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Instructional Strategies and Affective Barriers as Predictors to the Speaking Ability of Junior High School Students

Rayma A. Hamid[1], Aiza H. Sali[1], Geanky O. Malinao[2], Amina H. Ticzon[3], Anang Masdiya S. Sabli[3], Munayra T. Jaafar[4], Rolando J. Malinao[4], Manuel C. Malinao[4]

[1]*Student, College of Education, Mindanao State University–Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines*
[2]*Associate Professor V, Integrated Laboratory School, Mindanao State University–Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines*
[3]*Instructor I, Integrated Laboratory School, Mindanao State University–Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines*
[4]*Assistant Professor IV, Integrated Laboratory School, Mindanao State University–Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines*

Email of Corresponding Author: geankymalinao@msutawi-tawi.edu.ph

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Abstract

This study examined instructional strategies, affective barriers, and English-speaking ability among Grade 10 students at Mindanao State University–Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography, College of Education Integrated Laboratory School, during the school year 2024–2025. A descriptive quantitative research design involved eight purposively selected English teachers and 70 randomly selected students. Data were collected using adapted questionnaires and a picture-based oral speaking assessment and analyzed through weighted means, the Mann–Whitney U test, and Spearman correlation. Findings revealed high implementation of interactive ($M = 4.26$) and experiential ($M = 4.28$) instructional strategies. Students reported affective barriers involving attitudes ($M = 3.74$) and motivation ($M = 3.73$). Pronunciation met expectations ($M = 3.50$), whereas fluency required improvement ($M = 3.00$). A significant difference was identified between instructional strategies and affective barriers ($U = 267.5$, $p < .001$), while no significant relationship existed between affective barriers and speaking ability ($\rho = 0.15$, $p = .20$). These findings indicate that frequent instructional strategy implementation does not necessarily correspond to stronger speaking performance. Teachers should prioritize structured oral communication activities, fluency development, and supportive classroom environments. The single-institution sample and assessment limited to pronunciation and fluency constrain generalizability. The study provides context-specific evidence to guide responsive English instruction and strengthen communication development in multilingual secondary education.

Keywords: Affective Barriers; English-Speaking Ability; Experiential Instruction; Fluency Development; Instructional Strategies; Interactive Instruction; Junior High School

1. Introduction

English-speaking proficiency supports students' classroom participation, academic communication, and opportunities for meaningful interaction. Research on English-language instruction has documented limited

speaking practice, linguistic difficulties, and uneven confidence as challenges to oral communication (López et al., 2021; Boy Jon et al., 2021; Dang et al., 2023). Nurdin (2021) also examined learners' awareness of their speaking ability, underscoring the value of identifying students' perceived difficulties alongside observable performance.

Interactive and experiential instructional strategies provide opportunities to practice oral communication in authentic contexts. Abdisalimovich (2023) discussed communicative language teaching and interaction-oriented exercises, while Bakri et al. (2021) examined instructional materials for speaking lessons. Bordeos et al. (2023) investigated cooperative storytelling, and Mulyanti and Nadrun (2022) described strategies used by high-school teachers to support speaking instruction. Nur et al. (2022) examined instructional strategies in online speaking classes. However, Salaveria and Alil (2024) reported mixed outcomes from using TED Talks in a local speaking intervention, indicating that instructional activities should be evaluated in relation to specific speaking outcomes.

Affective factors may shape learners' willingness to participate in spoken English activities. Krashen's (1981) affective filter account provides a foundational explanation of how emotional conditions may influence language learning, while Gardner (1985) emphasized attitudes and motivation. More recent work has examined speaking anxiety and its relationship to proficiency (Trinh & Pham, 2021), socio-affective strategies for supporting speaking motivation (Razawi et al., 2023), and psychological barriers to English fluency (Dauba & Jullanda, 2024). Putera Jaya et al. (2022) further discussed the linguistic and psychological challenges students experience when speaking English.

