

## **Difficulties in Learning English Speaking of Senior High School Students**

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### **Abstract**

*The acquisition of speaking proficiency continues to be a significant challenge for a majority of individuals learning the English language. There are various factors that can contribute to students having difficulty speaking in English. The purpose of this research was to find out the students' problems in learning English speaking skills. A qualitative descriptive method was the design of the study. Two students of the eleventh grade of one of Islamic senior high school in Palembang became the subject of the study, and interview was the instrument to collect the data. The results showed that students' difficulties consisted of linguistic problem such as lack of grammar mastery, lack of pronunciation mastery and lack of vocabulary mastery, and psychological problem such as fear of making mistake, feeling shy, feeling anxious, lack of confidence and lack of motivation.*

**Keywords:** *Student's difficulties, Speaking english, Proficiency*

### **1. Introduction**

Language is a form of communication that humans use to communicate and engage with one another. Language, according to Nawaz et al (2015), is a set (finite or infinite) of phrases, each finite in length and comprised of a finite set of speaking elements. Language is a communication tool that humans use to communicate and interact with one another. People might convey their ideas and emotions through language. Language is used not just for communication, but also to relate to and develop relationships with others. Without language, it is impossible to communicate effectively or express thoughts or feelings verbally or in writing. Language extension could be used to share information about education, technology, or even tourism.

Communication is one of the most basic human needs. Its purpose is to get or communicate information from a speaker to a listener. Language may be used to communicate. People all throughout the world speak in a variety of languages. One of them is English. Learning English as a foreign language is essential in today's modern culture and globalization period. English as a

twenty-first-century lingua franca allows people all over the world to communicate (Sindik and Bozinovic, 2013). No matter where someone comes from, English is generally used to communicate with others who speak a different language. Because of the reasons mentioned, English is taught to Indonesian students from elementary school to university level in order to increase the quality of human resources in Indonesia Wulandari (2010).

Many people in Indonesia learn English seriously as a foreign language in order to have a successful future in the international society. English has recently grown in importance. Because English is so useful, one of the abilities that must be learned in order to communicate effectively is speaking. Based on Saputra and Wargianto (2015), speaking is not only a means of communication but also a set of supporting skills. As a result, supporting competence is beneficial for students in developing effective formal and informal communication with others. Furthermore, according to Bailey (2005), speaking is an interactive meaning formation process that includes information receipt, processing, and production. Receiving, generating, and digesting information while communicating is referred to as speaking. According to Brown (2001), speaking can cover all parts of English and can represent how far the language student has acquired the language itself. Nunan (2003) said that, mastery of speaking is significant for

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second language learners and English as a foreign language learner, and it is defined by the ability to communicate. There are several significant aspects of speaking Richards (2008) made an useful difference between educational reasons of speaking, which serve to establish and maintain social interactions, and transactional functions, which focus on the exchange of information.

Speaking is the most challenging skill for English foreign learners it was supported by Hinkel (2005), who stated that speaking is a hard skill to acquire—the most complicated and difficult skill to master. Learn the most complex and difficult skills to master. The aspect of speaking is more than just speaking in English with proper grammar; it is also about building students' confidence to speak first according to the findings of the research Maulana et al (2016).

Speaking English is the most important aspect that students must have in Indonesia. It will be useful in everyday life, for example, when introducing Indonesia to foreigners using English, and so on. Speaking English fluently is also important for debate competition, as is conversing with foreigners as a business tool. As a result, all students at the school should be prepared by developing an English speaking habit. English in the high school curriculum aims to teach students to communicate in English without difficulty and to build students' confidence in speaking English. At the school, Speaking English is the problem for the students. According to Zhang (2009), speaking remains the most difficult skill for the majority of English learners to master, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English.

Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researchers at one of Islamic senior high school in Palembang that was held on February 2022, the data obtained by interviewing some students there, it was found that most of students had a little exposure to use their English in real life situations. From the interview, they said that they had certain issues with speaking English, from several students who were interviewed, each of them had their own difficulties when speaking English, they were still confused in pronunciation Thus, the researcher was interested in identify students' difficulties in learning English Speaking. So, from the above explanation, the researchers were interested in conducting the study entitled "Difficulties in Learning English Speaking of Senior High School Students."

