



NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN LEARNING SPEAKING SKILLS AMONG ISLAND STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges encountered by seventh-grade students at SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang, located on Penyengat Island, in learning English speaking skills. The study examines three categories of challenges: linguistic, psychological, and social-socio-cultural. This study employed a mixed method methodology, incorporating speaking assessments and interviews as research instruments. The findings indicate that students encounter difficulties due to limited vocabulary and a lack of sentence organization skills. Anxiety, shyness, and low self-esteem significantly affect their ability to communicate. In addition, the students are having trouble because of social and cultural reasons including not having much exposure to English in their community, the fact that the local language (Bahasa Melayu) is the most common one, and not having relatives or friends who speak English. The report says that island students need more English-speaking practice that is relevant to their lives, inspiring, and participatory, and that teachers, school programs, and family members should all help with this.

Keywords: speaking skills, English language learning, speaking challenges

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I INTRODUCTION

Speaking was one of the essential abilities that needed to be acquired because it served as a means of communication (Abdullah, Hussin, and Ismail, 2019). Speaking was a crucial component of teaching and learning a second language, as noted by Rijal and Arifah (2017). This was because the primary goal of learning a language, particularly a foreign language, was to be able to communicate in that language. Speaking was a communication tool that used spoken words to convey and illustrate thoughts from the human mind. According to Syarif and Muthmainnah (2017), speaking was oral communication used to convey ideas to others as conversation partners. This implied that speakers were able to express themselves verbally.

Speaking was emphasized in the learning process in Indonesian schools. It became a weekly exercise for the students. When speaking English verbally, the majority of students experienced anxiety (Haidara, 2016). When speaking English, they had trouble coming up with words and often appeared at a loss for words. Among the foreign languages taught in Indonesia, English was unquestionably the most important and was given more weight than any other language (Haidara, 2016). In the spectrum of students, speaking was essential. Since then, the children demonstrated a high level of speaking proficiency. They could find it easier to communicate with others as a result. According to Al-Roud (2016) speaking was regarded as the primary mode of communication. Additionally, speaking ability was the capacity to express ideas, intentions, reflections, and feelings to others using moral language in a way that ensured the audience members understood and fully comprehended the message. As a result, speaking emerged as the main preoccupation of foreign language learners. Additionally, learning a language helped people become more proficient speakers of the target language (Barnard, 2002).

The researcher selected SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang for this research because the school was located in a tourism area called "Penyengat," an island surrounded by the ocean, and there hadn't been many studies conducted in this school about students' challenges in learning English. Even though some schools reduced the allocation of time for learning English, the teacher at this school emphasized the importance of students developing strong English skills, particularly in speaking. They understood that speaking skills were essential as they lived in a tourism area. Additionally, the unique location of the school made the researcher curious about what it was like to study in an island area and the challenges students faced while learning speaking skills as island students.

Students in the seventh grade at SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang, an island area of Indonesia, were the subjects of this study. Based on the researcher's interview with the English teacher of SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang, 7th-grade students were selected as subjects for this research because they faced more challenges in speaking English than students in other grades, as they did not study English in elementary school. This was supported by research by Candraloka and Rosdiana (2019), which stated that 7th-grade students often encountered challenges in learning speaking skills due to limited exposure to the language during their elementary years. These challenges included a lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, grammatical issues, and psychological problems such as anxiety, shyness, and a lack of confidence. Additionally, students felt ashamed to speak English and express their ideas correctly because they worried about mispronouncing words. Furthermore, various factors impacted students' speaking abilities. For instance, Hoang, Tran, and Mai (2015) found that several factors, such as a lack of student motivation, the use of the mother tongue during the learning process, insufficient vocabulary, and a lack of interest in teaching activities, all contributed to poor student performance in speaking.

