



An Analysis of English-Speaking Problem in Junior High School Students at Ban Yaning School

Narathiwat Thailand

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026 - 06- 01 Revised: 2026 06-18 Accepted: 2026 06-30	<i>This research aims to identify the most common factors of English-speaking problems faced by junior high school students at Ban Yaning School, Narathiwat, Thailand. These speaking problems identified five factors: 1) anxiety S confidence; 2) vocabulary; 3) grammar S pronunciation; 4) classroom environment S material; 5) motivation S learning strategies. This research used a quantitative descriptive approach involving 42 junior high school students as research subjects. The instruments used included a questionnaire with 5 to 6 for each statement for five main factors that the students must completed by choosing a scale 1 to 5, where 1 means 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree', and an interview with the teacher. The result showed that students agree they have faced these factors of speaking problems including 57% from anxiety S confidence, 60% from vocabulary, 63% from grammar S pronunciation, 60% from classroom environment S material, 61% from motivation S learning strategies. These finding confirms that most of the students faced these problems and data show a declining trend in how these issues are perceived as students advance through their grades.</i>
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1. Introduction

English is fundamentally defined as a global communication tool that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, functioning as the primary language for international diplomacy, business, and education (Rao, 2019). English as foreign language or second language use by most of people and English is a second language that should be mastered by language learners (Huda, 2018). Its role has shifted from being a foreign language to a crucial life skill required for global citizenship.

The importance of learning English lies in its ability to open doors to international career opportunities and provide access to the majority of digital and scientific information available today. In the Southeast Asian context, English proficiency is a strategic asset for Thailand's junior high school students to participate effectively in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (Tolentino S Santos, 2020).

Speaking is an active-productive skill that involves the systematic process of constructing meaning through the verbalization of thoughts and feelings (Basongan et al., 2025). Speaking is an oral productive ability that produces systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (Lebagi, 2025). It is the most direct way to demonstrate communicative competence in a second language. However, a speaking problem arises when learners experience a gap between their linguistic knowledge and their ability to produce speech fluently (Ariyanti, 2016). For Thai students, these problems are often characterized by hesitation, silence, or the inability to maintain a conversation due to various internal and external obstacles (Tantiwich S Sinwongsuwat, 2021).

Psychological barriers play a critical role in oral production. Anxiety in language learning refers to the specific nervousness or apprehension felt when a student is required to speak in the target language (Abrar et al., 2018). This often stems from the fear of being judged or making mistakes in front of peers. Closely related is confidence, which is the internal assurance and self-belief that one can successfully communicate an idea (Tridinanti, 2018). Without sufficient confidence, students tend to remain passive, even if they possess the necessary grammatical knowledge (Nadiyah et al., 2019).

Vocabulary is the collection of words used by a person to convey meaning and is the core component of any language (Ramli et al., 2024). A lack of lexical resources is a primary reason why students struggle to sustain speech, as they often cannot find the appropriate words to express their specific thoughts (Dinata et al., 2025). In Thai junior high schools, the limited exposure to diverse vocabulary often leads to repetitive and overly simplified speech patterns (Uchihara S Clenton, 2023)

Grammar serves as the structural framework that ensures clarity and coherence in verbal communication. Students frequently experience "monitor over-use," where they become too focused on grammatical rules, leading to disjointed and slow speech (Darwis, 2023). Parallel to this, pronunciation is the production of

sounds that listeners use to decode meaning. Mispronunciation, often influenced by the Thai phonological system, can lead to significant communication breakdowns even when the grammar is correct (Saengpakdeejit, 2014).

The classroom environment includes the physical setting and the psychological atmosphere fostered by the teacher and peers. A supportive and low-stress environment is essential for encouraging students to take risks in speaking. Furthermore, learning materials consist of the resources, such as textbooks and multimedia, used to facilitate the learning process (Srinivas Rao, 2019).

Motivation is the psychological drive that initiates and sustains the effort to learn a new language (Andhara S Alfian, 2023). Students with high instrumental or integrative motivation are more likely to overcome speaking hurdles. Finally, learning strategies are the specific techniques and behaviors students use to improve their speaking ability, such as asking for clarification or using gestures (Groenewald et al., 2023). Developing effective metacognitive strategies allows students to manage their own learning progress more efficiently (Nazarieh S Beigzadeh, 2025).

Along with this research, several researchers have also conducted previous research. There are 2 studies was used related finding. First is the research conducted by Dinata et al based on the data analysis from the questionnaires, the researcher found that the difficulties that students faced included linguistic problems and psychological problems such as a lack of pronunciation, a lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence, shyness and fear of making mistakes (Dinata et al., 2025).

