GRADIVA

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

Anatomy of Speech Errors: Investigating the Root Causes of Oral Discourse Failures among Second Language Learners

Maria Morena E. DELA PEÑA[1] & Desiree S. DELA PEÑA[2]

1.PhD, Professor IV, Department of English, Biliran Province State University, Naval, Biliran, Philippines.
2.MAEd, Faculty Member, Department of English, Biliran Province State University, Naval, Biliran, Philippines.
Email: [1]mamorena.delapena@bipsu.edu.ph, [2]desiree.salonoy@bipsu.edu.ph

Abstract

This study investigated the systematic oral discourse errors and underlying causes of spoken English failures among Senior High School second language (L2) learners in the Division of Biliran during the 2024–2025 school year. Employing a descriptive-explanatory mixed-methods design, the research built a localized speech corpus and surveyed students across multiple academic tracks (STEM, ABM, HUMSS, TVL) using an adapted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), alongside qualitative focus group discussions. Grounded in Corder's Error Analysis, Selinker's Interlanguage Theory, and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, the integrated findings reveal a dual-dimensional crisis of internal cognitive-structural deficits (Linguistic Problems) and restrictive affective barriers (Behavioral Problems). Linguistically, limited vocabulary, inaccurate phonological execution, and a lack of syntactic automaticity create cognitive formulation bottlenecks that overload working memory, resulting in structural collapses, sentence fragmentation, and code-switching. Psychologically, these failures interact with heightened performance anxiety, low self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation, driving students into a defensive cycle of communication apprehension, passive silence, and a total collapse of their willingness to communicate (WTC). This is further compounded by deficient reading habits that starve the receptive-to-productive linguistic pipeline. The study concludes that overcoming these systemic errors requires shifting away from rigid, lecture-heavy pedagogical models and disruptive hyper-correction. A unified, multi-stakeholder intervention is recommended: instructors must transition into empathetic facilitators using student-centered, task-based techniques and structured cooperative groupings; school leadership must provide low-anxiety institutional resources like non-graded language hubs; and students must actively cultivate psychological resilience by practicing strategic compensatory skills and consistent target-language reading.

Keywords: *Error Analysis, Interlanguage, Affective Filter, Oral Discourse Failures.*

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape of the Philippines, the mastery of English as a Second Language remains a cornerstone of academic and professional competitiveness. However, achieving oral proficiency is an intricate cognitive and linguistic milestone that often surfaces visible vulnerabilities in student output. Within the classroom environment, these vulnerabilities manifest as systematic oral discourse errors. Rather than viewing these deviations as mere communicative failures, modern applied linguistics frames them as valuable windows into a learner's interlanguage development. To effectively remedy these breakdowns, educators must look past the surface-level mistakes and dissect the underlying structural, psychological, and environmental mechanisms that cause them.

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

While traditional error analysis focuses heavily on cataloging grammatical or phonological slips, it often falls short of explaining *why* these errors persist during real-time communication. L2 learners constantly navigate a high-stakes cognitive balancing act during classroom interactions. In formal settings, such as graded presentations or structured debates, performance anxiety and the pressure for accuracy often paralyze speech production or cause systemic syntactic collapses. Conversely, in informal interactions like group discussions or spontaneous peer exchanges, a lack of vocabulary or an overreliance on first-language structures can lead to code-switching and fragmented discourse. This dichotomy suggests that oral discourse failures are rarely driven by a single factor; they are the byproduct of intersecting linguistic deficits, affective filters, and situational pressures.

This study is conceptually anchored in Pit Corder's Error Analysis Theory and Larry Selinker's Interlanguage Theory, which state that learner errors are systematic and rule-governed rather than random. It further integrates Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis to account for how non-linguistic variables—such as anxiety, low confidence, and a restrictive classroom environment can disrupt the cognitive processing required for spoken English. By examining speech production through this multidimensional lens, this research moves beyond superficial error identification to investigate the anatomy or root causes of these oral discourse failures.