Speaking is one type of communication in which people may exchange their knowledge, information, and thoughts. Certain scholars believe that there are some definitions of the nature of speech. Widdowson (2002) defined, speaking and listening are said to relate to

language conveyed through the aural medium, whereas reading and writing are said to relate to language expressed through the visual medium. Speaking and writing are considered active or procedural skills, but listening and reading are considered passive or receptive skills. Speaking is possible if there are two or more persons in the communication field. Morris (2011) stated that speaking acts as a natural manner of communication between members of the community, both as a type of social activity and as a natural way of communication. Speaking, according to Burgess (1994), is an activity in which someone talks about something or tells others about something that interests people. Speaking is a skill that allows someone to communicate in everyday situations, whether at school or outside Heubner (1960).

The issue is that students are unfamiliar with speaking English, despite the fact that speaking is a valuable talent. It is a component of listening. Tarigan (1990) described language speaking as a skill that develops in a child's life and is created by the listening and speaking abilities of the period investigated. Even if they have a lot of pronunciation, students find it challenging to communicate.

When someone speak, it will generate text that should be meaningful. There must be a speaker, a listener, message, and feedback in order for communication to take place. Pronunciation cannot be emphasized enough since it encourages students to master the English voice. Speaking is an important skill in English teaching and learning since it requires more than just knowing. Its grammar and vocabulary are excellent Khameis (2006). Thornbury (2006) argued that speaking is an interactive process that requires the capacity to cooperate in the management of speaking turns.

Based on the theories stated above, it is possible to conclude that speaking is a productive talent as a second or foreign language that is used to convey speakers' thoughts, facts, and feelings to others directly. People must be able to employ the right pronunciation of words, create the correct grammar for speech, and determine the diction or choice of words while speaking. Speaking is the most significant skill among others because it represents those who have a strong command of the English language. People do not believe that someone has a good command of the English language if she or he cannot talk fluently. According to Bailey (2005), speaking is possibly the most fundamental of human skills, because people do it all the time and rarely pause to evaluate the process involved.

The ability to produce words, express, and communicate thinking, idea and emotion is referred to as

speaking, along with listening, reading, and writing, is one of the fundamental skills in learning a foreign language. It is not a skill that can be learned quickly. It will be a hard process. Thompson (2003) described, language is a complex system, and each system is different, requiring the reorganization of students' thinking through extensive exposure. In conclusion according to the definition given above, speaking refers to actions in which humans attempt to communicate their thoughts, feelings and opinions as well as exchange information, via the use of utterances in the form of communication. As a communication tool, it is vital for people to have effective speaking skills. The basic purpose of speaking is to communicate, to be able to successfully explain your views. The speakers must be able to analyze the effect of communication on the listener in order to properly transmit their views. The basic goal of speaking by Tarigan (1990) indicated that speaking has certain goals, which are : to inform, to entertain, to persuade, to discuss.

Rahmawati (2017) suggests the elements in speaking that must be mastered by students, including: Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency. Fluency, accuracy, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are some of the criteria of speaking performance outlined by Hughes (2006). Fluency is defined as the capacity to explain oneself clearly, rational, and fluent without causing confusion in the listener. The accuracy of a speech has a significant impact on the listener's understanding; if a speech is not correct, the audience will lose interest in listening to it. The linguistically indicates the breadth of the learner's correct grammar structure and how to apply it. The correctness of vocabulary terms influences the choice of the appropriate words when speaking. Pronunciation is the act of saying words in the correct or understood manner; nevertheless, if they are pronounced incorrectly, it can lead to misconceptions since mispronounced words can have diverse meanings.

Speaking problems are that make someone lacks of speaking ability. According to Kayi (2006) language problems actually serve as one of the important reasons behind poor academic performance. These problems may become the obstacles for the students to enhance and improve their speaking ability. The reasons why students are having problems in their speaking are they are poor in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation those problems are belong to linguistics problems. Other problems that may become a barrier for the students to become a good English speakers in the psychological problems Xianghua (2007) states that psychological problems are those problems which often interfere emotional and psychal health, relationships, work

productivity, or life adjustment such as nervous, lack of confident and afraid to speak. These problem may affect students performance in their speaking. Khan (2005) claims in his research that some of his participants have psychological problems in speaking. This emphasizes that psychological problems also affect students performance in speaking. As said by Juhana (2012), there are psychological factors that faced by the students when they speaking in the class: fear of making mistake, shyness, Anxiety, Lack of confidence, lack of motivation.

