

# Systematic Literature Review: Investigating Speaking Challenges Among ESL Learners During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract**—Effective verbal communication in the English language poses many challenges for Malaysian students. As English is not their first language, the average Malaysian finds it difficult to attain the required speaking proficiency. COVID has only exacerbated this problem. Moving from a traditional classroom setting to an online one limits cohesive and effective verbal communication between the speaker and listener (s). Both students and teachers had to switch from traditional classroom instruction to online classroom instruction with various devices and technologies as their main means of communication. As a result, this study provides a systematic review of pertinent existing research into Investigating Speaking Challenges among English Language Learners (ESL) in Online Classrooms. We concentrated on 51 articles from the year 2006 to the year 2021, from a few databases. Google Scholar, ERIC, Microsoft Academic, and ResearchGate were referred to. The review begins with a search and scanning of suitable articles related to this study before selection. Most of these articles disclosed speaking challenges and provided positive solutions to overcome them during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both students and teachers dealt effectively with psychological issues such as shyness, lack of confidence, and anxiety, as well as technological aspects. Overall, this review gave some insights into the difficulties that ESL students have when they speak, as well as many ways to deal with them when learning online.

**Index Terms**—speaking challenges, speaking skill, ESL learners, online learning, Covid-19

## I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important skill for every individual, from cradle to grave. For individuals who do not know English, Lingua Franca (ELF) refers to the use of English as a common language in teaching and learning. They do not need to be native English speakers to master the English language. Under the Malaysian education system, English is now taught in schools as a second language. According to (Leong & Ahmadi, 2016) learners should have English language abilities to engage with people comfortably and effectively. In Malaysia, mother tongue interference has become one of the major speaking problems that the students have to deal with. Thus, Malaysian schools have learned about the Common European Reference Framework for Languages, which is the most recent plan to improve English skills (CEFR).

Trim (2010) stated that all students want to communicate fluently in a second language. To accomplish this, they must first understand the required skills necessary to become a successful speaker. Fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are the four speaking skills that students must master to become good speakers. Choosing and expressing the right words will help students improve their speaking skills. When an average student speaks with correct intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation, he or she becomes a good speaker, especially if they can completely capture the listeners' attention.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced Malaysian schools to replace all classroom instruction with online instruction. Students from elementary school through higher education benefit from online learning. What online learning is like for students and how it has transformed the teacher's position may be seen in this shift. The learner's willingness and ability to take charge, plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate his or her own learning with tasks created collaboratively and with the teacher's assistance (Tuan & Mai, 2015, as cited in Chen, 2019).

This systematic review examines a synthesis of contextual evidence from relevant studies conducted over the years on the speaking issues faced by ESL learners in online classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic. This article will focus on two research goals:

1. to investigate the speaking challenges of ESL learners.
2. to search for new ways to overcome speaking challenges.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Speaking Skills*

Speaking is one of the most important skills to develop when learning the English language. Dewi et al. (2016) added that it's important to communicate effectively with people and speak English since it's the most widely acknowledged language in the world, so it'll be extremely helpful for those who understand it not only to enhance their knowledge and abilities, but also make it easier for them to find a job. To communicate successfully, you must be fluent in the English language. Not only does speaking English improve their knowledge and talents, but it also helps them get a good job. According to (Rajendran & Yunus, 2021), speaking is a very intricate and productive skill that requires the use of many skills at the same time, which typically develop at different rates. Among the four language abilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking skills are considered the most important. This is because the speaker is usually affiliated with a certain community. Repetition is the key to attaining English proficiency. Constant speaking with different individuals will enforce good vocabulary, varying the structure of the phrase in order for the listener to comprehend what was said.

### B. *Speaking Challenge among ESL Learners*

Over the years, researchers have revealed many impediments faced by second language (L2) learners in terms of spoken language competency, which has a detrimental influence on their achievement at all levels. One of them is (Ferris, 1998), a study that found out that 768 ESL students at the university had the most challenging academic activities, whereas ESL students viewed oral presentations, full-scale debates, and note-making as less complex. Participants also expressed uncertainty about their English speaking and pronunciation abilities, as they struggle with pronouncing particular words correctly (Yanagi & Baker, 2016). In another situation, students claimed that their lack of ability to communicate in English was due to their fear of having an inadequate vocabulary, so they simply stopped speaking (Tokoz-Goktepe, 2014). Another study by (Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel, 2013) revealed that language anxiety is usually associated with situational anxiety since it is a particular language learning situation that triggers a learner to grow anxious.

