

## EXPLORING GEN-Z STUDENTS' PROBLEMS AND ATTITUDES IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

Oleh :

Raysha Davinna<sup>1)</sup>, Gabby Maureen Pricilia<sup>2)</sup>, Angelina Monthesari<sup>3)</sup>, Reni Afifah Harahap<sup>4)</sup>, Rizky Harahap<sup>5)</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup> Fakultas Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial dan Bahasa, Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan  
email: rayshadavinna@gmail.com

### Informasi Artikel

#### Riwayat Artikel :

Submit, 2 April 2026  
Revisi, 24 Mei 2026  
Diterima, 25 Mei 2026  
Publish, 26 Mei 2026

#### Kata Kunci :

Gen Z Students,  
Student Issues,  
Student Attitudes,  
Speaking English.

### ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research are to find out: (1) To identify the common problems encountered by Gen Z students in speaking English, (2) To analyze the factors caused students problem in speaking English, (3) To explore the attitudes of students in speaking English. The method of the research descriptive qualitative research. The informant of this research is all third semester students of English Language Education Study program at Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan with total 18 students. The instruments to collect the data are questionnaires and interview. The results revealed students experienced significant affective problems such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, shyness and lost-of self-confidence; social aspect include role of parents class environment and learning community; instructional aspect like use of mother tongue, teacher low commands in speaking English and teacher speaking time; linguistically, students struggled with lack of vocabulary pronunciation, and grammar While the factors cause the problems are afraid of being judge, anxious, and effected pronunciation in English by mother tongue. Despite these challenges, students exhibited positive cognitive and behavioral attitudes, recognizing the importance of English speaking and actively participating when supported, although affective barriers moderated their oral performance. The study highlights the interconnectedness of Generation Z characteristics, such as digital-nativeness and social sensitivity, with conventional speaking problems and attitudes.

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license*



### Corresponding Author:

Nama: Raysha Davinna  
Afiliasi: Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan  
Email: rayshadavinna@gmail.com

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The researcher found if the use of English in Indonesia currently is no longer the same as how it is actually known here. English now in Indonesia seems more like a second language than foreign language, which is mostly done by the younger generation or Generation Z.

Generation Z is defined as individuals born from the mid-to-late 1990s to the early 2010s, represents a unique cohort of learners characterized by their digital fluency, diverse backgrounds, and distinct attitudes toward education. Looking back at the birth time span of Gen Z we can see if how

English in Indonesia can be more like the second language than foreign language.

The fact, the use of English in the daily communication by the Gen Z is not apply the same as how it is explained above to Gen Z of the 3rd semester students' in English language education study program of Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan. Based on preliminary data obtained by researchers through interviews with the Speaking subject lecturers the researcher find if most of the students still have some problems such as their limit of vocabulary that caused them hard to convey their thought, lack of grammar and how they pronounce

the word, not only about the linguistics aspect but most of the students also have problem with their confidence they still feel shy to speak English. But even if they have a problem in speaking English the lecturer said they always try to do some effort to maintain those problems by sometimes they even will make small notes to lead them to speak. Yet the lecturer even adjusted if there's a student that didn't even want to speak in the 1st semester but now that student has tried to speak by bringing that small notes.

Paying attention whit that phenomenon the researcher feels the importance of conducting the research about Gen Z students' problem and what factors cause the problems and how their attitude in speaking English by investigating the intersection of Generation Z characteristics, language proficiency challenges, and attitudes toward speaking English. Because the delay in understanding of the common problems and attitudes faced by these students of the prospective English teacher problems can cause the difficulty to the students in mastering the material when teach English in class later, and will certainly impact their students in the future.

Related to the problem face by the students in speaking English there have been some research related to this research (Normawati et al., 2023) it said if there are three main difficulties faced by the students in developing their English-speaking skills such as difficulty with grammar, which is caused by the differences between the students' first language and English, the language being learnt, difficulty with pronunciation in English due to the inhibition of the English pronunciation system. last problem is related to vocabulary mastery as a result of the difficulty in mastering the meaning of new words in English.