Second is the research conducted by the students' conversational English problems were detected in four key areas. First, those involving segmental organization included final-sound omission and incorrect pronunciation of vowel sounds (with the highest frequency); and [l] or [r] deletion in consonant clusters. Second, problems with super-segmental organization contained stress (third-highest frequency), and too many pauses within turn construction units (TCUs). Next, ungrammatical TCUs (second-highest frequency) were found in syntactic organization (Tantiwich S Sinwongsuwat, 2021).

Based on the explanation previously this research aims to analyze the problems regarding what causes students hard to speak English fluently especially in junior high school students in Ban yaning school, Narathiwat, Thailand. Specifically, this research identifies the most issues that students faced in speaking problems, such as 1) anxiety S confidence; 2) vocabulary; 3) grammar S pronunciation; 4) classroom environment S material; 5) motivation S learning strategies. This research used quantitative descriptive by two instrument to collect the data. such as questionnaire and interview. The result of this research are expected to provide This study serves as a baseline for further academic inquiries into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) challenge in the Southern Thailand context, especially regarding students' psychological and strategic needs.

2. Method

The researcher uses descriptive quantitative, according to Loeb et al stated that more effective quantitative descriptive analysis, which is a crucial component of the scientific process. This method also provides recommendations for improving the ways in which quantitative descriptive findings are communicated across the educational and research communities (Loeb et al., 2017).

The research used a quantitative descriptive design to identify the most common factors of English-speaking problem faced by junior high school students. The data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically focusing on frequency and percentage, to provide a clear numerical representation of challenges.

The participants in this research involved of 42 junior high school students at Ban Yaning School, Narathiwat, Thailand. The sample included students from the first grade with 15 students, the second grade with 10 students, and the third grade with 17 students that actively participating in English lesson and willing to be part of this research.

This research used two instruments to collect data, the first one is by distributing questionnaire to the students and the second by interview to obtain more information about this problem. The questionnaire consisted of statement regarding the five problem such as 1) anxiety S confidence; 2) vocabulary; 3) grammar S pronunciation; 4) classroom environment S material; 5) motivation S learning strategies. for each statement that the students must select a value from 1 to 5, where 1 presents strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. Interview were conducted with English teacher who currently teach in class.

3. Result

The following section displays the information gathered regarding English speaking problems across three different grades. The findings are divided into several key factors: 1) anxiety S confidence; 2) vocabulary; 3) grammar S pronunciation; 4) classroom environment S material; 5) motivation S learning strategies. The overall distribution of scores reveals different levels of perceived challenges faced by students in different grades. 1) The first grade showed the highest overall average at 70%.

These factors particularly excelled in vocabulary with score of 73% and grammar with pronunciation at 72%. 2) Continue with the second grade that shows a significantly lower overall average of 56%. In this grade the most significant factor was grammar S pronunciation with score 58%, while anxiety S confidence scored the lowest at 48%. 3) the third grade had the lowest average overall among other grades at 55% agree to these issues. For this grade, vocabulary was the highest factors at 60%, where grammar S pronunciation was the lowest at 51%.

The first factors were anxiety & confidence; to understand the psychological barriers, researcher presented several statements to the students regarding students' perceptions of anxiety and confidence, such as students level of nervousness when speaking. The statement such as 'I feel anxious or nervous when I know I have to speak English in classes' and 'I choose to remain silent or provide very short answers to avoid further speaking' that shows the students if these factors that students does feel these ways, but it does not significantly affect on students English speaking problems.

The second factors were vocabulary, vocabulary is one from linguistic issues and crucial because its serves as the primary tool for conveying messages, and it is impossible to convey meaning without sufficient words. The statement such as 'I often stop speaking English because I forget or do not know the appropriate vocabulary' and 'I find it difficult to remember and use new vocabulary that I have learned in conversation' that shows the students faced these problems as well because the percentage of this factor was high, the total of this factor was 60% that indicated students was agree that this is one of the problems that causes students speaking problems.

The third factors were grammar pronunciation; this is one of the most students chooses of five factors English speaking problems and also related to linguistic issues. Grammar & pronunciation are the core components of linguistic competence. In this research, this is the most significant barriers that the students agree, this statements such as 'I focus too much on thinking about grammar while speaking, which makes me slow' and 'I have difficulty pronouncing certain sounds or English word correctly'. The data highlights these factors as the most significant challenges, with cumulative average of 63%.

