

Indonesian Nursing Students' Attributions on Their Improvements in English-Speaking Skills

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Abstract. For some people, speaking a foreign language might be exceptionally difficult. Some individuals have a natural aptitude for smooth communication, whereas others face challenges in acquiring this skill. The factors that contribute to individuals speaking a foreign language proficiently came under scrutiny. The objective of this research was to examine the attributions that nursing students had for their improvement in English-speaking skills. Attribution alone pertains to the justifications and rationales individuals offer for their advancement, accomplishment, or even lack thereof in a specific area, such as language acquisition. The study included a total of 38 nursing students from the Faculty of Nursing at Universitas Pelita Harapan in Indonesia. Data collection involved the utilization of open-ended questionnaires and interviews as the primary instruments. The participants were instructed to offer written responses to three items on the questionnaire. Additionally, during the interview phase, the researcher engaged nine participants to elaborate on their written responses from the questionnaire. The data analysis indicated that the primary factors contributing to the improvement of nursing students' English-speaking skills were the importance of doing speaking activities, internal motivation, and amicable learning environment.

Keywords: Attributions, Speaking Skills, Improvement, Nursing Students

Introduction

English has become the primary language for international communication and plays an increasingly important role in healthcare. As healthcare services become more globalized, nurses are expected not only to possess strong clinical competence but also to communicate effectively in English with patients,

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colleagues, and healthcare professionals from different countries. For Indonesian nurses, English proficiency also creates opportunities to work abroad, where the demand for qualified nurses continues to increase. According to the National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers (BNP2TKI), there was a demand for 944,916 nurses, nursing home staff, and caregivers in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Papua New Guinea, and Taiwan between 2017 and 2018 (Al-Ansori, 2022). However, despite these growing opportunities, English proficiency remains one of the major barriers preventing many Indonesian nurses from pursuing international careers.

Evidence suggests that many Indonesian nurses still struggle to meet the required English standards. For example, during the recruitment of Indonesian nurses for employment in Qatar, only 27 out of 100 candidates successfully passed the selection process. Similarly, among 240 applicants for nursing positions in Saudi Arabia, only 50 met the required qualifications. BNP2TKI also reported that only 37% of the 15,431 nurses demanded overseas fulfilled the expected requirements (Rokom, 2015). These findings indicate that improving English proficiency should become an important priority for nursing education in Indonesia.

Among the four language skills, speaking is particularly important for nursing students because effective oral communication is essential for interacting with patients, educating families, collaborating with healthcare professionals, and working in multicultural healthcare environments (Sudusinghe & Gamage, 2023). Unlike many university students who learn English mainly for academic purposes, nursing students learn English for professional communication where inaccurate or ineffective communication may affect the quality of healthcare services. Therefore, understanding how nursing students improve their English-speaking ability is especially important.

Although English language education has received considerable attention in Indonesia, previous studies have largely focused on instructional materials, teaching methods, and learning strategies. Psychological factors that influence language learning, such as motivation, beliefs, and learners' interpretations of success, have received comparatively less attention (Mirza, 2021; Nurhidayah, 2020; Seven, 2020). Among these psychological factors, attribution is particularly important because it concerns how learners explain the causes of their success or failure. According to attribution theory, these explanations shape learners' future motivation, persistence, and learning behaviours (Fishman & Husman, 2017; Graham, 2020; Weiner, 2010). Students who attribute success to controllable factors, such as effort or learning strategies, are generally more likely to remain motivated and continue improving than those who attribute outcomes to uncontrollable factors.

Previous studies have investigated learners' attributions in various educational contexts. Mali (2015), for example, found that tourism students attributed improvements in English-speaking skills to meaningful speaking activities, learning strategies, and encouragement from lecturers and peers. Similarly, Salsabila (2018) reported that English education students associated speaking fluency with regular practice, self-confidence, and a supportive learning environment. In the nursing context, Tai (2012) examined Taiwanese nursing

students' attributions toward writing achievement and found that successful learners mainly attributed their progress to sufficient learning materials and strong interest in learning English, whereas unsuccessful learners attributed their difficulties to limited vocabulary, inadequate grammar knowledge, and insufficient writing practice.