Speaking problems are connected to negative consequences, such as fear of being laughed at, poor pronunciation, anxiety, lack of motivation, and not being used to speaking in the desired language. Teachers can help to mitigate these negative effects by altering classroom teaching techniques, offering positive support and motivation, developing well-planned lesson plans, and implementing engaging and pleasant activities that can reduce anxiety when taking part in public speaking activities. To help students overcome problems with learning to speak, teachers must figure out factors that affect their students' speaking performance (Tuan & Mai, 2015). Students may even be encouraged to give each other positive feedback both during and after a speaking task. Teachers, on the other hand, might get small gifts or souvenirs to thank them for their hard work and boost their self-esteem (Garrett, 2008).

The pandemic has forced students into online learning. Teachers and education administrators are now contemplating whether or not online teaching is effective. In response to increased demand, several online learning providers offer free access to their services. Some individuals worry that a rapid and hurried move to online learning without training would lead to a poor user experience, limited bandwidth, and poor planning, which could hinder long-term growth. Others believe that a new paradigm of learning offers enormous benefits (Roddy et al., 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has revolutionised the way educators educate and enabled them to reach their pupils effectively and successfully via chat groups, video meetings, polling procedures, and document sharing. This research is one of the first studies to report the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education disruption in 31 nations (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

Students struggle to take part in digital learning because they lack a dependable internet connection and/or technological facilities. This issue exists across nations and within the local community's economic levels (Sia & Adamu, 2021). Studying online can be more successful in a variety of ways for students who have access to technology. According to several studies, students remember more content when learning online compared to being in a classroom (Said et al., 2013; Suliman & Yunus, 2014). Most of this can be attributed to pupils' capacity to learn more quickly online. Furthermore, because students can study at their own pace, going back and re-reading, skipping, or speeding through subjects as they see fit, e-learning takes less time to study than traditional classroom settings (Stern, 2018). It also involves the educators' timely communication and clear instructions about exams, quizzes, and assignments (El Said, 2021).

In a face-to-face class, integrating social interaction increases participation through actual learning. It is especially beneficial for students who cannot function independently or who are accustomed to traditional classroom teaching and learning settings (Mustapha et al., 2010a; Mustapha et al., 2010b). In a classroom setting, the teacher may move the students around or organise them in various ways. Most online classrooms involve teleconference technology, which allows for breakout groups and diverse student groupings in the classroom. Language teachers should use a variety of methods to improve students' proficiency in the Oral Expression module, including group work, role-playing, and discussions that encourage students to take communicative initiatives (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Traditional and virtual learning have a lot of differences, but in the hands of a well-trained teacher, both methods can achieve the same goals.

## III. METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfil this study's goals, 51 articles from a variety of sources were collected and evaluated. According to the methodology outlined by (Khan et al., 2003), conducting a systematic review consists of five stages, as shown in Figure 1. **Stage one** is the framing of the research questions. Issues should be addressed as explicit, unambiguous questions with a defined context. Amendments to the protocol can only be considered once the review questions have been developed. This study addresses two research topics that are of interest to ESL learners: investigating the speaking problems faced by ESL learners and finding innovative strategies to overcome these challenges.

**Stage two** comprises identifying and compiling relevant work in a chosen subject. To accomplish this, substantial study of a variety of sources is required. In this systematic study, peer-reviewed research databases, such as Educational Resources Information Centre, JSTOR, Elsevier, Cambridge University Press, and Google Scholar, were used to evaluate research articles and journals published five years ago. Over 5000 journals can be found on the websites above. Most of them are free to search for specific keywords and get automated suggestions.

The **next step** is to assess the quality of the chosen studies and evaluate if they meet certain pre-set criteria. Prior to the screening process, it is necessary to choose which criteria to include and which to omit. Once these items have been selected, they can be summarised if required. Many articles will be offered based on the keywords entered into search engines. This stage is important to prevent making mistakes while picking eligible articles. **Table 1** illustrates how keywords were utilised to discover relevant content.