Understanding the root causes of speech errors is essential for developing targeted pedagogical interventions that transcend generic grammar drills. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the systematic root causes of spoken English errors committed by Senior High School L2 learners during both formal and informal classroom interactions. By isolating the linguistic, psychological, and environmental drivers behind these oral discourse failures, this study aims to provide data-driven insights that will help educators design supportive, high-impact instructional strategies, ultimately transforming the classroom into a confident space for authentic mathematical and academic discourse.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While oral communication is essential for language acquisition, second language (L2) learners frequently experience communication breakdowns during school interactions. Consequently, this study aimed to investigate the systematic oral discourse errors and dissect the underlying root causes of speech failures committed by Senior High School L2 learners during both formal and informal classroom interactions.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following question:

1) What are the root causes of the spoken English errors committed by students during formal and informal classroom interactions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The investigation into how second language (L2) learners produce speech, and why that communication occasionally breaks down, sits at the critical intersection of psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and second language acquisition (SLA) theory. To understand the complex structural anatomy of oral discourse failures, contemporary research requires a holistic approach that moves past surface-level mistakes to examine the systemic roots of speech degradation. Grounded in Stephen Corder's classic Error Analysis (EA) framework, modern literature carefully distinguishes between random communicative lapses, which are temporary

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

slips of the tongue caused by fatigue or memory constraints and systematic errors, which signal deep-seated gaps in a learner's underlying linguistic competence. When Senior High School students engage in spoken English activities, these systematic errors manifest visibly across phonological, syntactic, and lexical levels, surfacing as mispronunciations, disrupted subject-verb agreement, and inappropriate word choices. Rather than viewing these deviations as mere instructional failures, applied linguistics frames them as rule-governed manifestations of a student's active interlanguage, a distinct transitional linguistic system operating between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2).

A primary linguistic root cause of these oral discourse failures is cross-linguistic influence, or negative L1 transfer. During spontaneous speech production, learners routinely map the structural, morphological, and phonological rules of their native tongue directly onto spoken English structures, causing immediate syntactic breakdowns. This issue is severely compounded by the rapid, real-time cognitive processing required for oral communication. When an L2 learner encounters a lexical deficit mid-sentence, their cognitive processing capacity undergoes an immediate formulation bottleneck. The working memory becomes overwhelmed, forcing the student to rely on compensatory strategies such as hesitation pauses, false starts, and structural fragmentation, which ultimately disrupts oral fluency and alters the intended meaning of the discourse.

Beyond purely structural deficits, the psycholinguistic literature emphasizes that speaking is uniquely the most anxiety-inducing skill in second language development, heavily governed by affective variables. According to Stephen Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, psychological barriers such as heightened performance anxiety, low situational self-confidence, and a pervasive fear of negative evaluation by peers or instructors can completely paralyze oral output. When a student experiences intense communicative anxiety, their available working memory is drained by intrusive, self-monitoring thoughts. This psychological overload halts the automatic retrieval of vocabulary and grammatical structures, causing immediate oral discourse collapses during live communication, even if the student demonstrates perfect structural mastery on traditional, untimed written assessments.

Finally, the environmental architecture of the classroom dictates the exact nature and frequency of these speech failures, creating a distinct behavioral split between formal and informal instructional contexts. In formal settings, such as graded speeches or individual presentations, the high-stakes environment activates a restrictive affective filter; the intense pressure for grammatical accuracy frequently results in severe speech freezes, unnatural pauses, and rigid, robotic phrasing.

Conversely, during informal interactions like peer group discussions, the root cause shifts from anxiety to an overreliance on fluency over accuracy. In these casual settings, students encounter expression bottlenecks due to a lack of specialized vocabulary, prompting them to default to severe code-switching, incomplete sentences, and conversational drifting. Classrooms characterized by hyper-correction—where instructors interrupt mid-thought to correct grammar errors; ultimately exacerbate these root causes by intensifying psychological anxiety and diminishing the student's willingness to communicate WTC.

Concurrently, environments that lack structured, authentic communicative opportunities fail to provide the cognitive push necessary to break interlanguage fossilization, leaving learners stranded in survival-level oral proficiency.

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive-explanatory mixed-methods research design to comprehensively analyze the types and root causes of oral discourse errors among Senior High School second language (L2) learners. The quantitative component was employed to systematically identify, frequency-count, and categorize the specific linguistic errors committed by students, as well as to statistically measure the perceived influence of linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors. Concurrently, the qualitative strand used a phenomenological approach through thematic analysis to capture the deep, nuanced lived experiences and cognitive processing of students during speech breakdowns. By integrating both data streams, the methodology ensured that the surface-level manifestations of speech errors were structurally paired with their underlying psycholinguistic and environmental root causes.

The study was conducted within the Division of Biliran during the 2024–2025 school year, targeting Senior High School students enrolled in public institutions. A combination of purposive and stratified random sampling was used to select the participants. Purposive sampling ensured that the cohort consists of students actively engaged in oral-heavy English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) or Oral Communication courses, while stratified random sampling guaranteed proportional representation across different academic tracks such as, STEM, ABM, HUMSS, and TVL.