Despite these valuable findings, several important gaps remain. First, most attribution studies have involved general English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, such as tourism or English education students, whose learning goals differ from those of nursing students. Nursing students learn English not only for academic achievement but also to communicate effectively in professional healthcare settings where communication directly influences patient care and teamwork. Second, research involving nursing students has primarily focused on writing rather than speaking, even though speaking is one of the most essential language skills required in nursing practice. Third, little is known about how Indonesian nursing students explain the factors that contribute to the improvement of their English-speaking ability, particularly within English for Nursing courses. Addressing these gaps is important because learners' own explanations for their improvement can provide valuable insights for designing more effective English instruction that meets the communicative needs of future nurses.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the attributions of Indonesian nursing students regarding their improvement in English-speaking skills in an English for Nursing course. By focusing on nursing students within the Indonesian healthcare education context, this study extends previous attribution research beyond general EFL settings and contributes empirical evidence on the factors that nursing students perceive as supporting their speaking development. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for English language teaching in nursing education and help educators create learning environments that better support students' professional communication skills.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore nursing students' attributions regarding their improvement in English-speaking skills in an English for Nursing course. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand how students explained the factors that contributed to their perceived improvement in speaking English, rather than to measure predetermined variables. Specifically, the study addressed the following research question: *What factors do nursing students attribute to their improvement in English-speaking skills?*

To provide a clear focus, the researchers defined students' speaking improvement using three observable classroom indicators: (1) actively participating in role-play activities in English, (2) actively asking questions during classmates' English presentations, and (3) actively answering questions from classmates in English. These indicators were selected because they represented the most frequent speaking activities throughout the English for Nursing course.

Participants and Context

Thirty-eight hospital-based nurses participated in this study. All participants had previously completed a Diploma in Nursing and were enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing program at Universitas Pelita Harapan, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 32 females and 6 males, ranging in age from 25 to 46 years. All had successfully completed the English for Nursing course during the 2023–2024 academic year.

English for Nursing is an elective course offered by the Faculty of Nursing at Universitas Pelita Harapan. The course introduces nursing-related English through topics commonly encountered in healthcare settings. It is intended for students with elementary English proficiency and aims to develop their functional communication skills for professional nursing practice. Throughout the course, students regularly participate in interactive speaking activities, including role plays, discussions, presentations, and question-and-answer sessions, which provide opportunities to practice English in authentic nursing contexts.

Instruments

Data were collected using two instruments: an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The open-ended questionnaire was developed based on previous studies by Yilmaz (2012) and Mali (2015). It consisted of three open-ended questions exploring students' attributions for their improvement in three speaking activities: participating in English role plays, asking questions during presentations, and responding to classmates' questions in English.

To ensure that participants fully understood each question, the questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia. Participants were also allowed to write their responses in Bahasa Indonesia so that they could express their ideas freely without being limited by their English proficiency. This approach enabled the researchers to obtain richer and more meaningful responses.

To complement the questionnaire data, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility for researchers to ask follow-up questions and explore participants' responses in greater depth (Busetto, Wick, & Gumbinger, 2020). Nine participants who provided detailed and diverse questionnaire responses voluntarily agreed to participate in the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to encourage participants to communicate comfortably and express their thoughts more comprehensively. To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms were used throughout the study.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted in two stages. First, the open-ended questionnaire was administered during class on December 1, 2023. Before participants completed the questionnaire, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and clarified the meaning of each question to ensure that all participants fully understood what they were being asked.

The second stage involved semi-structured interviews conducted on December 10, 2023. During each interview, participants reviewed their written questionnaire responses together with the researcher and were invited to elaborate on their answers. Follow-up questions were used to clarify meanings, obtain

additional examples, and gain deeper insights into the participants' perspectives. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire and interview data were analysed using grounded theory procedures following the approach described by Silverio et al. (Silverio, S.A., Gauntlett, W., Wallace, H., & Brown, 2019). This approach was chosen because it allows categories to emerge inductively from the data rather than being imposed beforehand.

