# WHAT MAKES SPEAKING THE HARDEST SKILL FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS?

***Umarjonova Gavxar Murodjon qizi***

*Umarjonovagavhar8@gmail.com*

*A student of the Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages named after Is'hoqxon Ibrat*

*Scientific adviser:* ***Abdusattorova Maxarram Sharifjon qizi***

*A teacher at Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages*

*abdusattorovamuharram929@gmail.com*

***Annotation.*** *This study examines why speaking is considered the most challenging skill for English learners. It examines both linguistic and psychological factors, such as limited vocabulary, fear of errors, and low self-confidence. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including surveys and classroom observations with 6th- and 7th-grade students. The results indicate that interactive activities like role plays and group discussions can enhance students' speaking confidence and engagement.*

**Keywords.** Speaking skill, English language learning, communication, speaking anxiety, vocabulary, confidence, interactive activities

***Annotatsiya.*** *Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tilini o'rganuvchilar uchun speaking (gapirish) ko'nikmasi nega eng murakkab hisoblanishini o'rganadi. Unda cheklangan so'z boyligi, xatolardan qo'rqish va past o'ziga ishonch kabi lingvistik va psixologik*

*omillar tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda aralash metod qo‘llanilib, 6–7-sinf o‘quvchilari orasida so‘rovnoma va sinf kuzatuvlari o‘tkazildi. Natijalar role play va guruh muhokamalari kabi interaktiv faoliyatlar o‘quvchilarning gapirishdagi ishonchi va faolligini oshirishini ko‘rsatdi.*

**Kalit so'zlar.** Gapirish ko‘nikmasi, ingliz tilini o‘rganish, muloqot, nutqiy qo‘rquv, so‘z boyligi, ishonch, interaktiv usullar

***Аннотация.*** *Данное исследование рассматривает, почему говорение считается самым сложным навыком для изучающих английский язык. В работе анализируются лингвистические и психологические факторы, такие как ограниченный словарный запас, страх ошибок и низкая уверенность в себе. В исследовании использован смешанный метод, включающий опросы и наблюдения в классе среди учащихся 6–7 классов. Результаты показывают, что интерактивные виды деятельности, такие как ролевые игры и групповые обсуждения, повышают уверенность и активность учащихся при говорении.*

**Ключевые слова.** Навык говорения, изучение английского языка, коммуникация, страх говорения, словарный запас, уверенность, интерактивные методы

**Introduction.** Speaking is often regarded as the most challenging skill in learning English because it occurs in real-time and requires both confidence and quick thinking. Many students find it hard to express their ideas naturally, especially when they can't rely on memorized answers. Understanding these challenges is important for helping learners build more confidence and fluency in speaking.

**Background.** Our students want to master English as naturally as they did with other languages. However, learning English becomes challenging because students cannot improve solely by using it in the classroom, as they do not hear or communicate with native speakers. They struggle to put ideas into words. This process is often cut off before genuine learning begins, leading to demotivation. Learning to speak involves "leading to automatization of language production, which emerged as an important aspect of formulaic language processing" [1].

Al Nakhalah (2016) conducted a study on the challenges faced by students learning English at Al-Quds Open University. The results revealed that students struggle with speaking due to reasons such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, and a lack of confidence. The researcher recommended creating a supportive environment and encouraging students to speak English more often. He also suggested conducting further research on speaking difficulties encountered by English learners[2].



According to Tuan & Mai (2015), teachers may face several issues when helping students improve their speaking skills in the classroom. These include performance conditions, affective factors, listening skills, feedback during speaking tasks, inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low participation, and the use of the mother tongue. The latter occurs because some learners prefer to speak their native language when they share the same mother tongue,

[1] G. Dillon, 2015
[2] Al Nakhalah (2016). Problems and difficulties of speaking that are encountered by English language students at Al-Quds Open University. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention

as it feels easier for them[3]. A similar observation was made by Alharbi (2015) in Saudi Arabia, where learners have limited oral skills due to the lack of authentic language learning situations both inside and outside the classroom. The author states that several factors influence the development of speaking skills, such as using the mother tongue inside and outside the classroom, the low status of English in the country, learners' negative attitudes toward English, teachers using the mother tongue to explain difficult concepts, reliance on **teacher**-centered methods, and learners' passiveness in the classroom[4].

