

Students' Difficulties in English Speaking Class of Grade Eight at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the types of difficulties experienced by eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar in speaking English and to analyse the factors that influence the difficulties experienced by eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar in speaking English. This study used descriptive qualitative method with a case study design. The research subjects consisted of one English teacher and 12 students of class VIII G selected through purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using three instruments, namely (1) an observation sheet based on Penny Ur (1996) four categories of speaking difficulties, (2) a speaking performance test based on Brown (2019) theory covering the rubric with five aspects of speaking, and (3) a semi-structured interview exploring linguistic factors based on Burns & Joyce (1997) and non-linguistic factors based on Krashen (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative data analysis model by Miles and Huberman (2014) through data reduction, data display, conclusion and verification. The findings of this research showed that students experienced difficulties across all speaking aspects, with fluency was the lowest achievement percentage (33.1%). Based on Penny Ur (1996) classification, inhibition was the most dominant difficulty experienced by all students (100%). In terms of contributing factors, vocabulary and grammar were the most dominant linguistic factors, while anxiety was the most dominant non-linguistic factor. In conclusion, students' English speaking difficulties were influenced by the interaction between linguistic and non-linguistic factors, especially vocabulary limitations, grammar problems, and anxiety, which reinforced inhibition and significantly affected students' fluency in speaking English. Therefore, teachers are suggested to create a supportive classroom environment, provide scaffolding, and use interactive activities to help students build confidence in speaking English. Future research is suggested to examine other types of students' speaking difficulties and the factors influencing those difficulties, using more diverse research instruments and involving a broader sample and research context.

Keywords: Speaking Difficulties, Linguistic Factors, Non-Linguistic Factors, Qualitative Case Study.

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INTRODUCTION

The four language skills have a very fundamental function, with speaking as a skill that develops after listening through human life experiences (Mashwani & Damio, 2022). Speaking skill not only serve to convey information or ideas, but also play an important role in building self-confidence and forming emotional bonds with others in daily interactions. According to Sugiharto et al., (2025), speaking skills serve as a crucial communication tool for conveying ideas, opinions, and feelings, as well as being key to success in careers and social relationships in today's global era. In line with that, Perdana & Perak (2025) giving opinion that learning speaking is a fundamental needs for human that is also very important because it is serves as a way to convey ideas, express feelings in many emotional situations, and build good relationships with others.

Speaking skills are one of the most important things that students need to learn when students are learning English (Salsabila et al., 2025). Learning English should not only help students learn vocabulary and grammar, but it should also help them speak English with confidence. As stated by Fahira & Sofiana (2025), students should be able to express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings in English with more fluency and accuracy. This allows for active interaction between students, which can increase their confidence in communicating. Based on a study by Asgawanti et al., (2025), it is stated that students will be able to express their ideas, interact with peers, and sharing opinion confidently and in a meaningful way because of having a good speaking skills. So that, the ideal of learning speaking English is not only as a school subject, but act as a true means of communication in everyday life.

However, the reality in the real life shows that the achievement of speaking English has not fully met the expected goals. In practice, many students still experience difficulties in speaking English even though they have received formal instruction at school. Wahyuni (2025), stated that when students faced anxiety in speaking it will be the main obstacle for the students' speaking skill. Along with that, students also faced a fear of making mistakes that still align with the causes of anxiety. Research by Kulsum et al. (2025) added that the factors influencing students' speaking difficulties is not only caused by affective factors, but also by linguistics and psychological factors at the same time, including limited vocabulary, lack of pronunciation, fluency, and not fully understanding grammar. The difficulties faced by students when they conduct speaking English need to be addressed seriously. Junior high school students that struggle with speaking English usually face bigger learning obstacles, which not only affect their overall speaking skills but also lead to lower academic performance, especially in English (Rusdin & Purwati, 2023). Research by Isna (2024) stated that students in junior high school are very sensitive in developing their self-confidence and the ability of speaking because they are still in the adjustment and unstable phase.