Data collection was executed in two distinct phases to mirror both formal and informal classroom interactions. For the quantitative phase, the researcher audio-recorded and transcribed structured student activities, such as individual graded presentations and spontaneous peer group discussions to build a localized speech corpus for error analysis. Additionally, a standardized, Likert-scale diagnostic survey adapted from Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and psycholinguistic frameworks was administered to measure the students' perceived linguistic deficits, affective filters, and environmental pressures. For the qualitative phase, semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with students exhibiting high error frequencies to uncover the internal, real-time cognitive and psychological bottlenecks they experience during oral production.

To analyze the gathered data, a rigorous multi-step procedure was applied. Quantitative oral data were subjected to Corder's five-step Error Analysis procedure: collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and weighted means were used to profile the error types and quantify survey responses regarding the root causes. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the FGD transcriptions were processed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework, which involves familiarization, initial code generation, searching for themes, and defining overarching thematic nodes. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative datasets were merged during the interpretation phase using a joint-display matrix to deliver a holistic, data-driven anatomy of the learners' oral discourse failures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Root Causes of Spoken English Errors Committed by Students during Formal and Informal Classroom Interactions. Participants recounted and described several factors that they believe are significant causes of their errors in speaking English during formal and informal

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

classroom interactions. Major themes extracted through the analysis of data were linguistic and behavioral problems.

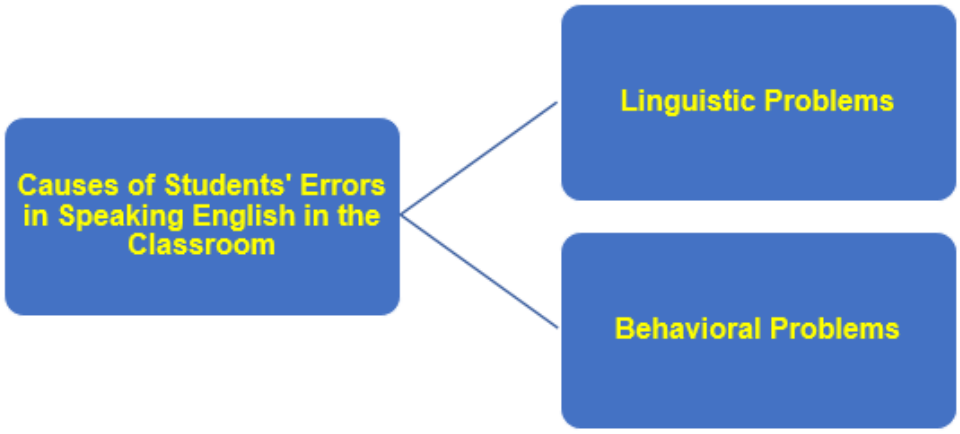

Figure 1: Root Causes of Spoken English Errors Committed by Students during Formal and Informal Classroom Interactions

1. Linguistic problems refer to the mechanical and structural breakdowns in language execution, stemming from proficiency deficits in core subsystems such as semantics (vocabulary), phonology (pronunciation), and syntax (grammar), which directly impede communication accuracy.

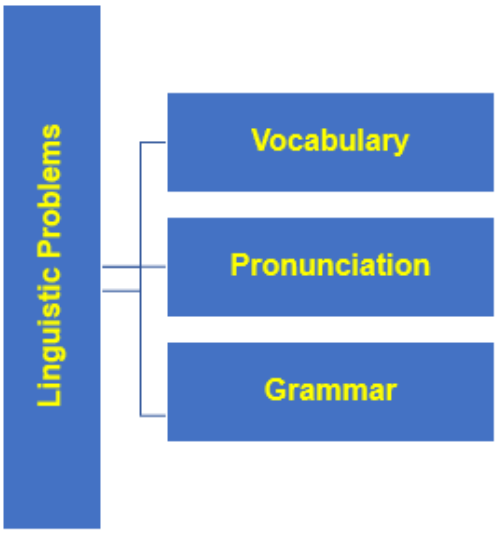

Figure 2: Linguistic Problems (Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Grammar

Vocabulary is the core lexical system of a language, encompassing the entire repository of words, expressions, and semantic units that an individual must acquire and retrieve to successfully decode, process, and articulate meaningful communication. This is reflected in one of the participants' responses:

The reasons that causes me this errors includes lack of vocabulary… (P6, L172, p76).