The results of a number of other studies (Clarita and Hidayat, 2020; Fitriani, Apriliaswati, and Wardah, 2015) indicated that difficulties in speaking English were generally caused by a lack

of vocabulary, a lack of self-confidence, and an atmosphere that was not conducive to learning. According to the findings of these studies, difficulties in speaking English were frequently caused by such factors. There was also the possibility that this condition could be worsened by factors associated with the geography and culture of the surrounding area. Because of this, it was absolutely necessary to carry out a thorough investigation of these challenges in order to ensure that the learning tactics implemented were as successful as possible. The researcher hoped that with the assistance of this study, they would be able to determine the challenges that seventh-grade students faced when speaking English and to gain an understanding of the factors that influenced their capacity to communicate in English.

II METHOD

In this study, a mixed method approach was employed, combining both quantitative and qualitative strategies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by island students in learning English speaking skills. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), a mixed methods approach was useful when both qualitative and quantitative data, together, provided a better understanding of a research problem than either approach alone. This approach was particularly appropriate for the current study, which aimed to not only measure students' speaking performance through a speaking test (quantitative data) but also to explore the underlying reasons, perceptions, and social contexts behind those challenges through interviews (qualitative data). The quantitative phase of the research involved administering a speaking test to seventh-grade students of SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang.

The data were analyzed using a technique known as thematic analysis, which was modified from Braun and Clarke (2006). Transcribing the data, coding it for the first time, organizing it according to themes, and making sense of it were all necessary steps in this process. By utilizing triangulation, which entailed looking at the outcomes of speaking tests and interviews, the researcher was able to ensure that the data were accurate.

III RESULT

3.1 Speaking Test Findings

The findings of the speaking test were analyzed to pinpoint prevalent challenges, including vocabulary usage, interaction, organization, and confidence.

3.1.1 Vocabulary Use

In this aspect of the speaking test, students were assessed based on how well they used vocabulary. The scores ranged from 1 to 5, each with its own criteria:

- **Score 1:** Very limited vocabulary; often used words inappropriately.
- **Score 2:** Vocabulary was limited and often repetitive.
- **Score 3:** Used basic vocabulary that was generally relevant to the topic.
- **Score 4:** Mostly used appropriate vocabulary with only a few errors.
- **Score 5:** Used a range of appropriate words with ease and confidence.

Table 3.1 Table of Vocabulary Score Distribution

Score	Number of Students	Percentage
1	3	14.3%
2	6	28.6%
3	8	38.2%
4	1	4.7%
5	3	14.2%
Total		21

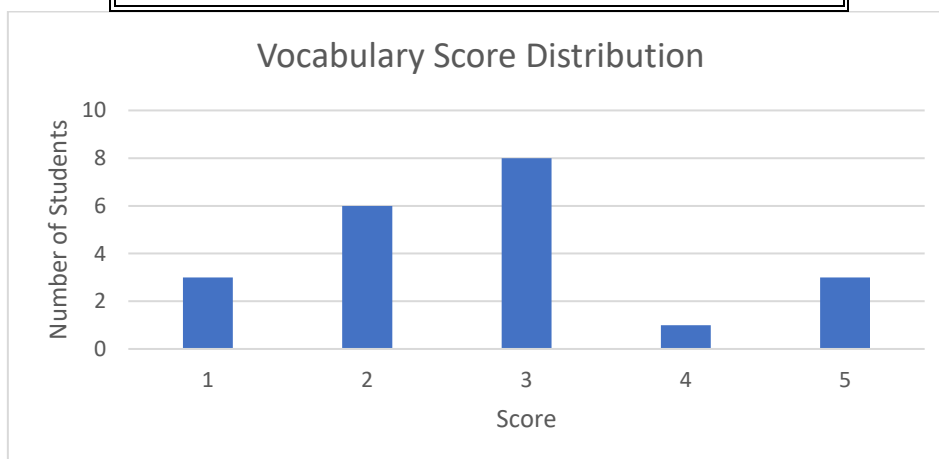


Figure 3.1 Vocabulary Score Distribution Graph

Descriptive Statistical Analysis:

- **Mean Score:**

Mean=2.76

- **Mode:**

Score 3 – most students (8) used **basic vocabulary relevant to the topic**.