**Table 2** illustrates how the same technique was used to approve and reject articles based on various criteria employed to narrow down the search. This makes it easier to choose the precise papers that are needed for the literature review. To ensure that it fits the needed criteria and is easy to search for, journal articles, systematic literature reviews, and case study papers were chosen instead of books and book chapters. Due to the concentration on ESL learners, only articles written in English were included.

Using a table is the most effective way to summarise in **stage four**. There's nothing better than highlighting the information you need in a table under a standard category when you're skimming and scanning the articles. This will ensure methodical analysis. To make it easier to calculate the overall data, binary codes of "0" and "1" are used in place of "Yes" and "No." Hamilton (2012) highlighted that utilising binary variables to code "Yes" or "No" data items may be a valuable tool for rapid and efficient analysis.

The **final stage** would be to interpret the findings. Compare the information obtained in this step by looking for discrepancies and similarities. The data is then assembled to make it easier to answer the research questions and preserve the data's quality. Tables and charts have been successfully constructed based on the five steps of creating the technique in the Systemic Literature Review in order to obtain an understanding of how many writers discuss "speaking problems" in their results.

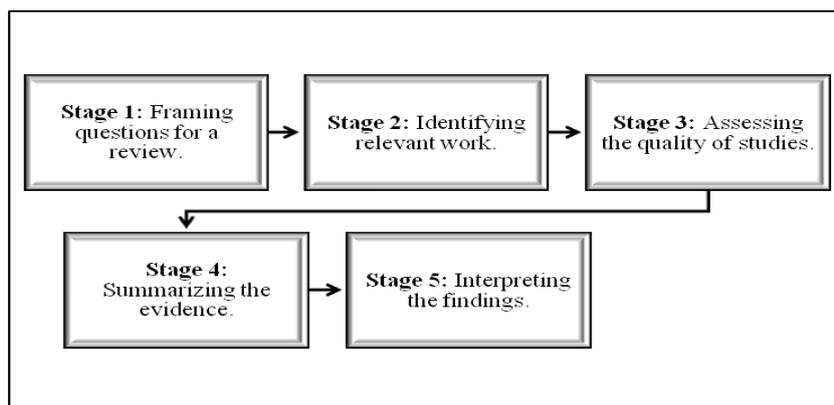


Figure 1: 5 Stages of Conducting a Systematic Literature Review.

TABLE 1  
KEYWORDS USED TO FIND RELATED ARTICLES

Search Engines	Web address	Keywords
Google Scholar	<a href="https://scholar.google.com/">https://scholar.google.com/</a>	Speaking Challenges, Speaking Impacts, Speaking Difficulties, Speaking Problems, Improving Speaking Disability, Speaking Anxiety, Speaking: Lack of confidence
ResearchGate	<a href="https://www.researchgate.net/search/researcher">https://www.researchgate.net/search/researcher</a>	Online class, face-to-face class, Traditional classroom vs online classroom
Elsevier	<a href="https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/sciencedirect/journals-books">https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/sciencedirect/journals-books</a>	Exploring student's problems in speaking, improving speaking fluency, factors affecting student speaking.
PubMed	<a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/</a>	History of Covid-19 Pandemic, Covid-19 Pandemic, Effects of Pandemic.

TABLE 2  
STANDARDS FOR ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION

Standards	Acceptance	Rejection
Type of Study	Journal Articles Systematic Literature Review Case Study	Books Chapters of Book
Language	English	Non-English
Year	2006-2021	<2005
Methodology	Quantitative & Qualitative, Mixed Method, Survey, Case studies, interview, Observations.	Experiments, Participant and non-participant observation, Observational trials, Studies using the Delphi method.

#### IV. RESULT

Based on the research topics, 51 papers or articles from 2006 to 2021 were shortlisted after passing through the five phases of vetting. All the selected journal papers are linked to the speaking problems faced by ESL students in online and non-online classrooms during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The writers wrote about internal and external factors that contributed to ESL learners' ability to communicate effectively, which is shown in *Tables 3 and 4*, respectively.