A robust mental lexicon is widely recognized as the foundational cornerstone of effective oral communication. Recent second language acquisition studies emphasize that a limited vocabulary remains a primary structural barrier, directly restricting a student's capacity to

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

convert abstract thoughts into spoken English (Alqahtani, 2021; Nguyen & Tran, 2023). When learners encounter a lexical deficit under real-time communicative pressure, their cognitive processing experiences an immediate formulation bottleneck (Al-Malki, 2022). Consequently, foreign language learners frequently struggle to sustain spontaneous discourse, forcing them to rely on defensive communication strategies such as prolonged hesitation pauses, code-switching, or complete message abandonment (Kusuma & Syafei, 2024; Zhou, 2025).

*Pronunciation i*s the production of speech sounds, encompassing phonetic precision, word stress, rhythm, and intonation, which collectively determine the clarity and intelligibility of spoken language. This is manifested in the participant's statement:

> *…lack of pronounciation practice, and most of the time these negative feelings that hinders me from speaking clearly (P6, L173, p75).*

In contemporary applied linguistics, clear phonological execution is a critical determinant of communicative intelligibility rather than a mere aesthetic goal. A speaker's mastery of segmentals (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmentals (stress and intonation) directly dictates how efficiently a listener decodes an utterance (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). Inaccurate production creates conversational ambiguity and forces listeners to expend excessive cognitive effort, frequently resulting in communication breakdowns (Sudewi, 2026).

Furthermore, this phonological vulnerability aggressively impacts a learner's psychological state. During formal presentations or classroom discussions, the persistent fear of mispronunciation activates a restrictive affective filter, triggering communication apprehension and causing students to withdraw from academic dialogue to avoid social embarrassment (Kusuma & Syafei, 2024). Consequently, modern L2 pedagogy prioritizes intelligible, functional pronunciation over native-like accent reduction to maintain the communicative competence and confidence necessary for classroom participation.

Grammar is the structural system of a language, encompassing the foundational rules of syntax, morphology, and mechanics that govern how words are organized, combined, and modified to construct meaningful and coherent sentences. This is evident in the participant's account:

> *Nervous because I think my classmate will laugh me when I speak English. (P2, L41-42, p69).*

Grammar governs how word forms are modified and synthesized into coherent sentences. A functional command of syntax, tense consistency, and morphology is critical for encoding accurate meaning during live discourse (Sari & Rahman, 2023). When second language (L2) learners possess automated grammatical knowledge, they seamlessly map thoughts onto spoken output, preserving semantic integrity.

Conversely, a lack of grammatical automaticity causes classroom speech degradation. Because real-time communication requires rapid sentence formulation, an unstable command of syntax forces learners to manually compute rules mid-speech (Al-Malki, 2022). This structural bottleneck increases cognitive load and disrupts spoken fluency, resulting in fragmented phrasing, severe structural collapses, and conversational paralysis (Zhou, 2025).

2. Behavioral Problems refer to a persistent pattern of disruptive, uncooperative, or maladaptive actions that deviate from established social and academic expectations, often interfering with an individual's learning, productivity, and interpersonal relationships. These are manifested through lack of confidence, lack of motivation, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

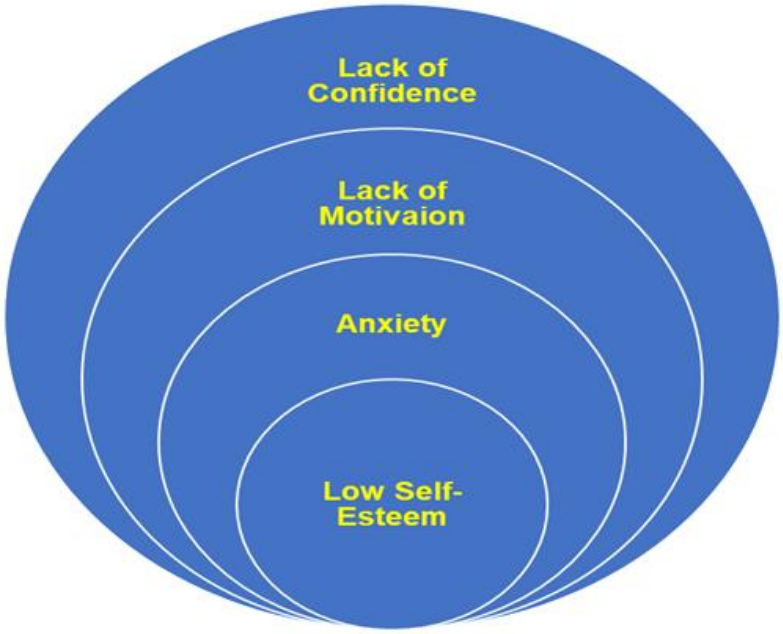

Figure 3: Behavioral Problems (Lack of Confidence, Lack of Motivation, Anxiety, and Low Self-Esteem)