Some previous research has already found the difficulties experienced by students at the junior high school level in speaking English. Purwananda et al. (2023) stated that students experience difficulties in speaking English such as limited vocabulary, not focusing in the class, often feeling nervous, and experiencing anxiety, concluding that speaking difficulties in junior high school are multidimensional. In line with this, Azma et al. (2023) found that junior high school students face difficulties when speaking English, including lack of understanding of how to produce words in English and psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and afraid to be the center of attention. Based on research conducted by Parawangsa et al. (2024), junior high school students often face challenges in developing English speaking skills such as limited vocabulary, poor grammar, bad pronunciation, lack of comprehension, and lack of fluency.

A number of previous studies have examined students' speaking difficulties at various educational levels. At the elementary school level, the main focus is on basic vocabulary and minimizing the use of mother tongue (Putri, 2024; Setianingsih et al., 2025), while research by Jannah et al. (2023) highlights complex linguistic proficiency in high schools, and Milani et al. (2023) examines speaking difficulties experienced by college students in a social context. At the junior high school level, several studies found that students experienced speaking difficulties due to lack of vocabulary, difficulty in pronouncing words, lack of confidence, feeling anxious, and afraid of making mistakes (Parawangsa et al., 2024; Lesda et al., 2023). Additionally, Labad et al. (2024) discovered that difficulties in speaking do not always have a direct correlation with students' low academic scores. However, despite the extensive research on students' speaking difficulties at various educational levels, previous studies have not specifically focused on junior high school students with low speaking achievement as determined by speaking test results and passing rates. As a result, an in-depth investigation into the speaking difficulties experienced by this group of students remains limited.

While many studies have discussed students' speaking difficulties, this study offers novelty in the way the research subject is identified and analyzed. This research specifically focuses on students who show low speaking achievement based on objective speaking test results, even though they have better performance in other literacy skills such as reading and writing. To provide an empirical basis for this case study, the researcher conducted a preliminary study. Based on initial observation and interview with the English teacher, the researcher found that students in class VIII G experienced a significant gap between their general English proficiency and their speaking skills. The teacher stated, "Of the four skills, I see speaking as the skill that students have the least mastery of." Based on the assessment results, the speaking percentage of passing rate was only 37.8%, only 14 out of 37 students met the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) of 78, far below reading (100% passed) and writing (94.5% passed). The teacher also revealed that "The majority of students lack vocabulary, low self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes." Based on the explanation above, the research questions of this study are what difficulties do eighth grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar experience in English speaking skills? and what factors influence the difficulties of eighth grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar in speaking English? With the objectives of this study are to identify the types of difficulties experienced by eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar in speaking English and to analyse the factors that influence the difficulties experienced by eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar in speaking English.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method with a case study design, conducted at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar in the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The research subjects consisted of one English teacher and 12 students of class VIII G, selected through purposive sampling technique. Class VIII G was selected because it had the lowest speaking passing rate among the eighth-grade classes, with only 37.8% of students meeting the KKM, making it the most relevant class for investigating speaking difficulties. Data were collected using three instruments. First, an observation sheet was used to observe students' speaking behavior in class, developed based on Penny Ur (1996) four categories of speaking difficulties: inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. Second, a speaking performance test was administered to all 37 students, assessed using a rubric adapted from Brown

(2019) theory covering five aspects: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation, with each aspect scored on a scale of 1 to 4, then converted to a scale of 100. Third, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the teacher and 12 selected student informants to explore the factors underlying students' speaking difficulties, covering: (1) what linguistic factors (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) influence students' speaking difficulties, based on Burns & Joyce (1997); and (2) what non-linguistic factors (anxiety, motivation, self-confidence) influence students' speaking difficulties, based on Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. The collected data were then analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verification, following the model by Miles and Huberman (2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research were obtained from three data collection instruments, namely speaking performance test, observation sheet, and semi-structured interview, which were conducted with one English teacher and 12 students of class VIII G at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. The findings are organized into three parts: (A) speaking difficulties based on Brown (2019) speaking aspects as identified through the speaking performance test, (B) speaking difficulties based on Penny Ur (1996) theory as identified through classroom observation, and (C) the factors influencing students' speaking difficulties as explored through semi-structured interviews with the teacher and students.

