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EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE ENGLISH TEACHING PROCESS IN AN INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT SMAN 7 BANDA ACEH

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menggambarkan harapan siswa kelas XI terhadap proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh serta faktor-faktor yang membentuk harapan tersebut. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan dari 30 siswa yang dipilih secara purposif melalui kuesioner terbuka dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis dengan analisis tematik reflektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa harapan siswa bersifat multidimensional, meliputi dimensi kebahasaan, emosional, sosial, pedagogis, dan institusional. Pada dimensi kebahasaan, siswa mengharapkan peningkatan kelancaran berbicara, penguasaan kosakata, pelafalan, dan tata bahasa. Pada dimensi emosional dan sosial, siswa membutuhkan guru yang sabar, suasana kelas yang aman dari penilaian negatif, serta dukungan teman sebaya. Secara pedagogis, siswa lebih menyukai pembelajaran komunikatif, interaktif, dan berbasis aktivitas dibandingkan ceramah. Secara institusional, siswa mengharapkan pemanfaatan teknologi dan penguatan kegiatan klub bahasa Inggris. Kecemasan berbicara menjadi hambatan utama yang memengaruhi seluruh dimensi harapan siswa. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang responsif terhadap suara siswa.

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Kata Kunci: Harapan Siswa, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Kecemasan Berbicara, Pembelajaran Komunikatif, Suara Siswa.

Abstract

This study aims to describe the expectations of grade XI students towards the English learning process at SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh and the factors that shape these expectations. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected from 30 purposively selected students through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed by reflective thematic analysis. The results of the study show that students' expectations are multidimensional, including linguistic, emotional, social, pedagogical, and institutional dimensions. In the linguistic dimension, students expect an increase in fluency in speech, mastery of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. On the emotional and social dimensions, students need a patient teacher, a classroom atmosphere that is safe from negative judgment, and peer support. Pedagogically, students prefer communicative, interactive, and activity-based learning to lectures. Institutionally, students expect the use of technology and the strengthening of English club activities. Speech anxiety is a major obstacle that affects all dimensions of student expectations. These findings underscore the importance of English language learning that is responsive to students' voices.

Keywords: Student Expectations, English Learning, Speaking Anxiety, Communicative Learning, Student Voice.

PENDAHULUAN

English has become a crucial social and educational issue in Indonesian senior high schools because it is no longer viewed merely as a school subject, but as a competence connected to academic mobility, digital literacy, employment, and participation in global communication. In this context, English language teaching is expected to help students develop communicative competence, academic literacy, and confidence in using English beyond examination purposes (Fauzi & Ridwan, 2025). However, many learners still experience a gap between the English they need in real life and the English they encounter in classroom practice. This gap is particularly important because students' expectations influence motivation, engagement, willingness to communicate, and learning persistence (Horwitz et al., 1986). Practically, teachers and schools need to understand what students expect from the teaching process so that instruction is not only curriculum-driven but also responsive to learners' voices, emotional conditions, and future-oriented needs (Arnot & Reay, 2007).

Previous studies have examined various aspects of English teaching in foreign language contexts, including communicative language teaching, speaking instruction, teacher support, learner autonomy, and technology-assisted learning. Research has shown

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that students generally prefer communicative, interactive, and student-centered activities because such activities provide more opportunities to practice English meaningfully (AL-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019; Annisa, 2023). Other studies also emphasize that speaking anxiety, teacher–student interaction, and the availability of facilities shape students' participation and achievement in English classrooms (Loeneto, 2020; Loveta et al., 2020). Nevertheless, much of the existing literature still tends to examine these factors separately. Studies often focus on teaching methods, anxiety, technology, or achievement without sufficiently integrating them into a single framework of student expectations. In Indonesian contexts, including Banda Aceh, research has also remained relatively dominated by teacher perspectives, instructional strategies, and learning outcomes, while systematic exploration of students' own expectations remains limited (Arroyyani, 2023).

Responding to this limitation, the present study aims to explore Grade XI students' expectations of the English teaching process at SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh by placing student voice at the center of the analysis. Specifically, this study investigates what students expect in relation to English skills, teacher characteristics, classroom atmosphere, learning activities, peer interaction, technology use, and institutional support. Rather than treating expectation as a narrow academic preference, this study examines it as a multidimensional construct shaped by linguistic, affective, social, pedagogical, and institutional factors (Eccles et al., 1983). Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative descriptive design using open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with Grade XI students. This approach allows students to express their experiences and expectations in their own words and enables the researcher to identify patterns of meaning across the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this design, the study seeks to provide both conceptual insight for English as a foreign language scholarship and practical direction for improving classroom teaching and school-based English programs.

