



Analysis of Factors Inhibiting Students in Speaking English as a Foreign Language: Qualitative Study in Classes VIII and IX at Mts Darul Falah Cibungur

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Abstract

This research investigates the factors that hinder students from speaking English as a foreign language in the classroom. Through qualitative research methods involving students and teachers, the findings show that there are two main factors that influence students' speaking abilities, namely affective factors and cognitive factors. Affective factors include eleven subfactors such as shyness, nervousness, and lack of self-confidence, while cognitive factors involve problems with grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In addition, the influence of teachers and peers also has a significant role in overcoming or exacerbating these factors. This research has implications for designing more effective speaking learning and a supportive environment for students in overcoming speaking barriers.

Keywords: Speaking English, inhibiting factors, affective factors,

1. Introduction

Speaking ability is one important aspect in the process of learning English as a foreign language. Speaking competence plays a crucial role in students' language skills, and good mastery of this is the main goal in the learning process. Most students start learning about speaking since they are in the fourth grade of elementary school. After that, they continue their education to a higher level to deepen speaking skills, so they can communicate better and more effectively in English (Abrar et al., 2018; Yulia, 2013).

Speaking is not only seen as a tool for communication, but also as a way for students to verbally express their knowledge, understanding and skills. It involves interactive processes involving the production, reception, and processing of information. This information is conveyed through words and body language in a variety of contexts, which are influenced by the collective experiences of the participants, the physical environment, and the purpose of speaking (Andi and Arafah 2017). The speaker, in this case, acts as a message encoder who must be able to communicate his ideas, thoughts, feelings and needs in a way that allows the listener to understand the message. Good speaking skills involve aspects of accuracy, fluency and completeness in communication.

For example, accuracy in speaking includes the correct choice of vocabulary, correct application of grammar, and clear pronunciation. Students' ability to use words appropriately in the correct order and produce pronunciations that are easily understood by listeners is an important element in speaking competence. Apart from that, fluency is also a key factor in speaking, namely students' ability to express their ideas fluently and without significant obstacles. Developing speaking competence in English has a broad impact in the context of globalization and increasingly close intercultural relations ((Yufrizal, 2017; Napitupulu, 2017). Therefore, a deep understanding of the background and significance of speaking skills in English language learning is essential for developing effective learning approaches and encouraging students' progress in speaking English.

Speaking skills are not only needed to communicate in casual situations or everyday communication, but also to communicate effectively in the context of public communication. This involves a number of very important supporting competencies, including a good understanding of grammar, fluency in speaking, clear pronunciation, and

also success in conveying message content well (Pranoto and Suprayogi, 2020; Al Arif, 2019). Learning these supporting competencies helps students build good speaking skills, which then allows them to actively participate in the learning process in the classroom. With strong speaking skills, students are more confident in interacting with teachers and classmates, and are more active in discussions, presentations, and various other speaking activities.

Speaking is one of the four main language skills, along with reading, listening and writing. It is the basis of all human interaction and is the main key to communication. In the context of language learning, speaking becomes very important, especially when students are learning a foreign or second language. Mastering speaking skills in the language learning process is the most significant aspect because it is often considered the main indicator of one's ability in the target language. Speaking skills describe a person's ability to speak and interact in the language being studied (Gunantar, 2016; Jon et al., 2021).

In today's world filled with electronic communication technology and mass media, most information exchange occurs through oral communication. Therefore, in language learning, speaking skills become more significant because students need to understand and master speaking skills in the target language to actively participate in modern communication. In conclusion, speaking ability has a central role in the language learning process and is a very important skill for students to master in an effort to understand and participate in an increasingly globally connected world (Sibarani, 2019).

MTs Darul Falah Cibungur, as an educational institution, understands how important it is to develop speaking competence in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Through an active and participatory learning approach, this school encourages students to actively participate in discussions, sharing, and other activities designed to improve their speaking skills. This is in line with the principle of educational reform which places students as the main agents in the learning process. Thus, speaking competency is a key skill that must be mastered by every student at MTs Darul Falah Cibungur.

By mastering speaking skills, students can be more effective in conveying their ideas, thoughts and concepts in the context of classroom learning. It also helps them build critical and analytical thinking skills, and increases their confidence in communicating. Apart from that, good speaking skills will also bring long-term benefits in everyday life, helping students to be more confident and competent in interacting with other people in various situations. Thus, developing speaking competence at MTs Darul Falah Cibungur not only influences students' academic success, but also equips them with very valuable skills for the future.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Factors Inhibiting Students in Speaking

In the context of learning to speak English as a foreign language, there are several factors that can become obstacles for students. One of the main factors is lack of confidence or lack of confidence in speaking the target language. This can be caused by fear of making a mistake or not being able to understand what the other person is saying. These factors can hinder students' ability to speak fluently and confidently.

