

Barriers To Learn Speaking Among Slow Primary Learners

Firstananda Jenni Yulieta Siagian¹, Isti Ramona Lubis², Siti Tasya Jelita Manurung³, Anna Riana Suryani Tambunan^{4*}, Mahmud Layan Hutahun⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Universitas Negeri Medan

) correspondence: annatbnunimed@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research at SD Sultan Iskandar Muda delves into the barriers hindering slow primary learners in mastering their English-speaking skills. The study involves sixth-grade students identified as slow learners, alongside their parents and teachers from Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda. Data collection methods encompass observations and interviews to gain insights into the psycholinguistic challenges faced by these students. Observations focus on monitoring the students' interactions and struggles in speaking English across various contexts, while interviews provide diverse perspectives on their language learning experiences and support systems. The data analysis phase employs thematic analysis and qualitative coding to categorize challenges such as limited cognitive ability, poor memory retention, lack of concentration, difficulty expressing ideas, and emotional instability hindering the students' progress in spoken English proficiency. By comprehensively understanding the characteristics and obstacles faced by slow learners, the study aims to inform the development of tailored teaching strategies to enhance language acquisition and communication skills effectively. The findings underscore the significance of creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment that accommodates the diverse learning styles and abilities of slow learners. Recognizing and addressing the root causes of slow learning enables educators to implement targeted interventions like differentiated instruction, engaging activities, and personalized support mechanisms. These interventions aim to foster the academic success and overall well-being of slow learners by enhancing their language abilities and confidence in speaking English. Ultimately, the research seeks to contribute to the improvement of teaching practices and the academic outcomes of slow learners in the context of developing their speaking skills in English.

Keywords: Slow Learners, Learning Difficulties, Speaking Skills

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a crucial ability for conveying information and expressing thoughts and feelings in spoken language, which is essential for students in the global era. Mastery of English-speaking skills allows for effective oral communication. Brown (2001) describes speaking as an interactive process involving producing, receiving, and processing information, requiring mental construction of meaning before speaking. Harmer (2007) emphasizes the importance of sub-skills like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, which are developed through practice and exposure. Thornbury (2005) and Nunan (1991) stress the role of interaction and strategic competence in effective communication, while Richards and Renandya (2002) advocate for a balanced approach to speaking instruction. Developing speaking skills is vital for effective communication and success in a globalized world.

The aim of teaching speaking is to improve the student's oral production. As Richards and Renandya (2005) state, since language teaching aims to provide learners with communicative competence, classroom activities are essential to a language course. Therefore, the teacher should engage students to become communicative. According to Brown (2001), creating a comfortable and supportive classroom environment is essential for encouraging students to practice speaking. Harmer (2007) emphasizes using interactive activities to boost student confidence and participation. To gauge how well students can speak, the teacher should implement various strategies and engage students, making them confident in expressing their opinions. As Dornyei (2009) suggests, motivational strategies play a crucial role in language learning, helping students feel more invested and confident in their speaking abilities. The teacher must ensure that the content taught is relevant and tailored to the

students' conditions and needs, as highlighted by Nunan (1999), who advocates for a learner-centered approach in language instruction.

A slow learner is not a diagnostic category; instead, it is a term used to describe a student who can learn necessary academic skills but at a rate and depth below that of same-age peers. According to Malik (2009), slow learner students often face various obstacles in learning. These students require more time, repetition, and additional teacher resources to succeed. As Karim (2010) notes, the intellectual challenges these children face make it difficult to understand concepts at the same pace as their peers. To support slow learners, teachers can implement strategies such as repetition to solidify concepts, engaging learners in activities where they can experience success, and differentiating instruction to meet their unique needs (Smith, 2012). Tutoring can help fill gaps in basic skills and keep students on track (Johnson, 2011).

Additionally, teaching study skills can make students more efficient learners, focusing on essential concepts while omitting less critical details (Brown, 2013). Peer tutoring has also been beneficial (Adams, 2014). Teachers should allocate more time for slow learners during classroom discussions and provide necessary prompts to facilitate understanding. Slow learners typically exhibit delays in thinking, decision-making, finding common ground, forming intimate connections, reasoning, and memory retention (Lewis, 2015).

Borah (2013) argues that slow learners occasionally need help to cope with the conventional academic requirements of the regular class. Meanwhile, the slow learners are average students whose problem is that they need to be more interested in learning activities with the traditional education system. So, it is evident that they need special treatment in the learning process. Innovation is required in the process, which can be derived from materials or other tools to stimulate their concentration, especially in speaking skills. Regarding this, they generally have some characteristics related to their ages and difficulty acquiring knowledge at school. Borah (2013) suggests several characteristics of slow learners, including they are relatively immature in having relationships with others, especially in school; they cannot complete a complex task and perform it very slowly; they cannot relate what they have learned in one task to another one; they hardly master skills which are academic, such as spelling rules and times tables; and they have a lack of ability in having long-term goals.

Previous research found that factors causing learning difficulties in slow learners at Homeschooling Global Lentera Kasih Batam when learning to speak English include prolonged emotional problems that hinder their learning process. These emotional issues lead to low academic performance among slow learners. Additionally, interviews with parents revealed that slow learners tend to be passive in interacting at home with family members. The study also identified personal factors that can cause slow learners, including physical disabilities, vision and hearing impairments, speech problems, and lack of self-confidence (Husein & Pulungan, 2021). However, this study has several limitations. One of each study is also confined to the context of homeschooling at a single location, making its results potentially irrelevant or inapplicable to students in formal schools or other regions. External factors such as the social environment or government support should be explored more deeply. By understanding these gaps, future research can be conducted with a broader approach and more comprehensive methodology to address the existing limitations.