In (Jaya et al., 2022) it is said if the major problems faced by the students in speaking English were divided into, affective-related problems that consist of self-confidence, motivation, anxiety, duration of the exposure to the language, classroom conditions, environment, family background, students and teachers' competencies; socially-related problems that is include comprehension to practice English outside the classroom, and comprehension in speaking class, and the third factor is linguistically-related problems that is include vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and pronunciation. Students tend to have affective related problems in speaking due to some reasons, for instance anxiety, low confidence, and nervousness.

In order to know clearly the cause of students' problem in speaking English, the researcher will analyze the problem based on the the aspect of the students problem in speaking. According to (Aleksandrak, 2011; A-Hosni, 2014; Juhana, 2012; Nguyen & Tran, 2015; Ur, 1999) as cited in (Thao & Nguyet, 2019) have addressed different aspects of English speaking problems, namely affective

problem Affective problem is one of the most essential problem that is faced by of language learner. Learners' affective problem include fear of making mistakes, shyness, loss of self-confidence, and anxiety; social problem are include every components around the individual of the speaking just like role of parents, calss environment, learning community, and the opinions and views of people in the surrounding environment; instructional problem According to Nawshin (2009) in (Thao & Nguyet, 2019) states a number of reasons about teachers' instructional methods that can lead to English speaking difficulties are, teacher's speaking time, use of the mother tongue in the classroom, teachers' low command in speaking English; and linguistic problem are related to lack of vocabulary, lack of pronunciation and lack of grammar.

In the terms of attituted according to (Teuku Zulfikar, 2019) the concept of attitudes consist of three elements, those are cognitive aspect of attitude students' reason for learning English, students' level of English competence and students' perception of learning English; emotional aspect of attitude that consist of English is interesting, Lack of interest, Anxiety, Skill preference. And the last behavior aspect of attitude that is consist of Effective teaching strategies, Lack of participation, Making self-scheduling.

## 2. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The located of this research takes place in Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan. The respondents of this research are the third semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan, which consist of 18 students'. The researcher observation, interview and questionnaires as the instrument of this research to collect the data and analyze it using this formula:  $=f/N \times 100\%$ .

P= Percentage

F= Frequency of respondent

N= Number of sample

100%= Constants value

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter, the formulation of the problem are analyzed included 1) To identify the common problems encountered by Gen Z students in speaking English, 2) To analyze the factors caused students problem in speaking English, 3) To explore the attitudes of students in speaking English. The interview and questionnaires used to answer the first until third problem. Furthermore, inferential statistic was used to answer the third problem.

### 1. Gen Z Students' Common Problem in Speaking English

To determine the common problems the researcher will pay attention to the type of statement given by the researcher. If the statement is a positive statement the higher the average score the lowest the

students' problem about that statement. In the other hand, if the statement given is a negative statement, the higher the average score the more students have problem about that statement.

In the questionnaires the researcher gave, there are both positive and negative statement. For the positive statement there are the statement about lack of vocabulary, teacher speaking time, lost-of self-confidence, role of parents, class environment, and learning community. While for the negative statement there are, the statement about lack of grammar, lack of pronunciation, mother tongue, teacher low command in English, shyness, anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and point nd view of people in surrounding environment.