Lack of confidence is a psychological state characterized by a deficit of self-belief and trust in one's own abilities, skills, or judgment, often leading to self-doubt, a fear of failure, and hesitation when performing tasks or interacting with others. The following insights reflect a shared understanding among participants:

> *Because I lack self-confidence (P3, L77, p72).*
>
> *Mostly when I am speaking in English I tend to see that I am lacking confidence especially when I am speaking because I tend to have a low self-esteem of that I am thinking that uhm I can't really answer the question right or maybe my answers are quiet away when I am speaking English (P5, L143-147, p75).*

Self-confidence is a primary psychological determinant of success in second language (L2) acquisition. Learners with high situational self-confidence demonstrate greater resilience and superior oral performance (Sari & Rahman, 2023). A lack of situational self-confidence surfaces during asymmetric communicative exchanges, that is, when a learner realizes an interlocutor has failed to decode their message or when they cannot comprehend incoming discourse (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). This breakdown in perceived competence triggers immediate communication apprehension, validating internal insecurities and causing learners to view their linguistic skills as inadequate.

Conversely, compromised self-confidence triggers acute communication apprehension, causing unconfident learners to adopt a defensive stance and remain silent while their peers dominate discourse (Zhou, 2025). Rather than deploying compensatory strategies to repair the breakdown, unconfident students frequently resort to defensive disengagement, manifesting as sudden silence, monosyllabic responses, or conversational abandonment.

This communicative withdrawal reflects a complete collapse of the learner's willingness to communicate, where the fear of performance overrides the desire for interaction. Ultimately,

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

this psychological withdrawal acts as a self-limiting barrier that strips learners of their willingness to communicate (WTC), denying them the authentic speaking practice required to build oral fluency and break the cycle of speech degradation.

Furthermore, L2 learners experience profound discouragement and social comparison anxiety when they perceive classmates to be more linguistically advanced (Nguyen & Tran, 2023; Sudewi, 2026). This peer-induced discomfort increases vulnerability, making students feel inadequate during live speech production. Because this psychological friction causes speech failures and long-term reticence, contemporary pedagogical frameworks emphasize that instructors must shift away from error-centric correction. Instead, teachers must cultivate a supportive, low-anxiety classroom climate that rebuilds confidence and normalizes mistakes as natural steps toward oral fluency.

Lack of motivation is a psychological state characterized by a deficit of intrinsic or extrinsic drive, enthusiasm, and goal-directed energy, resulting in decreased effort, low persistence, and a general reluctance to actively engage in or complete tasks. This is shown in the participants' responses:

Kulang sa practice and pagbasa sa English (P2, L55, p71).

For me first is, lack of lack of reading habit… (P4, L104, p73).

Given that oral performance difficulties stem heavily from motivational deficits, modern pedagogical research dictates that sustaining learner motivation must be a teacher's primary priority (Lamb, 2021; Henry & Thorsen, 2023). In second language acquisition (L2), motivation serves as the foundational catalyst that initiates learning and directly drives both academic achievement and a student's willingness to communicate (WTC) (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Boo et al., 2024).

A lack of intrinsic motivation directly manifests as a deficiency in regular reading and language practice outside the classroom. In second language (L2) acquisition, motivation is the primary engine for sustained linguistic effort; without it, learners rarely engage with the target language voluntarily (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). This motivational deficit creates a damaging cycle: a lack of reading habits restricts exposure to natural English syntax and vocabulary, which starves the linguistic foundation required to automate speech production during live interactions (Zhou, 2025).

Furthermore, oral fluency depends on a receptive-to-productive pipeline, where regular reading provides the cognitive scaffolding necessary for real-time lexical retrieval. Without the internal drive to read, students remain isolated from authentic language inputs, leaving them with a fractured and fossilized interlanguage system (Sari & Rahman, 2023). Consequently, this lack of motivation functions as a structural root cause of speech degradation, ensuring that students face immediate cognitive blocks and speech failures due to a lack of linguistic familiarity.

Because speech requires real-time vulnerability, unmotivated students frequently default to passive disengagement or complete speech avoidance. To counteract this, instructors must actively cultivate motivation by implementing autonomy-supportive teaching and relevant, task-based activities (Ushioda, 2023). Lowering the student's affective filter and stimulating intrinsic interest builds the psychological resilience necessary for learners to overcome structural speech errors and actively engage in classroom dialogue.