This research needs to be conducted because speaking ability is essential for students to communicate effectively in the global era. In education, teaching speaking skills aims to enhance oral production and create a supportive classroom environment. Moreover, there are students known as slow learners who face obstacles in their learning process and require additional support and resources from teachers. The problem statement of this journal is to investigate the factors causing learning difficulties for slow learners learning to speak English at SD Sultan Iskandar Muda. By understanding the characteristics and challenges faced by slow learners, teachers can develop more effective teaching strategies, such as repetition, engaging activities, and differentiated instruction, ensuring that all students, including slow learners, succeed in their learning process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Slow learners in international literature: causes and characteristics

Around us, there are various acknowledgments of instruction; due to the various interpretations utilized to look at educator backwardness, reddy, ramar, and Kusuma (2006) have given a precise capability between the two terms. Kusuma et. al (2006) have clearly refined the two terms. Direct learners are recognized as tall-finishing understudies who experience learning challenges due to school truancy, troublesome personal circumstances, and inadequately characteristic conditions. This is due to inauspicious personal circumstances, inadequately characteristic conditions, or their compelled learning capacities. Their confined learning capacity and learning failures impede language, examination, and communication—dialect, scrutinizing, and communication capacities. According Borah (2013), children with learning incapacities have unmistakable characteristics, most of which can be observed easily. It can be observed successfully. The consistent weight to take after peer and classroom informational and repeated dissatisfactions can lead direct learners to make a de test for school, as well as diminished inspiration, which can additionally brutal truancy and dropping out (Kaznowski, 2004). Schools are fundamentally composed into a structure where physical age is respected as a ensure of break even with improvement and work on the assumption that children of the same review level have break even with insights, inclination and conceivable outcomes; meanwhile, syllabi are by and large over-burden, and educational module are unbending, making it difficult for the framework to adapt satisfactorily to the person child's improvement (Dottrens 1962). According to Loizou (2016), there is too widespread inadequacy in academic approaches to teaching. Wray (2019), in this way it was found very early that inadequate arrangements for students in learning to be examined at the initial level were the main cause of learning retardation at later grade levels. In addition to school factors, students' racial, ethnic, social, financial, etymological and entitlement imbalances and family conditions are also to blame for their slow progress and limited achievement in school (Karsenty 2010). As an illustration, pupils who come from foundations that experience barriers, often do not get the opportunity to learn assets or useful discussions that can improve their thinking abilities that can be complementary to lessons in formal schools (Kusuma et al 2006). However, Kusuma et.al (2006) underline that when the causes of slow learning can be distinguished and properly addressed, then this issue can be managed effectively.

Intervention strategies and support for slow learners

Review of international literature reveals that curriculums are generally not developed or designed to cater to the needs of slow learners. As observed by Dottrens (1962).

TABLE 1. Slow learners and their characteristics

Characteristics	Examples
Limited cognitive ability	• Being slow in observing the features of things • Being slow in perceiving relations between things • Having limited ability to develop concepts or ideas that demand a great amount of work. • Preferring concrete learning to abstract learning
Poor memory	• Having to go over materials many times to internalize the knowledge • Being unable to retain information in memory storage for a long time and recall it when needed.
Lack of concentration	• Having short attention span

Inability to express ideas	• Having difficulty in finding and combining words • Having more difficulty with oral reading than silent reading
Emotional instability	• Having low self-esteem. • Lacking positive self-concept • Feeling inferior in making achievements in learning

Educational programs must be reviewed continuously for sociological reasons: they must be adapted to unused conditions and needs. Educational modules are rarely reviewed for instructional reasons and hardly ever reduce the level of backwardness and disillusionment in schools. The implication is that moderate students need attention from the teacher's side by using educational techniques and classroom exercises, which Brennan (1974) calls adaptive, developmental, remedial and remedial teaching. Because of their cognitive, individualized, and enthusiastic characteristics (Table 1), slow learners would benefit from more time, redundancy, and assets for learning, as well as other forms of support and inspiration that give them reassurance that they can learn (Muppudathi, 2014). According to Montani (2014), incorporating this perspective in intervention procedures for students of moderate ability appropriately tailors classroom instruction to their learning pace, learning style, and level of comprehension, provides on-the-spot critique and continuous observation, recognizes and resolves underlying errors, provides nurturing appropriate to their abilities, and motivates them to direct their judgment and behavior in doing difficult work. Using these same components, teachers around the world have proposed or actualized a variety of instructional techniques for their moderate students, including individualized teaching programs (Palat et. al, 2006), intelligent learning as opposed to inclination learning (Skemp, 1989), instructional rehearsal programs (Karsenty, 2010), skill-based preparation (Tiwari, 2017), multi-model approaches as opposed to single approaches (Hanif et. al, 2012), or using Gardner's distinctive sharp hypothesis (Haghani et. al, 2012). To a different degree, these customized scholastic mediation methodologies have been successful in advancing the conceptual understanding of the instructed substance for moderate learners and making their learning engagement positive (Hanif et.al, 2012). As an extension of this, Wilder (2017) advocates for a shared obligation between instructors and guardians, emphasizing the need for a surrogate role.

Characteristics and causes of slow learners

A slow learner is a student with a learning achievement below average or slightly below that of a typical child across any or all scholastic ranges. Slow learners have been characterized in different ways concerning IQ range, scholastic achievement, instructor grades, level of rigor, or a combination of these. They appear below average mental capacity on these criteria and tend to present numerical decay or formative delay. The number of slow learners in a subject usually ranges from 20%-25% of students. Students who are slow learners are in the bottom quartile of the class.

In another theory, it is said that slow learners have the following characteristics: (1) having intelligence below average, which is between 70-90 on the WISC scale (Wechsler Intelligent Scale for Children); (2) children with learning disabilities are less fluent in communication, both through expression and in expressing ideas; (3) the emotions of children with learning disabilities are less stable and sensitive; (4) the socialization skills of children with learning disabilities are poor or relatively passive, weak memory, lack of concentration, difficulty expressing ideas, and unstable emotions. Inadequate reading level, slow language acquisition, unclear speech, fear of speaking, apathy, indifference to learning, and frequent absence from school. In general, slow learners experience difficulties in learning English.

In this study, the slow learners are those in public schools (not special schools (SLB) or inclusive schools). They will be drawn from 20% to 25% of students in one class with abilities in the lower

quartile who do not have physical disabilities and exhibit characteristics similar to the theories mentioned above.