### a. The Affective Problems

Table.1.The Affective Aspects of Problem in Speak

No	Affective Aspect of Problem in speaking English	Percentages	Average Percentages	Criteria
1	Fear of making mistakes	56,67%	59,72%	Moderate
2	Shyness	55,56%		
3	Lost-of self-confidence	62,22%		
4	Anxiety	64,44%		

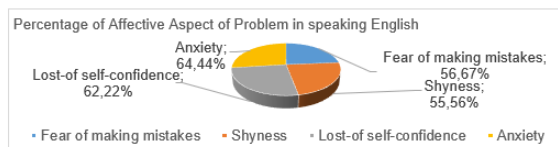


Figure.1. Percentage of Affective Aspect of Problem in speaking English

### b. The Social Related Problem

Table 2. The Social Related Problem in Speaking English Average Percentages and Criteria

No	Social Aspect of Problem in Speaking English	Percentages	Average Percentages	Criteria
1	Role of Parents	56,67%	61,67%	High
2	Class Environment	65,56%		
3	Learning Community	63,33%		
4	points and view of the people in surrounding environment	61,11%		

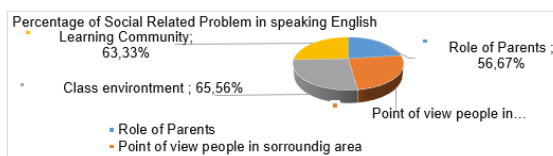


Figure 2. Percentage of Social Related Problem in speaking English

### c. Instructional Problem

Table 3. The Instructional Problem in Speaking English Average Percentages and Criteria

No	Instructional Aspect of Problem in speaking English	Percent ages	Average Percentages	Criteria
1	Teacher speaking time	58,89%	65,19%	High
2	Use of Mother Tongue	65,56%		
3	Teachers' Low Commands in Speaking English	71,11%		

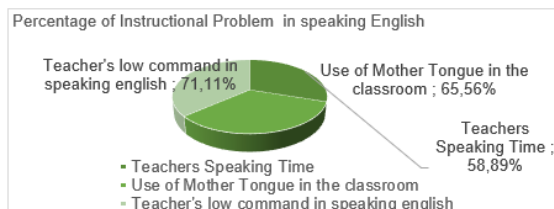


Figure 3. Percentage of Social Related Problem in speaking English

### d. Linguistics related problem

Table 4. Percentages of Linguistics Related Problem in speaking English

No	Linguistics Aspect of students Problem	Percent ages	Average Percentages	Criteria
1	Lack of Vocabullary	56,67%	58,52%	Moderate
2	Lack of Pronunciation	58,89%		
3	Lack of Grammar	55,56%		

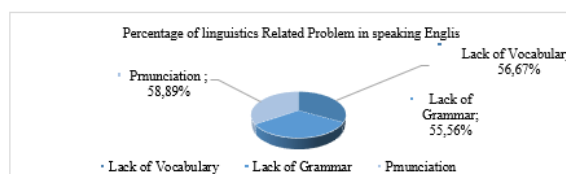


Figure 4. Percentage of Linguistics Related Problem in speaking English

Based on what is written above and displayed in the table above we can conclude if Gen Z students common problem in speaking English are the use of mother tongue with high category, teacher low command in speaking English with high category, anxiety with high category, Point and View of people in surrounding environment with high category. While for fear of making mistakes, shyness, role of parents, teacher speaking time, lack of vocabulary, lack of pronunciation, and lack of Grammar is in the moderate category.

While based on the interview the students problems are:

1) fear of making mistakes

F : *"kalua takut saat buat kesalahan pasti pernah tapi sejauh ini hal itu bukanlah masalah yang buat saya gak mau atau gk bisa ngomong sama sekali kak"*.

2) Shynes

F: *"kalau untuk ngomong kak saya lebih suka kalau orangnya sedikit aja kayak satu lawan satu gitu aja, kalua keramaian saya suka gugup dan tadi itu kak takut salah"*.

3) lost of self confidence

SB: *"Kalau untuk rasa percaya diri saya selalu merasa lebih percaya diri klaw saya lagi ngobrol sama teman saya kak, karena kalua salah gk akan terlalu gimana rasanya"*

4) Anxiety

SB: *"Kalau soal panik, khawatir pernah sih kak Pernah sih kak apalagi kalua saya lagi gk negrti orangnya ngomong apa dan hal ini kadang buat saya takut untuk berbicara tapi kadang jadi motivasi juga buat terus belajar lagi"*.

