

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN DEVELOPING BASIC COMPETENCIES OF SPEAKING SKILLS IN TOURISM AMONG 11 TH GRADE STUDENTS' AT SMKN 1 GOWA

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the challenges in developing basic competencies of speaking skills, to describe the influential factors faced by eleventh grade students majoring in Tourism Services Business at SMKN 1 Gowa, and to identify the learning strategies used to overcome those challenges. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method through observation and interviews with ten students to explore their experiences and strategies in learning English speaking. The findings reveal five main factors affecting students' speaking performance: age, psychological, personality, sociocultural, and linguistic factors. Age factor relates to cognitive development, psychological factors include fear of making mistakes and lack of motivation, personality factors involve individual traits such as shyness, sociocultural factors reflect environmental support and teaching methods, and linguistic factors cover limited vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation issues. To address these challenges, students applied various learning strategies including metacognitive, cognitive, social, affective, and communicative approaches. These strategies help students plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning, expand vocabulary, and maintain interaction during communication. The study highlights that both internal and external factors influence students' speaking skills, and that applying appropriate strategies enables them to improve their competence and confidence in English speaking.

Keywords: *Speaking skills, Influential Factors, Learning Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

In the view of English teachers, there must be problems in the learning process that must be solved. One of the problems that exist in the learning process is the challenge of students in speaking. The main step that must be done is to provide skills in speaking. According to Chen (2018) there is no place on Earth where people communicate only by reading and learning. In order for us to be heard, we must speak in our own language. Reading and writing in English will not make you a fluent speaker. Speaking practice in English is one of the motivations to be able to communicate by talking to others. As a foreign language in Indonesia, English is a very important language to learn (Brown, 2001). Facing challenges while learning to speak English is a normal part of the journey. Factors such as language barriers, cultural differences, lack of practice, or fear of making mistakes can be sources of such difficulties. However, to overcome them, it is very important to understand and acknowledge these challenges. To become fluent in spoken English, we need to be able to speak easily, maintain a natural rhythm, and respond spontaneously. This skill requires practice and direct exposure to English. In this study, the participants found that communicating in English became difficult (P. Orge 2024).

The ability to speak is the basis of verbal communication. Good speaking skills can help a person in many ways, such as succeeding in a career and interacting with others. Therefore, it is important to understand the difficulties encountered in developing this basic ability. Research on the challenges and solutions of speech development not only has a major impact on formal education, but also on professional development, job training, and everyday life. According to Refah (2022) It is difficult to build and develop strong relationships without good communication skills. Effective communication increases trust, understanding, and collaboration, whether it's with colleagues, clients, or fellow students. The development of

these competencies is essential in education, in accordance with the educational objectives to engage students with the ability to communicate effectively in academic, professional, and social fields (Refah, 2022).

There have been several studies that have discussed the methods students used to solve speaking problems, especially in English. For example, a previous study by Agustia (2022) investigated about Students' Strategies to solve Speaking Difficulties. Meanwhile, Bahri (2022) Studied about An Analysis of Student Difficulties in Learning. In addition, Prasetyaningrum (2020) also studied about Students' Strategies in Overcoming Speaking Problems. It can be assumed previous research suggests that students learn methods to overcome speaking challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative methodology. The goal of qualitative research is to characterize and examine social behaviors, events, beliefs, perceptions, social activities, occurrences, and individual or group thought processes (Rahman, 2022). In order to obtain genuine and reliable data, researcher evaluate the data in the form of direct observations and interviews with students of SMKN 1 GOWA to gain a deep understanding of the perspectives and experiences of students in developing speaking skills. In this study, the researcher selected 10 students with varying levels of English speaking proficiency at SMKN 1 Gowa in the Tourism program to effectively identify the challenges and solutions in developing speaking skills.

Subject and Object

The subject of this study is the students at SMKN 1 GOWA who had difficulty speaking in English. And the research object is selecting 11th grade students majoring Tourism at SMKN 1 GOWA. I decided to choose this school due to the fact that they understand the difficulty of communicating in English, which can be very relevant to the students of SMKN 1 GOWA, especially those in the tourism department, because English is very important in the tourism industry.

Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher used observations, and interviews to collect data in this study. The purpose of using these various research tools is to ensure that the data collected is valid.

Technique of Data Analysis

Data in qualitative research analysis since the beginning of the study. This analysis became a guideline for subsequent research, which was more focused during data collection in the field. According to Huberman (2015), Data collection and analysis are necessary for qualitative research. This is due to the fact that both occur simultaneously. Although irregular, the cycles are interactive. The researcher use Data Condensation, Data display and Verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study explored the challenges faced by 11th-grade Tourism students at SMKN 1 Gowa in

learning to speak English, along with the strategies they used to overcome those challenges. The findings were obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis, which were condensed into main themes reflecting students' speaking experiences.