The guiding argument of this study is that students' expectations of English teaching are not isolated preferences, but interconnected conditions that influence how students participate, communicate, and develop confidence in learning English. This study argues that when students' linguistic expectations, especially speaking fluency, are not supported by emotionally safe classrooms, communicative pedagogy, positive peer relations, and adequate institutional facilities, speaking anxiety increases and classroom participation decreases (Horwitz, 2002). Conversely, when teachers provide patient guidance, use interactive activities, integrate digital resources, and create supportive classroom interaction, students are more likely to show motivation, willingness to communicate, and autonomous learning behavior (Benson, 2011). Therefore, this article proposes that English teaching quality in senior high school can be strengthened by aligning classroom practices and institutional support with students' multidimensional expectations.

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LANDASAN TEORI

The literature on students' expectations in English as a foreign language learning has developed through several interconnected tendencies. First, a body of research has examined student expectations and student voice as important predictors of motivation, classroom engagement, and willingness to participate in learning (Arnot & Reay, 2007). Second, studies have focused on communicative and student-centered pedagogy, emphasizing that learners tend to expect interactive activities, meaningful communication, and more opportunities to speak English in class (AL-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019). Third, affective studies have highlighted speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, teacher support, and peer interaction as factors shaping students' participation in English classrooms (Horwitz, 2002). Fourth, recent research has increasingly examined learner autonomy, digital learning, facilities, and extracurricular programs as institutional dimensions of language learning support (Mudinillah et al., 2024). These tendencies show that students' expectations are related not only to language skills but also to pedagogy, affective climate, social interaction, and institutional ecology.

The first research tendency is oriented toward student expectations and student voice. This line of inquiry views learners not merely as recipients of instruction but as active subjects whose experiences, aspirations, and judgments should inform teaching improvement (Cook-Sather, 2006). Conceptually, expectations are often connected to expectancy-value theory, which explains how learners' beliefs about learning outcomes influence their motivation, effort, and persistence (Eccles et al., 1983). Empirically, studies in this category frequently use surveys, interviews, reflective responses, or qualitative descriptions to identify what students expect from teachers, learning activities, assessment, and classroom environments (Mahmud, 2023). These studies generally find that students expect English teaching to be relevant to future academic and professional needs, emotionally supportive, and aligned with their communication goals. However, this tendency often discusses expectations as general attitudes or satisfaction indicators rather than as a complex construct formed through the interaction of linguistic, affective, pedagogical, social, and institutional dimensions.

The second tendency focuses on communicative language teaching, speaking development, and student-centered pedagogy. Studies in this area are commonly grounded in the idea that language learning should provide learners with opportunities to use English meaningfully through interaction, role-play, discussion, task-based learning, games, and collaborative work (Hymes, 1992). AL-Garni & Almuhammadi (2019) showed that communicative activities can improve students' speaking skills, while Ghafar et al (2023) emphasized the positive contribution of communicative methods to speaking and listening

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development. Similar studies in Indonesian contexts indicate that students tend to respond positively to teaching strategies that reduce passive listening and increase classroom participation (Annisa, 2023). Methodologically, this tendency is often dominated by experimental, classroom action research, and review-based designs that measure the effectiveness of methods. Although useful, these studies often prioritize instructional outcomes and method effectiveness, while the deeper reasons behind students' expectations for communicative learning are not always explored from the learners' own perspective.

The third tendency emphasizes affective, social, and psychological dimensions of English learning. Research on foreign language anxiety has shown that students' willingness to speak English is strongly influenced by fear of mistakes, negative evaluation, embarrassment, and low confidence (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Krahnke & Krashen (1983) affective filter hypothesis also explains that anxiety can block language input and reduce learners' readiness to communicate. More recent studies extend this discussion by showing that teacher patience, emotional support, positive feedback, and supportive classroom interaction are crucial for sustaining engagement (Loeneto, 2020; Loveta et al., 2020). Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) further argue that language classrooms should be understood through both negative emotions, such as anxiety, and positive emotions, such as enjoyment. This tendency usually employs psychological scales, perception studies, interviews, or correlational approaches. Its contribution lies in showing that English learning is not purely cognitive. However, affective studies often remain separated from discussions of institutional support, classroom pedagogy, and student expectations as a broader educational construct.