- **Median:**

When sorted, the 11th value is **3**, so the **median score is 3**.

The results showed that most students got scores that were approximately average. Eight students got the most common score, which was 3. This means that they could generally use fundamental words relating to the topic, even when they weren't extremely advanced. Six pupils had a score of 2, which means they had problems employing different words and generally used the same ones again and over. Three students got the lowest score of 1, which means their vocabulary was very limited and often wrong or not right for the situation. On the other hand, a few kids had better vocabulary skills. Three kids got a 5, which means they felt comfortable utilising a lot of different appropriate words. Only one student got a 4, which means they had a quite good vocabulary and made very few mistakes. The average score was about 2.76, which let us see the general pattern better. This shows that most students are still at the beginning level of using English. A lot of them still don't feel comfortable using a lot of different terminology. The median score was also 3, which shows that most pupils are in the middle range. These results show that many children still have trouble with their vocabulary. They can't say what they want to because they don't know enough words or feel comfortable speaking them. There are probably

several reasons behind this, such as not hearing English spoken very often in daily life, not having many chances to speak English, and not knowing how to learn new words. This is what Afna (2018) found: that knowing a lot of words is an important aspect of being able to communicate clearly and smoothly. When students don't have enough words to say what they want to say, they often continue themselves, hesitate, or use the wrong words, which lowers the quality of their speech.

3.1.2 Interaction and Response

In this section, students were assessed on how well they responded during the speaking test. The focus was on whether their answers were relevant, clear, and appropriately timed. The scores ranged from 1 to 5, with the following criteria:

- **Score 1:** Fails to respond or gives irrelevant answers
- **Score 2:** Responses often unclear or incomplete
- **Score 3:** Responds but sometimes incomplete or off-topic
- **Score 4:** Responds appropriately but sometimes hesitates
- **Score 5:** Responds quickly and appropriately

Table

Score

Score	Number of Students	Percentage
1	1	4.8%
2	8	38.5%
3	4	19.3%
4	5	23.3%
5	3	14.1%
Total	21	

3.2 Table of Interaction Distribution

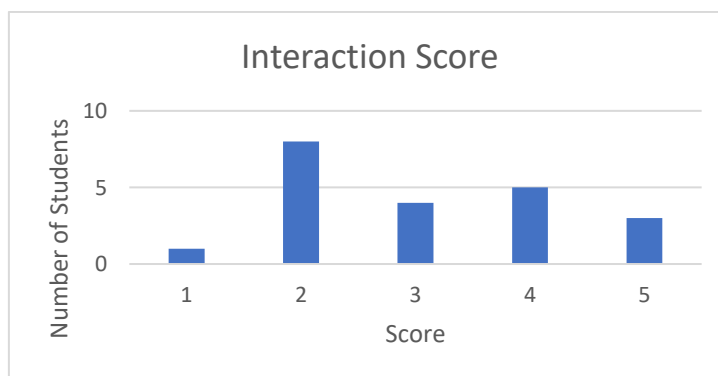


Figure 3.2 Intercation Score Distribution Graph

Descriptive Statistical Analysis:

- **Mean Score:**

Mean \approx 3.05

- **Mode:**
The most frequent score is **2** – eight students gave responses that were often unclear or incomplete.
- **Median:**
When sorted, the 11th value is **3**, so the **median score is 3**.

Students were generally able to respond during the speaking test, as indicated by the average interaction score of about 3.05; however, many of their responses were occasionally insufficient or marginally off-topic. The majority of students were in the lower to middle range, with eight students achieving the most common score of 2. This suggests that giving ambiguous or insufficient responses was a common problem. Positively, five students received a score of 4, indicating that despite their sporadic hesitations, they were able to respond appropriately. Three students, on the other hand, achieved the highest possible score of five, demonstrating excellent communication skills as well as the capacity to react promptly and accurately. Only one student received a score of 1, indicating a complete breakdown in communication or a very low level of interaction.