The analysis began with repeated reading of participants' written responses and interview transcripts to gain familiarity with the data. Relevant statements describing factors that contributed to students' speaking improvement were then identified and coded. Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, which were continuously compared and refined throughout the analysis process. Interview data were used to clarify and enrich the categories that emerged from the questionnaire responses, allowing the researchers to develop a more comprehensive understanding of students' attributions.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings, several strategies were employed throughout the study, following the principles of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stahl & King, 2020). First, method triangulation was achieved by collecting data through two complementary sources: an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. While the questionnaire captured participants' initial explanations for their improvement in the three English-speaking activities, the interviews provided opportunities to explore these responses in greater depth. Comparing the questionnaire and interview data allowed the researchers to examine the consistency of participants' attributions and gain a richer understanding of their perceived reasons for improvement.

Second, participants were invited during the interviews to revisit their questionnaire responses and provide clarification or further explanation when necessary. This process helped the researcher confirm the intended meanings of participants' written responses before data analysis, thereby reducing the possibility of misinterpretation.

Finally, an audit trail was maintained throughout the research process. The researcher systematically documented each stage of the study, including questionnaire administration, interview transcripts, coding decisions, category development, and the organization of emerging attributions across the three speaking indicators. Maintaining these records enhanced the transparency and dependability of the analytical process.

Findings and Discussion

Determining the attributions based on each indicator was the objective of the researcher in this section. The researchers would provide a detailed analysis of the research findings derived from the questionnaire data, which would include a variety of attribution categories attributed to each indicator by the nursing

students. Significantly, the nomenclature of the categories representing attributions that appears in certain tables of this section was modified and expanded upon from the works of Yilmaz (2012) and Mali (2015). Afterwards, the interview data would provide additional support for the questionnaire-derived research findings.

Findings

1) Nursing Students' Attributions for Their Ability in Performing Role Play using English Actively

The researcher must first define the phrase "English role play" as employed in this study. This activity involves the course lecturer instructing nursing students to engage in a role play set in a nursing context, typically simulating conversations between nurses, patients, and other healthcare professionals using English. The researcher identified eight attributions that participants made for their capacity to actively engage in role-playing using English. Table 1 ordered the attributions in order of importance:

Table 1. Nursing Students' Attributions for Their Ability in Performing Role Play using English Actively

Attributions	Number	Percentage
Positive classroom environment	29	40.8
Background knowledge/Topic	18	25.3%
Grammar and vocabulary mastery	11	15.4%
Need/importance	8	11.3%
Self-confidence	4	5.7%
Practice/preparation	1	1.5%
TOTAL	71	100%

Table 1 shows that the participants frequently mentioned positive classroom environment (40.8%) as the key category. The individual feels at ease in the classroom environment, allowing for a calm demeanour throughout role-playing exercises. Both instructors and peers maintain a pleasant attitude and do not ridicule mistakes made during practice. Encouraging comments from instructors also help create a favourable classroom environment. According to the participants:

"The lecturer is very understanding. If we made a mistake in speaking, she gave positive feedback and never criticized. That motivates us to do role-play" (Roy, translated by the researchers).

Subsequently, another participant made an addition:

"After we perform the role-play, the lecturer usually gives feedback and tells us what aspects we need to improve. This is very useful for those of us who want to develop our English-speaking skills" (Elisabeth, translated by the researchers).

In addition to the lecturer, classmates can influence nursing students' speaking fluency by offering assistance when needed. One of the statements featured was, 'My friends in the group motivated me to participate in role-playing, which made me feel competent despite my limited skills'. Another comparable assertion cited

by the participant was 'When I have difficulty pronouncing certain words, my friends help me by correcting my pronunciation or looking for the correct pronunciation on the internet'.