The fourth tendency examines learner autonomy, digital learning, and institutional learning support. This body of research argues that students' English development is not confined to classroom instruction because learners increasingly use digital media, applications, online videos, social media, and informal interaction to support their learning (Mudinillah et al., 2024). Learner autonomy is therefore understood as the capacity to take responsibility for learning by selecting resources, strategies, and practices that suit personal goals (Holec, 1980). Institutional studies also show that facilities, technological infrastructure, and extracurricular programs influence students' opportunities to practice English beyond regular class hours (Nurjannah & Rahmi, 2024; Revi Mariska et al., 2024). English clubs, debate teams, multimedia learning, and language laboratories are frequently discussed as forms of institutional support that can expand communicative exposure. Nevertheless, this tendency often treats facilities and digital learning as supporting variables, rather than as part of students' expectation structure. As a result, the connection between institutional ecology and students' emotional, linguistic, and pedagogical expectations remains insufficiently theorized.

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Although these tendencies have contributed significantly to the understanding of English learning, they still leave several gaps. Studies on student voice tend to emphasize learners' opinions but do not always connect them with anxiety, pedagogy, and institutional support. Studies on communicative teaching explain the effectiveness of interactive methods but often overlook how students' expectations are shaped by fear of speaking and by the classroom atmosphere. Affective studies successfully highlight anxiety and teacher support, yet they rarely integrate these factors with learning facilities, extracurricular opportunities, and digital practices. Research on autonomy and technology also tends to discuss independent learning without sufficiently examining how students expect schools and teachers to recognize those informal learning practices. Thus, previous studies have generally examined linguistic, affective, pedagogical, social, and institutional aspects separately. What remains underexplored is an integrated framework that explains students' expectations as a multidimensional construct, especially in Indonesian senior high school contexts such as SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh.

This study proposes a new direction by examining Grade XI students' expectations of the English teaching process through a multidimensional perspective. Rather than focusing only on teaching methods, speaking anxiety, facilities, or motivation as separate issues, this study investigates how linguistic expectations, emotional safety, classroom interaction, communicative pedagogy, autonomous learning, and institutional support intersect in students' own accounts. This orientation is important because students may expect speaking fluency, but such expectation cannot be fulfilled without supportive teachers, non-judgmental peers, interactive activities, and adequate opportunities for authentic practice (Yuan & Zhen, 2021). Methodologically, this study uses a qualitative descriptive design with open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, allowing students to articulate expectations in their own language and enabling the researcher to identify thematic relations across their responses (Crewell & Porth, 1998). The study therefore contributes a Multidimensional EFL Expectation framework that positions student voice as a conceptual and practical basis for improving English teaching quality.

METODE PENELITIAN

The unit of analysis in this study is individual Grade XI students as English as a foreign language learners at SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh. The research focuses on students' expectations of the English teaching process, particularly how they understand, experience, and articulate their needs regarding English skills, teacher characteristics, classroom atmosphere, learning activities, peer interaction, and institutional support. The students are positioned not merely as respondents who provide information, but as meaning-making subjects whose voices reflect the lived reality of English learning in a senior high school

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context (Cook-Sather, 2006). This unit of analysis is appropriate because expectations are subjective, contextual, and formed through students' previous learning experiences, personal goals, affective conditions, and interaction with teachers and classmates (Eccles et al., 1983). Thus, the study does not analyze curriculum documents or teaching methods as independent objects, but examines how students interpret the teaching process and what they expect from it as learners.

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. A qualitative approach was selected because the purpose of the study was not to test statistical relationships among variables, but to explore students' meanings, perceptions, and expectations in depth (Crewell & Porth, 1998). The descriptive orientation enabled the researcher to present students' expectations in a direct, contextual, and interpretive manner without reducing them into numerical scores. This design is suitable for studies that seek to understand educational phenomena from participants' perspectives, especially when the research problem concerns learner voice, classroom experience, and affective dimensions of language learning (Sandelowski, 2000). In this study, qualitative description was also supported by reflexive thematic analysis, which allowed the researcher to identify recurring patterns across students' questionnaire responses and interview narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the design provided a systematic yet flexible framework for examining students' linguistic, emotional, social, pedagogical, and institutional expectations.