Absence from school, adverse personal situations, and inadequate environmental conditions are some of the factors that contribute to pupils' delayed learning. Other issues include their limited cognitive capacities, insufficient social and familial situations, and the educational system's failure. Several factors contribute to students' slow learning, including vision problems, unfavorable health conditions, busy and economically disadvantaged parents, and school violence. Violence against teachers can lead to psychological issues, sluggish learning due to overprotective parents, and emotional and social problems for pupils.

Research suggests that internal and environmental factors cause a child's poor learning. Internal factors, including IQ and sickness, are congenital and challenging to modify. External factors such as instructors, friends, family, facilities, and infrastructure might contribute to student performance. Slow learners can be fostered in a supportive setting to achieve optimal learning results. This research identifies sluggish learners due to external difficulties. Slow learners have a short attention span, difficulty grasping the material, slow response, and lack vocabulary, so when speaking less fluent (Kusuma et. al, 2006).

Indonesia education system

Education in Indonesia is all education organized in Indonesia, both structured and unstructured. Structured education in Indonesia is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemdikbud), formerly known as the Department of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia (Depdiknas). In Indonesia, all residents are required to follow a nine-year compulsory basic education program: six years in primary school and three years in junior secondary school.

Education in Indonesia is currently regulated through Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System. It is divided into three main channels: formal, non-formal, and informal. It is also divided into four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary.

a. Level

Levels of education are stages of education that are determined based on the level of development of learners, the goals to be achieved, and the abilities developed.

- **Early childhood education**

Referring to Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 1 Point 14 on the National Education System, early childhood education (PAUD) is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age which is carried out through providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education.

- **Basic education**

Basic education is the initial education level for 9 (nine) years, namely Primary School (SD) for 6 years and Junior High School (SMP) for 3 years. Primary education is a compulsory education program.

- **Secondary education**

Secondary education is the level of education after primary education, namely Senior High School (SMA) and Vocational High School (SMK) for 3 years of education.

- **Higher Education**

Higher education is the level of education after secondary education which includes diploma, bachelor, master, doctor, and specialist education program organized by universities.

- **Academy/Institute/Polytechnic/High School/University**

Colleges in education in Indonesia are universities that organize academic education and/or vocational education within the scope of one discipline of science, technology, and/or art and if qualified can organize professional education.

b. Education pathway

The education pathway is a vehicle through which students develop their potential in an educational process that is in accordance with educational objectives.

- Formal education

Formal education is education organized in schools in general. This education pathway has a clear education level, starting from basic education, secondary education, to higher education.

- Non-formal education

Non-formal education is mostly found in early childhood, as well as basic education. There is also the Qur'anic Education Centre (TPA) which is found in every mosque, and Sunday School which is found in all churches.

In addition, there are also various courses, including music courses, tutoring and so on.

- Informal education

Informal education is a family and environmental education path in the form of independent learning activities carried out consciously and responsibly.

c. Types

Types of education are groups based on the specificity of the educational objectives of an educational unit.

- General education

General education is primary and secondary education that priorities the expansion of knowledge needed by students to continue their education to a higher level. Forms: primary school, junior secondary school and senior secondary school.

- Vocational education

Vocational education is secondary education that prepares learners primarily for work in a particular field. The form of education unit is vocational high school (SMK), which has a wide range of specializations.

- Academic education

Academic education is higher education undergraduate and postgraduate programs that are directed primarily at mastering certain scientific disciplines.

- Professional education

Professional education is higher education after undergraduate program that prepares students to enter a profession or become a professional.

- Vocational education

Vocational education is higher education that prepares learners to have jobs with certain applied expertise at a maximum of a diploma 4 level equivalent to an undergraduate program (stratum 1).

- Religious education

Religious education is basic, secondary and higher education that prepares learners to fulfil roles that require mastery of knowledge and experience of religious teachings and/or to become religious scholars.

- Special education

Special education is the provision of education for learners with special needs or learners who have extraordinary intelligence organized inclusively (joining regular schools) or in the form of special education units at the primary and secondary education levels (in the form of special schools/SLB).

The private sector largely relies on tuition fees as their sole source of income and has been developed and contributed to the greater flexibility and capacity of the national education system (Duggan 2001). The network of educational institutions has expanded across the country to enable to promote a society of learners (MoEC 2014).

Speaking

According to Manser (2000) speak is talk to somebody about something, use your voice to say something; be able to use a language; make a speech to an audience; say or state something. Aminatun (2020) provided the speaking as the ability which used to articulate distinct sounds or words to communicate the thoughts, concepts, and emotions. Pranoto (2020) presented there is a more comprehensive perspective, to define the speaking as the act of transmitting an individual's intentions, encompassing ideas, thoughts, and emotions, to others through spoken language.

From these explanations above, it can be concluded that Speaking is the ability to communicate one's thoughts, concepts, and emotions using sound and language. Speaking is considered one of the four basic skills that students must master, and is a productive skill that cannot be separated from listening. When we speak, we create text that must be relevant. In communication, there is a speaker, listener, message, and feedback. Speaking is also closely related to pronunciation, as it encourages students to learn how to pronounce sounds in English. Definitions of speaking can vary, but in general it refers to the ability to convey meaning using voice and language.

According Brown (2004) described those six categories of speaking skill area. Those are follows:

a. Imitative

A very limited portion of classroom speaking time may be spent generating "human tape recorder" speech, where, for example, learners practice an intonation contour or try to pinpoint a certain vowel sound. This practice is for focusing on some element of language form. "Drills" offer students an opportunity to listen and to orally repeat certain strings of language that may pose some linguistic difficulty-either phonological.

b. Intensive

It is practicing some phonological and grammatical aspect of language, usually students do the task in pairs, for example, reading aloud that includes reading paragraph, reading dialogue with partner in turn, reading instruction, and so on.

c. Responsive

A good deal of student speech in the classroom is responsive: short replies to teacher or student-initiated questions or comments. These replies are usually sufficient and do not extend into dialogues. It is meaningful and authentic.

d. Transactional (dialogue)

Transactional language, carried out for purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information, is an extended form of responsive language.

e. Interpersonal (dialogue)

It is carried out for the purpose of maintaining social relationships than for the transmission of facts and information. These conversations are a little trickier for learners because they can involve some or all factors such as: a casual register, colloquial language, emotionally charged language, slang, ellipsis, sarcasm and a covert "agenda".

f. Extensive (monologue)

Students at intermediate to advance levels are called on to give extended monologues in the form of oral reports, summaries, or perhaps short speeches. Here the register is more formal and deliberative. These monologues can be planned or impromptu.

