Research Article

Internal and External Factors Influencing Students' Reluctance to Speak English

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Abstract. The aim of this research to investigated the factors that most influenced the tenth-grade students of SMAN 12 Kota Jambi's reluctance to speak English. This research utilized a quantitative method with a survey approach. The data of this research were collected by using a questionnaire The results showed that internal factors had a mean value of 33.99, while external factors had a mean value of 25.69. Based on these data, it can be informed that internal factors had the highest mean value, which means that internal factors caused higher reluctance than external factors. Among internal factors, the fear of mistakes was the most influential on the tenth-grade students of SMAN 12 Kota

Jambi's reluctance to speak English, because it had the highest mean value, 3.34. Therefore, support from the students' environment is needed, for example, motivation from their parents and positive support from their classmates. The teachers should advise the use of appropriate learning techniques. Additionally, students should be given an understanding that making mistakes is normal in the learning process.

Keywords: External Factors, Internal Factors, Reluctance to Speak English

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool that plays an important role in people's lives to convey a message or intention from one person to another. English plays a special role among the various languages in the world because many people use it widely as a national language and an international language. In Indonesia, English has been included in the national education system through the curriculum since independence as an effort to improve human resources' ability to communicate with speakers of this language (Darmawan, 2019; Zein et al., 2020). In the 21st century, mastering English is important and is even emphasized because there are six competencies adopted into the curriculum for preparing pupils to thrive in the face of the 21st century (Pardede, 2020).

The teaching of English requires pupils to acquire proficiency in four areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. However, in the context of English lessons at school, speaking skills are considered one of the four English skills that are difficult for students to master because students do not practice speaking English enough, or they do not have the opportunity to practice it. Apart from that, this is because speaking skills are not just about speaking, but combining the ability to process words or sentences and listening skills (Astutie, 2018).

Based on the researcher's teaching experience, when participated in a *Magang Kependidikan* on March 06, 2024 to June 16, 2024 at SMAN 12 Kota Jambi, the researcher noticed that the tenth-grade students were reluctant to speak English in English class, which will be the focus of this research. The students' reluctance to speak English was accompanied by fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed at by their peers, and lack of self-confidence, even though they had studied English at school from elementary to high school. When they were asked questions, most of them struggled and even chose to remain silent. Even when they were required to share their ideas or comments, they tended to use Indonesian or their local regional language instead of English. It is aligned with Ur (1996) that some common characteristics that often occur in English class, such as, students were low or uneven participation, and the most important thing is that the use of the mother tongue in speaking activities was still prominent. Students' reluctance to speak English may also be caused by influencing factors that come from within the students themselves or from outside. These kinds of things probably happen for several reasons, such as the lack of time to study English subjects in class, and the use of Indonesian in teaching English is still used in class.

However, these preliminary observations are still subjective as a researcher who

believes that students' reluctance to speak English is probably influenced by internal and external factors. While several previous studies (Indrawati, 2019; Maya et al., 2025; Triani, 2025) have investigated reluctance to speak English, there are still limitations to their research, namely the lack of a comparison between internal and external factors influencing students' reluctance to speak English. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing and comparing internal and external factors from the perspective of the tenth-grade students at SMAN 12 Kota Jambi.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research utilized a quantitative design. A quantitative approach is a type of study that utilizes statistical procedures for data analysis as a benchmark for concluding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The data source was 224 tenth-grade students at SMAN 12 Kota Jambi in the 2025/2026 academic year, and it was selected through total sampling. Total sampling is a sampling technique where the number of samples is equal to the population.

In this research, the data were collected through a questionnaire via Google Form to deliver the questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire was adapted from the research by Indrawati (2019 and Maya et al. (2025). The questionnaire of this research used a five-point Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree).

After responses had been collected from the actual research sample, the collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistical analysis in the SPSS program to investigate which factors most influence students' reluctance to speak English. According to Salkind (2010), descriptive statistics is a technique used to describe and summarize the characteristics of a data set numerically, graphically, or in tables. The data collected was checked periodically to avoid errors. Once the data were prepared, an analysis was carried out focusing on which indicators tended to be the factors that most influenced students' reluctance to speak English. In this case, what was determined were the percentage and mean of the data collected. Then the data from the questionnaire were presented in the form of a table. Finally, the researcher concluded the results obtained after the data processing had been completed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research question, which set out to investigate the factors that have mostly influenced the tenth-grade students of SMAN 12 Kota Jambi's reluctance to speak English, are summarized in table 3 and 4 below.