Based on the answer above it can conclude if the students most dominant problem in the affective related problem in speaking English, is about their self confidence that is effect their anxiety

#### a. The Social Aspect of Problem

##### 1) Role of Parents

IWS: "Untuk keluarga saya memang mereka tidak terlalu terjun langsung dalam membantuu saya berlatih ataupun emnguasai keterampilan berbicara dalam Bahasa Inggris tapi Mereka cukup supportive dan kerap kali memberi motivasi dan dukungan moral".

##### 2) Class Environment

SR: "untuk kelas ini sendiri mereka cukup supportive dan membuat saya pengen kak untuk lebih bisa bahasa Inggris jadi karena banyak dari mereka yang udah bisa saya juga pengen bisa kak".

##### 3) Learning Community

AM: "Mengingat karena saya adalah lelaki sendiri di kelas jadi mungkin agak sedikit canggung untuk berinteraksi dengan mereka jadi kalau untuk atmosphere kelas tidak terlalu mempengaruhi kak".

##### 4) About Points and View of People in Surrounding Environment

F: "Gk sih kak, saya tetap berbicara aja, walaupun ada yang lebih jago atau gimana saya tetap melilih untuk bicara karena nanti bisa bantu di koreksi".

From the results of the interview above about the social related problem faced by the students, it is conclude if they don't really have problem about their social environment, their family, their class environment, people around them, event their learning community is quite supportive. The only problem that the researcher find in this aspect is the fact that the only boy students' feel that he doesn't really feel effected no metter how the situation or condition because he is the only boy in the class.

#### b. The Instructional Aspect of Problem

##### 1) Teacher speaking time

RDA: " Kalau untuk saya sendiri kak sangat berpengaruh, karena semakin banyak gurunya ngomong saya semakin memiliki banyak kosa kata baru dari apa yang digunakan oleh guru saya kak tapi kadang yang saya temui ada dosen yang dia selalu minta mahasiswanya ngomong tapi dia gk ngomong kak".

##### 2) Use of Mother Tongue

IWS: "Karena saya di rumah memakai Bahasa batak mandailing sebagai Bahasa ibu saya itu membuat pronunciation saya maih kental dengan aksen batak mandailing"

##### 3) Teachers' Low Commands

AM: "Kalau saya sendiri akan lebih paham mengerti dan senang kalau gurunya ngomong nya campur-campur. Bahasa Inggris dan Bahasa Indonesia sih kak kalau terlalu jago juga kadang suka gk ngerti kak kadang juga ada guru yang selalu nyuruh ngomong tapi dia aja gk ngomong"

Based on the results of the interview above the researcher can conclude if the use of mother tongue and also Teachers' Low Commands in Speaking English are that factor that caused the students' hard to master English speaking ability.

#### 4) The Linguistics Aspect of Problem

##### 1) Lack of vocabulary

YV: "Tidak sesering itu memang kalau saya mempunyai kesulitan dalam menentukan kosa kata tapi bberapa kali masih ada".

##### 2) Lack of Pronunciation

NR "untuk pronunciation masih banyak kak Karena benar-benar gak tau kak kalau soal pronunciation sebelumnya".

##### 3) Lack of Grammar

NSR: "Kalau untuk grammar kak saya memang memiliki masalah di situ karena saya masih memiliki kemampuan yang buruk itu membuat kalimat, dan itu masih sering kali berantahkan kak".

According to the explanation above the researcher conclude if the students still have some problems in linguistics aspect but still the problem they face is still the common problem experience by the English learners.

#### 1. Factors Cause Students' Common Problem in Speaking English

For the Factor Cause the students' problem in speaking English the researcher got the data from the interview, and to make it easiest to understand the Researcher will devide it according to the aspect of the problem.

##### 1) The Affective aspect of problem

###### a. Fear of making mistakes

The students say they are fear of making mistakes because they are affarid of being judge about their English.