The statements aligned with the notion presented in the prior study by Irianto, D.P. & Nurniati (2023), which indicated that a positive interaction between students and lecturers might enhance nursing students' speaking skills. Their speaking proficiency may be impacted as it fosters a welcoming environment for pupils and motivates them to utilise the language. Furthermore, Pavelová, (2017) stated that speaking fluency is influenced by the classroom setting and the teachers' involvement. An environment in the classroom that is both encouraging and interactive fosters genuine dialogue among students, thereby promoting the growth and refinement of their fluency. Educators assume a critical function in cultivating this atmosphere through the provision of abundant speaking opportunities, the delivery of constructive criticism, and the establishment of a secure environment in which students are at ease undertaking linguistic risks. Their active participation in facilitating substantive dialogues and providing guidance to students as they navigate difficult linguistic exercises improves their ability to communicate with confidence and proficiency, thereby making a significant contribution to the overall process of acquiring the target language (Rao, 2018).

The background knowledge or topic is the attribute that has the greatest significant impact on students' speaking fluency, accounting for 25.3%. Since all participants in this study were experienced professional nurses, they were well-versed in English for Nursing course subjects like pre-operative care, post-operative care, drug administration, bedside handover, managing patients' complaints, and more. Increased familiarity with the issue boosts self-confidence and passion for role-play exercise, leading to improved speaking fluency. As what the participants wrote: 'The role-play topic is a part of my daily work'; 'I am familiar with the material being taught'; 'There are not many changes to the material because I practice it frequently'. During the interview, one participant provided additional clarification that:

"We feel more in control of the material we study because it is relevant to our daily lives as nurses. Now the emphasis is on how we can perform well in English. Since we have mastered the content and the words in English are similar to Indonesian, we are more enthusiastic about role-playing and feel more fluent in speaking." (Andi, translated by the researchers)

Spelling and grammatical mastery (15.4%) is the last attribution that significantly impacts the proficiency of nursing students during role plays. Such remarks were included: 'The medical terms used in the role play are similar to their Indonesian translations, so it is not difficult to understand them'; 'The vocabulary in role play is familiar because I frequently find it in the documents I read'. During the interview, the participant elaborated:

"English has similar grammar to Indonesian. Furthermore, the medical terms we learn in class are frequently encountered in our workplace. It helps us with our speaking practice, Ms." (Rahma, translated by the researchers).

"Grammar and vocabulary are at the heart of speaking, Ms. Because the vocabulary in this topic is based on the nursing context, I frequently read or hear it while working. So, when we practice role play, all we have to do is apply it." (Budi, translated by the researchers).

This aligns with the assertion made by Rafique, Waqas, & Shahid (2023) that vocabulary serves as a fundamental determinant of language proficiency, influencing students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and listening in English. In accordance with this, Ly (2020) asserts that learning grammar is crucial for English language learners as it improves their comprehension of the language. Grammar also empowers individuals to comprehend the structure of sentences. One can effectively improve their speaking fluency through the acquisition of a comprehensive vocabulary and a solid grasp of grammar.

2) Nursing Students' Attributions for Their Ability in Asking Questions using English Actively

Based on the findings derived from the analysis of the questionnaire, the researcher identified seven attributions that the participants possessed regarding their proficiency in actively posing questions to their friends in the English language. The findings were comprehensively presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Nursing Students' Attributions for Their Ability in Asking Questions using English Actively

Attributions	Number	Percentage
Intrinsic motivation	22	34%
The need of clarifying or asking to what was being presented	16	25%
Self-confidence	11	17%
Encouragement from the lecturer	8	12%
Background knowledge/topic	4	6%
Interesting presentation from friends	2	3%
Rewards from the lecturer	2	3%
TOTAL	65	100%

Under those circumstances, internal motivation (34%) emerged as the primary factor enabling them to actively enquire using English. The remarks within this category encompassed: 'I want to speak English fluently, so I practice by asking questions when friends are presenting'; 'I'm embarrassed when my pronunciation is bad. That is what motivates me to ask questions during class'; 'When my pronunciation is incorrect, the lecturer usually shows me an example of what is correct.' During the interview, one participant further elaborated:

"As a nurse working in Bali, I frequently see foreign patients. Meanwhile, my English is not fluent, making it difficult to communicate effectively with patients. That's why I'm excited to ask questions in English in this class, because it's not just about speaking practice, but also

directions, pronunciation, vocabulary, and correct grammar." (Iwan, translated by the researchers).