Speaking Difficulties Based on Brown (2019) Speaking Aspects

The speaking performance test was conducted on Friday, 13 March 2026, involving all 37 students of class VIII G, from 12:50 to 14:10 PM. Students were asked to present personal experience orally from the recount text material without bringing notes or reading the text. The assessment was carried out using a speaking assessment rubric instrument adapted theory from Brown (2019), which includes five main aspects: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, dan pronunciation. In this assessment, each indicator has a score range from 1 to 4, so the maximum raw score a student can obtain is 20. To match the school assessment standards, the total score is then converted to a scale of 100 by multiplying the total score by five ($20 \times 5 = 100$). The test results are also compared with the school Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) of 78, to determine the percentage of students who experience difficulties or fail to meet the Minimum Competency Criteria. After all the data was analyzed and coding was done on the parts of the transcript that showed students' difficulties. To identify which indicators are the biggest obstacles for students in speaking, the researcher tabulated data based on the actual scores obtained from 37 students.

After conducting the speaking test, the researcher found that all aspects of speaking by Brown (2019) of the eighth-grade G students are far below the KKM (78), with achievement ranging only from 33.1% to 52%. This indicates that the speaking difficulties experienced by the students are comprehensive and not limited to a single aspect. The detailed results of this assessment are presented in Figure 1.1 below:

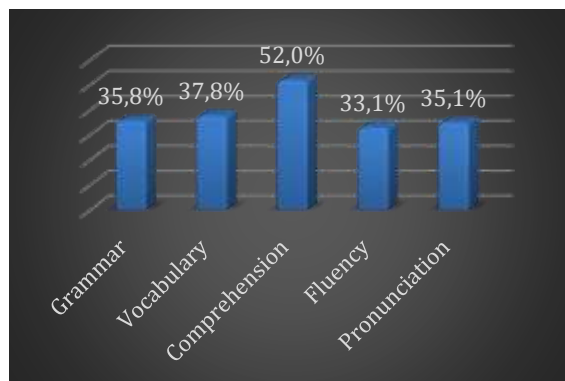


Figure 1. Students' Speaking Ability Results Based on Assessment Aspects

Notes on calculation:

Achievement Percentage (P)

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

P = achievement percentage for each speaking aspect

f = total score obtained by all students on that aspect

n = maximum possible score (number of students × highest score per aspect)

$$= 37 \text{ students} \times 4 \text{ (max score)} = 148$$

Fluency is the aspect with the lowest achievement percentage, which is only 33.1% of 100% with total score only 49. The most dominant phenomenon is the occurrence of long pauses, self-correcting, repetition, and the use of filler words that often disrupt the flow of speaking. This was seen in S17 (line 3, 00:20–00:35) who said, “With... my... my... parents,” and S6 (line 3, 00:07–01:39) with the utterance, “...we go like, um, searching, searching again.” This shows that the students still need time to think and construct their sentences before speaking, so their speaking becomes broken and not smooth. The same condition was found in S14 (line 3, 00:35–00:55), where there was a very long pause with the used of filler words: “With... family... my family... eeee...” even resulting in message abandonment, meaning the student completely stopped speaking. In addition, in S11 (line 3, 00:53–01:10), the student said, “I... fall down... fall down... motorcycle.” The repetition of “fall down” does not happen because the student does not know the words, but because the student cannot continue the sentence smoothly. This could also be seen in S12 (line 4, 02:05–02:25); “I Hit... hit... the *trotuar*”, S16 (line 3, 00:16–00:28); “With... my... my mom...”. The phenomenon using self-correction was also seen in S22 (line 3, 00:40–01:00); “I... eh... *masak*... cooking... and *tidur*... sleep...”, S30 (line 2, 00:11–00:25); “I... eh... I go... to *Nyeduh Kopi*... with... girlfriend”. The use of long pauses, self-correcting, repetition, and the use of filler words reflects difficulties in accessing vocabulary or organizing ideas directly. As a result, communication becomes less fluent and the message conveyed tends to be ineffective because it is disrupted by the process of thinking and language planning.

The interview data further confirmed these findings. S1 stated: “Yes, I still pause a lot because I really have to think about the words first, it's also hard to say them.” S3 explained: “I often hesitate when speaking because it's difficult to translate it into English.” Interestingly, S4 used the term 'loading' to describe this pause:

S4: “*Kelancaran saya ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris masih sedang-sedang saja, ya sering karena saat saya mengucapkan uhm/err itu saya sedang loading untuk kata selanjutnya dengan sambungan bahasa inggris yang pas.*”

(My fluency when speaking English is still just average, well, it’s often because when I say ‘um’ or ‘err’, that’s when I’m loading for the next word with the right English structure).