Extensive practice is crucial for learners to improve their speaking skills. They can enhance their speaking ability by listening and practicing their pronunciation through repetition. Teachers can provide students with models and ask them to repeat, which helps reduce shyness. Using short questions and dialogues in class can also promote the development of speaking skills (Bashir, Azeem, & Dogar, 2011)[5].

**Research Objectives**

1. Why do many English learners consider speaking the most challenging language skill?

2. What factors cause students to depend on memorized responses instead of speaking naturally?

3. What practical teaching strategies can help learners improve their confidence and spontaneous speaking ability?

[3] Tuan& Mai, (2015).An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skills. International Journal of Research in English Education

[4] Alharbi, H. A. (2015). Improving students' English speaking proficiency in Saudi public schools. International Journal of Instruction

[5] Bashir, Azeem, & Dogar, (2011). An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skills. International Journal of Research in English Education



**Research Problem.** This study aims to examine why speaking is considered the most difficult skill in English learning. Although learners study grammar and vocabulary for many years, they often encounter significant challenges when trying to express their ideas verbally. Speaking requires real-time thinking, correct pronunciation, appropriate vocabulary, and confidence all at once. Additionally, many students depend on memorized responses instead of developing natural communication skills, which limits their fluency. This article will analyze the main psychological and linguistic factors that make speaking difficult and highlight the gap between language knowledge and actual speaking performance.

This paper initially introduces the factors and problems that make speaking one of the most difficult skills. It then discusses ways to improve students' speaking skills. The research was conducted with 15 students from grades 6–7 at School No. 41 in Namangan.

**Methods.** To explore students' speaking challenges and enhance their speaking skills, various interactive classroom activities were carried out during English lessons with 6th and 7th-grade students. First, the Think–Pair–Share method was employed to help students organize their ideas before speaking. Students answered simple questions related to their daily lives, such as "What do you usually do after school?" or "What is your favorite subject?" They first thought individually, then discussed their answers with a partner, and finally shared their ideas with the class. This activity helped lessen anxiety and prepared students for speaking. Next, role-play activities were introduced to simulate real-life communication situations. Students worked in pairs or small

groups and acted out short dialogues such as meeting a new friend, shopping, or asking for directions. This approach encouraged students to speak more naturally and boosted their confidence by mimicking real communication.

Additionally, an Information Gap activity was used to foster spontaneous interaction. Students received different pieces of information and had to ask and answer questions to complete the task. Because they did not share the same information, they were required to communicate actively in English. This activity minimized memorization and promoted genuine communication.

Overall, these activities fostered a more interactive learning environment and helped students develop their speaking skills by increasing participation, confidence, and natural communication.

**Result.** The results of the survey show that speaking is considered one of the most difficult skills by the majority of students. According to the data, 60% of students reported that speaking is very difficult, while 25% found it difficult, and only 15% considered it neutral or easy. This suggests that most learners encounter significant challenges in speaking.