These findings demonstrate that for coastal students learning English, interaction and response continue to be a key concern. Many of them seem to have trouble both formulating and delivering appropriate answers with ease. This could be brought on by anxiety, a small vocabulary, or a lack of speaking experience. Turn-taking, prompt responses, and attention to the conversation's flow are all necessary for effective interaction. When students have trouble with these, the conversation may become lopsided or unclear. In a similar vein, Olkkonen et al. (2024) highlighted that interactional competence is crucial in determining how language learners engage in oral communication. These conclusions are amply supported by the data presented here, which shows that many students still lack the skills necessary to communicate successfully in English.

3.1.3 Organization

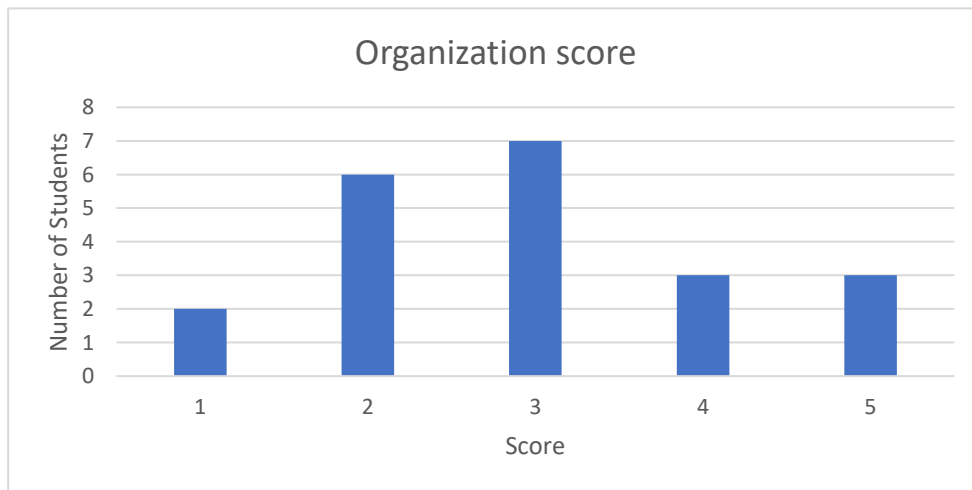


Figure 3.3 Organization Distribution Score Graph

Table 3.3 Table of Organization Score Distribution

Score	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1	2	10%
2	6	30%
3	7	35%
4	3	15%
5	3	15%

Descriptive Statistics – Organization

- **Mean Score:**
Mean = **2.95**
- **Mode:**
Score **3** – most students (7) presented their ideas simply but with occasional disorganization. This makes **3** the most frequently occurring score.
- **Median:**
When the scores are sorted in ascending order:
1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, **3**, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5
The 11th value (middle score) is **3**, so the **median score is 3**.

According to the data, the majority of students (35%) received a score of 3, indicating that while they were able to articulate their thoughts in a basic framework, they still struggled with disarray or a lack of a clear logical flow. Students at this level are capable of presenting ideas, but they may veer between ideas without making sense, which can impair listener comprehension. A sizable percentage of students (30%) obtained a score of 2, meaning that there was no discernible order or logic to their ideas. This implies that a sizable portion of students still have difficulty expressing themselves coherently, which may be brought on by a lack of exposure to structured English usage or insufficient practice structuring their ideas before speaking. Just 15% of students received a score of 4, and another 15% attained the highest possible score of 5, which denotes a logical and clear flow of ideas. These students showed that they could successfully organize their ideas and support idea transitions with cohesive devices. Effective spoken communication requires not only accuracy and fluency but also coherence, which is largely dependent on the speaker's ability to organize their message (Thornbury 2005).