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by a persistent feeling of apprehension, tension, and nervous worry, often accompanied by heightened self-monitoring and a fear of negative outcomes or judgment. This is reflected in the participant's account:

> *…and next is anxiety because if you say something that is not correct uhm maybe your classmate they will treat you as something wrong ganon tas bagan you will be embarrassed. (P4, L104-107, p73).*

Speaking anxiety serves as a primary affective barrier that severely compromises student comfort and oral performance. This situational anxiety degrades the structural quality of speech, forcing learners to appear significantly less fluent than their actual cognitive competence allows (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2021). Because public performance requires immediate vulnerability, anxious students face rapid cognitive overload during live tasks (Derakhshan et al., 2023). To mitigate this, educators must intentionally engineer low-anxiety, supportive environments that stabilize students' emotional states during communicative activities (Horwitz, 2021).

Furthermore, this anxiety interacts aggressively with external environmental pressures. While extrinsic motivation can lower a student's affective filter, learners often cease using English outside the classroom due to sociocultural constraints and peer pressure (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2022). This reticence is exacerbated when instructors dominate classroom talk and fail to allocate sufficient opportunities for student expression, leading to communicative alienation and solidifying oral passivity (Ushioda, 2023). The convergence of low self-confidence and heightened anxiety represents the most formidable barrier to oral proficiency. Second language (L2) speaking anxiety serves as the definitive predictor of classroom reticence, directly undermining a student's willingness to communicate (WTC) (Zhang & Shao, 2024). Driven by a compounding cycle of insufficient oral practice, weak linguistic automaticity, and low self-perceived proficiency, this anxiety induces severe stress, causing students to halt their language performance to protect themselves from perceived social failure (Sari & Rahman, 2023).

To disrupt this cycle of avoidance, educational psychology emphasizes cultivating a strong, empathetic bond between instructors and students (Hagenauer et al., 2023). When teachers transition from rigid evaluators to supportive emotional facilitators, they create a secure interpersonal environment where students feel safe taking linguistic risks. This relational scaffolding effectively lowers the affective filter, normalizes errors as natural components of language acquisition, and helps learners overcome performance anxiety to build long-term oral fluency (Zhou, 2025).

Low-esteem is a negative evaluation of one's own worth and capabilities. In second language (L2) communication, it manifests as a lack of self-efficacy, causing learners to constantly doubt their linguistic abilities and feel inadequate compared to peers. To shield themselves from anticipated failure, judgment, or embarrassment, students ultimately choose passive silence. This is evident in the following insights:

> *Mostly when I am speaking in English I tend to see that I am lacking confidence especially when I am speaking because I tend to have a low self-esteem of that I am thinking that uhm I can't really answer the question right or maybe my answers are quiet away when I am speaking English (P5, L143-147, p75).*

> *Ano, sa factors in… some wha…something is in teacher, because in teaching, sometimes student don't understand what the teacher's uhm teaching to them. She just lesson lesson*

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

but she is not ano she's the her not… iton …tsk…na … adto na…(P1, L23-26)… iton dire mo siya na kukuan kun nahibaro ba or dire because as what you have kuan na na if you ask if they have learned they will say just yes and yes yes but the real reason he doesn't have ah (P1, L28-30, p70).

To achieve long-term solutions for oral discourse failures, modern educational frameworks dictate that instructors transition from rigid, lecture-centric models to dynamic learning facilitators (Haryanto et al., 2021). Instructional design research emphasizes that pedagogical agility, aligning delivery with diverse learner needs is critical for classroom success (Sari & Rahman, 2023). Deploying student-centered methods and task-based techniques scaffolds real-time communication, reduces cognitive load, and drives student engagement (Nguyen & Tran, 2023). A pervasive paradox in second language (L2) classrooms is that while most learners desire oral proficiency, many harbor a profound aversion to the formal learning process, viewing English as an institutional obligation rather than a tool for personal expression (Fatiloro, 2022). This psychological detachment leads to disengagement and indifference toward linguistic development.

Overcoming this motivational barrier requires a systemic reformation of learner attitudes that goes beyond the teacher alone (Zhou, 2025). Resolving deep-seated speaking errors and classroom passivity demands a unified effort from all educational stakeholders (Al-Malki, 2022): School leadership must provide institutional resources and low-anxiety environments: Teachers must design meaningful, real-world tasks; and Students must actively cultivate a willingness to take linguistic risks.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The data reveal that spoken English errors committed by students during formal and informal classroom interactions stem from two primary internal dimensions: Linguistic Problems (cognitive-structural deficits) and Behavioral Problems (affective-psychological barriers). Structurally, a lack of vocabulary serves as an immediate formulation bottleneck that forces second language (L2) learners into prolonged hesitations or complete message abandonment. This lexical deficit is compounded by poor pronunciation execution, which distorts communicative intelligibility and creates conversational ambiguity. Furthermore, a lack of grammatical automaticity under real-time communicative pressure forces students to manually compute syntactic and morphological rules mid-speech, leading to fragmented phrasing, structural sentence collapses, and performance paralysis. Together, these linguistic deficiencies form an internal cognitive barrier that disrupts the mechanical production of fluent speech.