TABLE 3  
INTERNAL FACTORS AUTHORS SPOKE ABOUT SPEAKING CHALLENGES IN THEIR PAPERS

Author(s) / Year	INTERNAL FACTORS					
	Psychological / Behavioural Problem(s)					
	F	A/N	LM	S	LC	O
(Wold, 2006)	1	1	1	1	1	0
(Gan, 2012)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Fakhro, 2013)	0	1	1	1	1	0
(Maryslessor et al., 2014)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Mejilla et al., 2014)	1	0	0	0	0	0
(Fitriani et al., 2015)	0	1	1	0	0	1
(Rahayu, 2015)	1	0	0	0	0	0
(Tuan & Mai, 2015)	1	0	1	0	0	1
(Safae, 2019)	0	0	0	1	1	0
(Alharbi, 2015)	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Yanagi & Baker, 2016)	0	0	0	0	1	0
(Al-Roud, 2016)	0	0	0	0	1	0
(Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016)	0	0	1	0	0	0
(Musliadi, 2016)	0	0	1	0	0	1
(Afshar & Asakereh, 2016)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Nakhlah, 2016)	1	1	1	1	0	0
(Abda, 2017)	1	0	1	0	0	0
(Narayan, 2017)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Gabriel, 2017)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Saeed Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018)	0	0	1	0	0	0
(Al.kandari, 2018)	0	0	1	0	0	0
(Syaifudin, 2017)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Leong & Ahmadi, 2016)	1	0	1	1	1	1
(Sabbah, 2018)	1	1	0	0	0	0
(Education & Training, 2018)	0	0	1	0	0	0
(Muslem et al., 2018)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Ramasivam & Nair, 2019)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Mofareh A., 2019)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Prodhan Mahbub Ibnu Seraj, 2019)	1	1	1	0	0	0
(Shen & Chiu, 2019)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Alzahrani, 2019)	0	0	0	0	1	0
(Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Karataş & Tuncer, 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Ratnasari, 2020)	0	1	0	0	0	0
(Riadil, 2020)	0	0	1	1	0	0
(Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020)	0	0	1	0	0	0
(Getie, 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Sia & Adamu, 2021)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Sankar et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Aristovnik et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Rahmi Fhonna et al. 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Amir et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Selvanathan et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Destianingsih & Satria, 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Aboubakare et al., 2021)	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Ratnasari, 2020)	0	1	0	0	0	0
(Al-Hassaani & Qaid, 2020)	1	0	0	0	0	0
(Yunus et al., 2021)	0	0	0	0	0	1
(El Said, 2021)	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Utami, 2021)	0	0	0	0	0	1

Indicator		Binary Code:
F	- Fear (Ridicule by peers)	1 - Yes
A / N	- Anxiety / Nervousness	0 - No
LM	- Lack of Motivation	
S	- Shyness	
LC	- Lack of Confidence	
O	- Other(s)	

TABLE 4  
EXTERNAL FACTORS AUTHORS SPOKE ABOUT SPEAKING CHALLENGES IN THEIR PAPERS

Author(s) / Year	EXTERNAL FACTORS						
	LP	L1	LTC	EO	UI/T	LR	O
(Wold, 2006)	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
(Gan, 2012)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
(Fakhro, 2013)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
(Maryslessor et al., 2014)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
(Mejilla et al., 2014)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Fitriani et al., 2015)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Rahayu, 2015)	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
(Tuan & Mai, 2015)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Safae, 2019)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Alharbi, 2015)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
(Yanagi & Baker, 2016)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Al-Roud, 2016)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Musliadi, 2016)	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
(Afshar & Asakereh, 2016)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Nakhalah, 2016)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Abda, 2017)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Narayan, 2017)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Gabriel, 2017)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Saeed Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
(Al.kandari, 2018)	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
(Syarifudin, 2017)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Leong & Ahmadi, 2016)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Sabbah, 2018)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Tridinanti, 2018)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Muslem et al., 2018)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Ramasivam & Nair, 2019)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
(Mofareh A., 2019)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
(Prodhan Mahbub Ibna Seraj, 2019)	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
(Shen & Chiu, 2019)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Alzahrani, 2019)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
(Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Karataş & Tuncer, 2020)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
(Ratnasari, 2020)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Riadil, 2020)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
(Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020)	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
(Getie, 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Sia & Adamu, 2021)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
(Sankar et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
(Aristovnik et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
(Rahmi Fhonna et al. 2020)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Amir et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
(Selvanathan et al., 2020)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
(Destianingsih & Satria, 2020)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
(Aboubakare et al., 2021)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
(Ratnasari, 2020)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
(Al-Hassaani & Qaid, 2020)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
(Yunus et al., 2021)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
(El Said, 2021)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
(Utami, 2021)	1	0	0	0	1	1	0