In the Philippine context, local studies provide useful comparisons while differing in population and assessment focus. Alih and Usman (2023) examined communication apprehension and speaking ability among BSEd English students at MSU-TCTO. Abduhadi and King-King (2023) considered language preference and speaking ability in the same higher-education setting, while Hussien and Muddihil (2024) investigated communication strategies and speaking abilities among Grade 12 HUMSS students. These studies offer local context but do not directly address the combined instructional and affective experiences of Grade 10 learners in the Integrated Laboratory School.

The study draws on Brown's (2001) learner-centered communicative language teaching principles, Krashen's (1981) affective filter perspective, and Gardner's (1985) account of attitudes and motivation in second-language learning. These foundational perspectives inform the examination of interactive and experiential instructional strategies, affective barriers, and students' speaking ability; they do not, by themselves, establish a causal relationship among the study variables.

Despite extensive research on English-speaking proficiency, limited studies have jointly examined interactive and experiential instruction, affective barriers, and speaking ability among junior high school students in Tawi-Tawi. Addressing this gap, the present study investigated the instructional strategies employed by English teachers, students' attitudes and motivation, and their speaking ability in terms of pronunciation and fluency. It also examined differences between instructional strategies and affective barriers and the relationship between affective barriers and speaking ability among Grade 10 students at MSU-TCTO College of Education Integrated Laboratory School during the school year 2024–2025.

The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by supporting effective, inclusive, and learner-centered English language instruction. From a multidisciplinary sustainability perspective, it contributes to educational, social, and institutional sustainability by integrating language pedagogy and educational psychology to address communication difficulties and emotional barriers. Its findings may guide teachers and school administrators in developing responsive instructional practices, strengthening student engagement, and promoting sustained improvements in English-speaking competence within multilingual educational settings.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design to determine the extent of instructional strategies employed by English teachers, the affective barriers experienced by students, and their English-speaking ability. The descriptive approach characterized interactive and experiential instructional practices, students' attitudes and motivation, and their pronunciation and fluency. Quantitative analysis was employed to examine differences between instructional strategies and affective barriers and the relationship between affective barriers and speaking ability.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the MSU-TCTO College of Education Integrated Laboratory School, located within the MSU compound in Tubig Mampallam, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines. The institution serves as the

laboratory school of the College of Education and provided the educational setting for examining English instructional practices and the speaking abilities of Grade 10 students during the school year 2024–2025.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of eight English teachers and 70 Grade 10 students enrolled at the MSU-TCTO College of Education Integrated Laboratory School. The students came from three Grade 10 sections: Earth, Mars, and Venus. English teachers provided information regarding their instructional strategies, while students participated in assessments measuring their attitudes, motivation, pronunciation, and fluency.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling for English teachers and random sampling for students. All eight English teachers were included because of their involvement in English language instruction. From a population of 117 Grade 10 students across three sections, 70 respondents were selected through the fishbowl technique. This procedure involved randomly drawing students' names or assigned numbers from a container, providing each eligible student an equal opportunity for selection.

2.5 Research Instrument

Three adapted and modified instruments were utilized. The first was a 30-item checklist questionnaire adapted from Saskatchewan Education to assess instructional strategies, comprising 15 items each for interactive and experiential instruction. These strategies included classroom discussions, role-playing, debates, storytelling, and other communicative activities. The second instrument measured affective barriers through 15 items assessing attitudes, adapted from Gardner (1985), and 15 items evaluating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, adapted from Mr. Redz-Mhen Jumad's undergraduate thesis. The third instrument was a picture-based oral speaking assessment evaluated using an adapted and modified rubric from the Teaching for Understanding (TFU) Foreign Language Assessment, focusing on pronunciation and fluency. Students were given five minutes to examine the pictures and three minutes to express their interpretations orally. The questionnaires underwent expert validation through consultations to establish their clarity, relevance, and appropriateness.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection commenced after the research instruments were validated and permission was obtained from the research adviser, Dean of the College of Education, school principal, assistant principal, class advisers, and English teachers. Following respondent selection, the researchers administered the instructional strategies questionnaire to teachers and the affective barriers questionnaire to students over a two-day period. Students subsequently completed the picture-based oral speaking assessment, during which their responses were documented through audio and video recordings. Data collection schedules were coordinated with school personnel to minimize disruption to academic activities. Language experts evaluated the speaking assessments, while a statistician assisted in analyzing and interpreting the collected data.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics, particularly weighted means, were employed to determine the extent of instructional strategies, levels of affective barriers, and students' speaking performance. Instructional strategies were interpreted using five categories ranging from least extent to very high extent, while affective barriers were classified from never to always. Speaking ability was evaluated using performance categories ranging from not able to perform to exceeds expectation. The Mann–Whitney U test was utilized to examine differences between instructional strategies and affective barriers, while Spearman correlation analysis determined the relationship between affective barriers and students' speaking ability. Statistical interpretation was conducted with the assistance of a statistician, while language experts supported the evaluation of pronunciation and fluency.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Extent of Instructional Strategies