Apart from that, lack of exposure or practice in speaking can also be an obstacle. Students who rarely have the opportunity to practice speaking in real situations may experience difficulties when they have to do so. Lack of opportunities to speak the target language can result in poorly honed speaking skills.

Another factor that may influence is the learning environment. Students who study in an environment that does not support or facilitate speaking practice may experience difficulties in developing their speaking skills. For example, if the class does not provide many opportunities to talk or if there is no atmosphere that encourages students to actively communicate, this can be an obstacle.

Apart from these factors, cultural differences and learning styles can also influence students' speaking abilities. Students who come from different cultural backgrounds may face challenges in adapting to how to communicate in English. In addition, individual learning styles can also influence the way students learn to speak, and this needs to be considered in the learning process. In order to overcome these inhibiting factors, an integrated learning approach, providing structured practice opportunities, and creating a supportive learning environment can be effective strategies to help students develop their speaking skills in English.

2.2. English as a Foreign Language

English has a very significant role in the education system in Indonesia. Students in Indonesia start learning English from an early age, especially from the fourth grade of elementary school, as explained in Tahir's 2015 study. However, it is important to remember that in Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language. This means that the language used in daily communication in Indonesian society is not English.

The ability to speak English by students in Indonesia is more directed at providing them with wider opportunities to obtain higher and better education. English is considered the key to access to literature, resources and greater opportunities in the world of education and work, especially in an increasingly connected global environment.

However, it is important to differentiate between a second language and a foreign language. A second language is a language that is acquired after someone has acquired their mother tongue, while a foreign language is a language that

is learned additionally, usually in a school environment or a language that is not used in daily communication. In Indonesia, students do not use English in the context of daily communication in the surrounding community, so English is considered a foreign language, not a second language.

The role of English as a foreign language remains very important in the development of student education in Indonesia. The ability to speak English can open the door for them to access knowledge, global resources, and communicate with the international community, thereby broadening their horizons and opportunities in various fields.

2.3. Purpose of Speaking

The speaking component in language classes has the main aim of encouraging the acquisition of effective communication and supporting real communicative interactions, both inside and outside the classroom. To achieve this goal, instructors can utilize a balanced activity approach that combines providing language input, specific structure exercises, and communicative practice. Developing oral fluency is a primary focus in achieving this goal. This involves establishing specific content and activities that stimulate students to communicate actively and efficiently in the target language. Apart from that, oral fluency also includes students' ability to understand, respond and respond to various communicative situations.

There are several reasons why people communicate. First, they want to convey a message or information. In this case, speaking is a general way of suggesting that the speaker makes a definite decision to communicate with another person. In addition, people also communicate because they have certain communicative goals. They deliver messages because they want something to happen as a result of what they say. This can include purposes such as convincing, providing information, expressing pleasure, or even to express agreement or complaint. Thus, the aim of learning speaking is to equip students with communicative skills that enable them to participate actively in various communicative contexts. This includes the ability to convey messages clearly, understand messages from others, and interact effectively in different communicative situations.

2.4. Factors Inhibiting Students in Speaking

Speaking is one of the language skills that is very important in language learning and is the main foundation of communicative interaction. Especially in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), speaking skills require special attention and guidance. Today, speaking ability is considered one of the most vital skills that English language learners need to master and improve. For EFL learners, speaking English is not an easy task; this requires extra effort to produce proper sayings and sentences in English. Therefore, the main goal of teaching English is to improve students' ability to use a second language (L2) correctly, precisely and effectively in communication. Unfortunately, speaking exercises and activities are often neglected in classroom practice. Students often do not get enough opportunities to practice speaking, both in class and outside of class.

Thus, speaking is considered one of the most challenging language skills for students. Many students have studied English for years but still have difficulty speaking correctly and appropriately. This applies not only to students in Saudi, but also to non-native English learners in various countries. The main inhibiting factors in speaking, both for Saudi students and English language learners in general, include affective (related to feelings and emotions) and cognitive (related to thinking and understanding processes). Mastering English speaking skills has important implications for students' future studies and careers. Therefore, research on speaking skills in the context of the Saudi EMP becomes very relevant. This research aims to discuss obstacles related to students' speaking abilities, identify the main inhibiting factors, and provide solutions or strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Affective factors are the first main factors explained in this research. This arises because students often experience negative results in the process of learning English in class. In this study, four subfactors were categorized as affective factors, namely lack of motivation, shame, lack of self-confidence, and self-esteem.

