



# Student Difficulties in Speaking English Encountered by the Eleventh Grade of Ma Alkhairat Pusat Palu

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## Abstract

The objective of this research is to find out the difficulties in speaking English and the factors that cause the students difficulties in speaking English. This research used a qualitative approach, with findings that were not obtained through statistical procedures or calculations. The type of research design employed was a case study. This research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Alkhairat Pusat Palu, Jl. Sis Aljufri, Palu, Central Sulawesi. There are 5 students as participants. The research found that students difficulties in speaking English are influenced by two factors, namely psychological aspects and Speaking Aspects. Psychological aspects consist of fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety and lack of confidence, while language Apects are pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. The research emphasizes the need to address these issues in the classroom to enhance students' learning experiences.

**Keywords:** *Speaking English, Difficulties*

## Introduction

Speaking skills are a crucial aspect of English language learning. According to Brown (2001), speaking skills refer to the ability to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings effectively and efficiently in real life communication situations. In learning English one of the skills languages needed to learn is speaking. It was presented directly by Luoma (2004), which stressed the importance of language performance. Because the ability to speak languages reflects someone personality, self-image, knowledge and ability to express opinions. So we need to increase the ability to speak in academia. But despite the importance of learning to speak as the development of English learning.

Brown (2007), states that speaking is social contact in interactive language functions is an importance key and in which it is not what the learning say the counts but how learning say it what learning convey with body language, gestures, eye contact, physical distance and other nonverbal message. It means that speaking is activity human in interactive language to say something or convey message with body language, gesture not with oral language. Speaking is important because people use their speaking skill to communicate with each other. Brown (2004) explains that speaking is an oral interaction where participants need to negotiate the meaning of ideas, feelings and information.

In this case, the listener must understand the relationship between the ideas presented. Torkey (2006) define speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, the physical environment and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, opened, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions or patterns that tend to recur in certain discourse situations can be identified. Based on the theory above, speaking is the important part of the communication. We need to improve our skill in speaking for communicating and getting or giving information for other.

Speaking is the most important skill to master. Brings the ability to have a conversation. Through conversation people can do oral communication to apply communication function itself. Harmer (2007) argues that speaking skills that require the simultaneous use of a number of different abilities. They include aspects of speaking. There are several points which explains the aspects of speaking English as follows:

a. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the act way speakers produce clearer language when they speak. It is deal with the phonological process that refers to the component of a grammar made up of the element and principles that determine how sound and pattern in a language. It is included the segmental factors, vowels, consonants, words stress, tone pitch and intonation patterns. For the reason, if the speakers want to be able to speak English fluently, they need to be able to pronoun phonemes correctly.

b. Grammar

Grammar is the basic units of meanings, such as words and a set of rules to combine them into a new sentence (Fromkin & Rodman, 2014). It is needed for the speakers to arrange a correct sentence in a conversation. The speakers must be able to manipulate and to distinguish appropriate grammatical forms in appropriate ones. The utility of grammar is also to learn the correct way to gain expertise in a language in oral and written form.

c. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a basic element in language. It is included a single word, set phrases, variable phrases, phrases verbs and idioms. One cannot effectively

communicate or express their ideas both in oral and written form if they do not have sufficient vocabulary.

Mastering speaking is not easy. In learning speaking, the students are usually facing difficulties in speaking English. That can be seen from two aspects, there are psychological aspect and language aspect.

#### 1. Psychological Aspects

English speaking skill can be difficult for student in any educational levels and environment to acquire. The challenge is also encountered by the students of the Islamic based school, this is caused by several factors, one of which is psychology.

According to Juhanna (2012), there are some psychological aspects that faced by the students when they speaking in the class:

##### a. Fear of mistake

Many theorists argued that fear mistake becomes one of the main factors of student's reluctance to speak in English in the class room. Aftat (2008) adds that this fear is linked to the issue of correction by students fear of being laughed at by other students or being criticized by the teacher. So, the students low of motivation and low of participant in speaking activity. Therefore, it is important for teachers to convince their students that making mistake is not a wrong thing. Because students can learn from their mistakes.