The fourth issues were classroom environment & materials; these factors are fundamental because this serves as the physical and social infrastructure for language acquisition. The quality of materials determines how much input a student receives to produce output (speaking). This statement such as 'my teacher speaks too fast in English, making it difficult for me to follow' and 'the topic or speaking task assigned by the teacher are not interesting to me' shows that across all grades, students agree at 60% level that environmental and material issues are one of the problems.

The fifth problems were motivation & learning strategies, this are considered the internal engines of language acquisition. This statements in the questionnaire such as 'I find it difficult to force myself to practice speaking English outside of class hour' and 'I rarely watch films, listen to music or use other English language media for learning' the result was about 61% coming from these issues.

The data for this study was collected by administering a questionnaire to respondents, that consisted of five factors, which each factor included 5 to 6 statements for the students to complete. To determine the percentage for each

category, the research utilized a calculation formula where the obtained score was divided by the total score and then multiplied by 100.

Table 1. first grade scores

No	Grade	Anxiety's Confidence	vocabulary	Grammar S Pronunciation	Classroom environment S Material	Motivation S Learning Strategies	Total
1	1	47%	60%	80%	52%	72%	62%
2	1	77%	72%	80%	80%	76%	77%
3	1	67%	76%	73%	88%	84%	77%
4	1	70%	44%	53%	36%	44%	50%
5	1	67%	60%	70%	76%	60%	67%
6	1	70%	72%	77%	76%	68%	73%
7	1	93%	84%	83%	80%	72%	83%
8	1	73%	80%	80%	84%	84%	80%
9	1	80%	68%	77%	84%	84%	78%
10	1	70%	80%	87%	84%	88%	81%
11	1	67%	84%	77%	84%	76%	77%
12	1	77%	60%	80%	80%	68%	73%
13	1	70%	52%	37%	72%	56%	57%
14	1	47%	60%	80%	52%	72%	62%
15	1	50%	64%	57%	60%	60%	64%
total		68%	68%	73%	72%	70%	70%

Table 2. Second grade scores

No	Grade	Anxiety's Confidence	vocabulary	Grammar S Pronunciation	Classroom environment S Material	Motivation S Learning Strategies	Total
1	2	57%	76%	57%	64%	60%	62%
2	2	53%	52%	60%	60%	60%	57%
3	2	50%	68%	87%	36%	68%	62%
4	2	50%	64%	57%	60%	60%	64%
5	2	53%	60%	50%	64%	60%	57%
6	2	60%	68%	50%	52%	44%	55%
7	2	40%	44%	37%	64%	32%	43%
8	2	53%	64%	50%	64%	56%	57%
9	2	30%	56%	47%	40%	72%	48%
10	2	33%	40%	63%	52%	68%	51%
total		48%	59%	56%	57%	58%	56%

Table 3. third grade scores

No	Grade	Anxiety's Confidence	vocabulary	Grammar Pronunciation	Classroom environment Material	Motivation Learning Strategies	Total
1	3	53%	44%	47%	44%	48%	47%
2	3	37%	56%	63%	56%	60%	54%
3	3	63%	64%	67%	48%	84%	65%
4	3	64%	76%	84%	64%	36%	65%
5	3	53%	64%	83%	76%	48%	65%
6	3	67%	52%	57%	56%	48%	56%
7	3	66%	52%	66%	36%	44%	54%
8	3	40%	68%	60%	60%	60%	57%
9	3	77%	56%	80%	28%	84%	66%
10	3	60%	72%	60%	60%	60%	62%
11	3	47%	48%	60%	36%	48%	48%
12	3	43%	48%	47%	52%	56%	49%
13	3	53%	36%	40%	40%	36%	41%
14	3	53%	48%	47%	56%	60%	53%
15	3	70%	44%	63%	68%	52%	60%
16	3	53%	44%	53%	60%	52%	57%
17	3	60%	44%	47%	36%	64%	41%
total		56%	54%	60%	51%	55%	55%

The interview with teacher revealed that the student's English proficiency in this context is relatively low due to the lack of English usage at home, it is only utilized during the initial stages of instruction. Furthermore, English is perceived to have difficult pronunciation and the limited time available for teachers to provide comprehensive English material remain significant challenges.

This is reflected in the following interview with the teacher "mereka tak ada yang di bicarakan dengan siapapun jika memakai Bahasa angkrik (inggris)" and "sesudah besar dia jarang belajar bahasa angkrik (inggris), dia ada lupa apa yang diajarkan kepada saya". If this interview was translated to English was "they have no one to talk when attempting to speak in English" and "now they are older, they rarely studies English anymore, they already forgotten everything that I taught for them". This indicated that the teacher agree a lot of students faced

problem in learning English, especially in speaking problem.