S2 further added: “Yes, I’m not very fluent. I often hesitate and say ‘uhm’ because I need time to think about what I want to say in English.” The teacher also confirmed: “Students mostly feel unconfident so it sounds disfluent.” This aligns with the findings that showed fluency as the lowest-achieving aspect at only 33.1%.

A pronunciation rate of 35.1% of 100% with total score of 52, indicates that students' ability to pronounce English words is still considered weak and difficult to understand. This low score was caused by students being influenced by their mother tongue, making their pronunciation sound stiff and often unclear. Strong L1 interference significantly reduces clarity. This phenomenon was clearly seen in S2 (Line 4, 01:11 – 01:24); “When *saat itu* I just *labuh dari motor* because my brother not *bawa motor pelan-pelan. Akhirnya kecelakaan,*” (When that time I just fell off the motorcycle because my brother did not ride the motorcycle slowly. Finally, an accident happened.) Researcher noted that the pronunciation of the English words used was greatly influenced by the first language dialect, making it sound unclear.

In addition, many students were not yet able to pronounce basic words independently and tend to wait for pronunciation examples from the researcher before attempting to imitate them. This indicates a high dependence on external assistance. As example, S9 (Line 2, 00:30-00:34) carrying out a total imitation of the researcher's sentence: “I was on holiday in Puptutan at the time, looking at the *ogoh-ogoh* with my family,” and S3 (line 4, 01:00-01:03), “Embarrassing... Maybe no”. This student shows noticeable error in pronouncing the word ‘embarrassing’, but still can understood by the researcher. Although they managed to imitate, the pronunciation produced still sounded stiff and unnatural. Most students experienced errors in stress patterns, intonation, and pronouncing a word in a wrong way. Even though most students had difficulties, there were some students whose pronunciation was considered good and fairly clear, namely S4, S6, S21, and S23. In this group of students, the message conveyed could be understood well by the researcher, even though small errors still occurred.

Grammar with a percentage of 35.8% of 100% with total score only 53. The most dominant error is the failure to use past tense in the context of recount text. Almost all students still use the V1 form of the verb to tell past experiences. For example, S35 (line 1, 00:04–00:23) said “I go to strawberry garden in Tabanan with my family,” S32 (line 1, 00:00–00:08) stated “I go to Nusa Penida with my family for pray,” and S20 (line 1, 00:00–00:15) said “Last holiday, I go to Jimbaran with my family.” All three used V1 “go” even though the context is a past event that should use “went.” This error shows that students have not yet understand the structure of recount text, especially for using past tense.

Vocabulary is at 37.8% of 100% with total score of 56. The main obstacle was limited vocabulary that forced students to switch to Indonesian (code-mixing) in the middle of sentences. This is seen in S2 (line 3, 01:04 – 01:09), used word “*sedih*” (sad), S11 (line 4, 01:21–01:31) used the phrase “*anjing lari*” (dong runs), S19 (line 2, 00:22-00:40) used word “*pesawat*” (airplane) because the students did not know how to express it in English, and S5 (line 1, 00:00–00:11) who struggled to pronounce the word “beach” so

she still used the word "*pantai*". This limited vocabulary also affects fluency, as fillers are used while trying to remember a word.

Comprehension became the only aspect with the highest relative percentage, which was 52% of 100% with total score of 77, although this figure is still far from the Minimum Completeness Criteria. This reflected a gap between students' receptive and productive abilities. Students could generally understand questions or instructions from the researcher, but have difficulty responding orally with the correct language structure. This is seen in S15 (line 4, 01:10–01:15), where the student understood the question "Did you go to the beach?" and was able to answer it with "Yes... I go to beach and I play with dog". However, there were also significant difficulties found in understanding such as; S16 (line 1, 00:06 – 00:11) demonstrated this through a question "*Ini menceritakan apa ms?*" (What is this about, Ms?) which indicates that the student did not understand the task instructions even though students had already been explained. In addition, the student's silence and only smiling when given a follow-up question (S16, line 4, 00:40–00:50) further shows a total breakdown in understanding the spoken input. However, some other students still showed understanding when they were given questions and tried to respond. In short, the students have comprehension, but their oral production is very limited.