Based on the theory above, it can be concluded that there are some points that should be considered in assessing speaking. The students need to know at least the pronunciation, vocabularies, and language functions that they are going to use. When the students have been ready and prepared for the activity, they can use the language appropriately.

Speaking Ability

According to Harmer, learners should know "language features" and the ability to process them in communication. If the speaker dominates these language features, will help learners to acquire successful communication goal. Speaking does not cover just knowing the linguistic feature; linguistic feature of the message expanding oral communication requires more than memorized vocabulary and grammatical comprehension.

One of the obstacles of learning speaking is contradiction between class materials and courses, so that most of the teachers do not facilitate situations for real practice in speaking. Besides, the teacher should consider learners' interest and needs. Learners should take part in oral activities to exchange spontaneously their thought in second language speaking. Mackey defined speaking as oral expression that involves not only the use of right patterns of rhythm and intonation but also that of right words order to convey the right meaning. Manser speak is talk to somebody about something, use your voice to say something; be able to use a language; make a speech to an audience; say or state something.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that speaking is the most important skill of language which is about expressing ideas, opinions, or feelings to others by using words or sounds of articulation to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. Brown stated that there are some aspects of speaking such as pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, accent, and grammar, it should be mastered to be able to speak well. As a complex activity, speaking has three main aspects as follows:

a. Accuracy

As Marry Spratt and friend stated, accuracy in speaking is the use of correct form of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Those three parts involve together in making accurate utterance. Pronunciation is a basic quality of language learning especially in speaking ability. It concerns the way we say, articulate, assimilate, intonate, and stress words. Having poor pronunciation skill can obscure communication and prevent us from making meaningful utterances. Harmer states that pronunciation teaching is not only making the students are able to differentiate sounds and sound features, but also improving their speaking ability immeasurably such as to concentrate on sounds and be aware of using stress when producing sound.

Vocabulary is a foundation of a language. To create meaningful utterance or sentences, it needs to use appropriate vocabulary to express something. In other words, the requirement for students who want to have a good speaking ability is mastering vocabulary. In addition, Harmer says that if the students have more vocabularies or at least 1000 words, they can communicate fluently. They do not take a long time in expressing what they are going to say because they know the words that describe their ideas.

Grammar is very important in speaking accuracy. According to Nunan grammar usually can be thought as a set of rules specifying the correct pattern of words at sentence level. If our conversation is full of grammatical mistakes, your ideas will not get across so easily. Studying grammar rules will certainly help students speak more accurately. Those three parts are very important elements to accomplish the accuracy in the effort of being able to speak well.

b. Fluency

Fluency according to Mary Spratt and friends is speaking at a normal speed without hesitation, repetition and with smooth use of connected speech. It deals with how comfortable students are when they speak, how easily the words come out and whether there are great pauses and gaps in the student's speaking. It is a parameter of students' speaking ability goal. It deals with the quality of the way they speak fluently.

c. Accent

Language accent of one speaker and other is different. This is because every person has their own way in saying words depending on the cultures the speakers have. Roach states that there is no speaker who can be taken to represent a particular accent or dialect in this world.

Learning Process

Learning is a process of interaction between teachers and students which can be done directly through face-to-face activities or indirectly by using various learning media (Rusman, 2010). Learning can also be defined as a learning conditioning activity carried out by teachers to their students. Learning conditioning means students can understand, apply, analyze, and evaluate learning materials (Kurniawan, 2013).

According to Kurniawan (2013) the components of learning include:

1. Students and teachers

The main drivers of learning activities are students and teachers. Every learning decision made by the teacher, both learning design and planning, needs to make students the center of decision making. Design and planning need to make students as the center of decision making. In this case, student analysis is an important thing that needs to be done before implementing learning.

2. Learning objectives

Learning objectives are divided into instructional objectives and additional objectives. Instructional objectives are general and have been determined in the national curriculum, while additional objectives are learning objectives added by the teacher himself. learning objectives that are added by the teacher himself adjusted to the conditions of the school and students.

3. Learning conditions

Learning conditions relate to classroom conditioning and learning styles used so as to make students motivated in the learning process.

4. Learning resources

Learning resources are used so that students get a learning experience. This can include learning resources from textbooks or observations of the physical environment that are usually done in experimental learning.

5. Evaluation of learning

Learning is said to be successful if it has fulfilled the learning objectives or outcomes, for this reason it is necessary to conduct an evaluation to measure the level of success of the learning.

On the other hand, a survey of worldwide literature suggests that the curriculum is rarely established or tailored to accommodate the requirements of slow learners. To addresses the requirements of delayed learners. As reported by Dottrens (1962).

METHODS

The research will be conducted in the study Descriptive Qualitative Research. According to Gast (2010:20), the descriptive qualitative research was designed to obtained information used for investigating the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials. Most of the analysis was done with words. The words could be assembled, sub clustered or broken into segments. They could be reorganized to permit the researcher to compare, contrast, analyze and construct patterns out of them. According to Moleong (2005: 4) descriptive qualitative research is research whose data collection uses words and images. Where the data is obtained from interviews, documentation, photos, videos, personal notes, and other documentation. Miles et al (2014) said “qualitative research is conducted through intense and/or prolonged contact with participants in a naturalistic setting to investigate the everyday and/or exceptional lives of individuals, groups, societies and organizations.” Descriptive qualitative method is used to explain and analyze the phenomenon which occurs behind the data.