3.1.1 Interactive Instruction

The findings revealed that English teachers employed interactive instructional strategies to a high extent, with an overall mean of 4.26. Encouraging active participation and interaction during speaking activities obtained the highest mean of 4.88, interpreted as very high extent. Debates and oral picture descriptions both obtained a mean of 4.25, while the use of puppets for meaningful dialogues received the lowest mean of 2.88. These findings indicate that teachers frequently implement learner-centered activities to encourage classroom communication and speaking participation. Abdisalimovich (2023) emphasized that Communicative Language Teaching promotes interaction, role-playing, and authentic communication to enhance students' speaking proficiency.

3.1.2 Experiential Instruction

Experiential instruction obtained an overall mean of 4.28, interpreted as high extent. Activities involving real-life situations and discussions of personal experiences received the highest mean of 4.75. Participation in English

language seminars obtained a mean of 4.38, while multimedia resources received the lowest mean of 3.38. The combined instructional strategies yielded a grand mean of 4.27, indicating high implementation. The findings suggest that teachers frequently incorporate practical communication activities to develop students' speaking skills. This supports Bakri et al. (2021), who emphasized that task-based learning promotes language development through activities reflecting authentic communication situations.

3.2 Level of Affective Barriers

3.2.1 Students' Attitudes Toward English Learning

Students' attitudes obtained an overall mean of 3.74, interpreted as oftentimes. The belief that speaking practice is essential for English fluency received the highest mean of 4.63, while recognizing English communication as important for future goals obtained 4.31. Feeling comfortable communicating with teachers and classmates received a lower mean of 2.77. These findings indicate that students generally recognize the importance of English-speaking proficiency but experience difficulties expressing themselves confidently. Razawi et al. (2023) emphasized that positive attitudes and motivation contribute to overcoming affective barriers and strengthening engagement in English language learning.

3.2.2 Students' Motivation Toward English Learning

Motivation obtained an overall mean of 3.73, interpreted as oftentimes. Students strongly recognized the importance of improving English language skills, with the highest mean of 4.56. Engagement with English literature and media obtained a mean of 4.34, while the perceived contribution of leadership roles to speaking development received a lower mean of 3.07. The overall affective barriers yielded a grand mean of 3.74. The results suggest that students possess motivation to improve their English proficiency, although their engagement varies across learning activities. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening motivational support and providing meaningful opportunities for students to practice spoken English.

3.3 Level of Students' Speaking Ability

3.3.1 Pronunciation

Students' pronunciation obtained a mean of 3.50, interpreted as meeting expectations. This was higher than their fluency performance, indicating comparatively stronger pronunciation skills during the oral speaking assessment. The finding supports Nurdin (2021), who emphasized that pronunciation is essential for effective communication in English as a Second Language settings. Although students met the expected pronunciation standard, continued speaking practice remains important for improving their overall communication skills.

3.3.2 Fluency

Students' fluency obtained a mean of 3.00, interpreted as needing improvement. The combined speaking ability mean was 3.25, also indicating a need for improvement. These findings demonstrate that students performed better in pronunciation than in maintaining fluent oral communication. This finding is consistent with Lopez et al. (2021), who identified limited classroom speaking opportunities as a factor affecting fluency development. Their study emphasized authentic oral production through online video platforms as a strategy for improving students' speaking fluency.