Simultaneously, these structural failures interact aggressively with the students' psychological states, manifesting a severe behavioral problem. A lack of situational self-confidence, driven by conversational breakdowns and social comparison anxiety, strips learners of their willingness to communicate (WTC) and triggers defensive disengagement or sudden silence. This is exacerbated by a lack of intrinsic motivation, which manifests as a deficiency in regular reading habits; this deficiency starves the receptive-to-productive pipeline and isolates learners from the natural language input required to automate speech. Under public performance pressure, anxiety and low self-esteem overload the working memory with anxious self-monitoring and a fear of negative evaluation. This psychological friction forces students to choose passive silence to shield themselves from peer judgment, causing them to perform far below their actual linguistic competence.

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

Ultimately, the data highlight a pervasive classroom paradox: while students deeply desire oral proficiency, they suffer from an acute aversion to the formal learning process due to these combined cognitive and emotional strains. Resolving these deep-seated speaking errors and classroom passivity requires shifting away from rigid, lecture-centric, and error-centric instruction. Instead, a systemic, multi-stakeholder reformation is necessary. Instructors must transition into dynamic, empathetic facilitators who implement student-centered, task-based techniques that lower the affective filter and scaffold real-time communication. Concurrently, school leadership may provide the institutional resources to maintain low-anxiety environments, and students must actively cultivate the psychological resilience required to take linguistic risks and break the cycle of speech degradation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the systematic oral discourse errors and speech failures committed by Senior High School second language L2 learners during both formal and informal classroom interactions are driven by a dual-dimensional crisis of internal cognitive-structural deficits and maladaptive affective-psychological barriers. Linguistically, speech failures manifest a direct result of restricted vocabularies, inaccurate phonological execution, and a lack of grammatical automaticity. These deficits create immediate real-time bottlenecks that overload the working memory, causing structural sentence collapses, conversational ambiguity, and performance paralysis. Psychologically, these structural failures aggressively trigger a restrictive behavioral feedback loop. High levels of anxiety, low self-esteem, and deflated self-confidence cause students to experience acute communication apprehension. To shield themselves from peer judgment or social embarrassment, learners experience a total collapse in their willingness to communicate and resort to defensive disengagement, translating into passive silence and conversational abandonment. Furthermore, a distinct lack of intrinsic motivation starves the receptive-to-productive pipeline, fossilizing these errors due to a lack of out-of-class reading and language practice.

Ultimately, the study concludes that resolving these systematic spoken errors requires a departure from rigid, error-centric, and lecture-heavy pedagogical models. To break this cycle of speech degradation, a unified, multi-stakeholder intervention is required: school leadership must secure low-anxiety institutional environments, students must actively build the psychological resilience to take linguistic risks, and instructors must transition into dynamic facilitators who utilize student-centered, task-based techniques to effectively lower the affective filter and scaffold real-time oral proficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To systematically dismantle the linguistic and behavioral barriers hindering oral proficiency, a unified, multi-stakeholder intervention is recommended.

First, instructors may transition from lecture-centric models to roles as dynamic facilitators. This shift requires adopting student-centered, task-based techniques that simulate real-world communication to scaffold live discourse and reduce working-memory cognitive load. To lower students' affective filters and build situational confidence, teachers may de-emphasize immediate, public error correction during spontaneous speech, treating mistakes as natural developmental milestones. Furthermore, educators may restructure classroom dynamics by replacing open-floor volunteering with structured cooperative grouping formats, such as randomized small-group rotations to prevent peer monopolization and ensure equitable

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

floor time for low-confidence learners. Finally, integrating level-appropriate reading materials into the curriculum will stimulate the receptive-to-productive pipeline, naturally expanding vocabulary and building grammatical automaticity outside of active speaking tasks.

Second, school leadership may provide the infrastructure necessary to sustain a low-anxiety campus climate. Administrators may establish dedicated language hubs, English clubs, or informal speaking zones where students can practice oral communication free from the pressure of academic grading and negative peer evaluation. Curricular constraints may also be re-evaluated to expand interactive language activities, backed by targeted professional development workshops that equip teachers with strategies for empathetic classroom management and instructional agility.