Table 1. Mean Score for Each Questionnaire Item of Internal Factors

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
P1	3.27	1.085	Moderate
P2	3.34	1.064	Moderate
P3	2.84	1.051	Moderate
P4	2.64	1.115	Moderate
P5	3.21	1.148	Moderate

P6	3.33	1.031	Moderate
P7	3.02	1.169	Moderate
P8	3.09	1.237	Moderate
P9	2.96	1.194	Moderate
P10	3.14	1.184	Moderate
P11	3.13	1.175	Moderate

From the table, it can be seen that P1 - P11 represent the statements numbered 1 - 11 of internal factors. Meanwhile, the P1 – P3 represent the statements of fear of mistakes. The P4 – P6 represent the statements of anxiety. The P7 - P9 represent the statements of shyness. The P10 - P11 represent the statements of lack of confidence. Analysis of each statement showed that among statements P1-P11, P2 (I am afraid of making mistakes while speaking in English), which represented the fear of mistakes indicator, had the highest mean (3.34). This was interpreted as an indication that fear of mistakes was identified as a significant internal factor influencing students' reluctance to speak English.

Table 2. Mean Score for Each Questionnaire Item of External Factors

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
Q12	2.34	1.109	Low
Q13	2.46	1.054	Low
Q14	2.40	1.019	Low
Q15	2.71	.997	Moderate
Q16	2.80	.970	Moderate
Q17	2.69	1.041	Moderate
Q18	2.46	1.112	Low
Q19	2.33	1.147	Low
Q20	2.52	1.175	Low
Q21	2.98	1.092	Moderate

From the table, it can be seen that Q12 - Q21 represent the statements numbered 12 to 21 of external factors. Meanwhile, the Q12 – Q14 represent the statements of low motivation. The Q15 – Q17 represent the statements of mother tongue use. The Q18 – Q19 represent the statements of lack of parents' attention. The Q20 – Q21 represent the statements of learning media use. Analysis of statements Q12-Q21, Q21 (The lack of an interactive source influenced my interest in speaking English), which represented the learning media use indicator, had the highest mean (2.98). This was interpreted as an indication that learning media use was identified as a significant external factor influencing students' reluctance to speak English. A summary of these findings is presented in the table below:

Table 3. Mean of Internal and External Factors

Factors	Number of Indicators	Total Mean
Internal	4	33.99
External	4	25.69

The table above shows the results of descriptive statistical calculations of internal and external factors influencing students' reluctance to speak English. Internal factors, coded as "P", are composed of the following indicators: fear of mistakes, anxiety, shyness, and lack of confidence. Meanwhile, external factors, coded as "Q", are composed of the following indicators: low motivation, mother tongue use, lack of parents' attention, and learning media use.

As shown in the table, the total internal factor data has a mean of 33.99. On the other hand, the total external factor data has a mean of 25.69. A comparison between these two factors shows that internal factors had the highest mean score compared to the mean score for external factors. This finding indicates that internal factors significantly influenced students' reluctance to speak English, particularly the fear of making mistakes. In other words, the dominant factor causing students' reluctance to speak English came from within themselves.

DISCUSSION

As indicated by numerous studies, internal factors can influence students' reluctance to speak English. The findings of this study indicate that both internal and external factors contributed to students' reluctance to speak English in the tenth grade at SMAN 12 Kota Jambi. However, internal factors contributed more strongly, with a mean value of 33.99 compared to external factors with a mean value of 25.69. These findings align with Indrawati (2019), who found that internal factors were the most influential factor in students' ability to speak English.

A. Internal Factors Influencing Students' Reluctance to Speak English

Based on descriptive statistical analysis, internal factors such as fear of mistakes, anxiety, shyness, and lack of confidence were often factors that caused students to be reluctant to speak English in English class.

1. Fear of Mistakes

Fear of Mistakes (P1–P3) had the highest mean score (3.15) compared to the other indicators. This shows that the student's reluctance to speak English is because they are afraid of making mistakes and worried about getting corrected by their teacher or their peers. These align with Hasibuan & Irzawati (2020), who stated that students often hesitated to speak English due to the fear of being corrected or laughed at by their peers. This result is also supported by Ur (1996), she stated that learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts. In addition, Triani (2025), said that factors that make students reluctance to speak English zone are nervousness, shyness and

trembling, lack of speaking practice, lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes.