The data sources consisted of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh who were purposively selected based on their relevance to the research focus. Thirty students participated in the open-ended questionnaire, consisting of 16 female and 14 male students aged between 16 and 17 years. Grade XI students were chosen because they had experienced several years of formal English instruction and were considered capable of articulating their expectations about English teaching more reflectively. From these 30 participants, eight students representing different English proficiency levels, as judged by their English teachers, were selected for semi-structured interviews. The main data were therefore derived from students' written responses and oral narratives. These data were complemented by contextual information about the school, including the availability of basic technological infrastructure, classroom learning conditions, and English learning programs. In qualitative inquiry, purposive selection of participants is justified when informants possess direct experience of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002).

Data collection was conducted through two main techniques: open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. First, the researcher distributed an open-ended questionnaire consisting of 12 items covering four domains: students' English learning goals, preferred teaching methods and classroom activities, expectations of teachers and classroom environment, and institutional support such as facilities,

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technology, and extracurricular programs. The questionnaire was piloted with five students outside the main sample to ensure clarity and relevance. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight selected students to deepen and clarify the questionnaire responses. The interview guide consisted of 10 core questions, but the researcher allowed follow-up questions when participants provided meaningful or unexpected responses. Interviews were conducted using a combination of English and Bahasa Indonesia so that students could express complex ideas comfortably. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with informed consent. This process aligns with qualitative interviewing principles that prioritize openness, depth, and participant-centered meaning (Brinkmann, 2012).

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis following the stages proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis began with data familiarization through repeated reading of questionnaire responses and interview transcripts. The researcher then generated initial codes by identifying meaningful segments related to students' linguistic expectations, speaking anxiety, teacher support, classroom interaction, teaching methods, technology use, and extracurricular needs. After coding, related codes were grouped into broader themes and reviewed against the entire dataset to ensure coherence and relevance. The themes were then defined, named, and interpreted in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework. To strengthen trustworthiness, the study used data source triangulation between questionnaires and interviews, member checking through participant confirmation of interview summaries, and an audit trail documenting analytical decisions (Nowell et al., 2017). A second researcher also reviewed part of the coded data to support dependability. The final analysis produced five interconnected themes: linguistic, affective, pedagogical, social, and institutional expectations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The first result shows that students' expectations of English learning were strongly shaped by the controversy between the social demand for communicative English competence and the classroom reality that still tended to limit students' speaking opportunities. The most visible evidence appeared in the linguistic expectation data. Students repeatedly placed speaking fluency as the central goal of learning English. One interview participant stated, "I want to be able to speak English without thinking too much about grammar. When I can speak freely, I feel like I can study abroad or get a good job." This quotation shows that speaking was not understood merely as a classroom skill. Speaking was seen as a bridge to academic mobility and future employment. In simple terms, students wanted English teaching to move beyond grammar explanation toward real

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communicative use. The data reveal at least three patterns. Students prioritized speaking fluency over passive skills. Students viewed vocabulary as the main barrier to speaking. Students also considered pronunciation and grammar as supporting elements for confidence.

The linguistic expectation was further supported by students' statements about vocabulary limitation. One participant explained, "My biggest problem is vocabulary. Sometimes I know what I want to say but I cannot find the right words, so I just stop." This data shows that speaking fluency appeared as the primary expectation. Vocabulary mastery became the main difficulty. Pronunciation appeared as a confidence factor. Grammar appeared as an accuracy factor. Restated simply, students did not reject grammar, but they expected grammar to support communication rather than dominate the teaching process. This finding confirms that the transformation desired by students was not the elimination of formal language instruction. The transformation they expected was the reorientation of formal instruction toward communicative competence. Three tendencies can be identified from this data. Students expected usable English. Students connected English with future opportunities. Students perceived vocabulary shortage as the immediate obstacle that prevented them from participating orally in class (Hymes, 1992).