Lastly, students may take active agency in cultivating their own psychological resilience and linguistic fluency. Rather than defaulting to defensive disengagement, silence, or conversational abandonment during communication breakdowns, learners may be explicitly trained to deploy active compensatory strategies, such as circumlocution and clarification checks, to bridge sudden semantic gaps. To break the cycle of speech degradation and interlanguage fossilization, students may also commit to consistent target-language reading habits and out-of-classroom practice, transforming English from an institutional obligation into a personal tool for meaningful expression.

Works Cited

1) Al-Malki, E. A. (2022). Formulation bottlenecks in spontaneous L2 speech production: The roles of lexical deficit and syntax processing. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, *51*(3), 511–528. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-022-09852-2

2) Alqahtani, M. (2021). The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, *9*(1), 21–34.

3) Boo, Z., Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2024). L2 motivation research: A comprehensive review of the field's trajectory and willingness to communicate. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *46*(2), 215–238.

4) Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learner's errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *5*(1-4), 161–170. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.1967.5.1-4.161

5) Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error analysis and interlanguage*. Oxford University Press.

6) Derakhshan, A., Briggs, J. G., & Mirshekari, S. (2023). Cognitive load and foreign language speaking anxiety during real-time oral tasks: An experimental look at L2 vulnerability. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *13*(2), 341–365. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2023.13.2.5

7) Dewaele, J.-M., & Dewaele, L. (2021). Actual and self-perceived linguistic competence: The calming effects of Foreign Language Enjoyment and the exacerbating effects of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, *105*(2), 529–546. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12713

8) Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation* (3rd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351006743

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

9) Fatiloro, O. F. (2022). The language learning paradox: Examining institutional obligation versus personal tool for expression among secondary L2 learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, *11*(4), 18–27. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.11n.4p.18

10) Hagenauer, G., Hascher, T., & Volet, S. E. (2023). Teacher–student relations in secondary education: The emotional scaffolding of educational psychology. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *72*, Article 102143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2023.102143

11) Haryanto, E., Yusuf, M., & Anwar, K. (2021). Shifting from lecture-centric to dynamic learning facilitation: A study on instructional designs in Southeast Asian L2 contexts. *Journal of Language and Education*, *7*(3), 114–128. https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2021.11890

12) Henry, A., & Thorsen, C. (2023). Sustaining learner motivation in the L2 classroom: Structured scaffolding and teacher priority. *Language Teaching Research*, *27*(4), 811–832. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211003451

13) Horwitz, E. K. (2021). Reflections on *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*: Making the language classroom a low-anxiety, supportive environment. *Modern Language Journal*, *105*(S1), 60–73. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12702

14) Jarvis, S., & Pavlenko, A. (2008). *Crosslinguistic influence in language and cognition*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203935927

15) Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.

16) Kusuma, A. R., & Syafei, M. (2024). Navigating the affective filter: The psychological impact of phonological vulnerabilities and lexical gaps on oral production. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *14*(2), 289–311.

17) Lamb, M. (2021). Future directedness and motivation in language learning classroom environments. *System*, *98*, Article 102494. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102494

18) Levelt, W. J. (1989). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. MIT Press.

19) MacIntyre, P. D., & Gregersen, T. (2022). Affective variables in second language acquisition: Sociocultural constraints, peer pressure, and the willing listener. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *42*, 88–96. https://doi.org/10.1017/S026719052200005X

20) MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, *82*(4), 545–562. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x

21) Nguyen, T. H. T., & Tran, T. M. (2023). Segmental and suprasegmental mastery: Driving communicative intelligibility and mitigating structural barriers in L2 spoken English. *Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *10*(1), 45–62.

22) Sari, D. P., & Rahman, A. (2023). Syntactic automaticity and morphological accuracy in live L2 discourse. *Language Teaching Research Journal*, *7*(4), 112–129.

Volume 65 | Issue 07 | July 2026
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21451605

23) Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *10*(1-4), 209–231. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.1972.10.1-4.209

24) Sudewi, N. K. (2026). Conversational ambiguity and cognitive load: The cost of inaccurate phonological production in classroom settings. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *15*(3), 402–418.

25) Ushioda, E. (2023). *Language learning motivation: An ethical and autonomy-supportive approach for teachers*. Oxford University Press.

26) Zhang, R., & Shao, Q. (2024). Second language speaking anxiety as a definitive predictor of classroom reticence and willingness to communicate (WTC). *System*, *120*, Article 103210. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103210

27) Zhou, Y. (2025). Manual rule computation under time constraints: Structural bottlenecks and conversational paralysis in spontaneous L2 speech. *Modern Language Journal*, *109*(1), 88–105. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12944