## **2. Method**

In this study, qualitative research method used as the research design. Qualitative research is a valuable scientific methodology for investigating and interpreting the key concepts by Creswell (2012). In other hand Kothari (2004), this study is classified as qualitative since it is concerned with qualitative phenomena. The phenomenon of or relating to quality or type. Furthermore, Hidayati (2015) stated that qualitative research is one of the research methodologies that produces descriptive data in the form of speech or writing, as well as the behavior of those who observed. Qualitative research has two distinguishing features. first, qualitative research uses the natural setting as the primary source of data, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument. Second, qualitative research used a descriptive. In summary, the researchers chose a descriptive qualitative research because it deals with the problem of speaking difficulties in a real-life event that occurred to the students when they are speaking English. The findings of this study were presented in detail. The research data was collect through student interviews. In choosing the participan, the researchers used a homogeneous sampling. In a sampling approach known as homogeneous sampling, the researcher selected people with a specific characteristics (Creswell, 2012).The researchers chose 2 students of the eleventh grade in one of Islamic senior high school in Palembang to be interviewed, the reason why the researcher chose these students was that because the students had low level of achievement in learning English speaking than other classes.

On the other hand, the researcher employed an interview strategy for data collection. An interview is one of the methods for gathering information. In qualitative research, the interview is the most significant data gathering approach. Beside that, according Creswell (2009), qualitative interviews happen when researcher inquire one or more members common open-ended questions and record their answers. In this study, interviews were conducted individually through face-to-

face interviews with students (Nasser,2019). The interview was conducted in several steps. To begin with, the researcher arranged a recording gadget to record of the interview between the researcher and the students. Second, to begin the interview session, the researcher introduces herself asked for students' individual details, and asked some questions related of to the problem of the study. And finally, at the end of the interview, the researcher thanked them for sparing the time to be interviewed. In the data analysis, the researchers used thematic analysis as the data analysis techniques. Alhojailan (2012) states that thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis type that is used to analyze classifications and current themes that relate to the data. Techniques of data analysis were processed by looking at the results of interview transcript and document review. The researchers collected the detailed data from interview (e.g., interview transcriptions) and translates it into English text. Then, put all data into computer files. Next, the researcher read all the transcriptions and started to code the data interview that related to research question. After collecting data from interview, the researcher started to code the data interview from students' perception. Coding was used to categorized the recurring themes issued by the participants. The data are categorized based on the students' difficulties in learning English speaking. At the end, the data were analyzed and the researcher compared them to some previous studies that had been conducted and the researcher made the explanation of the result about students' difficulties in learning English.

The researcher used member checks to build trust in this study. According to Creswell (2012), member checking is a method for determining reliable results. From member checks, the researcher asked one or more participants to verify its veracity, and that check may also include taking the results back to participants in interviews about the accuracy of the information. Some procedures must be completed during validation used member checking. First, this process involves the author and one participant received research data and determining whether the data was complete and acceptable based on their answers. Second, if it is deemed inappropriate, the writer re-checked and asked the wrong part again to get the correct and accurate facts. Finally, the author double-checked all the information to ensure that it was complete and accurate.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The researcher finding was related to students' difficulties in learning English speaking. According to the researchers observation and interview result, the students had the difficulties in learning

English speaking, because there are many causes that influences. After analyzing the data from the interview, the researcher found some students' difficulties learning English speaking. The themes and codes analysis gained from the qualitative data through in-depth interview were explained in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Themes and codes for students' difficulties in learning speaking English