The results of this study are consistent with what Thornbury stated. According to Thornbury (2005) students often face difficulty in organizing their speech in real-time, a process he refers to as “online processing.” This challenge often leads to disorganized speech, especially when learners are not familiar with using discourse markers to guide their ideas. The surroundings of the students may also be a factor in this problem. They may not be exposed to regular and structured English usage in their environment because they are island students. According to Hoang et al. (2015) students in underdeveloped settings frequently lack role models for effective English communication, which makes it difficult for them to organize their thoughts when speaking. These results emphasize the necessity of clear training and practice in spoken discourse organization techniques, including brainstorming, speaking after outlining, and mastering common connectors (e.g., first, then, however, finally). By teaching them these techniques, students may be able to speak English more coherently.

3.1.4 Confidence and Effort

The following table shows the distribution of students' scores for the confidence and effort aspect of the speaking test:

Table 3.4 Table of Confidence and Effort Score Distribution

Score	Number of Students	Percentage
1	1	4.76%
2	5	23.81%
3	9	42.86%
4	3	14.29%
5	3	14.29%

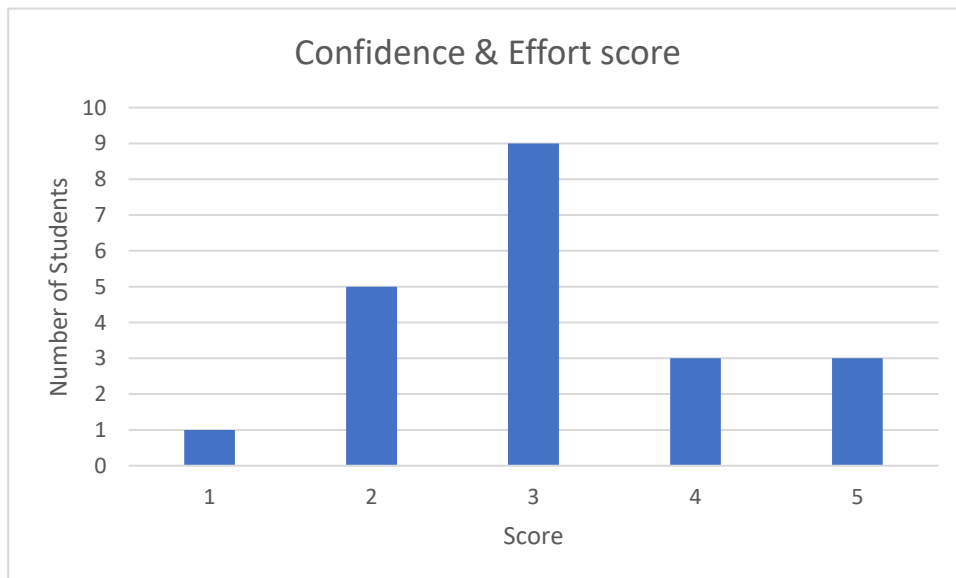


Figure 3.4 Confidence and Effort Score Distribution Graph

According to the results, the majority of students (42.86%) received a score of 3, indicating that they could speak with some confidence, albeit with some hesitancy. According to this, many students still lacked complete confidence in their spoken English, even though they were eager to participate in the speaking task. About 23.81% of the students received a score of 2, which suggests that they were insecure and hesitant to speak. Just three students (14.29%) demonstrated significant effort and self-assurance in their use of English by being able to speak with assurance and ease (score 5).

This outcome is consistent with the findings of Iswanto and Nurfadilah (2024), who highlighted that low self-confidence and language anxiety are major obstacles to EFL speaking performance, particularly in settings with little exposure to English, such as island and coastal schools. These students may be less inclined to communicate because they are afraid of making mistakes or receiving negative feedback. Furthermore, psychological elements that can impede language acquisition include fear, anxiety, and low motivation. Many of the students in this situation appear to have a moderate psychology filter; they are attempting to communicate, but are still hampered by their nervousness or lack of confidence. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) claim that foreign language anxiety, which results from a lack of encouraging practice environments and a fear of receiving a poor grade, has a major impact on students' confidence when speaking English. Students who experience this anxiety are less inclined to speak up and have fewer opportunities for oral communication in and out of the classroom.

