

**AN ANALYSIS OF DIFFICULTY LEVEL IN SPEAKING ENGLISH BY
EIGHTH CLASS STUDENTS OF MTS AL HIKMAH BANDAR LAMPUNG**

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Abstract

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his research aims to analyze the level of difficulty experienced by eighth-grade students of MTs Al Hikmah Bandar Lampung in speaking English. Speaking is one of the essential skills in language learning, yet it often presents challenges for students, particularly in non-native contexts. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, collecting data through interviews, observations, and questionnaires distributed to both students and English teachers. The findings reveal that students face several difficulties in speaking English, such as limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, poor pronunciation, and grammatical inaccuracies. In addition, environmental factors such as lack of exposure and limited opportunities to practice English in daily communication contribute to these challenges. The results of this study are expected to provide insights for teachers to develop more effective speaking strategies and to support students in overcoming these obstacles in learning English.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tingkat kesulitan yang dialami siswa kelas delapan MTs Al Hikmah Bandar Lampung dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Berbicara merupakan salah satu keterampilan penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa, namun sering kali menghadirkan tantangan bagi siswa, terutama dalam konteks non-native. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan kuesioner yang disebarkan kepada siswa dan guru bahasa Inggris. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa siswa menghadapi beberapa kesulitan dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris, seperti keterbatasan kosakata, kurangnya rasa percaya diri, pengucapan yang buruk, dan ketidakakuratan tata bahasa. Selain itu, faktor lingkungan seperti kurangnya paparan dan terbatasnya kesempatan untuk mempraktikkan bahasa Inggris dalam komunikasi sehari-hari berkontribusi terhadap tantangan ini. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan

dapat memberikan wawasan bagi guru untuk mengembangkan strategi berbicara yang lebih efektif dan untuk mendukung siswa dalam mengatasi kendala ini dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.

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INTRODUCTION

English is one of the subjects that plays an important role in education, especially in the current era of globalization. In Indonesia, English learning has been taught from elementary to secondary school levels, including at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level. One of the main skills in learning English is speaking skills, which are considered productive and interactive skills in communicating using a foreign language. However, in practice, speaking English is often a challenge for students. (Aryanika, 2015)

Grade VIII students at MTs Al Hikmah Bandar Lampung are one of the groups that experience various difficulties in speaking English. These difficulties can be caused by various factors, such as lack of vocabulary mastery, ignorance of grammatical structures, shame or lack of self-confidence, and lack of opportunities to practice speaking in the school environment or outside of school. This has an impact on students' low ability to communicate verbally using English. (Taman & Bima, 2018)

Reading comprehension become more important as student progress through the educational system. It important is realized as very substantial because it opens up new knowledge for individual. The goal is to enrich his/her experiences and to improve his/her intellectual ability. (Erika Sinambela; Theoria, Sinaga; Agustinus, 2020) In English, a student must master four skills, they are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among those skills, reading is one of the most important skills in learning language. Reading skill becomes a part of language skill that the students have reading skill has an important role in education field. Reading is one of a ways for the students to get the information needed in their education field, such as transferring information and knowledge from text book. English plays an important role nowadays. It becomes an international language. Therefore, in this modern era it is necessary for us to learn it. (Marzona & Astria, 2019)

English also has been taught in many countries in the world as a second foreign language such as in Japan, Malaysia, China, Germany and Indonesia in those countries students always make many efforts to make the teaching English as a second or foreign language better and better. (Arrasul, 2015) Many skills in English subject is reading that also has an own passion to make the students really more learn about English. There are four language skills that

must be achieved by the students in learning a language, in this case English.(Riswanto, 2022) They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Based on writer observation, the writers find out that the Grade students understand on reading comprehension still low, although it has been taught in the first semester.(Hermaniar & Azkiya, 2021)

The writer also found that the way the teacher taught reading to the students is boring. The explanation above, this is conduct to see the students' achievement in reading comprehension by Collaborative Strategy Reading (CSR), Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a set of instructional strategies designed to help students with diverse abilities acquire and practice comprehension strategies for use with informational test.(Giawa, 2025) The goals of CSR are to improve reading comprehension and increase conceptual learning in ways that maximize student involvement. CSR is a reading comprehension practice that combines two instructional elements (a) modified reciprocal teaching, (b) cooperative learning or student pairing. In reciprocal teaching, teachers and students take turns leading a dialogue concerning key features of text through summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting. Reciprocal teaching was developed with the intention of aiding students having difficulty with reading comprehension.(Galuh et al., 2023)