The third evidence under the first result concerns the shift in students' learning orientation from examination centered learning to future oriented communication. Although reading and writing were mentioned, they appeared as secondary concerns compared with productive speaking ability. In the data, students associated oral proficiency with studying abroad, communicating with foreigners, gaining confidence, and securing better career opportunities. This finding can be restated as follows. English was imagined by students not only as a school subject, but also as a form of cultural, academic, and economic capital. This description produces several tendencies (Eccles et al., 1983). First, students' expectations were instrumental because English was linked to mobility and employment. Second, students' expectations were affective because confidence became part of the desired learning outcome. Third, students' expectations were pedagogical because students expected classroom activities that allowed them to practice speaking frequently. The trend therefore confirms a change in students' orientation. They no longer expected English teaching to be dominated by memorization, but by meaningful use and communicative participation (Mahmud, 2023).

The second result shows that speaking anxiety became a central affective barrier shaping students' expectations of teachers, peers, and classroom atmosphere. The clearest evidence was found in one interview statement. The participant stated, "When the teacher asks me to speak in front of the class, I feel nervous and my mind goes blank. I am afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at." This quotation shows the emotional reality

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experienced by students. Restated simply, students were not unwilling to speak English. They were afraid of being negatively evaluated when they made errors. The data reveal three patterns. First, anxiety appeared when students had to speak publicly. Second, fear of peer ridicule intensified silence. Third, teacher response determined whether mistakes were viewed as learning opportunities or sources of shame. This result confirms that the problem in English teaching was not only methodological but also emotional. Students' willingness to communicate depended on classroom safety (Horwitz, 2002).

A second piece of evidence for the affective result was students' expectation of patient, supportive, and non judgmental teachers. One participant stated, "A good English teacher for me is one who does not make students feel embarrassed when they make mistakes. I need to feel safe." This statement shows the link between teacher behavior and students' emotional readiness to participate. The data can be restated in a simple pattern. When teachers corrected harshly, students withdrew. When teachers corrected gently, students tried again. This evidence shows that students expected teachers to function not only as language instructors but also as emotional facilitators. Three tendencies emerged. Students valued patience more than perfectionism. Students expected feedback that protected dignity. Students interpreted classroom safety as a prerequisite for learning engagement. This finding supports the view that affective factors and teacher and student interaction influence students' participation in English classrooms. Speaking anxiety therefore cannot be treated as an individual weakness alone. It must be understood as an interactional condition shaped by classroom relationships (Loeneto, 2020; Loveta et al., 2020).

The third evidence in the affective result was the role of peer collaboration and classroom atmosphere. One student noted, "If my friends laugh when I make a mistake, I will never try again. But if they support me, I try harder." This quotation shows that students' speaking expectations were socially mediated. Restated simply, students expected an English classroom where mistakes were normalized, peer support was present, and participation was not punished by ridicule. The data indicate several tendencies. Students preferred collaborative learning. Students associated peer encouragement with willingness to speak. Students expected the physical and psychological classroom to support concentration. This pattern strengthens the interpretation that emotional safety was not merely a background condition but part of the core expectation structure. The CCTES element appears here as an emergency. Without safe interaction, students' communicative expectations could not be realized. Therefore, English teaching must address not only curriculum content but also the social culture of the classroom, including how students respond to one another's errors (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

The third result shows that students expected communicative, interactive, and institutionally supported English learning. Questionnaire data provide a clear visualization.

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Discussions were mentioned by 26 of 30 students. Role plays were mentioned by 22 of 30 students. Games were mentioned by 20 of 30 students. Debates were mentioned by 18 of 30 students. Media based activities such as films and songs were mentioned by 25 of 30 students. This data can be restated as a strong preference for activity based learning over lecture based instruction. Students did not simply want entertainment (AL-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019). They wanted activities that allowed them to use English in meaningful, memorable, and low pressure ways. One participant stated, "I prefer class activities where we talk to each other in English. When we just listen to the teacher explain grammar, I get bored and cannot remember. When I use it, I remember." The data reveal three tendencies. Interaction made learning memorable. Media increased engagement. Speaking practice was expected to be integrated into regular classroom routines (Ghafar et al., 2023).

Institutional expectations strengthened the third result. Twenty four of thirty questionnaire respondents identified improved technology access as a priority. The technology access expected by students included internet, projectors, and language learning applications. One student explained, "We have a computer lab but it is not often used for English. If we could use apps like Duolingo or watch YouTube videos in class, I think we would learn more." This statement shows a gap between available infrastructure and meaningful pedagogical use. Restated simply, students did not only ask for facilities to exist. They expected facilities to be integrated into English learning (Benson, 2011). Three tendencies appeared from this data. First, students recognized digital media as a useful source of authentic input. Second, they expected teachers to connect formal lessons with informal digital learning practices. Third, they viewed technology as a bridge between classroom English and real world exposure. This result shows a transformation in learner expectations. English learning is no longer imagined as confined to textbooks. It is connected with applications, videos, online interaction, and multimedia resources (Mudinillah et al., 2024).