Descriptive Statistics – Confidence and Effort

- **MeanScore:**
Mean = **3.10**
- **Mode:**
Score **3** – most students (**9**) spoke with some confidence, though still with hesitation.
This is the most frequent score.
- **Median:**
Ordered scores:
1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, **3**, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5
The 11th value is **3**, so the **median score is 3**.

3.2 Interview Findings

To complement the speaking test data, in-depth interviews were conducted with five students who scored the lowest. Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis method, five major themes emerged that reflect the complex interplay between psychology, cognitive, and socio-cultural dimensions of learning English speaking skills.

3.2.1 Psychology Challenges: Nervousness and Fear of Judgment

Every participant reported experiencing anxiety, fear, or embarrassment when speaking in English, particularly in front of their peers. Horwitz et al. (1986) first conceptualized anxiety in language classrooms as a performance-related anxiety resulting from fear of a negative evaluation. This emotional discomfort is a classic example of foreign language anxiety.

“Nervous, shy, and afraid of making mistakes.” – Panji

“Nervous, afraid of being seen by classmates.” – Student

These feelings increase mental barriers that impede language processing in addition to decreasing students' willingness to speak. According to Saito, Dewaele, and Hanzawa (2017) anxiety reduces students' attentional capacity, making it more difficult for them to concentrate on giving clear speech. This psychological filter supports Krashen's Psychology Filter Hypothesis. Students who experience high levels of anxiety or low self-esteem create mental obstacles that keep them from absorbing intelligible information Krashen (1985) Due to limited opportunities for oral performance, island students may have even more psychological challenges because they may not have access to communicative environments

3.2.2 Lack of Motivation and Learning Support

The students reported low intrinsic motivation to speak English, primarily because they found the language difficult and uninspiring. Alzabidi and Khadawardi (2022) suggests that when learners lack a clear vision of their “ideal L2 self,” they become less motivated to engage in challenging tasks like speaking.

“No motivation, because it's difficult.” – Student 2

“The learning media is not enjoyable.” – Student 5

Additionally, there is a mismatch between instructional media and student learning preferences, as students indicated that they preferred video-based learning over traditional textbooks. When using interactive and technologically supported language learning resources, students in under-resourced areas exhibit higher levels of engagement.

"The video is entertaining, but the book isn't." Student 3, Student 4, and Student 5

This supports the findings of Li et al. (2022), who point out that digital learning environments provide visual and aural cues that boost motivation and reduce linguistic load. In island environments, where English is not frequently used outside of the classroom, the misalignment between pedagogy and learner expectations is particularly detrimental.

3.2.3 Cultural and Environmental Factors

Although not all students articulated this clearly, two students highlighted how Bahasa Melayu dominates classroom interactions. This constant reliance on the mother tongue significantly reduces authentic exposure to English, a key requirement for developing spoken fluency.

"Malay is used more frequently than English." -Student 4, Student 3

Yasufuku & Doyle (2021) finding of language transfer, which explains how learners inadvertently apply rules from their first language (L1) into their second language (L2), leading to phonological and structural errors, lends support to this. Yasufuku and Doyle (2021) also shows that the more linguistic and cultural distance between L1 and L2, the greater the likelihood of interference. In the coastal and community of Penyengat Island, language learning is impeded by a lack of fluent English-speaking role models, limited exposure, and limited use in daily communication (Vygotsky 1978). Students consequently lack what Vygotsky (1978) calls a Zone of Proximal Development—a social space where they can engage with one another and receive learning scaffolding.