The research methodology employed for understand the social phenomena from the perspective human participants. The data collection techniques will be included by observations and interviews to gather information on students' problem learning speaking English in the class. The research will be conducted at Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda especially the sixth-grade student from SD Swasta Sultan Iskandar Muda. The location is on Jalan Sunggal Gg. Bakul, Tengku Amir Hamzah Pekan I, Sunggal Kec. Medan Sunggal, Kota Medan. The research was aimed to analyze the psycholinguistic problems faced by students in learning English. The participant of this research is one student which was indicated the slow learner students in each class. The research will be conducted by interviews and observation. The interview was conducted in two parts to identify the students that classified the slow learners and investigate the factors that caused these problems. The first interview was aimed to find answers to students' problems in learning speaking English that classified them as slow learners, and the second interview aims to find the factors that cause students' problems in learning speaking English. In qualitative research, data collection techniques can be carried out through arrangements from various sources, and in various ways. Data collection techniques used in this research include: observation techniques, interview techniques. Apart from

that, this interview was aimed to confirm the results of observations and obtain more data related to this research.

From the interview section, the researcher will collect the answers from the research subjects (students, parents, and teachers) and makes several conclusions related to previous research to support the results of this research. Information from interviews was collected when the data researchers began to classify the results of the interviews and discovered most of the problems and causal factors faced by students in learning speaking English. The final step, the researchers will conclude the results of the interview which have been translated by the researcher.

Checking the validity of data of this research uses extended observation and triangulation techniques. The extension of observation is by means of observation and interviews with parties involved in the research. While the triangulation technique is by checking data to the same source with different techniques, namely observation, interview, and documentation techniques.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data from the research findings, an analysis was conducted on the learning speaking challenges faced by students in five subjects at SD Swasta Sultan Iskandar Muda. These subjects had causes contributing to their delayed learning. As observed by Dottrens (1962) proposed the factors of slow learner are Limited cognitive ability, Poor memory, Lack of concentration, Inability to express ideas, and Emotional instability. The subsequent items are learners who encounter the following throughout their learning process:

1. *Limited cognitive ability*

Limited cognitive ability refers to a reduced capacity to process information, think logically, and understand complex concepts, affecting learning speed, memory retention, attention, and focus. This can impact academic performance, including language acquisition and speaking skills. The student with initial MP (12 years old) at grade 6-3 is a diligent student with a supportive family environment. Her first language is Chinese. Despite her efforts, she finds it challenging to speak English fluently and confidently. Her vocabulary and grammar were limited, she often hesitated or used incorrect grammar, and had difficulty understanding complex sentences and instructions. MP also showed signs of dissatisfaction and lack of motivation due to repeated failures. The factor which contributed to her slow learning of speaking English included slow information processing speed.

Base the insight of interview with MP, her parents, and teachers. There are some points:

R: How do you feel when you're asked to speak in English in class?

MP: Um, I feel nervous and sometimes I struggle to find the right words to say.

MP's reaction reveals anxiety and a hard time expressing herself in English class, pointing to possible issues with self-assurance and language proficiency. It aligns with characteristics of limited cognitive ability such as being slow in perceiving relations between things and having a limited ability to develop complex ideas.

R: How do you observe MP's progress in learning speaking English compared to other subjects?

Parents: We've noticed that MP seems to struggle more with English speaking compared to her performance in other subjects. She often finds it challenging to express herself clearly and tends to avoid speaking up in house.

MP's parents suggest she may face more significant difficulties in English speaking due to her limited cognitive ability to effectively process language and develop ideas.

R: Based on your observations, what specific areas of language learning do you think John struggles with the most, and how can we provide targeted support?

Teacher: From what I've observed, MP appears to have difficulty in grasping abstract language concepts and constructing complex sentences. She tends to prefer tasks that involve concrete learning methods rather than abstract reasoning.

The teacher observed MP's difficulty with abstract language concepts and preference for concrete learning due to limited cognitive ability. Targeted support focusing on simplifying abstract concepts and incorporating concrete activities could help overcome these challenges.

2. *Poor memory*

Poor memory refers to difficulties in encoding, storing, and retrieving information, impacting short-term, working, and long-term memory. It significantly impacts academic performance, including language acquisition, in educational contexts. The student with initial MP (12 years old) at grade 6-5 is a slow learner and hyperactive student, this can be observed in terms of MP's memory is lower than his friends. MP has learning speaking English difficulty. Her vocabulary and grammar were limited, she often had difficulty remembering vocabulary and grammar rules, as well as frequently forgetting words mid-sentence and struggling to form complete thoughts. She was hesitant to participate in speaking activities for fear of making mistakes. The factor which contributed to her slow learning of speaking English included difficulty recalling information that has been learned.

Base the insight of interview with MP, her parents, and teacher. There are some points:

R: *How do you feel about your ability to retain information in speaking English? Do you struggle to remember what you've learned for long periods of time?*

MP: *I often find myself having to review English materials multiple times to really understand them. Even then, I struggle to retain what I've learned for long periods of time. It's frustrating because I feel like I forget things easily.*

The student acknowledges the necessity of multiple review sessions due to their difficulty in retaining information and their poor memory, which significantly impacts his speaking English learning process.

R: *Have you noticed any specific difficulties your child faces when trying to remember English language concepts or vocabulary?*

Parents: *Our child struggles to remember English vocabulary and concepts. They often forget words shortly after learning them, which makes the speaking learning English difficult.*

Speaking English language learners often face challenges in retaining concepts and vocabulary, resulting in communication difficulties, and learning progression difficulties.

R: *From your perspective, how does this student approach learning speaking English, especially considering their memory retention challenges?*

Teacher: *From our perspective, this student approaches learning speaking English with diligence, but their memory retention challenges pose significant obstacles. He often need extra review and reinforcement to grasp and retain language concepts, despite their efforts.*

The teacher acknowledges the student's diligent speaking English learning but acknowledges their memory retention struggles. They suggest the student's reliance on repetitive learning methods, which affects their effective information retention.