##### b. Shyness

Shyness is an emotional thing that many students suffer from at home time when they are required to speak in English class. Shyness is one of common problem in student's speaking performance. Shyness also being a problem in speaking learning class, so paying attention on this aspect is also quite important in order to help the students do their speaking performance in the classroom (Gebhard, 2000). According to Baldwin (2010) speaking in front of people is one of the more common phobias that students encounter and feeling of shyness makes their mind go blank or that they will forget to say.

##### c. Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of tension, apprehension and nervousness with the situation of learning foreign language, Anxiety is one of the problems that can make students do not feel comfortable when they doing speaking performance. Anxiety can affect student performance. It can influence the quality of oral language production and make individuals appear less fluent than the really are. By the explanation above, the teacher should make an attempt to create a learning atmosphere which gives students more comfortable situations in their learning activity (Hermaniar and Azkiya, 2021).

##### d. Lack of confidence

The situations of lack confidence are when the students who did not apply English orally could have a negative impact. They were afraid to speak and to make the mistakes. Often, they chose to remain silent or did not speak English in order to avoid the ridicule of friends. Sometimes they had prepared words, but they found it

difficult to express them. Therefore, this incident could reduce their attractiveness to practice English orally. Having self-confidence needed to look at themselves and judge them. If they thought they could do anything, then they were up for the challenge. Despite facing tough problems, they easily found the best solution to improve themselves. Self-confidence is the key to success in English speaking skills.

Students who are confident in their abilities are able to overcome their fears and negative thoughts so that they will speak English fluently. Therefore, the teachers should encourage the students to practice speaking more often to boost their self-confidence. In addition, student self-confidence could be created by having positive and showing love for their self. When students could do these two things, they would be able to speak English without any fear.

## 2. Language aspects

English language skills can be seen from four skills, namely writing, reading, speaking, and listening. In addition, there are three language elements that play an important role in supporting the four skills, namely these four skills, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (language structure), which has always been an obstacle to learning English (Megawati, 2016).

Pronunciation is one part of speaking skills that will be directly and clearly observable and knowable. When someone speaks in English, people who listen will directly identify the pronunciation of that person. Pronunciation is one of the most important aspects of English, especially in oral communication. Every sound, stress pattern, and intonation can convey meaning. Speakers who are not native English speakers (non-native Speakers who are not native English speakers (non-native speakers) when speaking English must be very careful in pronouncing some vocabulary in English because if there is an error in pronunciation, even just a little, it can cause misunderstanding. So, mastering good and correct pronunciation as well as native speakers to be understood is very necessary.

According to Lado (1964: 70), pronunciation is the use of the sound system in speaking and listening. (speaking) and listening (listening). In this case, pronunciation is only treated as actions that occur in speaking and listening; Lado does not mention how the sound is produced. The sound is produced. From this definition, it can be concluded that pronunciation is a way of saying a certain word or phrase that is generally accepted or understood (intelligible).

Vocabulary is literally "a rundown or assortment of words or of words and phrases sometimes alphabetically. assortment of words or of words and phrases sometimes alphabetically organized and explained or defined." From this understanding, it can be understood that vocabulary is a list of words and phrases arranged alphabetically and explained or defined. Hatch & Brown (1995) say that vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of words that may be used by every speaker of a language. that might be used by any speaker of the language. From this statement, vocabulary can be defined as all the words that are known or used by everyone, and it is all the words in a particular

language. Cameron (2001) concludes that vocabulary is one of the most important areas of knowledge in language. In the field of knowledge in language, it plays an important role for learners in mastering a language. In mastering a language, this statement emphasizes the importance of vocabulary in the knowledge of a language. In the knowledge of a language.

The learning process by including English in subject in Indonesia has begun since the Dutch colonial era, the dynamics of policies and curriculum changes from the government have colored our education world, especially in English subjects themselves. The need to use and master foreign languages, especially English has made changes which is quite significant in the education system in Indonesia. The position of English in the learning curriculum Indonesia is important because in addition to responding to global challenges, English is an international language that must be mastered and studied by the Indonesian people, especially in our education world as well access to digital technology.