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ชื่อ : ...
 นามสกุล : ...
 ชั้น : ...
 ปีที่ : ...

วัตถุประสงค์ : ...

สมมติฐาน : ...

ขอบเขต : ...

ขั้นตอนการวิจัย : ...

เครื่องมือที่ใช้ : ...

การเก็บข้อมูล : ...

การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล : ...

สรุป : ...

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	English speaking is a difficult task for me					
2	I often feel nervous when I speak English					
3	I often forget the words I want to say when I speak English					
4	I often feel shy when I speak English					
5	I often feel bored when I speak English					
6	I often feel tired when I speak English					

70 %

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	English speaking is a difficult task for me					
2	I often feel nervous when I speak English					
3	I often forget the words I want to say when I speak English					
4	I often feel shy when I speak English					
5	I often feel bored when I speak English					

70 %

Figure 1. questionnaire test

4. Discussion

The results are different and vary significantly among students, this is especially true when comparing different grades, where the gap is even more pronounced because the higher percentage increases indicated a higher level of student's agreement regarding the issues they encountered. The first grade shows that 70% agree that the students have these problem while the second and the third grade shows lower than the first grade about 55% to 56% that faced these problems. This data indicates that many students in junior high school faced these problems, that prevents many students from speaking English fluently. The significant gap between first grade and higher grades students suggested that these problems are more prevalent in the early stages. Based on the data analysis, several key points emerge regarding the nature of these speaking problems.

Dominance of linguistic barriers

The data clearly indicated that grammar S pronunciation represent the most significant obstacle in speaking English, with an overall agreement score of 63%. Students from all grades, especially those in the first grade that has 72%, expressed that the complexity of English structures and the difficulty of natural intonation prevent them from speaking fluently. Grammar S pronunciation are recognized as the most formidable obstacles due to their role as the primary tools for accuracy. For Thai students, the hurdles of grammar S pronunciation in speaking are particularly hard due to the vast linguistic distance between the Thai and English language.

First, the phonological barrier (pronunciation). Thai is a tonal language, where English is an intonation-based language. This difference creates a struggle for Thai students such as final consonants that in Thai many final consonants are unvoiced or that Thai students often drop the final sounds, missing phonemes which leads to significant misunderstanding during spontaneous speech. Consequently, makes Thai students hesitate to speak English due to the fear of incorrect pronunciations.

Second, the syntactic conflict (grammar). The "logic" of an English sentence is often opposite of a Thai sentence, creating a high cognitive load such as tenses and inflection that Thai grammar is 'isolating' meaning words don't change form. There are no verb conjugations for past, present or future and subject-verb agreement that in Thai, the verb stays regardless of the subject. Consequently, makes Thai Students focus too much on thinking about grammar while speaking.

The role of internal and external factors

First, motivation and learning strategies with 61% this factor emerged as the second highest barrier. The high agreement in the first grade that has 70% suggest that early stages learners needed to practice outside the classroom. Motivation is the psychological engine that drives language acquisition. In speaking, it plays critical roles such as overcoming the "Fear of Failure" that Speaking is a public act. Most learners are afraid of making grammar mistakes or having a "weird" accent. High motivation provides the courage to push through this embarrassment. In this research students lack of motivations to speak English, that makes students hard to force themselves to speak English and don't have the reason why should study English.

Second, classroom and learning strategies with 60%, the findings reveal that students are highly sensitive to their learning surroundings. A lack of interesting topics and insufficient practice time significantly impact students' willingness to speak English. Third, was anxiety and confidence at 57% this scored the lowest on average, it remains a critical psychological barrier. This data shows that from the first grade that 68% until the third grade shows 56% indicated that anxiety levels resurface as academic expectations and task complexity increase. Reveals that higher the students' grades, these factors become less influential, resulting in a decrease in anxiety and an increase in self-confidence; nevertheless, these issues remain significant barriers to students speaking performance.

Comparative analysis across grade levels

There is a visible trend of decreasing difficulty as students' progress, yet the challenges remain substantial. This shows in the first grade faced the most intense struggle across all factors at total average was 70%, continue to the second-grade students represent a stable phase where students feel the least anxious, though the students in this grade still struggle with grammar and last the third grade shows that overall of the students' agreements is the lowest.

