

ABSTRACT

Putri Ayu Lestari, Registration Number 2213121048, Eighth-Grade Students' Perceived Difficulties in Speaking English, A Thesis, English Education Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan, 2026.

This study aims to find out the types of students' difficulties in speaking English and the factors affecting those difficulties among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 27 Medan. This study applied a qualitative research design. The data used in this study were the difficulties faced by students in speaking English and the factors influencing these difficulties. The data source consisted of 30 students of class VIII at SMP Negeri 27 Medan. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews and analyzed descriptively. The findings showed that students experienced four types of speaking difficulties, namely inhibition, nothing to say, low participation, and mother tongue use. Among these, inhibition was the most dominant difficulty, as students often felt shy, anxious, and afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. These conditions affected their confidence and participation in class. In addition, many students had difficulty expressing their ideas, which led to low participation and frequent use of their mother tongue during English lessons. Furthermore, the study found that the students' difficulties were influenced by linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The linguistic factors included limited vocabulary, lack of grammatical knowledge, and pronunciation problems. Meanwhile, the non-linguistic factors consisted of psychological factors such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of criticism, as well as social factors related to the learning environment at school and at home. These factors were interconnected and significantly affected students' speaking ability. This study is expected to be useful for anyone who wants to learn about students' difficulties in speaking English. For future researcher, it would be beneficial to conduct in depth-research on aspect of speaking difficulties and the strategies for dealing with the difficulties student face when speaking English.

Keywords: *Students' Difficulties, Speaking Skill, Eighth-Grade*