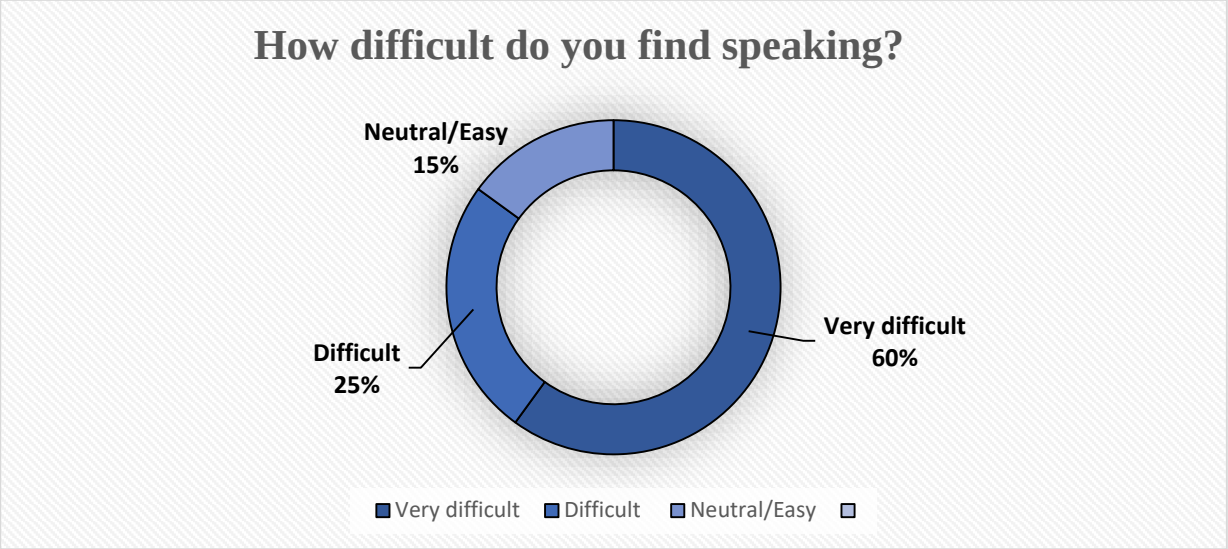



*Figure.2. The results of the survey questions*

In terms of participation, 50% of students stated that they sometimes speak English in class, while 30% rarely speak, and only 20% actively participate. This indicates that many students lack sufficient speaking practice during lessons. When asked about their main difficulties, 40% of students identified fear of making mistakes as the biggest problem, followed by 30% who mentioned lack of vocabulary, 20% pronunciation issues, and 10% lack of confidence. This highlights that psychological factors play a significant role in speaking difficulties.

Moreover, 65% of students reported feeling nervous when speaking English, which explains why many of them avoid speaking or rely on memorized answers. In fact, 55% of students admitted that they sometimes memorize answers instead of speaking freely, which limits their ability to communicate naturally.

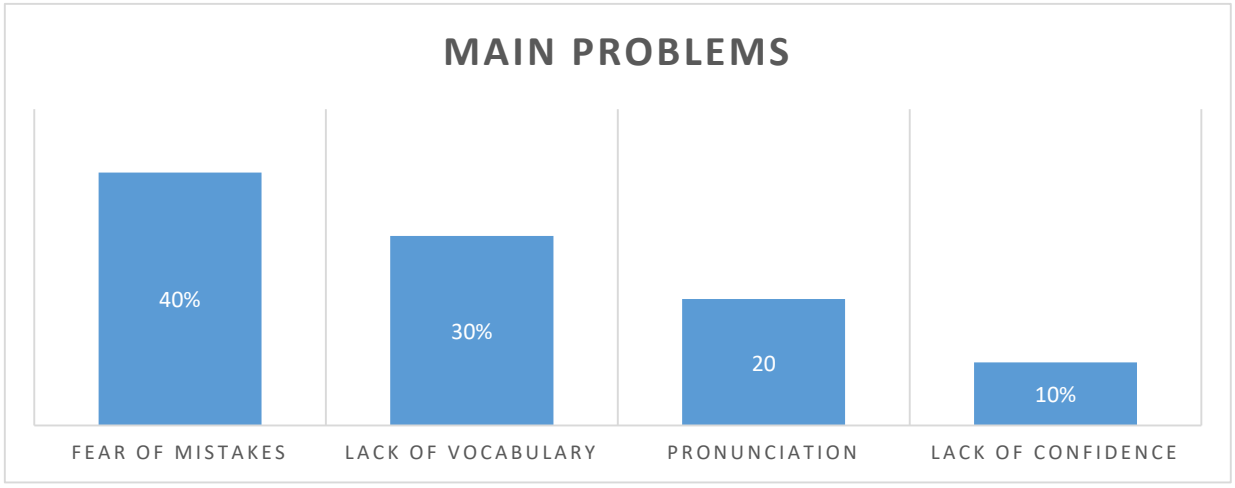



*Figure. 3. The results of the survey questions*

On a positive note, the data shows that interactive activities are helpful. 45% of students preferred role play, while 30% chose group discussions, and others selected question–answer activities. Additionally, 70% of students agreed that speaking activities help improve their confidence, and 80% expressed a desire for more speaking activities in class. Overall, the findings suggest that speaking difficulties are caused not only by linguistic problems but also by psychological barriers such as anxiety and fear. However, the use of interactive and communicative teaching methods can significantly improve students' speaking performance and confidence. **Discussion.** The results of this study show that speaking is one of the most challenging skills for English learners because of both language and psychological reasons. Many students struggle with issues like limited vocabulary and fear of making mistakes, which lowers their confidence and willingness to participate in speaking activities. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of confidence and practice in language learning.