First, lack of motivation is a significant factor. In the teaching and learning process of speaking, students need encouragement from teachers and classmates to actively participate. This motivation is an important driver for students to take the initiative in speaking and communicating in class. Second, shyness is another factor inhibiting speaking. Students often experience embarrassment when asked to speak in front of the class, especially in situations such as dialogues, speeches, or presentations. This embarrassment can disturb students' concentration and cause them to forget the words they are supposed to say. Third, lack of self-confidence is also a factor that influences students' speaking abilities. Students who feel less confident in their knowledge of English tend to have lower confidence in speaking. This can be exacerbated if they see their classmates seem more adept at communicating. Lastly, negative self-esteem or self-judgment can also hinder students' speaking abilities. Students who evaluate themselves in a negative way, especially regarding speaking competence, will tend to have low self-confidence. Therefore, it is important for teachers to help students appreciate and recognize their own speaking competence.

By understanding and acknowledging these affective factors, teachers can implement learning strategies that motivate, build self-confidence, and help students overcome shame and negative self-esteem. Thus, students can develop their speaking skills more confidently and effectively in learning English.

Cognitive factors are another main factor that can hinder students' speaking ability in English. This factor is mainly related to students' knowledge and understanding of English. When students face difficulties in understanding grammar, vocabulary, or sentence structure, this can increase their anxiety and nervousness when speaking.

The following are cognitive factors that can hinder students from speaking English:

- a) **Limited Knowledge of Grammar** Students who have limitations in understanding English grammar may experience difficulty in forming correct and clear sentences. This can affect their ability to speak fluently and precisely.
- b) **Limited Vocabulary** Limitations in mastering English vocabulary can make it difficult for students to express their ideas or thoughts clearly and precisely. They may experience confusion in choosing appropriate words in certain situations.
- c) **Difficulty Understanding Sentence Structure** Students may face difficulty in understanding English sentence structure, thereby hindering their ability to construct sentences correctly and communicate messages effectively.
- d) **Limited Understanding of Word Meanings** Understanding the meaning of words in different contexts is an important aspect of speaking. Students who have difficulty understanding the meaning of words may have difficulty expressing ideas appropriately.

These cognitive factors can significantly influence students' ability to speak English. Therefore, it is important for teachers and counselors to provide additional guidance and support to students to overcome these difficulties and improve their speaking skills effectively.

Research methods:

This research adopts a qualitative approach to obtain more in-depth and descriptive results regarding the factors that inhibit students in speaking English. The research design used is descriptive qualitative, which aims to provide a detailed description of student interactions in the classroom.

The research was carried out at MtsS Darul Falah, a school located in Cibungur Village, Parungponteng District, Tasikmalaya Regency. Research participants were ninth grade students at the school. To collect data, various instruments were used, including questionnaires, video recorders, and researchers as the main instruments.

- a) **Questionnaire** Questionnaires are used to obtain information from students regarding factors that hinder them in speaking English. This provides insight into students' perspectives on the obstacles they face.
- b) **Video Recorder** The use of a video recorder allows researchers to record student interactions and speaking activities in class. This allows for a deeper analysis of students' speaking patterns, facial expressions, and level of confidence.
- c) **Researcher as Main Instrument** Researchers play an important role in observing and collecting data during research. Direct observation and interaction with students provides a deeper understanding of the context and factors that influence student speaking.

The research was carried out for one month, starting from October to November 2023. The research time was divided proportionally to distribute the necessary instruments, including data collection through questionnaires, video recording and direct observation by the researcher.

3. Results and Discussion

This research involved students in grades VIII and IX as well as teachers as research subjects. The findings show that there are two main factors that hinder students from speaking English, namely affective and cognitive factors.

- a) **Affective Factors** These factors come from students as individual learners. There are eleven affective subfactors that influence students' speaking abilities, including shyness, nervousness, lack of confidence, fear, worry, anxiety, lack of motivation, self-esteem, feelings towards the topic, feelings towards the interlocutor, and self-awareness. The results show that shyness and nervousness are the biggest influences of affective factors on students' speaking abilities.
- b) **Cognitive Factor** This factor is related to students' knowledge and understanding of English. Grammatical errors, pronunciation problems, and limited vocabulary are cognitive subfactors that influence students' speaking abilities. From the findings, it can be concluded that grammar is a significant inhibiting factor for students in learning to speak English.

