Vietnamese High School Students' Appraisal of Speaking Problems and Influential Factors

Pham Vu Phi Ho[1], Than Thanh Long[2] & Truong Minh Hoa[3*]
[1]*Associate Professor, Doctorate in TESOL, Vice-Dean of BaRia-VungTau, Vietnam*
[2]*Master of Arts in TESOL, Tay Ninh High School, Vietnam*
[3]*Master of Arts in TESOL, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Vietnam*
Corresponding Author: Truong Minh Hoa, E-mail: ngutngonnguhoc91@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study was predominantly conducted to examine 280 eleventh-grade students' appraisal of their speaking problems and potential influential factors at Tay Ninh high school, Vietnam. The data were garnered by 40-item questionnaire copies and analyzed by SPSS 22.0 for descriptive statistics (e.g. mean, standard deviation, and percentages) and inferential statistics (e.g. Beta and significance values). The findings of the study revealed that a greater part of the eleventh graders at this site frequently experienced linguistic problems of accuracy, fluency and appropriateness; alongside, many students also encountered with some non-linguistic problems such as inhibition, nothing to say, low participation, and mother tongue use. These speaking problems derived from two main influential factor domains, including internal (e.g. limited language input and topical knowledge, negative psychological states), and external factors (e.g. pressured performance conditions, rigid ELT curriculum, counter-productive ELT materials, inconvenient classroom environment, teachers' inflexible roles, fixed teaching methods).

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

The prominent aim of English language pedagogy these days is to facilitate language learners to communicate in English effectively and confidently (Davies & Pearse, 2000). The common question that arises from anybody who wants to know one's ability in foreign language is whether he/she can speak English or not (Heriansyah, 2012). Similarly, Nunan (2015) states that for most people, mastering speaking skill is the single most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and the ability to make a conversation in English is deemed to be successful.

In reality, it seems that language learners are unable to communicate effectively though they have spent so many years studying English language (Nguyen & Tran, 2015). Zhang (2009) argues that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. Indeed, English speaking is not an easy task because speakers should capture elements of speaking performance like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, appropriacy, and affective variables. Learning speaking requires more than knowing its linguistic rules (Heriansyah, 2012).

1.2. Research Problem

In academia, numerous researchers have studied speaking problems faced by language learners in their oral productions. As per Leong and Ahmadi (2017), they are categorized into accuracy and fluency. The former problems may be mispronouncing a single sound or wrong use of stresses and intonations, lack of receptive vocabulary for productive use in speaking activities, or inaccurate use of grammar points in speech (Bhattacharya, 2017), leading to misunderstanding among interlocutors (Larsen-

Freeman, 2001). Regarding the latter problems, Iswara (2012) describes that when the learners speak to the others, they try to make the hearers understand about what they want to say. For being that case, they usually hesitate and fragmentary unduly while speaking. Besides, speaking problems are also pertinent to affective (i.e. psychological) states. For example, students are fear of making mistakes, shy and anxious while speaking, lack of motivation, and confidence. Generally speaking, these psychological problems may bring negative effect towards student's speaking performance (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

If teachers want to help learners overcome their speaking problems, they should identify some causal factors that influence their students' speaking performance. Actually, many language learners still cannot perform a simple and short conversation in English accurately, fluently and confidently due to a set of complicated factors. Ur (1996) eludes four factors that make speaking difficult for second or foreign language students. To the first problem, the learners tended to keep reticent and silent during speaking activities. To the second problem, the learners often were stuck to express something because they lacked topical knowledge and had no motivation. To the third problem, the learners showed their tendency of low participation in speaking activities. To the last problem, the learners were reliant on their mother tongue during speaking tasks.

In Vietnam, Nguyen and Tran (2015) list some reasons affecting Vietnamese learners' speaking performance like performance conditions, psychological indication, listening ability and feedback during speaking activities. Most recently, Dao (2017) figure out other factors affecting high school students' speaking performance. First, teachers let students use much Vietnamese to express the ideas. Second, students lack motivation and are shy and afraid of making mistakes and speaking in public. Third, the curriculum and textbooks do not contain sufficient amount of exercise for speaking skills. Fourth, students are not given enough time for speaking practice. Fifth, the environment in speaking class is not really exciting and motivating. To sum up, there exist two main domains of causal factors that exert influence on Vietnamese students' nurturing their speaking performance, that is, internal factors (e.g. language competence, psychology) and external factors (e.g. curriculum, materials, learning environment).

Like any other high schools in the Vietnamese context, English is one of the compulsory subjects taught at Tay Ninh high school. Most of the students have learnt it since they were in grade six. Although the students learn all four skills of the target language (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing), the two former skills are exclusive in any tests and exams. Ironically, most tests are designed to check the students' grammatical and lexical units, reading comprehension ability. As a result, the students can master some grammatical and lexical input but they find it challenging to communicate in English even at sentential level. However, there are possibly a lot of other speaking problems and difficulties beyond that. Based on the private talk with one English teacher at Tay Ninh high school, almost all the students speak English with a lot of grammatical errors; besides, they lack vocabulary needed for the speaking activities. On the whole, their speaking performance is low fluent and confident. At the same time, there exist a variety of factors which negatively impact their speaking performance and catalyze these speaking problems. This teacher of the preliminary interview also revealed that the students' speaking problems could derive from the students, the schooling environment or the teachers.