3.2.4 Limited Support from Peers and Family

Social context turned out to be yet another potent limitation. Many students reported that their family members or peers actively discourage them from speaking English. Negative peer criticism, like mockery or laughter, fosters a poisonous atmosphere that deters taking chances.

“Afraid of being laughed at by friends.” – Student 3, Student 4

“My family doesn't give any encouragement.” – Student 4

This is supported by Teimouri, Goetze, and Plonsky (2019) who contend that speaking up is directly impacted by peer judgment anxiety. Peer ridicule can have a significant impact

because students in collectivist cultures, such as Indonesia, are particularly sensitive to group approval, as shown by Myhre et al. (2023) Support from family is also essential. Lack of educational support in the home can hinder students' development of their L2 identities by making English seem like an alien language that is unrelated to their everyday lives.

3.2.5 Teacher's Role: Mixed Influence

Students' opinions of their English teachers were divided. Some said the lessons were boring or lacked motivation, while others praised the clear explanations and direction. This implies a discrepancy between learner engagement and instructional intention.

“The teacher teaches, but it’s not enjoyable.” – Student 2

“The teacher explains thoroughly, but it doesn’t make me want to speak right away.” – Student 3

According to Qasserras (2023) these answers highlight the need for more Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) strategies. Two essential components of speaking in real life—interaction and spontaneity—are restricted by a teacher-centered approach. Without meaningful speaking opportunities, such as role-playing or pair work, students are unable to gain confidence and fluency

IV DISCUSSION

4.1 Aspects related to psychology Significantly Impact Speaking

The confidence and effort scores (mean = 3.10; mode = 3) show that most of the students tried to engage, but they still didn't feel completely sure of themselves. Five students were unsure and didn't have much confidence, while nine kids spoke with some confidence. This was backed up by interview data, which showed that students were nervous, shy, and scared of what their peers would think of them:

"Afraid of making mistakes, shy, and anxious." Student 1

"Scared of my classmates seeing me." Student 5

This backs up what Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) found: that worry about speaking other languages is a big reason why people don't speak out. Teimouri, Goetze, and Plonsky (2019) also talk about how peer assessment anxiety can hurt speaking confidence, especially in collectivist societies like Indonesia where how others see you is very important. This mental filter backs up Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which says that emotional problems like anxiety make it harder to learn a language and, as a result, lower the quality of output. Anxiety also makes it harder for students to think properly, which makes it harder for them to communicate effectively and smoothly Saito et al. (2017) This explains why students with vocabulary and fluency scores of two or three often hesitate and delay.

4.2. Vocabulary and Interaction Problems Reflect Limited Exposure and Low Practice

The majority of students (38.2%) received a score of 3, indicating the usage of a basic but restricted vocabulary, while the vocabulary score average for the speaking test was 2.76. Three students only received one point, while six (28.6%) received two for repeating the same

words. 38.5% of students who received a score of 2 indicated that their responses were inadequate or ambiguous. The mean score for the interaction category was 3.05. Students struggle to recall appropriate vocabulary and provide clear responses due to insufficient speaking practice and limited lexical resources. Afna (2018) states that students with limited lexical flexibility frequently hesitate or select inappropriate words, resulting in decreased accuracy and fluency. Communication requires interactional competence, which means being able to take turns and answer in a way that makes sense. About 40% of the students said these skills were hard for them, which means they didn't get enough practice speaking in front of other people.

4.3 Organizational Skills Are Underdeveloped Due to Lack of Structured Input

The average score for organization was 2.95, and most students got a 3. This suggests that students tried to organize their thoughts, but they often didn't make sense. People who answered the interview questions tended to speak without thinking, which made their speech sound broken. This is consistent with Thornbury (2005) concept of "online processing," which says that students struggle to organize their speech in real time if they don't practice enough. In addition, he notes that without discourse markers and explicit frameworks, communication can become disorganized. This problem is worse for students who don't get a lot of structured English, like those who live island or coastal areas. Hoang, Tran, and Mai (2015) also found that students who live in places that aren't very developed don't often get to hear well-structured English, which makes it hard to organize their thoughts when they have to speak. These results show that students need clear instruction on how to organize their writing, such as how to brainstorm, put ideas in order, and use transition markers.