###### b. Shyness

The students feel shy if there are too many people in the place they are talking in, and they are afraid someone will make fun of them if they make a mistakes in speaking English.

###### c. Lost-of self-confidence

The students' get used to lost their self - confidence when they have to someone whose English ability is better than them so if they make a mistakes they will get judge

###### d. Anxiety

The students feel anxious when ther's someone asking them to talk but they don't know what the people say and they can't replay it.

##### 2) The Social Aspect of Problem

###### a. Role of Parents'

The students say they don't really have problem with their parents role, sometime their parents are just not really pay attention about their English.

###### b. Class Environtment

The students say of their class environtment is quite supportive, its just sometime they can't find a

match or a same level of friend to talk with in English so that they can understand each other.

c. Learning Community.

If it is about learning Community the students say if they don't really have a learning community accept their class mate, and they are quite help, but when they are about to practice outside the class, they have no friends to practice with.

d. Points and view of people in surrounding environment

The students actually don't really have a big deal with the people in the surrounding environment, it's just if there someone whose English is better then they will feel afraid to make a mistakes.

**3) The Instructional Aspect of Problem**

a. Teacher Speaking Time

The students say they if their problem about teacher speaking time that there are some teacher or, lecture they that get use to ask them to speak but never speak by them self, and get used to ask them to use English but don't use english.

b. Use of mother tongue

The students if their problem in the use of mother tongue is their class get used to use mother tongue in class, so they don't have enough time to practice in speaking English.

c. Teachers' Low Common in English

The students say if they get used to find their teacher ask them to speak English but the teacher don't speak English, so they don't get enough new knowledge and intention to speak English.

**4) The Linguistics Aspect of Problem**

a. Lack of Vocabulary

The reason why it is happen is because they haven't have enough vocabulary especially a not daily communication conversation

b. Lack of Pronunciation

The students say if their problem about pronunciation comes from their use of mother tongue that still effect they pronounce English. Aslo th estudnets feel it hard to pronounce English because it's still hard for the to make the different sound according to the English phonetics symbols.

c. Lak of Grammar

The lack of Grammar the Students face is because they still get it hard to make the sentence according to the rules of that grammar because they still have lots problem in understand the rules.

According to what is written above the researcher conclude if the factor cause the students problem in speaking English are;

Table 3. Factors Cause Gen Z Students' Problem and in Speaking English

No	Aspect of Problem	Students' Common Problem in Speaking English	Factor Cause
1.	The Affective Aspect of Problem	a. Fear of making mistakes	Afraid of being judge
		b.Shyness	Embarrassed
		c.Lost-of Self Confidence	Afraid of being judge and being embarrassed
		d.Anxiety	Anxious if they are have to talk spontaneously

2.	The Social Aspect of Problem	a. Role of Parents	Not really pay attention about their English
		b. Class Environment	Hard to find a same level of friend to talk with English
		c. Learning Community	They don't really have a learning community outside the class
		d. Point and View of People in surrounding Environment	Afraid if they make a mistakes when they talk and being judge
3.	The Instructonal Aspect of Problem	a. Teacher Speaking Time	Some teacher always ask them to talk but they never talk in
		b. Use of Mother Tongue	Always use mother tongue even in class so they don't have enough time to practice their English.
		c. Teachers' Low Commands in Speaking English	Some teacher rarely speak English so they don't get a new knowledge
4.	The Linguistics Aspect of problem	a. Lack of Vocabulary	still not used to vocabulary other than everyday conversation
		b. Lack of Pronunciation	So Effected by mother tongue
		c. Lack of Grammar	Still hard to understand and to arrange the sentence following the rules of grammar.