Another attribute that emerged from the questionnaire was need/importance (25%). Regarding this category, some participants commented that 'I want to know my friend's response to a phenomenon'; 'I asked if my friend's explanation was interesting and I wanted to know more about the topic'; and 'If something is unclear, I will try to ask'. This category included additional statements such as 'Frequently, my friend's pronunciation during a presentation is unclear, causing the listener to miss the meaning of the sentence he wants to convey. So, it must be asked.'

Self-confidence (17%) was another frequently reported attribute on the questionnaire. The participants believed that self-confidence would allow them to speak fluently. In this regard, some participants stated, 'I ask questions in English because I am brave and confident in my English skills; I feel like my English is not that bad.' During the interview session, a participant provided additional clarification: *"Because in class, the lecturer asks us to speak comfortably without fear of making mistakes and we don't have to speak perfect English, so I am confident in trying to ask questions when the opportunity arises."* (Ali, translated by the researchers).

The aforementioned statements are also pertinent to the findings of Dewi et al. (2022), which suggest that in addition to engaging in language practice, students must also cultivate self-motivation and enhance their confidence in English speaking. The acquisition of English language proficiency plays a significant role in bolstering self-confidence and assertiveness, both of which are crucial qualities for successfully navigating diverse social and professional environments. Ultimately, by cultivating self-motivation and fostering self-assurance in the English language, students empower themselves to thrive in a globally interconnected and fiercely competitive milieu. In line with this, Pasarlay (2020) mentioned that self-confidence is identified as a significant factor influencing students' speaking fluency. Students who exhibit a robust conviction in their capacity to communicate proficiently are inclined to partake in consistent practice and actively seek out avenues to augment their oral communication abilities, leading to a gradual enhancement in their fluency. Confidence also plays a significant role in enhancing non-verbal communication cues, such as body language and vocal tone, which in turn improves the clarity and logical coherence of students' verbal expressions.

3) Nursing Students' Attributions for Their Ability in Answering Questions using English Actively

As presented in Table 3, the researcher identified eight distinct attributions that emerged from the questionnaire data with respect to the final indicator, namely the students' active ability to respond to questions using English. Consistent with the preceding indicators, the participants prevalently identified the following major categories: need/importance (19.2%), strategy (19.2%), and self-confidence (15.5%).

Table 3. Nursing Students' Attributions for Their Ability in Answering Questions using English Actively

Attributions	Number	Percentage
Need/Importance	18	31.5%
Self-confidence	13	22.8%
Background knowledge/topic	11	19.3%
Vocabulary mastery	7	12.3%
Rewards from the lecturer	3	5.3%
Motivation from friends	2	3.5%
Encouragement from the lecturer	2	3.5%
TOTAL	57	100%

The category of need/importance (31.5%) encompassed statements such as 'I feel the need to answer my friend's question to clear up the ambiguity that exists, even though my English is still messy'; 'Answering questions forces me to practice my English-speaking skills, so that I can develop further'. Subsequently, the self-confidence category (22.8%) encompassed the following statements: 'Every week's English for Nursing class gives me speaking practice, which slowly boosts my confidence in speaking English. For example, I felt like I could answer questions during presentations because I knew the material well and my English was pretty good'. For the background knowledge/topic category (19.3%), participants said things like 'I can answer questions because I know the right answer to the question asked'; 'I had no trouble answering because the topic I presented was very related to my work'; 'Before presenting, I study so that I can answer questions that come up.'

