoubtedly face difficulties in learning the four skills of English, namely speaking, reading, writing, and listening. The EPT score is simply one way to determine English language proficiency. Among the four skills, speaking is identified as being the most crucial (Ur, 1996, in Aristy et al., 2019). For students of foreign languages, especially English, speaking is crucial skills because if they cannot master speaking well, it will be difficult to communicate and exchange information. Speaking is a crucial skill for students to possess when learning English as a foreign language (Zainurrahman & Sangaji, 2019). For EFL students speaking is the most important thing and the goal of learning EFL is to be able to speak English. In the EFL context, speaking skill can be considered as a primary skill that the students must have. Saputra and Akib (2020) argued speaking is also a gauge of English speaking competence and a standard for language learners. Therefore, requirements for language learners are not satisfied if pupils cannot master speaking. And if students can master speaking well, then as a language learner they can be said successful in learning English as a second language and are expected to be able to use it continuously to hone their speaking skills in English.

To measure students' speaking ability, a rubric is needed which contains indicators that must be achieved. The rubric will be the teacher's guide in assessing the ability or mastery of speaking in students. Berger, (2011) in Ulker (2017) stated the four main types of evaluation rubrics are as follows:

- a. Checklist is a short list of items created for the assessor and student to use in determining whether each item has been given.
- b. Rating scale - This type of scale is quite similar to a checklist in that it also contains a list of things, but it also has a level that ranges from Strongly Agree to Disagree Completely.
- c. Analytic/descriptive rubric - addresses each criterion in turn, offers scales for a list of components and an explanation for each rating.
- d. A holistic rubric is used to evaluate a project or product in its whole. It summarizes the performance by putting all the criteria into use at once and enabling an overall assessment of the work's quality.

Based on the main objectives to determine qualities that define of spoken English of non - native speaking students of English (Tracing, 2011, in Ulker, 2017), several criteria are needed in the assessment of speaking. Knight (1992) stated there are eight different criteria in speaking:

- a. Grammar (range and accuracy)
- b. Vocabulary (range and accuracy)
- c. Pronunciation (individual sounds, stress, rhythm, intonation, and linking/elision/assimilation)
- d. Fluency (speed of talking, hesitation while speaking, hesitation before speaking)
- e. Conversational skill (topic development, initiative, cohesion, and conversation maintenance)
- f. Sociolinguistic skill (distinguishing register and style, use of cultural references)
- g. Non-verbal (eye-contact and body language)
- h. Content (coherence of arguments and relevance)

In some studies that related to this study such as, Darasawang and Reinders (2021) was found a weak relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC) and second language proficiency and second study by Rahmadani (2019) was found a correlation between students' TOEFL and GPA score, this study will focus to find out whether there is any correlation or not between students' English proficiency score and their speaking ability.

2. Hypothesis

a. Hypothesis 1

There is a significant correlation between students' English Proficiency Test (EPT) score and their speaking ability

- Students who have high English Proficiency score also have high speaking ability score
- Students who have low English Proficiency score also have low speaking ability score

b. Hypothesis 0

There is no a significant correlation between students' English Proficiency Test (EPT) score and their speaking ability.

2. METHOD

This is quantitative research with the correlational design or method This study requires numerical processing data to determine the correlation between two variables, therefore the data in this study will be processed using the SPSS version 26 application for statistical analysis. The data for this study are the form of recording of student EPT scores and student speaking scores especially for speaking in academic communication in KHS (Study Result Card) will be used. Data was collected via Google Form which was distributed via the WhatsApp application by researcher. This research will be carried out at a private university in Purwokerto,

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education , especially English Language Education Study Program. This study involves students of semester 5 of English Language Education Study Program from a university in Purwokerto. The total number of the students is 49 students will be re-selected that only students who participated in EPT and Speaking in Academic Communication class. The participants consisted of students who had attended EPT 1 to 5 times and only a total of 35 students.