As a society and especially educators themselves, they certainly understand and have hope that if English does have an important role in learning in Indonesia, English must remain in the learning curriculum in Indonesia, considering and seeing its urgency in today's era, but in fact it is often found in education. We in particular do not fully understand and master English, starting from the low interest in learning English among students, students feeling hesitant in starting and using English, difficulty understanding and pronouncing vocabulary from students, and also educators who are less competent in teaching so that it makes the position of English in the curriculum in Indonesia increasingly urgent, and of course the government's goal to include English lesson in the curriculum is definitely not separated from preparing human resources capable of global competitiveness

## **Method**

This research used a qualitative approach, with findings that were not obtained through statistical procedures or calculations. The type of research design employed was a case study. A case study is a research method that specifically investigates contemporary phenomena objects that are ongoing or have occurred but still leave a significant impact at the time the research was conducted within the context of real life, using various data sources. The case study made it possible to investigate a particular event, situation, or social condition and to provide insight into the processes that explain how certain events or situations occur.

Instruments in collecting data are tools used by researcher to help in collecting data in order to make it easier (Arikunto, 2000). There is the researcher herself, observation checklist, and interview guide.

1) Observation checklist

In this research, the researcher used an observation checklist as an instrument to obtain data. the researcher made observation checklist to find out the difficulties in speaking English in MA Aliyah Alkhairat Pusat Palu

2) Interview guide

Interview guide is a list of questions that researcher asks when conducting interviews to obtain research data. It is used to record the students and the teacher during learning process in the classroom and the researcher recorded students' answer during interview.

Data analysis was the process of searching and arranging the interview transcripts and other materials that the researcher collected to enhance her own understanding and that of others. It involved describing the information in units, selecting what was important, and drawing conclusions to make it easier to understand (Sugiyono, 2012). In this research, the researcher used qualitative methods and applied descriptive qualitative analysis techniques. The researcher analyzed the students' difficulties in speaking English at the eleventh grade of MA Alkhairat Pusat Palu. The data collected was analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Data reduction

Data reduction means summarizing, choosing or selecting the important points the most needed in research focusing on the main things from the data that appear in interview transcript and field note of observation, describing them into units, synthesizing, compiling into patterns.

2. Data display

Data display was the second component in analyzing the data. It involved reducing data and presenting it in an organized, compressed way so that conclusions could be drawn more easily. Sugiyono (2012) states that the most commonly used form of data display for qualitative research was narrative text. This meant that the data was presented and explained in the form of words, sentences, and paragraphs.

3. Conclusion Drawing

This step in analyzing data involved drawing conclusions or verification. The researcher collected the data and analyzed it to ensure it was valid, consistent, and sufficient. The researcher read the entire transcripts of the interviews and drew conclusions from the field notes of observations and interviews. The researcher reached conclusions after analyzing the data.

## Results

The researcher conducted classroom observations to see the learning process in the classroom. The researcher observed how the teacher teaches, the teacher's interaction with students during the learning process, and communication in the classroom when providing material. Here researcher also saw how students are during the learning process, student interactions with teachers, interactions among

students, how active students are in class when asking questions and presenting their assignments, and how often the use of English in the classroom is done and used by teachers and students.

Another data collection technique used by researcher was interview. By conducting interview, researcher obtained the information needed in this study. Researcher conducted interviews with the students, namely from class XI IPS, in MA Alkhairaat Pusat Palu.

Observation has been done twice by the researcher in class XI IPS on August 21 and 26, 2024. Based on the results of observations and interview, Researcher elaborate conclusions about students' difficulties in English lessons. The results of observation and interviews, can be seen as follows:

## 1. Students' Difficulties in Speaking English

### A. Psychological Aspect

#### 1. Lack of Confidence and Fear of Mistake

##### a. Observation (Monday 26 August, 2024 at 10:00 – 12:00)

On the observation, the teacher asked one of the students to introduce herself of the class. But most of the students lack of confidence to speak English. And the students lost their confidence in speaking English in front of their friend because they thought they did not do well when speaking English.