Speaking Difficulties Based on Penny Ur (1996) Theory

The observation took place on Monday, 9 March 2026 in Class VIII G at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar from 12:50 to 14:10 PM. This observation was conducted for 80 minutes, observing the English language learning process led by Ni Luh Kadek Wiwik Kartika Dewi, S.Pd. Due to time constraints and the school's limited availability, the observation was carried out only once. The focus was on group project presentation activities where students explained posters on the theme 'Household Tools' and an individual question-and-answer session. Based on the observation, all four categories of speaking difficulties according to Penny Ur (1996) were found in class VIII G students.

The criteria and indicators of speaking difficulties in this observation checklist were adopted from Penny Ur (1996) theory, namely: inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. The specific behavioral indicators under each category are developed by the researcher based on Penny Ur's description, with reference to the empirical findings of Hosni (2014), Sabariyanto (2021), and Chand (2021), who explicitly documented the manifestations of these four categories in the context of speaking learning in EFL classrooms, including for junior high school students in Indonesia.

The findings are presented in the table below, showing the number of students exhibiting behavior for each difficulty, the percentage, and the most dominant indicators appearing for each aspect of speaking difficulty. The percentage explanation is calculated using the formula; $P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$ where, f is the number of students showing difficulty indicators in a particular category, and n is the total number of students (37).

Table 1. Results of Classroom Observation on Students' Speaking Difficulties

Speaking Difficulties	Number of Students	Percentage	The Most Frequently Appearing Indicator (Dominant)
Inhibition	37	100%	Hesitant speech, avoid eye contact, nervous gestures (squeezing hands, hands clenched, gesture by feet).
Nothing to Say	28	75.6%	Student remain silent, student saying "I don't know", long pauses and short response.

Low or Uneven Participation	26	70.3%	Student speak very little, student choose not to speak at all, student accept limited talking time without attempting to participate more.
Mother Tongue Use	34	91.9%	Student prefer using their mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia or local language), student switching language from English to Indonesian or a local language.

The findings indicate that inhibition became the most dominant aspect of difficulty, experienced by all 37 students (100%). The indicators that appeared most frequently were hesitant speech, avoid eye contact, and nervous gestures. This was clearly seen in S8: “um... cleaning tools mean, uh... no, I mean... this tool is used to clean the house...” (hesitant speech); S11: “First... we... uhh...” (hesitant speech; avoided eye contact); S1: “The first of... eh... this is for... em... pour the water?” (hesitant speech). Most students also tend to avoid eye contact with teacher when asked to answer the teacher’s question. This condition can clearly saw in S17: ... (remained silent; avoided eye contact). The same phenomenon experience with another students; S24: “This tool is... is... em... I don't know, Ms.” (avoid eye contact). As for nervous gestures, three specific forms were observed. First, squeezing hands was evident in S10, who was seen squeezing both hands together before answering “I... (squeezing hands) *saya tidak tahu*, Ms.” (I don’t know, Ms). Hands clenched was observed in S4, who kept both hands tightly clenched while looking down and responding “Uhh... I don't know, Ms.” gesture by feet was recorded in S15, who repeatedly shifted and tapped feet nervously while struggling to answer, producing “We use... to... em... scrub them? I don't know, Ms.” The most extreme case was seen in S12, who experienced freezing, standing still and not move for several seconds. Meanwhile, S9 showed the most explicit form of inhibition by directly refusing to speak: “No Ms, *saya gatau*” (No, Ms, I don’t know), even after the teacher repeatedly asked her to try.

The most extreme case was seen in S12, who experienced freezing, standing still and not move for several seconds, unable to move or provide any verbal response at all when being the centre of attention in front of the class. Meanwhile, S9 showed the most explicit form of inhibition by directly refusing to speak: “No Ms, *saya gatau*” (No, Ms, I don’t know), even after the teacher repeatedly asked her to try. A similar pattern was seen in S16, who ended the speaking with; “First, we... uhh... *sudah*, Ms” (First, we... uhh... done, Ms). Using Indonesian as a signal to end the speaking turn because they could not continue in English. Nothing to Say was observed in 28 out of 37 students (75.6%). The most specific case was recorded in S24, who did not know the word in English, making it difficult to find ideas: “This tool is... is... em... I don’t know, Ms. *Saya lupa Bahasa Inggrisnya.*” (This tool is... is... em... I don’t know, Ms. I forgot the English word). Some students, such as S9, S17, S18, and S22, only spoke after being repeatedly prompted by the teacher, not on their own initiative.