In this study data will be taken from documents. The documents include the score of EPT and Speaking in Academic Communication. The documents is in the form of photos or files that will be collected from each participant. The instrument used in this study is the researcher herself or is called a Human Instrument. Moleong (2011) in Sulastri et al. (2020) stated “ Humans as research instruments because humans are the planners, executors of data collection, analysis, interpreters of data, and in the end become reporters of research results”. Therefore, in this study the researchers acted to collect and process data to find results regarding the correlation of two variables, namely the EPT score and Speaking in Academic Communication. The data obtained from the documentation using SPSS 26. The purpose is to find out the correlation between speaking ability and EPT score. In this study, descriptive statistics will be used to determine the average proficiency test score In addition, researchers conducted several data tests such as:

2.1 Normality Test

The purpose of the normality test is to determine if the data is regularly distributed. This normality test uses SPSS which consists of 2 types, namely Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk which have their respective criteria, namely:

1. Participants with a total of > 50 use Kolmogorov Smirnov
2. Participants with a total of < 50 use Shapiro-Wilk

Based on these standards, Shapiro-Wilk was utilized in this study with 35 students as participants, and there are two requirements for the normality test results, namely:

1. Data with a significant score > 0.05 is considered normal.
2. Data with a Significant Score < 0.05 is considered abnormal.

2.2 Linearity Test

The researcher then carried out a linearity test after completing the normality test. Using SPSS 26, this test was done to see if there was a linear relationship between the students' EPT Score and their speaking prowess. In the correlation test, this linearity test is a criterion that comes after the normality test, and Rahmadani (2019) stated that “The data linearity is found whenever the p-output was higher than 0.05, and F-value was lower than F-table”.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Analysis Data of Students' EPT

Students' EPT Score data is summed and averaged according to the number of times they have attended EPT. The range of student EPT scores from the first EPT to the following EPT does not significantly alter, therefore this average figure makes it simpler for researcher to interpret data.

Tabel 3. Data of Students' EPT Score of Class A and B

Student	EPT Score					Average	Rounding
	1	2	3	4	5		
S-1	370	367	353			363.333	363
S-2	423	390	413			408.667	409
S-3	427					427	427
S-4	443	443	337	457	457	427.4	427
S-5	480	500				490	490
S-6	450					450	450
S-7	437	423	440	433	457	433.333	433
S-8	343					343	343
S-9	410					410	410
S-10	480	483	497	380		486.667	487
S-11	480	463	477			473.333	473
S-12	437	430	457	510		441.333	441
S-13	397	400				398.5	399
S-14	337	370	410	430		386.75	387
S-15	457	413	447			439	439
S-16	453	487	493	467		477.667	478
S-17	427	383	337			382.333	382
S-18	453	457	497			469	469
S-19	437	390	393			406.667	407
S-20	360	387				373.5	374
S-21	510					510	510
S-22	387					412.333	412
S-23	443	449				449	449
S-24							
S-25							
S-26	420	443				431.5	432
S-27	430	440	447	413		432.5	433
S-28	460	473	477			470	470
S-29	460	420	477			452.333	452
S-30	417	397				407	407
S-31	407	433	410	410		416.667	417
S-32	440					440	440
S-33	370	387	360	367		372.333	372
S-34	387	430	420			412.333	412
S-35	430	440	387	450		419	419

Based on the CEFR level, students are already at level A2 and B1 as explained in introduction, that is, students are at level A2 (score 333-459), namely "Can Communicate in English within a limited range of contexts" therefore students still have difficulty extending topic of conversation that can be caused by an inability to understand the contents of the conversation or lack of vocabulary. Then students are also at level B1 (Score 460-542), namely "can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts" at this level, students are able to converse more effectively about known topics.