3. Lack of Concentration

MP is a slow learner, struggles with English speaking due to his short attention span and difficulty maintaining concentration. He frequently gets distracted during lessons and requires repeated instructions to stay on task.

Base the insight of interview with MP, her parents, and teachers. There are some points:

R: *When you start to lose focus during English speaking activities, what do you think causes it?*

MP: *When the subject is dull or there are too many distractions around, I think I become distracted and lose focus. Sometimes, I just can't focus on what we're doing in class because I start thinking about other things.*

MP's concentration issues are attributed to his interest in the topic and environmental distractions. To enhance his focus, lessons should be engaging and interactive, and reducing external distractions and creating a more focused learning environment could also be beneficial.

R: *At home, what activities or routines seem to help John concentrate and maintain focus?*

Parents: *MP's concentration improves when she engages in hands-on activities or enjoys playing educational games, and improves after physical activity or a specific time in the afternoon when he is more alert.*

MP's parents responded that engaging, hands-on activities and physical exercise improve his concentration. They suggested incorporating movement breaks and hands-on learning in the classroom and scheduling demanding tasks during John's natural alertness to maximize focus.

R: *Which types of speaking activities seem to hold John's attention the longest during English lessons?*

Teacher: *MP tends to stay more focused in group discussions and interactive activities, maintaining focus when tasks are broken down into manageable steps and visual aids or props are used to support lessons.*

The teacher responded that interactive activities, group discussions, and visual aids help MP maintain focus and engagement. Breaking tasks into smaller steps is also beneficial for John's short attention span, ensuring he can follow along without becoming overwhelmed.

4. Inability to express ideas

Base the insight of interview with MP, her parents, and teacher. There are some points:

R: Do you find it difficult to find the right words when speaking or answering questions in class, and do you find it easier to understand the text when reading silently compared to reading aloud in front of the class?

MP: Yes, I often find it difficult to find the right words when speaking in class. Sometimes, I feel confused and find it difficult to form correct sentences. I also find it easier to understand the text when reading silently compared to reading aloud in front of my friends because I often get nervous and make mistakes when reading aloud.

The student's response aligns with the characteristics outlined by Dottrens (1962) in the "Inability to express ideas" trait. The student frequently experiences difficulty in finding the right words when speaking in class, indicating challenges in expressing ideas verbally. This difficulty is further emphasized by feelings of confusion and struggle in constructing coherent sentences, highlighting limitations in verbal fluency and language processing.

Moreover, the student's experience of finding it easier to comprehend text when reading silently compared to reading aloud in front of classmates reflects the aspect of "Having more difficulty with oral reading than silent reading" as observed by Dottrens. This suggests potential issues with oral fluency or decoding skills, as well as the presence of anxiety affecting performance during oral reading tasks.

Overall, the student's experience underscores the relevance of Dottrens' theory of slow learners, particularly in understanding the challenges faced by individuals with limited cognitive abilities in expressing ideas verbally and in the context of oral reading tasks. It emphasizes the importance of tailored interventions and support strategies to address these challenges and promote the development of language skills and confidence in the student's learning journey.

R: Have you noticed that this child often has difficulty in finding the right word or putting words together when answering questions orally in class, and does he/she seem to struggle more when reading aloud compared to reading silently?

Teacher: Yes, I noticed that this child often has difficulty in finding the right words when answering questions orally. He often seemed hesitant and took more time to string sentences together. In addition, he seemed to struggle more when reading aloud in class compared to reading silently, which was evident from the many pauses and errors in pronunciation.

Based on the teacher's observation of children who often have difficulty in finding the right words and stringing sentences together when answering questions orally in class, this is in accordance with the characteristics observed by Dottrens (1962) in slow learners, especially in the feature of 'Inability to express ideas.' Children's difficulty in expressing ideas is also reflected in their difficulty in finding the right words and putting them together. This indicates a barrier in language processing and lexical access, in line with Dottrens' theory of limited cognitive abilities in slow learners, which includes difficulties in finding relationships between things and developing concepts or ideas.

In addition, the child's difficulty in oral reading compared to silent reading is also in line with Dottrens' theory, specifically in "Has more difficulty with oral reading compared to silent reading". This suggests the possibility of phonological or decoding problems, as well as anxiety that can worsen oral performance, both of which reflect the characteristics of slow learners in Dottrens' (1962) observation table. The difference in performance between oral reading and reading silently highlights the need for specialized support and intervention to address these challenges and help the child develop language skills and confidence, as suggested by Dottrens' theory. Thus, this data analysis supports the findings in Dottrens' (1962) theory on slow learners, which emphasizes the importance of understanding individual characteristics in developing appropriate learning strategies.

R: Does your child often struggle to find the right words when speaking or telling stories at home, and do you notice that he/she seems to struggle more when reading aloud compared to reading silently?

Parents: Yes, my child often struggles to find the right words when telling stories or speaking at home. He often pauses to look for the right word or repeats words. I have also noticed that he struggles more when reading aloud, with many pauses and mistakes, than when he reads silently.

The observations provided by the parent align closely with Dottrens' (1962) theory regarding slow learners, particularly in the aspect of "Inability to express ideas". The child's frequent difficulty in finding the right words while speaking or storytelling at home indicates challenges in expressing ideas verbally, which corresponds to the characteristic of having difficulty in finding and combining words as outlined by Dottrens. The pauses and repetitions the child exhibits while searching for the right words further emphasize limitations in verbal fluency and language processing.

Additionally, the parent's observation regarding the child's greater difficulty in oral reading compared to silent reading supports Dottrens' observation of slow learners having more difficulty with oral reading than silent reading. The child's struggles during oral reading, characterized by numerous pauses and errors, suggest potential issues with oral fluency, decoding skills, or confidence in reading aloud.

In summary, the parent's observations provide valuable insights into the child's challenges, which align with Dottrens' theory of slow learners. Understanding these characteristics is essential for implementing effective support strategies to address the child's needs and facilitate their language development and confidence in verbal expression and reading.

5. Emotional instability

Base the insight of interview with MP, her parents, and teacher. There are some points:

R: Do you feel a lack of confidence or inadequacy when studying or trying to achieve something at school, and does this make it difficult for you to achieve well?