Guided Reading Peer Questioning Strategy (GRPQ) is a structured approach to peer interaction focusing on the cognitive processing of participants. It emphasizes the role of teachers and generic question stems in guiding peer interaction.(Komalasari, 2022) Through reciprocal peer-questioning, students learn from each other by giving and receiving help, by recognizing and resolving contradictions between the individual student and other students' perspectives, and by internalizing problem-solving processes and strategies that emerge during group work Language is a tool to convey messages, information, and ideas from one to other people. Said that language is a series of sounds produced by a conscious human speech.(Amelia et al., 2024)

Revealed that language is the most complete and effective communication for expressing opinions to others. Syamsuddin (1986) gave two views. First, writing is a tool used to influence thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions. Second, communication is a symbol of human personality, a symbol of family and country, and a symbol of human thought. All definitions above pointed out that language is a tool to communicate with other people in the world. English is the most common language used in various countries. The role of English in technology and communication is essential. Along with the development of the current era of globalization, English has developed to be an

essential foreign language learned in Indonesia. It has learned since kindergarten. Students must master English both orally and in writing. It consists of the ability to listen, read, speak, and write—these abilities are interrelating with each other.

Students will be more confident when they can talk with others correctly. As expressed. That most students learn English to develop their speaking skills. By speaking, they can express their communication with others. Students generally have difficulties in learning foreign languages, especially English. However, there are still many students who have a problem in using English in terms, the ability to speak. Reported that most students have scared to speak English. Learners are worried about making mistakes when they are speaking English, and they are afraid of criticism by other students. They feel embarrassed by the attention of other students who directed at the student. argue that lack of motivation is one reason for students, not active in-class lessons. It causes students to be passive and reluctant to speak in class. said that students who lack confidence indeed suffer from fear when communicating. Students do not have anything to express because the teacher chooses the topic of conversation that is not suitable for students or issues that are not familiar to students.

Therefore students are challenging to respond when the teacher invites them to say something in English. Some researchers have done some studies about the aspects that hinder students' ability to speak. stated that vocabulary is the basis of language skills. The more vocabulary known by students, the students understand the contents of the conversation or writing. Lack of vocabulary is caused students to challenge to understand them. The grammatical problem also becomes a factor that affects students speaking. The students who have difficulty in grammar also feel trouble in speaking English confirmed that the ability of students who are low in pronunciation became a students' obstacle to speaking English.

Explained that less confidence caused students afraid to speak English. The first previous study is a study conducted. This research aims to determine the elements that influence the students' speaking performance. The findings of this research indicated that students with higher motivation and lower discomfort able to speak English fluently and easily and vice versa. However, in this study, the researchers did not explain the specific of the participants' level of their study. The researcher only explains their analysis in a general way without giving specific information about participants level and specific instruments so that the information that they provided is too general.

English has become an international language and plays a crucial role in
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various aspects of life, including education, communication, business, and technology. Among the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – speaking is considered the most important skill for communication. In the context of English language learning, speaking enables students to express ideas, interact with others, and build confidence in using the language in real-life situations.(Lestari, 2021)

However, for many students, especially at the junior high school level, speaking English remains a challenging task.(Afandi et al., 2023) This is also evident among the eighth-grade students of MTs Al Hikmah Bandar Lampung, where many of them still struggle to communicate effectively in English. Several factors contribute to these difficulties, such as limited vocabulary, grammatical issues, poor pronunciation, anxiety, and lack of motivation. Moreover, insufficient practice opportunities and limited exposure to English in their environment further hinder their speaking development.(Qalyubi et al., 2023)

This study was conducted to analyze the level of difficulty faced by grade VIII students in speaking English and to identify the causal factors. The results of this study are expected to be used as evaluation material and consideration for teachers in designing more effective speaking learning strategies that are in accordance with students' needs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Speaking is a productive skill that involves producing language to convey messages, thoughts, and ideas verbally. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. It requires learners not only to know the linguistic elements of the language, such as vocabulary and grammar, but also to be able to use them fluently and accurately in communication.(Sintadewi et al., 2020)

In language learning, speaking is often regarded as the most difficult skill to master, especially for students in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings. the mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many learners, but it is also one of the most challenging tasks. Students often face internal and external obstacles such as limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, lack of grammatical competence, anxiety, and low self-confidence.