3.2 Analysis Data of Students' Speaking Ability

The researcher lists the students' speaking grades for the Speaking in Academic Communication course from semester 5 in this part. The values collected are values expressed as numbers, which makes it simpler for researchers to enter data into SPSS. The speaking value includes:

Table 4. Value Guideline from The University

Value Range	Letter Value	Classification
86-100	A	Very Good
81<86	A-	
76<81	B+	
71<76	B	Good
66<71	B-	
61<66	C+	
56<61	C	Enough
41<56	D	Not Enough
0<41	E	Failed

Based on the information gathered from students' study result card before, the speaking score statistics have been categorized as follows:

Table 5. Data of Students' Speaking Score of Class A and B

Student	Number Alphabet	
	Number	Alphabet
S-1	6	B
S-2	6.7	B+
S-3	6.7	B+
S-4	7.3	A-
S-5	7.3	A-
S-6	6	B
S-7	6.7	B+
S-8	6.6	B+
S-9	7.3	A-
S-10	6.7	B+
S-11	7.3	A-
S-12	7.3	A-
S-13	7.3	A-
S-14	6.6	B+
S-15	7.3	A-
S-16	7.3	A-
S-17	6.7	B+
S-18	7.3	A-
S-19	6	B
S-20	7.3	A-
S-21	6.6	B+
S-22	6.6	B+
S-23	6.7	B+
S-24	6.7	B+
S-25	7.3	A-
S-26	7.3	A-
S-27	7.3	A-
S-28	7.3	A-
S-29	6.7	B+
S-30	7.3	A-
S-31	7.3	A-
S-32	7.3	A-
S-33	7.3	A-
S-34	7.3	A-
S-35	6	B

From the data above it can be observed that students have a good Speaking in Academic Communication score, no students get a "C" or "Enough" grade. Overall, it can be considered that this university's students are already proficient speakers. According to some of the data collected, pupils got a "A-" rating, indicating that their speaking abilities had improved. According to the data analysis's findings that students already have EPT scores at level A2 and B1 with Speaking scores in good grades. The data that is processed as a result is the average EPT score of the students together with their Speaking in Academic Communication Score.

3.3 Research Findings

I. Assumption test

a. Normality test

The researcher conducted the following normality test carried out via SPSS based on the provided data:

Table 6. Normality Test of English Proficiency Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
EPT	.076	35	.200*	.987	35	.939
Speaking Ability	.334	35	.000	.749	35	.000

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

b. Linearity Test

The researcher conducted a linearity test to find out whether the research data was linear or not.

Table 7. The Result of Linearity Test

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Speaking Ability * EPT	Between Groups	(Combined)	5.534	30	.184	.533	.860
		Linearity	.155	1	.155	.447	.541
		Deviation from Linearity	5.379	29	.185	.536	.857
	Within Groups		1.385	4	.346		
	Total		6.919	34			

As can be observed from the SPSS findings above, the significant value of 0.857 surpasses the linearity test criteria, which must be > 0.05 , indicating that the connection between students' EPT scores (X) and speaking ability (Y) is linear.

II. Hypothesis test

a. The Correlation Between Students' EPT Score And Their Speaking Ability

The next step after the normality and linearity test, the data can be analysed whether there is a correlation or not. To find out the correlation of the data, researcher used SPSS with Rank Spearman as follows:

Table 8. The Result of Correlations Test

Correlations				
			EPT	Speaking
Spearman's rho	EPT	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.150
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.196
		N	35	35
	Speaking	Correlation Coefficient	.150	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.196	.
		N	35	35

From the SPSS results above, the significant value is 0.196 higher than 0.05, so the following hypothesis results can be taken:

1) The Alternative Hypothesis (H_a)

The hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between students' EPT scores and their speaking abilities was rejected. Based on the result that the significant value is more than 0.05, namely 0.196, while the data requirements are said to have a correlation, namely if the significant value < 0.05

2) The Null Hypothesis (H_o)

The hypothesis that there is no a significant correlation between students' EPT score and their speaking ability was accepted. The significant value from the results of the correlation test meets the criterion of > 0.05 , so it can be concluded that there is no significant correlation between students' EPT scores (X) and their speaking abilities.