4.4 Motivation Is Low Due to Mismatched Pedagogy and Unengaging Materials

According to student interviews, learning English was seen as tiresome, and textbooks were found to be especially uninteresting.

“The learning media is not enjoyable.” – Student 5

“The video is entertaining, but the book isn't.” – Student 3, Student 4, Student 5

23.8% of students received a score of 2 in confidence and effort, this lack of motivation explains why many students did not put forth enough effort during the speaking test.

Alzabidi and Khadawardi (2022) assert that motivation is significantly linked to students' "ideal L2 self." In the absence of engaging learning environments or supportive materials, learners tend to disengage from challenging tasks such as speaking. In island contexts, students may exhibit heightened responsiveness to visual and auditory stimuli. Studies conducted by Li et al. (2022) provide evidence for the effectiveness of digital, video-based, or gamified learning environments in improving student motivation and speaking confidence, particularly in contexts where classroom instruction constitutes the sole exposure to English.

4.5 Sociocultural Environment Restricts Speaking Opportunities

Students repeatedly noted that Bahasa Melayu was used more often than English, both in and out of class:

“Malay is used more frequently than English.” – Student 4, Student 3

This means that they don't get to hear real English very often, which makes it harder for them to become fluent in speaking. (Yasufuku and Doyle 2021) say that using L1 too much can cause negative language transfer, which happens when students use L1 rules in L2 speech and make mistakes with grammar and phonology. Kurniawan et al. (2018) also say that in remote and coastal areas, the lack of English-speaking role models and real-life situations makes it very hard to learn a second language. This means that students can't get to what Vygotsky (1978) calls the Zone of Proximal Development, which is where they can learn by talking to others and getting help.

4.6 Social Support Is Weak, Increasing Anxiety and Isolation

The interview findings showed that several students felt discouraged by peers or unsupported by their families:

“Afraid of being laughed at by friends.” – Student 3

“My family doesn't give any encouragement.” – Student 4

Social pressures diminish students' readiness to articulate their understanding, despite their comprehension of the material. Teimouri et al. (2019) assert that peer judgment constitutes a significant source of speaking anxiety, especially in collectivist societies. Myhre et al. (2023) demonstrate that negative social feedback leads to a sustained aversion to speaking, particularly when students prioritize the fear of social embarrassment over the fear of linguistic failure. Alfadda et al. (2022) emphasize the significance of psychological safety and familial support in the development of L2 identity. In the absence of supportive environments, students perceive English as irrelevant to their daily experiences.

4.7 Teaching Methods Are Not Fully Aligned with Student Needs

Although some students appreciated clear instruction from teachers, others found the lessons boring or non-interactive:

“The teacher teaches, but it's not enjoyable.” – Student 1

“The teacher explains thoroughly, but it doesn't make me want to speak right away.” – Student 3

This means that the way teachers teach doesn't match the way students like to learn. Qasserras (2023) says that traditional teacher-centered methods limit student participation and make it less likely that they will improve their speaking skills. Batmaz (2023) says that role-plays, pair work, and real-life projects are all examples of student-centered communicative techniques that can help with engagement and fluency. The fact that many students don't do well in vocabulary, interaction, or confidence, and that they don't want to talk, could be because they don't use these strategies.

V CONCLUSION

There were several challenges that students in the seventh grade at SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang must overcome in order to acquire the ability to speak English. These challenges range from linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural factors. Based on these findings, it was clear that there was a need for more learning strategies that are contextual and participatory.

Speaking activities that are relevant to the lives of students should be designed by teachers. Some examples of such activities are role-playing and simulations relating to tourism. Support at home can also be strengthened through the implementation of a strategy that involves providing training to parents on the significance of English.

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