Indicator		Binary Code
LP	- Linguistic Problems	
L1	- Mother tongue Interference	
LTC	- Limited to Classroom	1 - Yes
EO	- Exam Oriented	0 - No
UI/T	- Unstable Internet Connection / Technology	
LR	- Limited Resources	
O	- Other(s)	

Based on *Tables 3 and 4*, the bar chart in *Figure 2 (a)* was tabulated to show the detailed result of the two main factors that contributed to ESL learners' speaking challenges, as analysed from 51 journal articles. Out of 51 authors, 65% said "Yes" and the rest, 35%, said "No" to internal factors. In contrast, 78% said "Yes" and 22% said "No" to external factors. This result has been tabulated and is presented in *Figure 2(b)*.

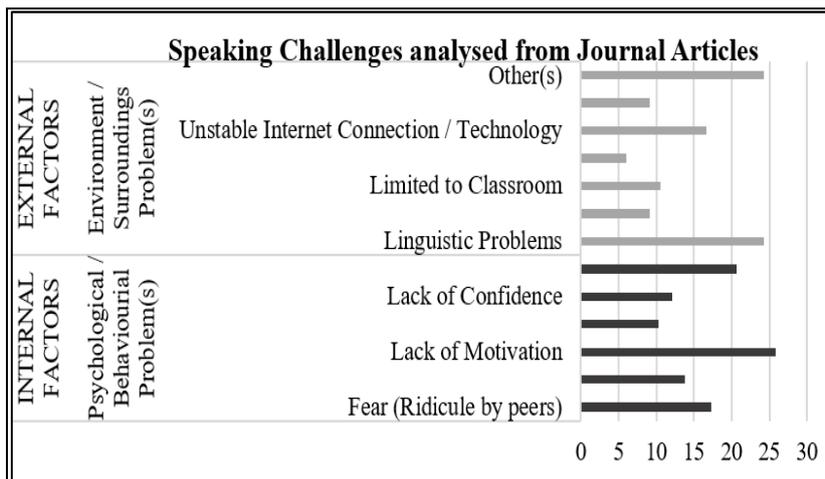


Figure 2 (a): Result From Analysed Journal Articles.

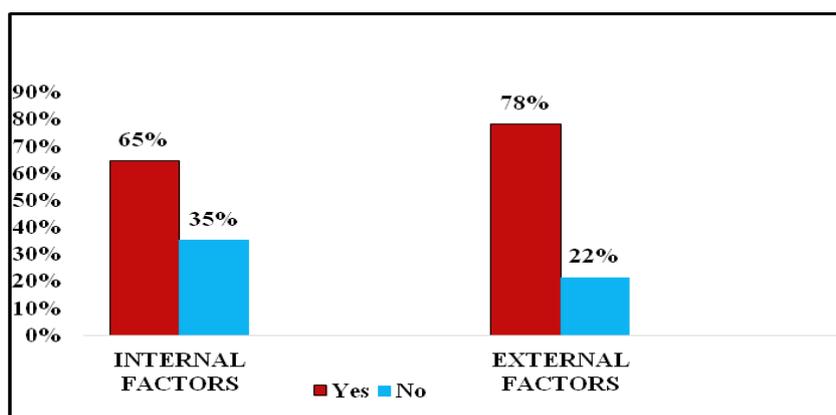


Figure 2 (b): The Percentage of Internal and External Factors

V. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to investigate speaking challenges among ESL learners during the COVID-19 Pandemic. From the result, it has been found that two main factors contributed to the ESL learners’ speaking challenges: first the internal factors, which focused on psychological factors, and second, the external factors, which focused on environmental and surrounding problems. The result is presented according to the two research questions: (i) To investigate ESL learners' speaking challenges; (ii) To seek new approaches to overcoming speaking challenges in online and offline classrooms.