##### b. Interview (Monday 26 August, 2024 at 10:00-12:00)

Students who conducted interviews with the researcher commented about their confidence :

R : " Apakah kamu takut diminta untuk maju ke depan atau tidak?"

S : takut ka, gugup dan saya tidak percaya diri

From the data above, the researcher can draw the conclusion that students find it difficult to speak in English because of a lack confidence and afraid to making mistakes when the practice speaking in front of a friend.

#### 2. Anxiety and shyness

##### a. Observation (Monday 26 August, 2024 at 10:00-12:00)

On the observation, the teacher asked one of the students to introduce herself of the class. Some students feel anxious and shy when they to speak English with their friend or teacher in classroom.

##### b. Interview (Monday 26 August, 2024 at 10:00-12:00)

Students who conducted interview with the researcher had physical problem such as fear of making mistakes and shyness, as evidenced by the first subject. The statement from one of the students as follows :

R: ketika kamu di minta untuk maju, apakah kau merasa senang?

S: saya senang, walaupun saya merasa malu dan khawatir karena takut melakukan kesalahan.

Based on the result above, researcher can conclude that students feel shy and afraid when speaking English. They feel nervous and anxious when speaking English in front of the class.

## B. Language Aspect

### 1. Lack of Pronunciation

#### a. Observation (Monday 26 August, at 10:00-12:00)

The researcher employed observation, the observation was conducted to know the process of teaching and learning. The researcher found that students did not have the best way to produce the language when speaking English. It means that almost all the students did not have good pronunciation.

#### a. Interview (Monday 26 August, at 10:00-12:00)

The interview that discussed the pronunciation of words, they said that they were confused about pronouncing words in English, because if they were wrong in their pronunciation, they were afraid being laughed at by friends and scolded by the teacher, so that sometimes they became sad, afraid when they were told to read or speak English. The student opinion about pronunciation :

R: boleh kah saya mengetahui, apakah kamu menyukai pelajaran bahasa inggris?

S: tidak terlalu ka, soalnya pelajaran bahasa inggris kadang susah

R: apa yang membuatmu susah atau sulit dalam pembelajaran bahasa inggris, terutama dalam berbicara dalam bahasa inggris ?

S: menurut saya, berbicara dalam bahasa inggris itu sangat sulit, karena dalam pengucapan dan penulisan itu berbeda. Jadi kadang sebelum saya di suru maju saya harus mengecek dulu di aplikasi cara pembacaannya bagaimana.

Based on the results of the statement above, the researcher can conclude that students have difficulty speaking English due to poor pronunciation. The students have difficulties pronouncing English words because writing and speaking are different, and they are also afraid to pronounce the wrong word when speaking.

### 2. Lack of vocabulary

#### a) Observation (Monday 26 August, at 10:00-12:00)

Based on observation data, students are confused when they speak English because they do not understand the vocabulary they will use.



Even when the teacher speaks English, the students do not understand and only stay silent when asked to speak English.

b) Interview (Monday 26 August, at 10:00-12:00)

When interviewing student about English vocabulary, students are confused if the teacher explains the lesson in English and they do not understand what the teacher's words mean. When given an assignment by the teacher, they also use google translate to interpret or use vocabulary when speaking English. They also have difficulty remembering the vocabulary that will be used in speaking English. The one student comment is :

R: Apakah kamu menyukai pelajaran bahasa inggris atau tidak?

S: saya suka kak

R: kenapa kamu suka ?

S: bagi saya belajar bahasa inggris itu seru tapi kadang membuat saya sulit untuk memahami

R: maksudnya bagaimana dalam sulit memahami?

S: sebelum saya berbicara saya harus berfikir dulu tentang artinya kemudian saya menjawab.

From the results of the data above, it can be conclude that students are still lacking in vocabulary and they are confused by so many vocabulary.