No	Themes	Group of Codes
1.	<b>Linguistic Problems</b>	a. the students faced difficulty in use the right tenses in making sentences when speaking in English.
	a. Lack of rammar	
	b. Lack of pronunciation	b. The students experienced difficulties where they found it difficult to pronounce English words, especially if the word had a long alphabet and was difficult to say
	c. Lack of vocabulary	c. The students experienced difficulties when remembering vocabulary, as they often forgot the vocabulary and words that were rarely heard and spoken.
2.	<b>Psychological problems</b>	a. The students were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English.They were afraid if they made mistakes when speaking English they were afraid if being laughed friends.
	a. Fear of Making Mistake	
	b. Feeling shy	b. The students felt embarrassed when speaking in English if there were errors such as making mistakes when saying words or sentences
	c. Feel of anxious	c. The students felt anxious when speaking English. They got nervous when they made a mistake
	d. Lack of Confidence	d. The students felt less confident when speaking English because when speaking English students felt they were not fluent when speaking and were afraid of misspelling complex vocabulary.
	e. Lack of Motivation	e. Some students are not motivated to learn speak English, in the current environment students do not need to be able to speak English

Themes and codes discovered using the qualitative data shown in **Table 1** were described in order to find out the students' difficulties in Learning English Speaking.

There were several difficulties in learning English speaking. First is Linguistics problem there are some linguistics problems that affect someone in speaking, such as poor in grammar, lack of vocabulary and pronunciation. The first students problem is grammar the students faced difficulty in using the right tenses in making sentences when speaking in English. They were

confused whether the tenses they use were correct or not, they also faced difficulties in pronouncing the word. The second is pronunciation. They also faced difficulties in pronouncing the words especially if the words were not familiar to them. Therefore they often made mistakes, they listener did not understand what they talked about. Third is vocabulary the researcher found that they were lack in vocabulary. Students find it difficult to remember vocabulary, especially if the words are very difficult to pronounce, and they often forget and don't even know the meaning.

The second is Psychological Problem, there were several problems in psychological. The first is fear of making mistake. The students admitted that they felt afraid to make a mistakes when speak English afraid of being laughed at if make a mistake, and they are also afraid when they are wrong when making a sentence they don't know whether the sentence they are saying is right or wrong. that was supported by Aftat (2008) this fear is linked to the issue of correction by students' fear is linked to the issue of correction by students' fear of being laughed at by other students. The second is shyness Baldwin (2011) further explains that speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget what to say. Students felt shy because they can not pronounce English properly. And also they felt shy to speak English because they afraid of making mistakes. Third is anxiety, Juhana (2012) said that Anxiety over speaking a particular language can have an impact on students' performance, decrease the quality of oral language output, and make people look less proficient than they are. From the interview with students above, the researcher can make conclusion the students feel anxious when they make mistakes in composing sentences and feel anxious if the pronunciation is bad, besides that they also feel anxious if they make mistakes. And then lack of confidence. The students felt not confidence because they felt not very good at English and they felt insecure because the way of speaking is not clear. And the last is Lack of Motivation Students had lack of motivation in learning speaking, Juhana (2012) in speaking performance, motivation influences the success of speaking performance. the students felt lack of motivation because they felt English is hard to learn and they felt not important in their environment so they are not motivated to be able to speak English.

#### **4. Conclusion**

According to the result of data analysis, some students had difficulties in English speaking. The

students' difficulties in English speaking, such as linguistic problem and psychological problem there were several problem in linguistic problem such as grammar, the researcher had found that the students faced difficulty in use the right tenses in make sentences when speaking in English. In Pronunciation the researcher had found that students difficult to pronounce English words, especially if the word had a long alphabet and was difficult to say because they rarely used English and were not used to it. The last is vocabulary. In vocabulary based on the findings the researcher had found that students often felt they forgot when memorizing and remembering vocabulary and words that were rarely heard or difficult to pronounce. The second problem is psychological Problem and there were several problems in psychological problem such as Fear of making mistake students were afraid if the grammar used was wrong. And shyness based on the findings the researcher found that student feel shy because they can not pronounce English words properly. In Anxiety based on the findings the researcher had found that students felt anxious because they were afraid of being laughed at if they make mistakes. And in lack of confidence based on the findings the researcher had found that students felt they were not fluent when speaking and were afraid of misspelling complex vocabulary. and the last is lack of motivation based on the findings the researcher also found that some students are not motivated to learn speak English, in the current environment students do not need to be able to speak English.

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