A. To Investigate the Speaking Challenges of ESL Learners

A total of 51 papers were examined on the speaking problems among ESL learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers discovered that ESL students had and still face obstacles in speaking. 90% of the reasons pupils couldn't practise speaking either inside or outside the classroom were based on psychological issues such as fear of speaking, fear of being mocked by others, feeling anxious or uncomfortable, lack of motivation, shyness, and lack of confidence were some of the reasons discovered by the experts. The teachers’ teaching style is also the reason it was difficult for them to speak English. The environment and its surrounds handle 98% of the external factors that create barriers. It was a lack of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and other linguistic issues. Those whose family solely uses L1 as their primary language may experience mother-tongue interference.

Schools, colleges, and universities have been closing rapidly around the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the authorities are undertaking the change to online learning programs (Clancy & Sentance, 2020). The "new norm" is being adopted by students, teachers, and parents alike. They are connected through online platforms, devices, and resources in distance learning programmes. Parents with one or two children might still supply appropriate devices or equipment for the online school. Unstable internet connections and the fact that some students do not have a communication device to engage in online classes accounted for 22% of the total. Saminathan (2021) claimed that students who transit from a face-to-face classroom to a computer-based virtual classroom encounter a fundamentally different learning process.

Many students lag in their virtual studies because they do not have access to sufficient bandwidth or a robust internet connection. Another 12% of the study reveals that there are relatively few resources, and the final 31% of external

factors include various speaking challenges such as education policy, students working part-time, time management, attempting to adjust from traditional classroom to online learning, and other minor issues.

### B. To Search for New Ways to Overcome Speaking Challenges

Students are at risk of falling behind during this phase of transition. Many platforms, programmes, and software may be utilised for task-based activities as well as online interactive activities. Teachers want to guarantee that their students will be pleased and take part in their online teaching and learning. There are many free and paid platforms available for educators and students to engage in the learning process. The Malaysian Ministry of Education has developed a teaching and learning platform called DELIMa, which may be accessed by using the following website login address: <https://sites.google.com/moe.edu.my/login/login>. The portal provides links to Google Classroom and Microsoft teaching and training teams, computerised presentations, recordings (Eduweb TV/CikgooTube), and apps that enhance teaching and learning, such as Edpuzzle, a quiz (test game), and Kahoot (game-based learning platform). EDU-WEB Learner self-regulation is the principle that states that students should develop the strongest sense of accountability and control over how they learn.

Furthermore, various tools for teachers and learners can be used in online teaching and training, apart from the above websites and apps. Telegram, Google Meet, Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook, Tick Tock, and many other applications are extensively used by our learners. Tiktok was introduced to the social media market in September 2016 (Dilon, 2020). Teenagers and young adults across the world are becoming increasingly interested in this application. The site 'Tiktoking' allows users to create 15-second-long videos, which are then run in a loop until the next film is posted. Students may use this programme to develop their speaking abilities as it helps them build their self-confidence and motivation. Researchers use the method of video chats and video conferencing tools on social media to carry out speaking lessons (Sevy-Biloon & Chroman, 2019). **Table 5** illustrates examples of apps that may teach speaking. Finally, teachers need to be able to use technical skills to meet the needs of their students over time.