Low or Uneven Participation was observed in 26 out of 37 students (70.3%). Most students in this category spoke very little and accepted limited speaking time without attempting to participate more actively. This pattern of low participation was shown by short answers, long pauses, and students being unwilling to speak unless the teacher directly asked them. For example, S2 remained completely silent when first called upon and only responded after repeated encouragement from the teacher, stating “...I don’t know, Ms.” While displaying nervous behavior such as clenching hands and avoiding eye contact. For example, S34, who even after being prompted with the question “Is it a...?” only gave a brief answer: “Oh, *dustpan* Ms.” Without any elaboration. The most extreme case was found in S9, who chose to give minimal

response to the teacher even after being directly called on by the teacher. Students not included in the low or uneven participation category in the accepted limited talking time section would try to answer the teacher's questions and would not remain silent during presentations and the question-and-answer session with the teacher.

Based on the observation, the result showed that dominant difficulties faced by students was inhibition with the indicators that appeared most frequently were hesitant speech, avoid eye contact, and nervous gestures. Furthermore, the result from semi-structured interview showed that the dominant face difficult in inhibition. S2 stated that he was afraid of making pronunciation mistakes, and S7 admitted to feeling very shy when having to say English words in front of many people. S3 expressed:

S3: *"Saya seringnya gugup saat bicara bahasa Inggris di depan kelas takut salah mengucapkannya. Takut karena nanti akan malu gitu, malu sama teman, sama guru juga kadang."*

(I often get nervous when speaking English in front of the class, afraid of mispronouncing it. I'm afraid of being embarrassed, embarrassed in front of my friends and sometimes even the teacher.)

S5 described her feelings as a mixture of embarrassment, fear, and nervousness, while S35 admitted that her hesitation came from feeling not fluent and slow in speaking. Notably, only S4 stated that he did not feel afraid and instead applied the principle of 'Believe' within himself. The teacher confirmed: "I do find students that hesitant to speaking English, like they shy, and often unwilling to speak." It can be concluded that most students experienced significant difficulties with inhibition, as they tend to feel shy, nervous, and afraid of making mistakes, which makes them hesitate, avoid eye contact, and showed nervous gestures.

Factors Influencing Speaking Difficulties

After the researcher collected data from observation, the researcher proceeded to conduct semi-structured interviews with one English teacher and twelve selected students from class VIII G to gather more in-depth information about the reasons behind these difficulties. The teacher interview was conducted face-to-face on Thursday, March 12, 2026. Meanwhile, the interview with students was conducted online via video call on the WhatsApp application. Interviews with students were conducted from 16 to 31 March 2026. The interview explores the factors underlying students' difficulties in speaking, which include non-linguistic factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety from Krashen (1982), as well as linguistic factors such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation from Burns and Joyce (1997).

1. Non-Linguistic Factors

Regarding motivation, the teacher observed that students' motivation varies: "Some students have a high enthusiasm in participating and others are passive. Sometimes yes, they seem interested if the lesson is fun, like quiz using projector, or playing games." The research results show that the majority of students (10 students) are motivated to learn and speak English due to their own internal desires (intrinsic motivation). S3 was motivated by popular culture and a desire to socialize globally; S4 wished to communicate directly with tourists; S25 was inspired by a family member's success. However, 2 other students (S2 and S7) are influenced by external factors or lack motivation. S2 admitted:

S2: *“Kalau boleh jujur, saya termotivasi untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris karena saya takut mendapatkan nilai buruk, bukan karena saya benar-benar ingin berbicara, karena saya tidak banyak tahu tentang kata-kata dalam bahasa Inggris, sehingga jika saya ditunjuk atau ada presentasi maka saat itu saya berbicara bahasa Inggris.”*

(To be honest, I am motivated to speak English because I am afraid of getting a bad grade, not because I really want to speak. I don't know many English words, so I usually speak English only when I am appointed or when there is a presentation.)

Based on data analysis, this study found that motivation is not the main cause of students' speaking difficulties.