In addition to the three prominent attributions mentioned by the participants, the researcher identified other attribution categories that were less commonly mentioned by the participants. The initial classification was designated as rewards vocabulary mastery, accounting for 12.3%. Subsequently, the participants identified rewards from the lecturer (5.3%) as the second category, as elucidated by an interviewee: "*Aside from having studied the presentation material, the lecturer usually awards activity points to group members who actively participate in answering questions in full English. This makes us excited to answer questions*" (Wati, translated by the researchers).

Motivation from friends constituted the third category, accounting for 3.5% of the total. The category in question encompasses a statement such as 'Sometimes my group friends ask me to answer questions because they believe I am better able to answer them'. This statement was derived from the data collected through the questionnaire and aligned with the statements made by a participant during the interview: "*My groupmates encouraged me to try to answer questions, despite my limited English skills. Maybe they want me to actively participate in the discussion, not just be silent*" (Rahma, translated by the researchers).

The fourth category, denoted as encouragement from the lecturer, accounted for 3.5% of the total. This category included comments such as 'The lecturer encourages the team to actively ask and answer English questions, including offering activeness points'; 'She always reminds us not to be afraid of grammar mistakes, what matters is that we have the courage to try'. Finally, the

category of internal motivation (1.8%) was found to be the least frequently mentioned by the participants.

Discussions

This study identified several dominant attributions that Indonesian nursing students associated with their improvement in English-speaking skills, namely a positive classroom environment, intrinsic motivation, and the perceived importance of engaging in English-speaking activities. These attributions suggest that students' speaking development was shaped not only by their linguistic knowledge but also by how they interpreted their learning experiences and the value they assigned to classroom speaking activities. From the perspective of attribution theory, these perceived causes are important because learners' attributions influence their motivation, persistence, and future learning behaviours (Weiner, 2019).

One of the most prominent attributions identified in this study was a positive classroom environment, particularly during role-play activities. Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of supportive learning environments in language learning (Ali, Masroor, & Khan, 2020), the dominance of this attribution may be explained by the characteristics of the participants. Unlike traditional undergraduate students, the participants in this study were practicing nurses who had returned to university after working in clinical settings. While they possessed substantial nursing knowledge, many still lacked confidence in communicating in English. Consequently, they valued a classroom environment in which lecturers and classmates responded to mistakes with encouragement rather than criticism. Such an atmosphere reduced anxiety and encouraged students to participate more actively in role plays. This interpretation is supported by Dewaele and Li (Dewaele & Li, 2021), who argued that enthusiastic teachers and supportive classroom environments promote learners' enjoyment and behavioural engagement, making students more willing to communicate and participate actively in language-learning activities. These findings suggest that, within an English for Nursing classroom, creating a psychologically safe learning environment may be just as important as teaching language itself.

Another important attribution emerging from this study was intrinsic motivation, which appeared to be more influential than external forms of motivation such as rewards or lecturer encouragement. One possible explanation is that the participants were adult learners who had already experienced the communication demands of their profession. Rather than learning English simply to achieve good grades, many participants viewed English as an essential skill for communicating with foreign patients, improving their professional competence, and expanding future career opportunities. Consequently, their speaking behaviour was driven primarily by personal and professional goals instead of external classroom incentives. This interpretation is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which suggests that learners who perceive learning activities as personally meaningful are more likely to engage actively and persist in the learning process than those who rely mainly on external rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The present findings therefore indicate that fostering nursing

students' intrinsic motivation may be more beneficial than relying solely on extrinsic incentives to encourage classroom participation.

The findings also showed that many participants attributed their speaking improvement to the perceived importance of participating in English-speaking activities. Students believed that asking and answering questions in English helped them clarify information, avoid misunderstandings, and gradually improve their speaking ability. These attributions suggest that students understood the purpose of classroom speaking activities beyond merely completing course requirements. Instead, they viewed speaking as meaningful preparation for authentic communication in healthcare settings. This finding highlights the important role of lecturers in explicitly explaining the objectives and professional relevance of classroom speaking activities. When students recognize why a speaking task is important for their future nursing practice, they may become more willing to participate actively and engage in meaningful communication.

