

ABSTRACT

This study investigated Grade 8 students' linguistic and psychological speaking challenges, the responsive strategies used by the English teacher, and the application of those strategies to particular speaking challenges during English speaking activities at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pesantren Persatuan Islam 97, Cikajang, Garut, Indonesia. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through three classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with six selected students (S01–S06), and a semi-structured interview with one English teacher (T1). The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The findings revealed that students experienced interconnected linguistic and psychological speaking challenges during English speaking activities. The linguistic challenges included Limited Vocabulary, Grammatical Problems, Pronunciation Difficulties, and Lack of Fluency, while the psychological challenges included Anxiety, Fear of Making Mistakes, and Low Self-Confidence. To address these challenges, the teacher applied responsive strategies according to students' specific difficulties. Limited Vocabulary was addressed through scaffolding and modeling, Grammatical Problems through scaffolding, modeling, and feedback, Pronunciation Difficulties through modeling and feedback, and Lack of Fluency through wait time and scaffolding. Meanwhile, psychological challenges were addressed through encouragement, classroom support, feedback, and pair/group work. The application of these strategies involved adjusting the type, timing, intensity, and interaction arrangement of support through vocabulary cues, language examples, sentence guidance, pronunciation modeling, corrective feedback, preparation time, reassurance, and supportive classroom interaction. Therefore, this study provides a contextual description of the relationship between students' speaking challenges and teacher's responsive strategies during classroom speaking activities without claiming causal effects or long-term improvement in students' speaking ability.

Keywords: speaking challenges, responsive strategies, EFL classroom, scaffolding, Grade 8 students