1. Students' Speaking Challenges

No.	Category of Challenge	Description	Supporting Evidence (Excerpt)
1	Age Factor	Age influences students' learning ability and confidence. As teenagers, students feel more anxious about making mistakes and being judged.	"As a teenager, I began to feel ashamed or afraid to speak in English in front of others because I was worried about making mistakes or being judged." (Participant 5)
2	Psychological Factors	Students experience fear of making mistakes, low confidence, and anxiety when speaking in front of others.	"I often feel nervous when I have to speak in front of my friends." (Participant 3)
3	Personality Factors	Shyness and introversion make students reluctant to participate in speaking activities.	"Sometimes I actually know the answer, but I choose to stay silent rather than speak." (Participant 9)
4	Sociocultural Factors	Limited exposure to English, unsupportive classroom atmosphere, and ineffective teaching methods reduce opportunities to speak.	"My English teacher rarely enters the class and immediately gives assignments without teaching vocabulary first." (Participant 4)
5	Linguistic Factors	Lack of vocabulary and difficulties in pronunciation and grammar are major barriers to fluency.	"I often feel confused because I don't know the right words to use, so I often stop when I speak." (Participant 5)

From these data, it is evident that psychological and linguistic factors are the most dominant challenges. Students' self-perception, fear of making mistakes, and limited vocabulary directly affect their willingness to engage in speaking activities.

2. Strategies Used by Students

No.	Strategy Type	Description	Supporting Evidence (Excerpt)
1	Cognitive Strategies	Students improve understanding through self-practice, reading, and watching English media.	"I started practicing speaking by myself at home and watching films in English to increase my vocabulary." (Participant 3)
2	Metacognitive Strategies	Students plan and monitor their learning progress and evaluate mistakes after practice.	"If I forget some vocabulary, I will ask my teacher or friends, then study again to improve my knowledge." (Participant 2)
3	Social Strategies	Students engage in group discussions and peer learning	"I was more active in participating in group discussions in class."

No.	Strategy Type	Description	Supporting Evidence (Excerpt)
4	Affective Strategies	to increase confidence and participation. Students control emotions, stay motivated, and maintain a positive attitude toward learning English.	(Participant 3) “I must stay enthusiastic about learning English and start using it from now on.” (Participant 8)
5	Communicative Strategies	Students use gestures, paraphrasing, and repetition to convey meaning effectively.	“I rephrase my sentence or use gestures to help express my meaning.” (Participant 4)

These findings show that students tend to combine multiple strategies to cope with their challenges. Social and affective strategies, in particular, were found to be the most effective in improving students' confidence and speaking performance.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the eleventh-grade tourism students at SMKN 1 Gowa face several challenges in developing their English-speaking skills. These challenges come from both internal and external factors, such as lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, low confidence, and limited speaking practice. This discussion aims to interpret the results based on relevant theories and previous research.

1. Students' Challenges in Speaking English

From the interview and observation results, it was found that many students still have difficulty expressing their ideas in English because of their limited vocabulary and poor pronunciation. This finding supports Brown's (2001) theory that speaking is an interactive process that requires learners to understand, process, and produce language in real communication. Without enough vocabulary and pronunciation practice, students cannot communicate clearly and naturally.

Moreover, many students are afraid of making mistakes when they speak. They often feel nervous and shy, especially when speaking in front of others. This finding is similar to Rodearni (2022), who mentioned that students' speaking performance is affected by fear of making mistakes and low confidence. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), this is part of *foreign language anxiety*, where students are afraid of being judged or corrected. Because of this, students prefer to stay silent rather than try to speak English.

The linguistic problems are also supported by Warastuti (2013), who stated that limited vocabulary and mispronunciation directly affect students' fluency. Chen (2018) also argued that just reading and writing English is not enough to make learners fluent speakers — students need to practice speaking directly and regularly. This supports the idea that teachers should give students more opportunities to use English in real communication during class activities.

In addition, the school environment also influences students' speaking skills. From the observation, English-speaking practice is still very limited in class. Most of the time, teachers focus more on grammar and written exercises rather than speaking practice. This is similar to what Khan (2013) said — that modern teaching should be interactive, communicative, and involve participation. Without real communication activities, students cannot build speaking confidence or fluency.

2. Students' Strategies in Overcoming Speaking Difficulties

To overcome these challenges, students use several strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, and communication strategies. This supports Oxford's (1990) theory that good language learners use different strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning.

Some students practice speaking by themselves at home, watching English movies, or listening to songs to improve their vocabulary. Others use metacognitive strategies by reflecting on their mistakes and planning how to improve. Many students also rely on their friends for help — for

example, by practicing conversations in pairs or small groups. This social interaction helps them feel more comfortable speaking in English.

These results are similar to the studies by Agustia (2022) and Prasetyaningrum (2020), who found that using social and affective strategies can increase students' confidence and

participation in speaking activities. When students work together, they become less anxious and more motivated to speak.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted in the eleventh grade of the Department of Tourism Services Business at SMK Negeri 1 Gowa found that students face difficulties in speaking English. The students' speaking performance did not meet the essential aspects that should be present in effective spoken communication. The researcher categorized the challenges faced by students into five main factors and identified six components that explain how students attempt to overcome these speaking-related challenges.

Age factor plays an important role in developing English speaking skills because earlier exposure makes it easier to build fluency, pronunciation, and grammar. However, other factors like motivation, learning strategies, and environment also play important roles. Psychological barriers such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation often limit speaking performance. Personality traits like shyness and introversion can reduce students' willingness to speak, while sociocultural factors such as family, friends, and cultural norms influence confidence and opportunities. Linguistic challenges like limited vocabulary and grammar errors also hinder fluency. To overcome these, students apply strategies such as planning, practicing, seeking feedback, managing emotions, and using communication tactics to improve their speaking skills and confidence.

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