**2. Gen Z Students' Attitude in SPEAKING English**

No	Aspect of Attitudes	Students' Common Problem in Speaking English	Avarage Score	Category
1.	The Cognitive Aspect of Attitude	a.Students reason for learning english	77.78%	High
		b.Students' level of English Competence	62,22%	High
		c.Students' perceptions of learning English	75.56%	High
2.	The Social Aspect of Problem	a.English is interesting	67,78%	high
		b.Lack of interest	62,22%	High
		c.Anxiety	75.56%	High
		d.Skill preference	73,33%	High
3.	The Instructonal Aspect of Problem	a.Effective Teaching strategy	74,44%	high
		b.Lack of participation	46,67%	low
		c.Making self-scheduling	74,44%	High

According to the explanation above the researcher conclude if the students attitudes in speaking English is in behavior aspect is also stil in the positive level, because all students still enjoy every teaching strategy given by the teacher, and just a small number of students that ever felt that they don't want to join or participate in the class and also just a small number of student that don not make a self-schedule in learning speaking.

These findings align well with research (Normawati & dkk, 2023) and Jaya et al. (2022) similarly report vocabulary, grammar, and anxiety as major hurdles. Instructional constraints of mother tongue use and teacher proficiency reflect Nawshin (2009) and (Wulandari et al., 2022) Social motivation's importance corresponds with Aziz and Zakir (2022), and digital language mixing mirrors Ishak et al. (2025) and Yulyani (2024). Overall, this reinforces the multifaceted nature of Gen Z's

speaking challenges involving linguistic, emotional, social, instructional, and digital dimensions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

1. Gen Z students' common problem in speaking English are the use of mother tongue with high category, teacher low command in speaking English with high category, anxiety with high category, Point and View of people in surrounding environment with high category. While for fear of making mistakes, shyness, role of parents, teacher speaking time, lack of vocabulary and lack of pronunciation.
2. Factor cause Gen Z students' problem in speaking English are afraid of being judge, embarrassed, anxious, parents not really pay attention about the students English speaking ability, don't really have learning community outside the class, don't have time and friends to practice English. Effected by mother tongue using.
3. Students' attitudes in speaking English is still in positive level because the questionnaires show if most of the percentages still in the high average.

#### 5. REFERENCES

- Aziz, A., & Zakir, S. (2022). Investigation of Sociocultural Factors in Affecting English Speaking Ability of English Major Students at Lakidende University. *Indonesian Research Journal on Education: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 2(3), 1030–1037.
- Brown, H. D. (2018 ). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. Pearson Education: White Plains.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2001). Language Anxiety and Achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 12, 112–126. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190501000071>
- Jaya, H. P., Petrus, I., & Pitaloka, N. L. (2022). Speaking Performance and Problems Faced By English Major Students at A University in South Sumatera. *Indonedsan EFL Journal (IEFLJ)*, 8(1), 105–112.
- Normawati, A., Nugrahaeni, D. A., Kusuma Hadi Manggolo, N. S., & Susanto, A. I. F. (2023). EFL Learners' Difficulties in Speaking English. *English Language and Education Spectrum*, 1(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.53416/electrum.v1i1.116>
- Pricilia, Gabby Maureen, Irmayana, A., H. Rahmansyah, and W. Iskandar Lubis. (2025). Integration of ICT by The Use of The Yoodli Artificial Intelligence on Students' Speaking Skill. *Jurnal Education and Development*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 294-298.
- Thao, T. Q., & Nguyet, D. T. N. (2019). Four aspects of English speaking difficulties encountered by tertiary English-majored students. *Ho Chi Minh City Open University Journal of Science - Social Sciences*, 9(2), 53–64.

<https://doi.org/10.46223/hcmcoujs.soci.en.9.2.261.2019>

Wahyuddin, & et.al. (2022). Strategy for Developing Honesty and Caring Attitude in Students. *Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic and Interdisciplinary Studies*, 455-460.

Wulandari, N. A., Amalia, S., & Ramdhani, M. I. (2022). Investigating Speaking Difficulties of Senior High School Students: Linguistics and Psychological Problems. *ENGLISH FRANCA: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 6(1), 151. <https://doi.org/10.29240/ef.v6i1.4271>