Additionally, it was noted that students often rely on memorized responses instead of sharing their own ideas. This habit limits their ability to communicate naturally and

creates a disconnect between their language knowledge and actual speaking performance.

Nevertheless, using interactive methods such as role play, Think–Pair–Share, and information gap activities has had a positive effect on students' speaking abilities. These activities promote active engagement, reduce anxiety, and help students speak more confidently and naturally. Overall, the findings suggest that speaking challenges can be minimized through consistent practice and the use of communicative, student-centered teaching approaches.

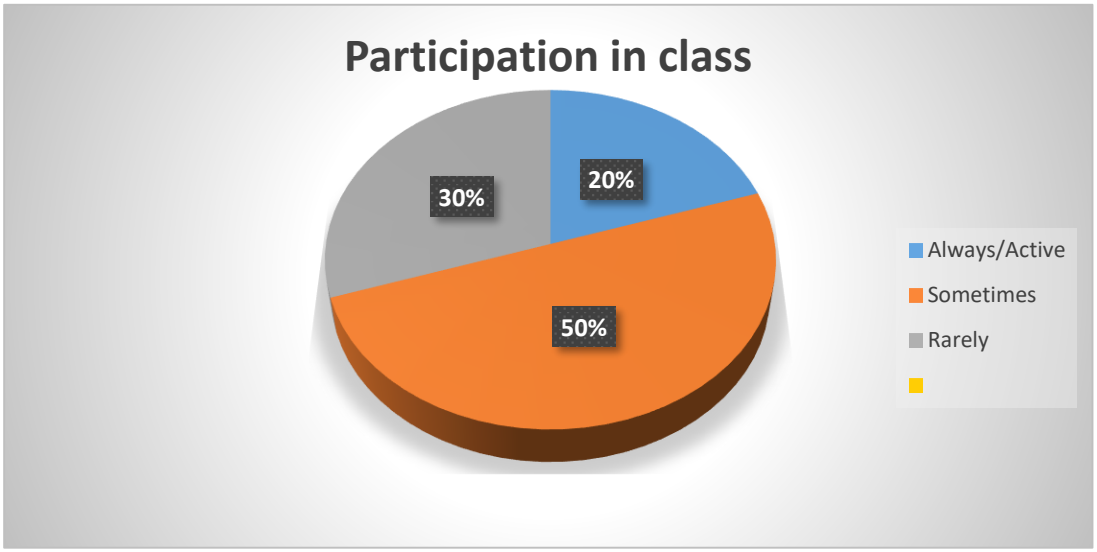



*Figure.4. The results of the survey questions.*

**Conclusion.** In summary, speaking is often seen as the most difficult skill to learn in English because of both language and psychological hurdles. Many students face challenges like limited vocabulary, fear of errors, and low confidence, which prevent them from speaking naturally and fluently. The results of this study indicate that traditional methods do not always effectively improve speaking skills. However, incorporating interactive and communicative activities like role play, Think–Pair–

Share, and information gap exercises can greatly boost students' confidence and participation.Therefore, teachers should foster a supportive classroom environment and offer more chances for students to practice speaking. With consistent practice and effective teaching methods, students can gradually overcome their difficulties and gain more confidence as English speakers.

**References:**

1. Speaking is a Challenging Skill in Language Learning, International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS) 2. Al Nakhalah (2016). Problems and difficulties of speaking that are encountered by English language students at Al-Quds Open University. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention;

3.Tuan& Mai, (2015). An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skills. International Journal of Research in English Education

4.Alharbi, H. A. (2015). Improving students' English speaking proficiency in Saudi public schools. International Journal of Instruction;

5. Bashir, Azeem, & Dogar, (2011). An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skills. International Journal of Research in English Education

.