Table 4. final summary table

No	Grade	AnxietyS Confidence	vocabulary	Grammar S Pronunciation	Classroom environment S Material	Motivation S Learning Strategies	Total
1	1	68%	68%	73%	72%	70%	70%
2	2	48%	59%	56%	57%	58%	56%
3	3	56%	54%	60%	51%	55%	55%
	Total	57%	60%	63%	60%	61%	60%

The table above presents calculated the final results, indicating that the total impact of all influencing factors is 60%. This demonstrate that junior high school students at ban yaning school indeed face significant challenges in English speaking, with a cumulative problem rate of 60% across from various factors such as anxiety S confidence at 57% total, vocabulary at 60% total, grammar S pronunciation at 63% total, classroom environment S material at 60% total and the last was motivation S learning strategies at 61% total.

Sociolinguistic and pedagogical context

The interview confirms that the lack of an English-speaking environment at home is a primary cause of low proficiency. Students have “no one to talk to” outside of school, and English exposure is often limited to the beginning of a lesson. This combined with insufficient instructional time and the inherent difficulty of English phonology, creates a challenging landscape for both teachers and students.

The pedagogical recommendations was first, Focus on Fluency over Accuracy: Since students are overly focused on grammar (63%), teachers should design “fluency-first” activities where mistakes are not immediately corrected. This allows students to build communication flow without the fear of being stopped. Second, Contextual Vocabulary Building: Instead of memorizing word lists, use “Topic-Based Learning” that relates to the students' daily lives. This addresses the 60% problem in vocabulary by making words more memorable and relevant. Third, Explicit Pronunciation Drills: Devote the first 10 minutes of class to “Phonetic Awareness” — teaching specific English sounds that do not exist in the students' native language to improve their Pronunciation scores.

Limitations and future research directions

First, research limitations faced during this research was 1) Sample Size and Scope: The study was limited to 42 students at a single institution (Ban Yaning School), which may not represent the speaking challenges of students in other regions or different types of schools. 2) Methodological Focus: The data relied heavily on self-reported questionnaires and a teacher interview; therefore, the results reflect the participants' *perceptions* of their problems rather than a direct

measurement of their actual speaking proficiency. 3) Time Constraints: As noted in your findings, the limited instructional time allocated for English prevented a more longitudinal observation of how these speaking barriers evolve over a longer school year. 4) Linguistic Context: The study focused on a specific environment where English is not used at home, meaning the results are highly specific to an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context and may not apply to ESL (English as a Second Language) settings.

Second, future research directions 1) Experimental Studies: Future research could implement specific interventions, such as "Task-Based Language Teaching," to see if it significantly reduces the 63% barrier found in Grammar and Pronunciation. 2) Comparative Analysis: Researchers could compare speaking barriers between urban and rural schools to see if the 60% problem rate is consistent across different socioeconomic environments. 3) Technology Integration: Given that students lack partners to speak with at home, future studies should investigate the effectiveness of AI-based speaking apps or voice-recording tools in reducing speaking anxiety and improving fluency. 4) Longitudinal Tracking: A study following the same group of students from Grade 1 to Grade 3 would provide deeper insights into how motivation and anxiety fluctuate over time as their linguistic skills develop.

5. Conclusion

According to the research result, it can be concluded that students faced significant challenges in English speaking, evidenced by an average agreement level of 60% across all categories. The greatest challenge highlighted is Grammar S Pronunciation, which received the highest total score of 63%. Additionally, these data show a declining trend in how these issues are perceived as students advance through their grades: the first grades experienced the most significant issues at 70%, followed by the second grade at 56%, and the third grade at 55%. This suggest that while challenges in speaking remain consistent, they are most intensely experienced by students in the earlier stages of their academic journey.

The qualitative evidence from teacher interviews highlights a critical gap: the lack of an English-speaking environment outside the classroom. Students have no interlocutors at home, and exposure is often restricted to the beginning of lessons. This lack of "real-world" practice, combined with limited instructional time, results in an overall speaking problem rate of 60% across the school.

In summary, as students' progress to higher grade levels, their anxiety tends to decrease and confidence increases; nevertheless, linguistic inaccuracies and environmental constraints remain a persistent barrier. The total calculated impact of 60% across all five factors confirms that speaking remains the most challenging skill for students at Ban Yaning School.

To mitigate these barriers, it is recommended that:

1) Pedagogical Shift: Educators should adopt a "Fluency-First" approach, prioritizing communicative intent over grammatical perfection to lower the high linguistic barrier (63%). 2) Strategy Training: Students should be explicitly taught autonomous learning strategies, such as the use of digital media and shadowing techniques, to compensate for the lack of exposure at home. 3) Curriculum Adjustment: Schools should consider increasing allocated time for interactive speaking tasks and designing materials that are more culturally and contextually relevant to the students' interests.

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