However, unlike Indrawati (2019), who found that mother tongue use had a big influence on the students' reluctance to speak English. It is also in contrast to Maya et al. (2025), who reported that some factors that obstructed students from speaking are the environment, the teachers' method, lack of confidence, and did not like English. And the environment was a significant barrier to speak English.

2. Anxiety

Anxiety (P4-P6) also had a high mean value (3.06), but it is lower than the fear of mistakes. This shows that the students' reluctance to speak English is because they are worried about their pronunciation, they feel frightened when the teacher asks to speak in English, and they feel uncomfortable. This is supported by Horwitz et al. (2016) that anxiety can make students do not feel comfortable when they speak in English. In addition, this is consistent with Triani (2025), who argued that anxiety, pronunciation, confidence, and English language ability are significant factors affecting students' reluctance to speak English because anxiety can affect students not being able to understand what the interlocutor is saying.

However, this result is in contrast to Ur (1996), who reported that some of the factors in getting learners reluctance to speak English are inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. It also differs from Maya et al. (2025), who concluded that students' interest, motivation, and lack of confidence caused students' reluctance to speak English, and with Indrawati (2019), who emphasized that factors who gives big influence to the students' reluctance to speak English is mother tongue.

3. Shyness

Shyness (P7-P9) had the lowest mean value (3.02) in the internal indicator. This shows that the students' reluctance to speak English is because the students are shy to speak in front of their English teachers and their classmates and it can make them choose to be silent. When students choose to remain silent because of shyness, it hinders their speaking skills. These align with Keramida & Tsiplakides (2009), who stated that shy students are less likely to take risks in language learning, which hinders their speaking development and fluency. This result is also in line with Ur (1996), who also found that shy of the attention, worried about making mistakes, and fearful of criticism or losing face often inhibited learners from trying to say things in a foreign language.

On the other hand, this contradicts findings by Indrawati (2019), who highlighted mother tongue use as a factor which gave a big influence on students' reluctance to speak English. It also differs from Maya et al. (2025), who reported that students' interest, motivation, and lack of confidence were the factors causing students' reluctance to speak in English. Furthermore, Triani (2025), who highlighted that anxiety is an obstacle to students reluctant to speak English.

4. Lack of Confidence

Lack of confidence (P10-P11) also showed a high mean value (3.13), but lower than fear of mistakes. This shows that the students' reluctance to speak English is because the students feel their English skills is not good as their classmates and they

afraid of making mistakes. This result is in line with Ariyanti (2016) that students who lack self-confidence tend to be quiet during English lessons because they fear making mistakes and being judged by their peers. It is supported by Maya et al. (2025), who also found that lack of confidence made the students reluctant to speak because they felt that their English was not good enough, and they often felt their classmates underestimated them when speaking English. In addition, Triani (2025), concluded that English language ability, anxiety, and confidence were significant factors contributing to students' reluctance to speak English.

However, this result contradicts Ur (1996) and Indrawati (2019), who both highlighted that mother tongue use had a significant influence on students' reluctance to speak in English.

B. External Factors Influencing Students' Reluctance to Speak English

Although based on descriptive statistical analysis, external factors such as low motivation, mother tongue use, lack of parents' attention, and learning media use had a lower overall mean, they still played a role in influencing students' reluctance to speak English.

1. Low Motivation

Low motivation (Q12-Q14) showed a low mean value (2.40). It appears that student motivation does not affect students' reluctance to speak English. The findings of this study are inconsistent with research by Riaan (2018) that low motivation has been experienced by everyone, including students, as it is a situation where a student does not want to learn due to the difficulty in following the lesson. It is also supported by Triani (2025), who also found that unsupportive motivation was one of the reasons why the students were reluctant to speak English.

On the other hand, this result contradicts findings with Maya et al. (2025), who argued that the students said the environment did not support speaking English, as seen in their social life in the family; they are not used to speaking English in daily activities. It also differs from Indrawati (2019 and Ur (1996), who emphasized that mother tongue use had a significant influence on students' reluctance to speak in English.