The division of inhibiting factors by teachers also includes factors that are considered to seriously hinder students from speaking English. This includes the difficulty of students understanding the teacher's explanation, negative comments received by students, students' difficulty in speaking, and students' perceptions of the difficulty of the topic of conversation. In conclusion, the findings of this study provide answers to the research questions and achieve the stated objectives. Affective and cognitive factors significantly influence students' speaking ability in English. Therefore, English teaching and learning needs to pay attention to and address these factors so that students can develop speaking skills more effectively.

Affective factors do have a significant influence on students' speaking ability in English. The research results show that the problems that arise from these affective factors originate from students as individual learners, and the influence of teachers and friends in class greatly influences students' speaking performance.

Several things that are highlighted in the affective factors that hinder students from speaking are:

- a) **Negative Comments** Negative comments from teachers and peers in class can have a big impact on a student's self-confidence. Students' fear of receiving criticism makes them feel nervous and anxious about speaking in front of the class. These negative comments can be a major barrier to developing speaking skills.
- b) **Embarrassment and Nervousness** Embarrassment and nervousness are common feelings felt by students when speaking in front of the class. They feel afraid that their friends will laugh or criticize their speaking performance. This can reduce students' motivation to speak and affect their performance.
- c) **Pressure from Teachers and Peers** Students often feel pressured by the expectations of teachers and fellow classmates. They are afraid of failing or disappointing their teachers and friends, so this pressure becomes an additional burden in speaking.
- d) **Self-Esteem** Low self-esteem can hinder a student's ability to speak. They may feel that they lack competence in speaking, which in turn reduces their self-confidence.

In this context, the teacher's role is key in helping students overcome these affective factors. Teachers need to create a supportive environment and provide positive feedback to students. In addition, a motivating approach and providing space for constructive mistakes can also help students overcome shyness and fear of speaking. The importance of understanding these affective factors in learning to speak English as a foreign language is so that teachers can design appropriate learning strategies to help students overcome these barriers and develop their speaking skills with more confidence.

It can be concluded that affective factors, especially feelings of nervousness and embarrassment, have a significant influence on students' ability to speak English. Some students even just speak for the sake of getting grades, without really focusing on developing proper speaking skills. This results in unsatisfactory results in speaking classes. In addition, the research results also show that this affective factor includes eleven subfactors, all of which can influence students' speaking performance. Some of these include feelings towards the topic, self-confidence, feelings towards the person you are talking to, the teacher's explanation, motivation, self-esteem, self-awareness, as well as feelings of nervousness and embarrassment.

It is important to pay attention to and address these affective factors in the process of learning to speak. Teachers can create a supportive environment, provide positive feedback, and motivate students to speak confidently. Additionally, it is also important to provide space for students to learn from their mistakes without fear or shame. By understanding and overcoming these affective factors, it is hoped that students can develop their English speaking skills better and be more confident in the classroom.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data and findings that have been presented, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a) **Inhibiting Factors in Speaking English** There are two main factors that hinder students from speaking English, namely affective factors and cognitive factors. Affective factors include eleven subfactors, including feelings of nervousness, embarrassment, lack of self-confidence, and so on. Cognitive factors include grammatical errors, pronunciation problems, and vocabulary.
- b) **Influence of Teachers and Peers** Teachers and peers have a big influence on students' ability to speak. Negative comments and criticism from teachers or peer reactions can make students feel down and lose their enthusiasm for speaking.
- c) **Feelings towards the Topic and the Interlocutor** Students' feelings towards the topic they will discuss, as well as feelings towards the interlocutor, also influence their speaking ability. Interest in the topic and confidence in communicating with others are important factors.
- d) **Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem** Self-awareness, especially in comparing speaking competence with peers, as well as self-esteem regarding one's own speaking ability, also influence students' speaking performance.
- e) **The Importance of Motivation and a Supportive Environment** Motivation from teachers and peers, as well as creating a supportive environment and providing positive feedback, are important factors in overcoming speech impediments.
- f) **Impact of Lack of Speaking Practice** Some students focus more on achieving high scores in evaluations, rather than on developing actual speaking skills. This can result in unsatisfactory speaking results.

By paying attention to and overcoming the factors above, it is hoped that students can develop better English speaking skills and be more confident in the classroom. Affective factors such as nervousness and shyness, as well as cognitive factors such as grammar and pronunciation, need to be the focus in the speaking learning process.

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