Compared with previous attribution studies involving English-major students (Mali, 2015; Salsabila, 2018), the present findings demonstrate that nursing students develop different attributions toward speaking improvement. While English-major students typically learn English as their primary academic discipline and often focus on linguistic accuracy and language mastery, nursing students in the present study viewed English primarily as a professional communication tool. Consequently, they attributed their speaking improvement to authentic nursing topics, supportive classroom interactions, and opportunities to communicate in situations resembling real clinical practice rather than to language-related factors alone. These differences suggest that learners' disciplinary backgrounds shape the attributions they develop toward language learning. This interpretation is also consistent with recent discussions in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which emphasize that learners' communicative needs and professional contexts strongly influence language learning processes (Basturkmen, 2022). Therefore, the present study extends previous attribution research by demonstrating that learners from different academic disciplines may develop different explanations for their language-learning success because they pursue different communicative goals.

From the perspective of attribution theory, the findings also have important implications for nursing students' future speaking behaviour. According to Weiner (2019), learners who attribute success to controllable factors are more likely to remain motivated and continue investing effort in future learning. In the present study, the dominant attributions—including a supportive classroom environment, intrinsic motivation, and the perceived importance of speaking activities—represent factors that students can continue to develop throughout their learning process. For example, students who attribute their speaking improvement to active participation and supportive classroom interactions are likely to continue volunteering during role-play activities, asking questions during presentations, and responding to their classmates in future English-speaking tasks. Likewise, students who attribute their improvement to their own intrinsic motivation may continue seeking opportunities to practice English beyond the classroom because they perceive English communication as personally and professionally meaningful. These adaptive attributions are

therefore likely to strengthen students' confidence, willingness to communicate, and long-term engagement in English-speaking activities.

An important contribution of this study is that it demonstrates how learners' attributions are shaped by their disciplinary context. Rather than being universal across all English learners, nursing students' attributions reflected the communicative demands of healthcare practice, where English functions as a tool for patient care, professional collaboration, and clinical communication. This finding suggests that attribution research should pay greater attention to discipline-specific learning contexts, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where learners' professional goals may influence how they interpret their language-learning experiences and evaluate the factors contributing to their improvement.

Overall, the findings suggest that improving English-speaking skills among nursing students requires more than simply increasing opportunities for language practice. English lecturers should also create psychologically supportive classrooms, design speaking activities that reflect authentic nursing practice, and help students develop positive attributions toward their own learning. By strengthening these adaptive attributions, English for Nursing courses may not only improve students' speaking proficiency but also encourage them to become more confident and proactive communicators in future healthcare settings.

Conclusion

This study explored the attributions of Indonesian nursing students regarding their improvement in English-speaking skills in an English for Nursing course. The findings showed that students mainly attributed their speaking improvement to three factors: a positive classroom environment, intrinsic motivation, and the perceived importance of participating in English-speaking activities. These findings indicate that improving speaking skills involves more than developing language knowledge. How students interpret their learning experiences and the reasons they believe contribute to their progress also play an important role.

This study also adds to previous attribution research by showing that nursing students develop different attributions from those reported among English-major students. While English-major students generally learn English as their main field of study, nursing students view English as a practical communication tool that supports their future professional responsibilities. As a result, they tended to attribute their speaking improvement to authentic nursing topics, supportive classroom interactions, and meaningful speaking opportunities that reflected real clinical situations.

The findings have several implications for English for Nursing courses. Lecturers should create a supportive classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable speaking English without fear of making mistakes. Classroom activities should also be connected to authentic nursing practice so that students clearly understand why speaking English is important for their future careers. At the same time, encouraging students' intrinsic motivation may help them become more confident, participate more actively in speaking activities, and continue improving their English beyond the classroom.

This study was conducted with nursing students from a single institution; therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this context. Future studies could examine whether nursing students from different universities or healthcare disciplines develop similar attributions toward English-speaking improvement. Such studies would provide a broader understanding of how professional contexts shape language-learning experiences.

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