

ABSTRACT

Despite the curriculum's focus on both pedagogical and linguistic competence, students exhibit persistent reluctance, hesitation, and anxiety in oral communication. This research aims to investigate the speaking difficulties and their causing factors among first-year English Language Teaching (ELT) students in a Transactional Speaking class at Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Purwokerto. A mixed method design was used in this research. This research used questionnaires and interviews as the research instruments. 14 ELT students of the 2025/2026 academic year in Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama participated in filling out the questionnaire and answering the interviews. The findings reveal that all students (100%) struggle with limited vocabularies, making it the most faced difficulty, followed by social pressure or shame (78.6%), fear of making mistakes (71.4%), lack of opportunities to practice (50%), influence of mother tongue (50%), and low self-confidence (42.8%). These difficulties were driven by nine factors: 1) Shyness; 2) Linguistic Limitation; 3) Students' Personal Expectation; 4) Fear of Negative Evaluation; 5) Late Learning Interest and Exposure of English; 6) Cognitive Load and Language Processing Speed; 7) Mother Language Usage Habit; 8) Internal Social Pressure; and 9) Environmental Boundary.

Keywords; *Speaking, speaking difficulties, factors of speaking difficulties, ELT*