MP: Yes, I often feel a lack of confidence when studying at school. I often think that I am not as smart as my friends and sometimes feel that I cannot achieve the things that they achieve easily. This makes it difficult for me to achieve good grades, and sometimes I feel lazy or afraid to try something new because I am afraid of failure.

The student's statement directly reflects the characteristics observed in Dottrens' (1962) theory of slow learning, particularly in the aspect of "Emotional instability". The student often lacks confidence and feels inadequate when learning at school, which indicates low self-esteem and a lack of a positive self-concept. These feelings make it difficult for her to achieve well, reflecting feelings of inferiority in achieving achievement in learning as described in Dottrens' theory. Such feelings of inadequacy and lack of confidence can be a significant barrier to academic success, and sometimes even inhibit the desire to try new things for fear of failure. Thus, the analysis of this data highlights the importance of attention to the emotional and psychological aspects of students in the development of supportive learning strategies and confidence building to achieve optimal learning potential.

R: Have you noticed that this child often shows signs of low self-esteem or lack of confidence when doing assignments or participating in class activities, and does this affect his/her learning achievement?

Teacher: Yes, I have noticed that this child often shows signs of low self-esteem when doing class work. He often hesitates to answer questions or participate in discussions. In addition, he seemed anxious and tended to give up more quickly when faced with challenging tasks. I also noticed that his learning achievement was not as good as his peers, although he seemed to be trying hard.

The data provided by the teacher regarding the child's behavior is in line with Dottrens' (1962) theory of slow learning, particularly in the aspect of "Emotional instability". The child often shows signs of low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence when working on classroom tasks, reflecting the characteristics of low self-esteem and lack of a positive self-concept observed in Dottrens' theory. Hesitation in answering questions or participating in discussions, as well as a tendency to give up early when faced with challenging tasks, are other indications of a lack of self-confidence that might affect his learning achievement. In addition, the teacher's observation about her learning achievement not being as good as her peers, even though she seems to be trying hard, also reflects feelings of inferiority in achieving achievement in learning, as described in Dottrens' theory. Thus, the analysis of this data provides a deeper understanding of the psychological factors that may affect children's learning experiences, and highlights the need for emotional support and confidence building in improving their learning achievement.

R: Does your child often show signs of low self-esteem or lack of confidence at home, especially in relation to schoolwork or learning, and does this affect his/her motivation and learning achievement?

Parents: Yes, my child often shows signs of low self-esteem at home. He often says that he can't do things well or feels that he is not as smart as his friends. I also notice that he gives up quickly if he finds it difficult with homework or schoolwork. This seems to affect his motivation to learn and do well at school.

Her parents' statements clearly reflect the characteristics observed in Dottrens' (1962) theory of slow learners, particularly in the aspect of 'Emotional instability'. The child often shows signs of low self-esteem and lack of confidence at home, especially in relation to schoolwork or learning, reflecting low self-esteem and a lack of a positive self-concept. These feelings can be a significant barrier to motivation and learning achievement, as described in Dottrens' theory. Giving up behavior when facing difficulties with homework or schoolwork also reflects feelings of inferiority in achieving achievement in learning. Thus, the analysis of this data suggests the need for greater attention to children's emotional wellbeing and confidence building, and the implementation of appropriate support strategies to help them overcome the challenges they face in learning and achieve their optimal learning potential.

Based on data analysis, it can be determined that students at SD Swasta Sultan Iskandar Muda, particularly slow learners such as MP, experience a variety of problems when learning to speak English. These difficulties include cognitive limits, poor memory, loss of attention, inability to convey thoughts, and emotional instability. MP suffers with fluency and confidence while speaking English owing to a lack of vocabulary and grammatical abilities, which is upset by slow information processing speed. These findings emphasize the necessity of providing specific support and interventions to help slow learners develop their language abilities and confidence. The study also emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive strategy to overcoming the constraints of prior studies on slow learners to improve the efficiency of teaching English speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research, the student who face difficulties in learning to speak English have characteristics such as limited cognitive ability, poor memory, lack of concentration, difficulty expressing ideas, emotional instability, and difficulty finding the right words to communicate effectively. These challenges can lead to feelings of anxiety, low self-esteem and lack of motivation that hinder student's progress in learning the language. Research at SD Swasta Sultan Iskandar Muda concluded that some students have difficulties in learning to speak English, caused by factors such as cognitive limitations, weak memory, lack of concentration, inability to express ideas, and emotional instability. Students with MP initials face challenges in terms of fluency and confidence in speaking English due to vocabulary and grammar limitations. Slow information processing speed is also a major factor that slows down his learning. This research highlights the importance of teaching speaking skills effectively and recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach in addressing the limitations of slow learners.

Through interviews with MPs, parents, and teachers, it was found that anxiety, poor memory, lack of concentration, inability to express ideas and emotional instability are barriers to learning English. Therefore, this research encourages targeted support and intervention to help students improve their language ability and confidence. This research methodology uses descriptive qualitative techniques, such as observation and interviews, to collect data regarding students' difficulties in learning English speaking skills. The conclusion is the need to adopt curriculum and teaching approaches that suit the needs of slow learners to improve their English in speaking skills.

