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Paper: **“Speaking Paucity Among Learners of English in Sierra Leone”**

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Peer review:

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ESJ Manuscript Evaluation Form 2026

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Please respond within the appointed time so that we can give the authors timely responses and feedback.

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Date Manuscript Received: April 10, 2026	Date Review Report Submitted: April 19, 2026
Manuscript Title: SPEAKING POVERTY AMONG LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN SIERRA LEONE	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 0437/26	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: No	
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Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	Rating Result [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	4
The title is clear, direct, and aligned with the paper’s central problem: weak oral fluency/limited spoken competence among learners of English in Sierra Leone. The paper covers multiple	

aspects; the title could be slightly more specific (e.g., “oral fluency/communicative competence constraints”).	
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results.	4
1-The abstract clearly states aims/objectives (relationship of multilingual background and English adeptness; influence of sociocultural/cultural factors). 2-It also states design and sampling (mixed methods, systematic random sampling, N=1000; tools include questionnaires/discussions/interviews). 3-It gives headline findings (85% pronunciation errors; traditional methods reduce fluency; urban and rural; weaknesses in spelling/pronunciation/SVA; recommends interactive strategies). 4- The main weakness preventing a 5: the abstract is overlong and dense. 5- It also mixes multiple theoretical framings without specifying how theory guided analysis.	
3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	2
This research paper contains frequent grammar and wording problems. Examples include: clumsy phrasing, inconsistent tense, article use, agreement errors, and unclear sentences. 1.“Invariable, the aim of the study is to ascertain best sociocultural and linguistics practices...” - Issue: “Invariable” is not appropriate here; “linguistics practices” is awkward; missing articles. - Better: “Overall, the study aims to identify the best sociocultural and linguistic practices...” 2. “In order to do this, it is evident that over the past ten years, there has been a significant rise in the desire of people worldwide...” - Issue: “it is evident that” is vague; sentence is wordy and indirectly phrased. - Better: “Over the past decade, global demand for English has increased...” 3. “However, thinking about the issue and generating speculative assumptions may never lead to the intended outcomes.” - Issue: awkward and rhetorical; not academic evidence-based phrasing. - Better: “However, addressing the problem requires empirical investigation rather than speculation.” 4. “This situation is alarming and depicts Sierra Leone’s dire oral English language needs.” - Issue: “dire” is incorrect word choice; sentence is unclear. - Better: “This situation is alarming and indicates serious oral English needs in Sierra Leone.”	

5. “It is ridiculous to know that majority of the senior secondary school pupils in Sierra Leone can’t communicate...” • Issue: inappropriate tone (“ridiculous”); “majority... can’t” needs “the”; contraction is informal. • Better: “It is concerning that the majority of senior secondary school pupils... cannot communicate...” 6. “Thus, the aim of this ESL Oral Proficiency Inapt in Senior Secondary School Learners is to assess...” • Issue: phrase is ungrammatical/unclear (“Proficiency Inapt”); difficult to interpret. • Better: “Thus, this study aims to assess practices that can improve ESL oral proficiency...” 7. “Stevens, Challay and Thulla, (2023) stated that although English is required...” • Issue: citation punctuation (comma before parentheses) and tense consistency; also extra comma after “Thulla”. • Better: “Stevens, Challay, and Thulla (2023) stated that...” 8. “Furenzi (2021) define fluency as...” • Issue: subject-verb agreement (“define”) • Better: “Furenzi (2021) defines fluency as...”	
4. The study methods are explained clearly. The study states a mixed-methods approach. It includes tools (questionnaires, interviews/discussions, observation), and a speaking evaluation activity (recitation, passages, conversation). It reports sample size (1000) and mentions systematic random sampling.	3
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors. -The results section has clarity issues and numerical/reporting inconsistencies in tables. For example, in Table 1 the layout appears confused: “Agree 385 85; Disagree 15 5” for Bo with 400 learners does not reconcile (385/400 = 96.25%, not 85%). Similar misalignments occur in other districts. Table 2 also shows ratios that do not consistently match the counts presented (e.g., Bo: Agree 315, Disagree 85, but ratio says 70.5 and 20.5—those don’t sum to 100 and do not match 315/400). -The presentation is to some extent understandable (urban-rural difference, limited English use outside class, L1 influence), but due to the table errors and over-interpretation, results reliability is weakened.	3
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content. -Many conclusions are consistent with the reported themes: pronunciation/vocabulary barriers, sociocultural constraints limiting practice, teacher-centered methods, and need for interactive speaking activities. - Some conclusions are overgeneralized (e.g., broad claims about Muslim-dominated districts and English seen as cultural deviance) without careful, sensitive use and distinctive qualitative evidence citations.	3

7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	3.
-The reference list is significant and includes many recent sources (2024–2025) relevant to fluency, technology, AI, and speaking pedagogy. -Some references are incomplete (e.g., “Available @ owlcation,” unclear publisher credibility for some items, inconsistent bibliographic details, and several citations. -Formatting is inconsistent (APA-like elements mixed with irregular punctuation; missing volume/issue/pages for some; inconsistent DOI formatting).	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

1-Rebuild Tables 1–5 with correct totals and percentages (ensure they sum correctly and match the raw counts).

2-Explain interview protocol and qualitative analysis method (coding steps, themes, evidence excerpts/quotes).

3-Improve academic tone and sensitivity in terms of avoiding such phrasing (e.g., “It is ridiculous...”). When discussing religion/culture, use cautious academic language and support claims with data or evidence.

4-Carry out thorough proofreading (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, word choice).

5-Apply one citation style consistently (APA 7th, for example).