TABLE 5  
ONLINE APPLICATION TO TEACH SPEAKING SKILLS

Authors Name & Years	Title of the Article	Skill(s)	Review
(Jalaluddin, 2016)	Using YouTube To Enhance Speaking Skills in ESL Classroom.	Speaking	Speaking, listening, and reading abilities may be improved by using YouTube.
(Hussein, 2016)	The Impact of Utilising Skype as a Social Tool Network Community on Developing English Major Students' Discourse Competence in the English Language Syllables	Writing & Speaking	Students developed writing and speaking skills using Skype chat more efficiently and effectively.
(Muslem et al., 2017)	The Application of Video Clips: With Small Group and Individual Activities to Improve Young Learners' Speaking Performance.	Speaking	Video clips used in a small group activity to improve young learners' speaking performances.
(Yükselir & Kömür, 2017)	Using Online Videos to Improve Speaking Abilities of EFL Learners.	Speaking	Watching videos improved their speaking ability and scored good result.
(Xodabande, 2017)	The effectiveness of social media network Telegram in teaching English language pronunciation to Iranian EFL learners.	Speaking	Pronunciation of participants in the experimental group improved significantly compared to the control group.
(Young & West, 2018)	Speaking Practice Outside the Classroom: A Literature Review of Asynchronous Multimedia-based Oral Communication in Language Learning	Speaking	Asynchronous multimedia-based oral communication promotes language improvements in terms of fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation.
(Nilayon Brahmakasikara 2018)	Using Social Network Sites for Language Learning and Video Conferencing Technology to Improve English Speaking Skills: A Case Study of Thai Undergraduate Students	Speaking	Lower-level participants improved significantly and might be a good remedial class of learners with lower English-speaking proficiency.
(Le, 2018)	Voice Recording in Second Language Outside the Classroom: Process and Product.	Speaking	The voice recording is to practise their speaking skills and improved their fluency and lexical complexity.
(Namaziandost & Nasri 2019)	The Impact of Social Media on EFL Learners' Speaking Skill: A Survey Study Involving EFL Teachers and Students	Speaking	Social media creates a relaxing context for learners to talk freely and express their ideas with no fear of embarrassment or lack of confidence.
(Sevy-Biloon & Chroman, 2019)	Authentic Use of Technology to Improve EFL Communication and Motivation Through International Language Exchange Video Chat.	Speaking	The program showed increased confidence in speaking, naturally motivated and increased fluency, and overall communication skills.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Speaking is the hardest skill, as students need to communicate with one another orally. Therefore, they require a considerable amount of exercise. There are ample resources available online and offline, some of which come at an affordable price, and some are free. Teachers need to put in extra effort if they want to see some improvement in their students' speaking abilities in the ESL classroom. This systematic literature review investigated the speaking challenges among ESL learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the investigation comprises two main factors: physiological and environmental factors that impede the learning of speaking skills among these learners. Using technology in teaching and learning has a positive effect and experience for both teachers and learners. Most of the reviewed research found that speaking can be taught online or in a traditional classroom setting, and there is a lot of evidence that shows improvements in speaking proficiency. There are many ideas to adapt and a wide range of applications to choose from, as well as resources both in your area and around the world. There are also a lot of self-access and interactive activities that you can do on your own and through the world wide web. When regular face-to-face instruction is not available, education policy will briefly examine the role of students' attitudes toward learning in achieving the full potential of online education. Teachers can use this time to look at and use the different platforms that are available online to help students improve their speaking skills.

## VII. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

In any research, challenges and limitations may arise, affecting the conclusions. Nonetheless, many researchers are hesitant to highlight how limited their study is in their papers, giving readers and reviewers the impression that it is worth less research. When the method of probability sampling was used to select a sample that did not reflect the population, sampling errors occurred. This prompted a search for articles relevant to the study. A literature review is built on quoting and referring to previous research studies, and these previous studies provide a theoretical underpinning for the research topic. Due to the recent pandemic's detection, the time frame for investigating speaking challenges was limited to two to four years; this provided an opportunity to identify new gaps in the existing literature and perform further development in the area of study.

## VIII. IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to Affendi and Aziz (2020), a few limitations were identified when performing the systematic review based on the research paper analysed. It might be worth resolving in the future if there are researchers that wish to further examine this matter. Foremost, the articles chosen for this study were stressed outside Malaysia; therefore, it could have been clustered on Malaysian ESL learners' backgrounds. It would be possible to perform research on Malaysian ESL learners' speaking skills in this pandemic. This study examined 51 ResearchGate and Google Scholar publications. Elsevier and PubMed databases also have comparable publications available. As a result, if the data is extended to more scholars, it may either improve findings and conclusions or reveal different outcomes with many other schools of thought. In addition, it was found that some teachers hated teaching speaking skills. Teachers with more experience declined to be watched in class, referring to the fact that they are focused on examinations and as needed by management. In reality, many of them did not know what their speaking abilities were. A significant recommendation would be for the management to move from an exam-oriented zone to a pleasant teaching and learning zone for both teachers and students in order to create a win-win scenario for everyone. In the long term, these children might profit from a lifetime of education and knowledge.

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