2. Mother Tongue Use

Mother tongue use (Q15-Q17) had a high mean value (2.73). This shows that the students' reluctance to speak English is because they are always using their mother tongue in English class, and they feel more confident when speaking in their mother tongue. This aligns with Harmer (1991) that there are reasons why students use their mother tongue in class; when discussing something that they may find difficult to master, students will use their mother tongue to explain. It is supported by Indrawati(2019) and Ur (1996), who found that mother tongue use had a significant influence on students' reluctance to speak in English.

On the other hand, this result contradicts Maya et al. (2025), who concluded that lack of confidence rather than mother tongue use was the primary influence on students' reluctance to speak because they feel that their English is not good enough. It also differs from Triani (2025), who concluded that anxiety, pronunciation,

confidence, and English language ability are significant factors affecting students' reluctance in speaking English in the English zone.

3. Lack of Parents' Attention

Lack of parents' attention (Q18-Q19) had the lowest mean value (2.39) in the external indicator. This shows that a lack of parents' attention does not affect students' reluctance to speak English. The findings of this study are inconsistent with research by Indrawati (2019) that in the family, there must be a good relationship between parents and children, and a good relationship can give good support for children of course the students' achievement will improve. It is supported by Maya et al. (2025), who found that the students' environment supported by seeing their social life in the family, allowed and helped them to acquire English.

However, this result contradicts Ur (1996), who found that some of the factors in getting learners reluctant to speak English are inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. It also differs from Triani (2025), who concluded that significant factors affecting students' reluctance to speak English in the English zone are anxiety, pronunciation, confidence, and English language ability.

4. Learning Media Use

Learning media use (Q20-Q21) had the highest mean score (2.75) compared to the other indicators in the external factors. This shows that the student's reluctance to speak English is due to a lack of an interactive source, which influenced the students' interest in speaking English. These align with Prensky (2001), who found that integrating technology and diverse media into education engages students more effectively by aligning with their digital native tendencies. So, it can increase students' interest in learning. It is supported by Maya et al. (2025), who found that the environment and the facilities of learning. The facilities could be used to practice English, such as dictionaries, audio-visual aids, and appropriate textbooks. Also, Indrawati (2019), who found that students more understand when the teacher uses the media rather than not using the media. It shows that learning media use is very important.

However, this result differs from Ur (1996), who found that some of the factors in getting learners reluctant to speak English are inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use.

Study and analyze each aspect of the problem one by one. It is necessary to build arguments and analyze the data discussed and compared with other research and scholarly works. In other words, the way to address an issue here is to combine data and discussion. If necessary, include tables, figures, figures or other illustrations. For quotations use the APA (American Psychological Association) style, for example: (Iqbal, 1983: 47). The body note contains the author's last name, year of publication, and page (Edelman, 2015: 6). It is recommended to use the Mendeley reference management application (Ichwan, 2001:3).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion based on the research result using a questionnaire, that the internal factors (fear of mistakes, anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence) were the most influential factor in the influence the tenth-grade students of SMAN 12 Kota Jambi's

reluctance to speak English, because it has a higher mean (33.99) compared to the mean of external factors (25.69). Among the four indicators, fear of mistakes was found to have the highest mean score in the overall indicators. The second was lack of confidence, the third was anxiety, and the fourth was shyness, which has a lower mean score in internal factors. This is explained by the fact that many students are reluctant to speak in English because they are afraid of making mistakes, afraid of being corrected, feel frightened when the teacher asks to speak in English, shy to speak in front of their English teacher and their classmates, and feel their English skills are not as good as their classmates

The conclusion of the external factors based on the research result using a questionnaire, which has been described previously, showed that external factors (low motivation, mother tongue use, lack of parents' attention, and learning media use) were found to have a lower level of influence on the tenth-grade students of SMAN 12 Kota Jambi's reluctance to speak English. However, learning media use as one of the indicators of external factors had a relatively high influence on students' reluctance to speak English, followed by mother tongue use.

Based on the results of this research, the researchers would like to give some suggestions to the English teacher and the students. The English teachers should be able to create a supportive classroom environment and provide students with an understanding that making mistakes is normal and part of the learning process. Furthermore, teachers should consider appropriate teaching techniques tailored to the student's specific needs. This should also be followed up with positive feedback.

Also, the students should instill in themselves the belief that making mistakes while learning to speak English is part of the learning process. Then, they should strive to build self-confidence by continually practicing speaking English both during and outside of class, and by encouraging themselves to speak more in English than their native language during practice.

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