The final evidence concerns extracurricular support. Twenty two of thirty students expected an English club or debate team as an institutional resource that could provide additional speaking practice beyond the classroom. This data shows that classroom hours were viewed as limited. English clubs were expected as practice spaces. Debate activities were imagined as confidence building activities. Technology was expected as exposure support. Restated clearly, students perceived formal instruction as necessary but insufficient for developing communicative competence. Three patterns can be identified. First, students wanted more time for authentic practice. Second, students viewed extracurricular programs as less threatening than formal classroom performance. Third, students expected schools to design an English learning ecosystem that includes classroom

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teaching, digital media, peer collaboration, and extracurricular activities. This finding confirms that students' expectations were multidimensional. They were not limited to teacher performance or classroom method, but extended to institutional policy and school culture. Thus, English teaching quality depends on coordinated support from teachers, peers, facilities, and school leadership (Nurjannah & Rahmi, 2024; Revi Mariska et al., 2024).

Discussion

This study explored Grade XI students' expectations of the English teaching process at SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh and found that those expectations were multidimensional. The results show three major findings. First, students prioritized speaking fluency, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and grammar as linguistic expectations, with speaking emerging as the central goal. Second, students' expectations were deeply shaped by affective and social conditions, especially speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, teacher patience, emotional safety, and peer support. Third, students expected communicative, interactive, and institutionally supported English learning through discussions, role plays, games, debates, media use, digital applications, and English club opportunities. These findings confirm that student expectations cannot be understood as isolated preferences. Rather, they form a connected structure involving linguistic goals, emotional readiness, pedagogical method, peer relations, and institutional ecology. This summary strengthens the Multidimensional EFL Expectation framework proposed in this study and positions student voice as a central source for improving English language teaching (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The relationship among the findings can be explained through the interaction between expectation, anxiety, and learning opportunity. Students expected to speak English fluently because they attached high value to speaking for academic mobility, future work, and social communication. However, this expectation could not automatically produce participation because students also experienced speaking anxiety. In other words, the more students valued speaking, the more emotionally vulnerable they became when classroom conditions exposed them to ridicule or harsh correction. This explains why students simultaneously expected communicative activities and emotionally supportive teachers. Communicative learning without psychological safety may increase anxiety. Supportive classrooms without sufficient speaking practice may fail to develop fluency. Therefore, the findings suggest that effective English teaching requires balance. Learners need opportunities to use English, and these opportunities must be organized within a safe, collaborative, and non judgmental classroom culture. This relationship confirms that affective factors and cognitive expectations are inseparable in language learning (Hyland, 2002).

Compared with previous studies, these findings share similarities with research emphasizing communicative language teaching, student centered pedagogy, and the

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importance of learner voice. AL-Garni & Almuhammadi (2019) and Ghafar et al (2023) showed that communicative activities support speaking development. Mahmud (2023) found that students' expectations influence satisfaction and engagement in language learning. The present study also supports Loeneto (2020) and Loveta et al (2020), who highlighted the role of teacher and student relationships in English learning engagement. However, the novelty of this study lies in its integrated explanation. Previous studies often discussed speaking competence, anxiety, teacher support, technology, or extracurricular programs separately. This study demonstrates that these aspects are mutually connected in students' own expectation structure. Speaking expectation was inseparable from speaking anxiety. Classroom method was inseparable from peer culture. Institutional support was inseparable from students' desire for authentic communicative practice. This integration contributes to a more holistic understanding of English learning expectations in Indonesian senior high school contexts.

The meaning of these findings must be interpreted within the social context of English learning in Indonesia. English functions as a symbolic resource associated with modernity, global access, academic opportunity, and employability. For students at SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh, the expectation to speak English fluently reflects not only a linguistic aspiration but also a desire for social mobility (Arnot & Reay, 2007). Historically, English teaching in many Indonesian classrooms has often emphasized grammar, reading, and examination preparation. At the same time, students increasingly encounter English through digital media, social platforms, entertainment, and global communication. This creates a tension between school based English and life world English. Ideologically, the data suggest a shift from teacher centered instruction toward learner responsive pedagogy. Students want to be heard, supported, and given opportunities to practice. Thus, student voice becomes a democratic educational principle. Learners are not passive objects of curriculum implementation, but active participants whose expectations can guide institutional improvement (Cook-Sather, 2006).