### 3. Lack of Grammar

1) Observation (Monday 26 August, at 10:00-12:00)

Based on the results of observatios, students have difficulty speaking English because they are do not know how to arrange words to speak or their choice of words is still confusing. Some students also speak indonesian when asked by the teacher. They also told to come forward in front of the class, do not use English during conversation.

2) Interview (Monday 26 August, at 10:00-12:00)

According to the results of the interview, students said that when they speak English, they felt less confident and were afraid of making a mistake or the teacher not understanding what were saying, so when the teacher told them to speak English, sometimes they used Indonesian or even kept quiet. From the interview results, one students commented about grammar

R: Apakah kamu menyukai bahasa Inggris atau tidak?

S: Saya suka ka, tapi saya susah dalam memahami. Saya tidak faham bagaimana menyusun kalimat karena saya masih bingung dengan grammar

R: menurut kamu faktornya apa sampai kamu bingung dengan grammar?

S: struktur kalimat yang berbeda kak. Struktur bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia berbeda dengan bahasa Indonesia dan saya juga kurang latihan dan praktik itulah yang menyebabkan saya susah dalam memahami dan menguasai grammar dalam bahasa Inggris.

The results of the data above indicate that students have difficulties speaking English because of lack of grammar. Students find it difficult to arrange the words or sentences with the correct grammar when speaking.

## Discussion

Based on the research findings, the researcher will discuss the research. The discussion is about the students' difficulties in speaking English, the factors that cause students' difficulties in learning to speak. After describing the data, the researcher needed to analyze the data because it was still raw. It is appropriate with the answer to the problem statement. The explanation will be presented below:

The results of the research, the students in class XI Ips of MA Alkhairat Pusat Palu feel difficulties when they speak English. The researcher wants to discuss the problem with speaking English as seen from the observation and interview.

### **1. Factors and cause the students' difficulties in speaking English at the Eleventh grade of MA Alkhairat Pusat Palu**

The researcher found the students' difficulties such as psychological Aspect and Speaking Aspect.

#### A. Psychological Aspect

The major issue that most students face is psychological aspect. It is because the psychological factors can influence students' ability to communicate effectively such as fearing of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, and lack of confidence. Based on an observation and interview the researcher found the four problems that students have.

##### a. Lack of confidence and shyness

Self-confidence may be the most critical thing in speaking English. Confidence and shyness are the same thing because when the students feel shy about speaking English it means their lack of confidence.

##### b. Fear of making mistake and anxiety

The students are afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. They are afraid that their pronunciation and grammar are wrong. Students also felt anxiety when speaking English because of unfamiliar vocabulary. Besides that, the students also become embarrassed if they make mistakes when speaking English.

## B. Language Aspects

Language aspects are those that make the students' speaking abilities poor. In general speaking aspects comprises the details of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

### a. Pronunciation

Based on the result, students did not good in pronunciation so it will make them cannot increase their speaking abilities. It can be a big problem for the students if they did not master pronunciation because if they have bad pronunciation, it makes other people did not understand about what they want to say. The other reason why pronunciation is difficult because pronunciation in English language is different from other language. There are a lot of words that have similar pronounce for example "weak" "with" "week" and "pour" with "poor". These words are similar in pronunciation but have a different meaning. It makes difficult for students to determine the true meaning.

### b. Vocabulary

From the result of the observation and interview the students said the vocabulary in English language is difficult. It is because their knowledge of vocabulary is low. In observation the students do not understand and only stay silent when asked to speak English.

### c. Grammar

The results of the research indicate that one of the factors contributing to students' difficulties in speaking English is a lack of grammar. Students with inadequate grammar skill will experience difficulties in communicating effectively in English.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the result the researcher discovered students challenges in English speaking lessons, the elements that produce difficulties in English speaking lessons, according to the research findings, XI students at MA Alkhairaat Pusat Palu face difficulties in speaking English in class, included psychological aspects and speaking aspects. In psychological aspects there are four aspects, which included fear of making mistake, shyness, anxiety and lack of confidence. In speaking aspects there are three aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and Grammar.

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