Regarding self-confidence, the teacher noted that students' self-confidence was situational and highly dependent on the type of learning activity: "Sometimes, it depends on the activity. When they think the activity is quite fun, so that they will feel confidence to participate." Based on the results of interviews with students, the researcher found diversity in how students view their own abilities compared to their peers. Some students (S1, S6, S21, S25) have high and stable levels of self-confidence. S6 stated that he was always confident in his abilities, while S21 even felt he had a higher level of competence than other students. S4 also demonstrated a positive mindset by assuming that every student's abilities were essentially equal. But on the other hand, some students (S5, S7, S8, S9, S35) actually possess self-confidence, yet are often hindered by technical limitations or nervousness. S9 acknowledges that her self-confidence can suddenly disappear because she feels her abilities are not yet at maximum. S35 adds that although she is confident, difficulties with pronunciation still cause her to feel nervous.

S2: *“Tidak, saya tidak merasa percaya diri saat berbicara bahasa Inggris di depan kelas karena saya tahu kemampuan saya.”*

(No, I do not feel confident when speaking English in front of the class because I know my ability.)

S9: *“Saya merasa percaya diri, tetapi terkadang rasa percaya diri itu hilang karena kemampuan saya belum maksimal.”*

(I feel confident, but sometimes that confidence disappears because my ability is not yet optimal.)

Importantly, the follow-up question results showed that all 12 students would feel more confident to participate when the material is interesting and they believe they are capable of answering, indicating that engaging topics and a supportive learning environment can significantly increase students' self-confidence.

Anxiety was the most dominant non-linguistic factor. The teacher confirmed: "Yes, some students feel anxious and it makes them forget about what they want to do." Some students experience anxiety at a level that affects their physical condition. S5 and S9 openly admitted that they not only felt nervous but also experienced shaking when they had to speak

S5: *“Iya, saya sangat sering merasa gugup, cemas, dan bahkan gemetaran saat giliran saya untuk berbicara.”*

(Yes, I very often feel nervous, anxious, and even shaking when it is my turn to speak.)

The majority of students (S1, S2, S3, S8, S25) experience moderate levels of nervousness, in short, they are still felt nervous and anxious but they stated that it's not often showed up. Their anxiety is generally

triggered by external factors such as fear of appearing stiff (S25) or fear of negative judgement from the class environment. S4, S6, S7, and S21 consistently state that they have never experienced significant anxiety. The main factor building this resilience is the habit of speaking English. S35 provided a very specific explanation regarding the source of this social anxiety.

S35: *“Iya, saya merasa gugup saat berbicara di depan kelas. Takut dilihat semua orang, takut diketawain, diejek nanti.”*

(Yes, I feel nervous when speaking in front of the class. I am afraid of being watched by everyone, afraid of being laughed at or mocked.)

The results showed that 9 out of 12 students (S1, S2, S3, S5, S7, S8, S9, S25, and S35) experienced nervousness, anxiety, or even shaking. Only 3 students (S4, S6, and S21) reported no anxiety, mostly because they were already used to speaking in front of others. This finding aligns with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis: when students' affective filter is elevated due to high anxiety, the input they receive cannot be optimally processed in the brain, and language production becomes blocked.

2. Linguistic Factors

Vocabulary was confirmed as the most dominant linguistic factor. The teacher explicitly identified it as the core obstacle: "Sure. Their vocabulary is very limited, yes, that's the main key... I have tried various ways to help them remember English words, such as giving quizzes, having them open dictionaries, but in the next meeting they would definitely forget them again." Students consistently confirmed this.

S4: *“Iya, betul sekali seringkali ide sudah terpikirkan di kepala, tapi karena tidak tahu katanya jadi tertunda untuk diucapkan.”*

(Yes, that's right. Often the idea is already in my mind, but because I don't know the words, it gets delayed to be spoken.)

S2: *“Iya, saya sering kesulitan menemukan kata yang tepat, jadi saya tidak bisa mengungkapkan ide saya dengan jelas.”*

(Yes, I often have difficulty finding the right words, so I cannot express my ideas clearly.)

Many students (S3, S5, S7, S8, S9, S25, S21, S35) honestly admit that they know only a small number of words. S21 emphasized that not knowing the meaning of words is the main obstacle. Meanwhile, S7 choose for a strategy that relied more on the teacher as the primary source of help when facing vocabulary difficulties. From the follow-up question results, all 12 students agreed that vocabulary is one of the main factors that makes it difficult for them to speak English. They commonly reported that limited vocabulary causes confusion, hesitation, and difficulty in forming sentences or expressing ideas clearly. This indicates that vocabulary plays a crucial role and becomes one of the factors that influence students' difficulties in speaking English.