Reflectively, the findings have both functional and dysfunctional implications. Functionally, listening to students' expectations can help teachers design more relevant, communicative, and emotionally safe English lessons. It can also help schools identify concrete needs such as technology integration, English clubs, and peer based speaking activities. When student voice is recognized, learning becomes more participatory and students may develop stronger motivation, confidence, and autonomy (Benson, 2011). However, there are also possible dysfunctions if expectations are misunderstood. For example, students' preference for games, films, and applications should not be interpreted as a rejection of structured learning. Communicative activities still require careful planning, language objectives, feedback, and assessment. Similarly, the desire for non judgmental

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classrooms should not eliminate correction. It should transform correction into constructive feedback. Therefore, the implication is not to replace academic rigor with entertainment. The implication is to redesign rigor through meaningful communication, supportive interaction, and learner responsive teaching (Sandelowski, 2000).

Based on these findings, several action plans can be proposed. First, English teachers should systematically integrate communicative activities into weekly lessons. These activities may include pair discussion, role play, short debate, storytelling, and media based speaking tasks. Second, teachers need professional development on anxiety sensitive feedback so that correction supports confidence rather than embarrassment. Third, schools should activate available digital facilities by using computer laboratories, projectors, online videos, language learning applications, and curated digital tasks for English practice. Fourth, school administrators should establish or strengthen English clubs, debate teams, and informal speaking communities to extend practice beyond limited classroom hours. Fifth, curriculum review should include periodic student voice surveys so that teaching improvement is informed by learners' expectations. These policies would transform English learning from a classroom only activity into a broader learning ecosystem. In this way, the findings are not merely descriptive but practical. They provide a basis for improving English teaching quality through coordinated teacher, peer, technological, and institutional support (Crewell & Porth, 1998).

KESIMPULAN

The most important lesson from this study is that students' expectations of English teaching cannot be understood merely as a desire for better methods or higher achievement. The experience of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 7 Banda Aceh shows that English learning is meaningful when linguistic goals, emotional safety, classroom interaction, and institutional support are connected. Students expected to speak English fluently, master vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and understand grammar, but these expectations were strongly influenced by fear of making mistakes, peer judgment, and teacher response. Therefore, the central finding of this study is that speaking competence does not grow only from repeated practice, but from a learning environment that makes students feel safe to try, fail, and try again. The main lesson is that English teaching must listen to student voice. When students' expectations are recognized, the classroom becomes not only a place for delivering material, but also a space for building confidence, participation, and future readiness.

The strength of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of students' expectations as a multidimensional construct. The study contributes empirical data from students' written responses and interview narratives, showing that expectations include

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linguistic, affective, pedagogical, social, and institutional dimensions. Conceptually, this study offers the Multidimensional EFL Expectation framework, which explains that students' expectations are not separate variables but interconnected elements that shape learning engagement. Methodologically, the qualitative descriptive approach allowed students to express their expectations in their own language, so the findings were grounded in learner voice rather than in teacher assumptions or test scores. The study also opens new academic questions. Future studies may ask how expectation profiles differ across grade levels, how teachers respond to student expectations in real classroom practice, and how school policies can transform student voice into curriculum improvement. In this way, the study contributes both to English language teaching scholarship and to practical school based innovation.

This study also has limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in one school and focused only on Grade XI students, so the findings cannot be generalized to all Indonesian senior high schools without further investigation. Second, the study relied mainly on open ended questionnaires and semi structured interviews, while classroom observation was not conducted. As a result, the study could identify students' expectations, but it could not directly compare those expectations with actual classroom practices. Third, the use of purposive sampling may have represented students who were more willing or able to articulate their learning experiences, while less active students may have different expectations. Future research should involve multiple schools, different grade levels, and a larger number of participants. It should also combine interviews, surveys, classroom observation, and teacher perspectives to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Longitudinal research is also needed to examine how students' expectations change over time and how those changes influence motivation, confidence, and English achievement.

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