III. Interpretation of the result

In this section, the researcher provides additional investigation, namely categorized the correlation strength intervals, after doing numerous tests to get the finding that a significant value of 0.196 with The Null Hypothesis was accepted. The above categories include:

Table 9. The Correlation Strength Intervals

Interval	Category
0.00 – 0.199	Very poor correlation
0.20 – 0.399	Poor correlation
0.40 – 0.599	Moderate correlation
0.60 – 0.799	High correlation
0.80 – 1.00	Very high correlation

The results of the previous correlation test were in the range of 0.00 - 0.199, with a very low correlation category, as can be seen from the interval table above. The results of the significant value in this study were 0.196, therefore it can be concluded that the X and Y variables were stated to have a very weak correlation.

DISCUSSION

From all the test results that have been carried out in this study, the results show that there is no significant correlation between students' EPT scores and their speaking abilities using the speaking value in academic communication as explained in chapter 3. The correlation test's findings show a significant value of 0.196, which implies the values are higher than 0.05, while the requirement for correlated data is < 0.05 .

According to the interval of correlation strength, this study's correlation strength was between 0.00 and 0.199, which indicates that it was extremely weak. These two findings support the study's premise, which is that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was rejected while the null hypothesis (H_o) was accepted. With the results of the null hypothesis being accepted, students' EPT scores that have reached levels A2 and B1 as explained in chapter 2, namely students can communicate but in limited contexts (A2) and can communicate in familiar contexts cannot represent students' speaking abilities as well.

Based on the highest score, 517 out of 35 participants, the student's speaking score in academic communication is 6.6 on the KHS. Students who formerly took the EPT and scored 517 had poor speaking scores. As shown in the data table, students with a score of 372 receive a speaking score of 7.3. Therefore, students with high EPT scores do not guarantee that their speaking scores are also high. This also applies to students with low EPT scores, which are typically between 300 and 400.

This result is same as in the previous study, willingness to communicate and second language proficiency by Darasawang and Reinders (2021) stated "speaking is a productive skill" in other hand proficiency assess "receptive skill". However, in contrast to the results of research by Rahmadani (2019) finding a correlation between students' TOEFL and GPA scores, this allows for a correlation because all skills in English are involved in data processing. Meanwhile, this research only takes speaking skills where EPT does not measure speaking so there is little possibility of a correlation, if there is any correlation only occurs in a small amount.

The results which state that there is no significant correlation in the research data, it can be assumed that this can happen because students are not optimal in working on EPT and taking speaking classes in academic communication. In doing EPT students must be able to master three aspects, namely listening comprehension,

structure and written expression, and reading comprehension. If students cannot master one or perhaps 2 skills in EPT, it will certainly cause the EPT score.

Then for the lack of speaking scores it can be caused because students are not optimal in attending classes which include interactions in class, doing assignments, and taking semester exams. Furthermore, the fact that there is no correlation creates this research because EPT does not examine the speaking aspect. EPT only assesses accuracy not fluency, so EPT only evaluates theoretically, not practically. Speaking must be practiced by speaking either monologue or dialogue not in written form.

Based on the criteria for evaluating speaking according to Knight (1992) pronunciation is one of the aspects in the assessment of speaking whereas in EPT pronunciation is not tested, therefore this can be one of the factors for not having a correlation because EPT is not a test in oral form. The other criteria in speaking are fluency, conversational skills, sociolinguistic skills, non-verbal, and content.

In EPT, the five criteria are not tested and in the EPT assessment there are only right and wrong answers while speaking there is no wrong and right answers because speaking assessment uses a rubric as presented by Berger (2011) in chapter 2. Types of rubrics in speaking assessment include checklists, rating scale, analytic/descriptive, and holistic rubric. Based on the criteria and also the form of assessment speaking which is clearly different from what was tested in the EPT could be the cause of no correlation in this study. If the English proficiency exam is TOEIC or IELTS, there may be a correlation because speaking is one of the abilities assessed.

Data analysis using SPSS version 26 the correlation test produced a significant value of 0.196 indicating that there is no significant correlation between the students' EPT Scores and their speaking ability. The strength of correlation interval also proved that the significant value of this study is in the interval of 0.00 – 0.199, indicating that the data has a very poor correlation. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and it can be concluded that students with high EPT scores do not necessarily have good speaking ability.

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