REFERENCES

- Adams, J. (2014). Peer tutoring: A guide to effective implementation. Corwin.
- Borah, R. R. (2013). Slow learners: Role of teachers and guardians in honing their hidden skills. *International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration*, 3(2), 139–143.
- Brennan, Wilfred Kayran. 1974. *Shaping the Education of Slow Learners*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Brown. Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, San Francisco: San Francisco University, 2000.
- Brown, G and Yule, Y. 2001. Teaching the Spoken Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, P13.
- Brown, H.D. (2014). Principles of language learning and teaching (6th edition). Longman: Pearson/Longman.
- Derakhshan, A., & Shirmohammadi, M. The difficulties of teaching English language: The relationship between research and teaching, International Journal of Linguistics, 7(1), 102-110. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v7i1.6648>, 2015. 15
- Dornyei, Zoltán. "Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self: A Theoretical Overview." Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self, edited by Zoltán Dornyei and Éva MacIntyre, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 1-19.
- Dottrens, Robert. 1962. The Primary School Curriculum. Monographs on Education. Paris: UNESCO.
- Gouwens, Donald. 2004. "Slow Learners: A Guide to Academic Interventions for Parents." In Helping Children at Home School II: Handouts for Families and Educators, edited by Andrea Canter, Leslie Paige, Mark Roth, Ivonne Romero, and
- H. Douglas Brown, An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, (San Fransisco: San Fransisco State University, 2004), P. 271.
- Harmer, J. The practice of English language teaching (3rd ed), London: Longman 2000. 14
- Harmer, J. The Practice of English language teaching. Essex: Pearson Longman, 2007. 21
- Hott, Brittany L, Laura Isbell, and Teresa Oettinger Montani. 2014. Strategies and Interventions to Support Students with disabilities. Kansas: Council for Learning Disabilities.
- Husein, A., & Pulungan, M. (2021). Factors Slow Secondary Learners' Difficulties in Learning Speaking at Homeschooling. Jurnal Linguistik Terapan-Pascasarjana [Journal of Applied Linguistics-Postgraduate Program], 18(2), 101-108.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2011). Relationship among cooperative learning experiences, social interdependence, children's aggression, victimization, and prosocial behaviors. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 41(4), 976-1003).
- Johnson, B. (2012). *Values in language teaching*. London: Taylor and Francis e-libraby.
- Karim, H. N. (2010). Bangladesh IT Industry Going Global. The Daily Star, 6
- Karsenty, Ronnie. 2010. "Nonprofessional Mathematics Tutoring for Low-Achieving Students in Secondary Schools: A Case Study." Educational Studies in English 74: 1–21.
- Kaznowski, Kimberly. 2004. "Slow Learners: Are Educators Leaving Them Behind?" NASSP Bulletin 88 (641): 31–45.
- Krishnakumar, Po, M. G. Geeta, and Ramakrishnan Palat. 2006. "Effectiveness of Individualized Education Program for Slow Learners." The Indian Journal of Pediatrics 73 (2): 135–137.
- Kormos, J., & Smith, A.M. (2012). Teaching languages to students with specific learning differences. Toronto: Multilingual Matters.
- Leung, Frederick Koon Shing. 2006. "Mathematics Education in East Asia and the West: Does Culture Matter?" Education in Different Cultural Traditions: A Comparative Study of East Asia and the West. The 13th ICMI Study, edited by Frederick Koon Shing Leung, Klaus-D Graf, and Francis J Lopez-Real, 21–46. New York: Springer.
- Lewis, S. (2015). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches. Health Promotion Practice, 16, 473-475.
- Loizou, Florentia. 2016. "Changes in Teaching in Order to Help Students with Learning Difficulties Improve in Cypriot Primary Classes." Education 3-13 44 (4): 371–390.
- Mackey, A. Interaction as practice, In R. DeKeyser (ed.), Practice in a Second Language (pp. 85–110), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, P.13 16
- Malik, Salahuddin. "Effect of Intervention Training on Mental Abilities of Slow Learners." International Journal of Education Sciences, vol. 1, no. 1, 2009, pp. 61-64.

- Malik, Najima Iqbal, Ghazala Rehman, and Rubina Hanif. 2012. "Effect of Academic Interventions on the Developmental
- Manser, H. Martin, Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, (New York: Oxford University Press. New Edition, 2000), P. 414
- Medwell, Jane, and David Wray. 2019. "Primary Homework in England: The Beliefs and Practices of Teachers in Primary Schools." *Education 3-13* 47 (2): 191–204.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldana, J. (2014) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Sage, London.
- Moleong Lexy J. 2005. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Muppudathi, G. 2014. "Role of Teacher's: Helping Slow Learners to Bring out Hidden Skills." *Journal of Research & Method in Education* 6 (6): 23–26.
- Niroom, Mohammad, Gholamreza Haji Hossein Nejhad, and Mahmoud Haghani. 2012. "The Effect of Gardner Theory Application on Logical Intelligence and Student's Functioning Relationship." *Procedia -Social and Behavioral Sciences* 47: 2169–2175.
- Nunan, David. *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language learning and teaching*. Melbourne: Heinle & Heinle.
- Nunan. *Practical English Language Teaching*, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2003, P.154
- Oakes, Jeannie, Tor Ormseth, Robert M Bell, and Patricia Camp. 1990. *Multiplying Inequalities: The Effects of Race, Class, and Tracking on Opportunities to Learn Math and Science*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND. *Skills of Slow Learners*." *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research* 27 (1): 135–151
- Pound, Linda, and Trisha Lee. 2011. *Teaching Creatively*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Reddy, G. L., R. Ramar, and A. Kusuma. 2006. *Slow Learners: Their Psychology and Instruction*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- Richards, Jack C., & Renandya, Willy A. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, Jack C., & Renandya, Willy A. (2005). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- School II: Handouts for Families and Educators, edited by Andrea Canter, Leslie Paige, Mark Roth, Ivonne Romero, and
- Servio Carroll, 175–178. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Shaw, Steven. 2000. "Academic Interventions for Slow Learners." *NASP Communiqué* 28 (16).
- Spratt, Marry, Alan Pulverness and Melanie Williams. *The TKT Teaching Knowledge Test Course*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, P.34 19
- Skemp, Richard. 1989. *Science in the Primary School*. London: Routledge.
- Thornbury, Scott. *How to Teach Speaking*. Longman, 2005.
- UNESCO. 1966. *English in Primary Education*. UNESCO Insitute for Education: Hamburg
- Wilder, S. 2017. "Parental Involvement: Giving Parents a Voice." *Education 3-13* 45 (1): 104–121.
- Yadav, Bajrangi, and Ram Kalap Tiwari. 2017. "Effect of Skill Based Training on Slow Learner's Ability." *International Inventive Multidisciplinary Journal* 5 (9): 52–64.