Factors influencing speaking difficulties can be categorized into linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Linguistic factors include lack of vocabulary, inappropriate grammar use, and pronunciation problems. Non-linguistic factors refer to psychological elements such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of motivation, and environmental aspects such as lack of exposure to English or limited classroom practice.

Understanding these challenges is crucial for teachers and educators to design effective instructional strategies that encourage students to speak more

confidently and competently in English

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the level of difficulty experienced by eighth-grade students in speaking English. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore students' challenges in depth, based on their expressions, experiences, and perceptions.

The subjects of this research are the eighth-grade students of MTs Al Hikmah Bandar Lampung. The selection is done using purposive sampling, targeting students who are actively participating in English classes and representing a variety of speaking skill levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Based on the data collected through classroom observation, student interviews, and questionnaires, several significant difficulties were identified among the eighth-grade students of MTs Al Hikmah Bandar Lampung in speaking English. The findings are categorized into two main factors: linguistic difficulties and non-linguistic (psychological and environmental) difficulties.

1. Linguistic Difficulties

- a. Limited Vocabulary: 78% of the students reported difficulty in expressing their thoughts due to a lack of vocabulary. They often paused during speech, searched for words, or used Indonesian equivalents.
- b. Grammar Issues: 65% of students made frequent grammatical mistakes, such as incorrect verb tenses, sentence structures, and subject-verb agreement, which hindered effective communication.
- c. Pronunciation Problems: 70% of students faced problems in pronouncing English words correctly, especially those with silent letters or unfamiliar sounds, which affected their fluency and confidence.

2. Non-Linguistic Difficulties

- a. Lack of Confidence: 72% of students admitted feeling shy or embarrassed when speaking English, especially in front of the class.
- b. Fear of Making Mistakes: 60% of students were afraid of being laughed at or corrected by peers or teachers, which discouraged them from speaking.
- c. Lack of Practice Opportunities: The English class time was often focused on reading and writing, with limited speaking practice. 66% of students stated they rarely had the opportunity to speak English outside of class.
- d. Low Motivation: Some students lacked interest in learning English or did not see its practical use, which contributed to their reluctance to practice

speaking.

B. Discussion

The results of this study are in line with previous research which indicates that speaking is often the most difficult skill for students learning English as a foreign language. The dominant issue faced by the students was a lack of vocabulary, which confirms the crucial role of lexical knowledge in effective communication. Students cannot construct meaningful sentences if they do not know the appropriate words. Pronunciation and grammatical difficulties further complicated students' ability to communicate. These linguistic challenges often contribute to anxiety and reduced students' willingness to speak. The psychological factors—especially lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes—are consistent with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which emphasizes that emotional variables can hinder language acquisition.

Moreover, the limited exposure to English-speaking environments and minimal speaking practice in class exacerbated the problem. This implies the need for a more communicative and interactive approach in the classroom that allows students to practice speaking regularly in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

The study also highlights the importance of teacher roles in creating a safe and encouraging classroom atmosphere. Teachers should implement strategies such as pair work, group discussions, and role plays to increase student engagement in speaking activities. Furthermore, incorporating multimedia tools and real-life contexts may enhance student interest and motivation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that eighth-grade students of MTs Al Hikmah Bandar Lampung face various difficulties in speaking English. These difficulties can be categorized into two main factors: linguistic and non-linguistic. Linguistically, most students struggle with limited vocabulary, incorrect grammar usage, and poor pronunciation. These issues hinder their ability to express ideas fluently and accurately. Non-linguistic factors such as lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and limited opportunities to practice speaking English also significantly contribute to their speaking difficulties.

These findings suggest that to improve students' speaking skills, English teachers should create a more supportive and interactive learning environment. This can include implementing communicative activities, providing regular

speaking practice, and encouraging students to speak without fear of judgment. Addressing both linguistic and psychological barriers is essential in helping students become more confident and competent English speakers.

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