3.4 Significant Difference Between Instructional Strategies and Affective Barriers

The Mann–Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference between instructional strategies and affective barriers, with a U-value of 267.5 and a p-value of 5.87e-05. Since the p-value was below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant difference between the two measured variables. The finding highlights differences between teachers' reported instructional practices and students' experiences of affective barriers. Nur et al. (2022), described instructional strategies as systematic approaches designed to improve learning outcomes. However, instructional activities may not engage all learners equally, emphasizing the importance of considering students' motivational and attitudinal differences when implementing classroom strategies.

3.5 Significant Relationship Between Affective Barriers and Speaking Ability

Spearman correlation analysis revealed a rho value of 0.15, indicating a negligible positive correlation between affective barriers and speaking ability. The resulting p-value of 0.20 exceeded the 0.05 significance level, indicating no statistically significant relationship. Consequently, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The findings suggest that students' affective barriers were not significantly associated with their speaking performance in the study. Other factors, including language exposure, speaking practice, and prior knowledge, may contribute to differences in speaking ability. This interpretation is consistent with Putera Jaya et al. (2022), who identified multiple linguistic, psychological, and educational factors contributing to students' speaking difficulties.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study revealed that English teachers at MSU-TCTO College of Education Integrated Laboratory School employed interactive and experiential instructional strategies to a high extent, reflecting their emphasis on communicative and learner-centered teaching practices. However, Grade 10 students continued to experience affective barriers involving attitudes and motivation, while their overall English-speaking ability required improvement, particularly in fluency. Although pronunciation met expectations, students demonstrated difficulties maintaining fluent oral communication. Statistical analysis established a significant difference between instructional strategies and affective barriers but found no significant relationship between affective barriers and speaking ability. These findings indicate that the frequent implementation of instructional strategies does not necessarily correspond to stronger speaking performance or the absence of affective challenges. Overall, the study highlights the importance of considering both instructional practices and students' learning experiences when addressing English-speaking difficulties within the Integrated Laboratory School.

English teachers should strengthen interactive and experiential instructional practices by providing regular opportunities for meaningful oral communication through debates, role-playing, storytelling, and group discussions. Greater emphasis should be placed on developing students' fluency through consistent speaking exercises, guided conversations, and activities that encourage spontaneous expression. Teachers should also establish supportive classroom environments that promote confidence, positive attitudes, and motivation while minimizing students' fear of mistakes and criticism. Constructive feedback, encouragement, and appropriate instructional adjustments should be incorporated to address students' emotional and learning needs. School administrators should support teachers in maintaining engaging and student-centered instructional approaches that promote active participation. Students should be encouraged to practice English regularly and participate confidently in classroom communication activities. Future researchers should examine larger groups of respondents and expand speaking assessment criteria beyond pronunciation and fluency to provide a more comprehensive understanding of English-speaking proficiency and its associated factors.

The study was limited to eight English teachers and 70 Grade 10 students at MSU-TCTO College of Education Integrated Laboratory School during the school year 2024–2025. Its descriptive quantitative design examined instructional strategies and affective barriers within a single educational institution, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other schools and student populations. Speaking ability was assessed exclusively through pronunciation and fluency, excluding other dimensions of oral communication. Furthermore, the investigation focused on classroom instructional practices, attitudes, and motivation without examining external influences. Future studies may include broader samples, additional educational settings, and expanded speaking assessment criteria to strengthen the applicability and comprehensiveness of the findings.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in relation to this study. The research was conducted with institutional permission from the College of Education and the administration of the MSU-TCTO College of Education Integrated Laboratory School, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines. The study involved eight English teachers and 70 Grade 10 students, with data collected through expert-validated questionnaires and oral speaking assessments. Data collection was coordinated with the concerned school authorities and conducted according to approved schedules to minimize disruption to regular academic activities.

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