Grammar was the second most significant linguistic factor. Almost all students (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S7, S8, S9, S21, S25, S35) stated that they feel afraid, confused, and hesitant to construct words and sentences. S21 explicitly identified grammar as the main inhibiting factor:

S21: *“Iya, dan itu menjadi faktor utama penghambat saya dalam pengucapan bahasa Inggris.”*

(Yes, and that becomes the main factor that hinders me in speaking English.)

S2 stated: “*Iya, saya merasa bingung tentang tata bahasa, jadi saya takut membuat kesalahan.*” (Yes, I feel confused about grammar, so I am afraid of making mistakes.) S3 added: “*Iya, saya ragu saat berbicara karena takut kalimat yang saya bicarakan salah dan tidak sesuai.*” (Yes, I feel hesitant when speaking because I am afraid that the sentences I say are incorrect or inappropriate.) The teacher confirmed: “Some students may pay attention to the grammar, but some are not, so they can speak naturally without thinking of the grammar first. Grammar is indeed one of the reasons why that student's speaking is not good yet, because it is still complicated and difficult for them.” From the follow-up question, all 12 students agreed that grammar is one of the factors that makes it difficult for them to speak English.

Pronunciation, while less dominant than vocabulary and grammar, affected students in two different ways. For some students (S3, S7, S21, S25, S35), pronunciation difficulties were the source of unsure and afraid when speaking. S3 stated:

S3: “*Sangat iya, saya sangat sulit mengucapkan kata kata bahasa Inggrisnya yang benar, takut teman teman saya tidak memahaminya.*”

(Yes, very much. I find it very difficult to pronounce English words correctly, and I am afraid my friends will not understand me.)

S35 even prepared a language-switching strategy: “*Iya, saya sangat takut jika salah dalam mengucapkan kata dalam bahasa Inggris. Jika memang tidak dipahami mungkin saya akan menjelaskannya dalam Bahasa Indonesia.*” (Yes, I am very afraid of mispronouncing English words. If it is not understood, I might explain it in Indonesian.). In contrast, S1, S5, S6, S8, and S9 did not view pronunciation as a major problem and demonstrated resilience by repeating words until correct. S4 even showed a uniquely high level of confidence: “*Iya, ketika saya merasa kesulitan mengucapkan kata-kata bahasa Inggris dengan benar mungkin saya dengan orang itu akan tertawa bersama.*” (Yes, when I find it difficult to pronounce English words correctly, I might laugh together with others.). The teacher confirmed: “Yes, it does, so it makes them shy to speak. The reasons are the same as before, because a lack of vocabulary and a fear of constructing sentences incorrectly.” From the follow-up question, The results showed that 5 students considered pronunciation as a factor that makes it difficult to speak English (S3, S4, S7, S9, S25), while 7 students did not see it as a major difficulty (S1, S2, S5, S6, S8, S21, S35). Students who agreed stated that they feel unsure about correct pronunciation and are afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at. Meanwhile, those who disagreed believed that pronunciation can be improved gradually and communication can still take place as long as the message is understood. This indicates that pronunciation is a challenge for some students, but not the main barrier for most of them.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to identify the types of speaking difficulties experienced by eighth-grade students at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar and to analyze the factors that influence those difficulties. The research findings indicated that students experienced difficulties in all aspects of speaking skills proposed by Brown (2019), with fluency as the lowest achievement percentage (33.1%), characterized by frequent long pauses, filler words, self-correcting, and repetition. Based on the classification of speaking difficulties by Penny Ur (1996), inhibition was identified as the most dominant difficulty, experienced by all students (100%), reflected in hesitant speech, avoiding eye contact, and nervous gestures. In terms of contributing factors, vocabulary and grammar were the most dominant linguistic factors, while anxiety was the most dominant non-linguistic factor that further reinforced inhibition and reduced students' willingness to participate actively in speaking activities. Therefore, teachers are suggested to create a supportive classroom environment, provide gradual scaffolding, and use interactive and fun activities to help students build their confidence in speaking English.

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