1.3. Research Aim and Questions
By nature of an exploratory study, the researchers conducted a survey at Tay Ninh high school, Vietnam to discover speaking problems faced by the eleventh graders in their English speaking learning and influential factors causing these problems. To achieve the objective, the research questions were formulated:
1-What are speaking problems encountered by the eleventh graders at Tay Ninh high school?
2-What are influential factors leading to the eleventh graders' speaking problems as appraised by themselves?

2. Methodology
2.1. Participants
The sample of this study was comprised of 280 students of nine eleventh-grade classes at Tay Ninh high school, Vietnam. 60.5% of the sample was female, and 39.5% was male. Nearly all of them were 17 years old. The majority of this response community felt like learning speaking skill at a "much" (57.1%), and "medium" extent (34.9%). Overall, the subjects were generally at pre-intermediate level, as determined by entrance and class examinations.

2.2. Materials
The in-service teachers at Tay Ninh high school were obliged to utilize the three textbooks English 10, English 11, and English 12 developed by the new Vietnamese national curriculum to develop language competency among high school students. The

methodologies the books were claimed to follow were the "learner-centered approach and the communicative approach with task-based teaching being the central teaching method" (Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, 2006, p. 5). Each book is comprised of total sixteen units covering different topics such as education, personality, health, environment, technology, etc. Each unit includes five forty-five-minute sections such as Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing and Language Focus. According to Nguyen's (2007) demonstration, the *"B. Speaking"* section of each unit consisted of from three to four activities. The first two activities provided language input and developed specific language functions like expressing opinions, agreements and disagreements. The remaining activities involved short talks on a specific topic with or without prompts.

2.3. Research design
Methodology gets to grips with the matter of how a researcher goes about finding out whatever it is that he believes, he knows (Le, 2011). Researchers must consider the notion of "fit for purpose" when deciding on the methodological approach to be taken for the research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Overall, the present study was a survey design, which is "a procedure in which any researcher administers a survey to a sample […] to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the sample" (Creswell, 2012, p. 321). This survey was to investigate the speaking problems encountered by the eleventh-grade students and influential factors on these problems during their speaking learning.

2.4. Research Instrument: Questionnaire
Rationale
In this study, the researcher deliberately used a questionnaire, a written instrument by which the respondents can select the best option from among existing answers (Brown, 2001), to garner data for the present study due to two salient reasons. Firstly, it is known to be one of the easiest methods to manage, with large numbers of subjects (Dörnyei, 2010). Secondly, it tends to be more reliable as it encourages greater honesty from respondents and saves the researcher's and participants' time and effort (McDonough & McDonough, 1997).

Description
The 40-item questionnaire was categorized into two distinct sections. The first section was associated with the participants' linguistic (Items 1-12) and non-linguistic problems (Items 13-18). These items were rated on a five-point Likert-scale, including *1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually,* and *5=always*. The second section addressed the influential factors which impacted eleventh-grade students' speaking problems (Items 19-40). These influential factors included both internal factors (e.g. students' preparation on linguistic input and topical knowledge, psychological states) and external factors (e.g. performance conditions, materials, curriculum, teaching methods, teacher roles). These items were rated on a five-point Likert-scale, including *1=totally disagree, 2=disagree, 3=uncertain, 4=agree,* and *5=totally agree.*

2.5. Collection and Analysis Procedure
After receiving acquiescence from the leader of the English division at Tay Ninh high school with one consent form, the researchers came to the eleventh-grade classes on the united dates to distribute and collect the questionnaire copies from the respondents. On the receipt of questionnaires from the respondents, the researcher found that all 280 copies (100%) were valid. Finally, the researcher employed Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 to analyze the descriptive statistics of the questionnaires in terms of mean (M) and standard deviation (S.D.). The responses were reported and interpreted as per Pallant (2005)'s descriptors: *1.00-1.80 (very low level), 1.81- 2.60 (low level), 2.61-3.40 (medium level), 3.41-4.20 (high level),* and *4.21-5.00 (very high level).* Besides, multiple regression analysis was run, assisting the researchers' conclusion on whether the possible factors could be the best predictor of the sought speaking problems. Some values of the multiple regression analysis were considered and interpreted namely *B* (coefficient of the independent variable) and *Sig.* (the statistical significant level of the model).

3. Results and Discussion
3.1. Research Question 1: Speaking Problems
Linguistic Problems as Appraised by the Eleventh Graders
As evidenced in Table 1 below, regarding grammatical problems, the majority of the students frequently incurred errors in word order and sentence structures (Item 3, M=4.36, S.D.=.958). Similarly, a greater part of the sample often made several errors in both verb forms (Item 1, M=4.24, S.D.=1.013) and verb tenses (Item 2, M=3.93, S.D.=1.167) when producing English utterances. As for lexical problems, a large number of the participants frequently lacked vocabulary items for their speaking (Item 4, M=4.50, S.D.=.984). In addition, many of them often spoke with wrong word collocations (Item 5, M=4.29,

S.D.=1.051). With reference to orthoepic problems, a big proportion of the sample frequently put inaccurate stress and intonation in their utterances (Item 7, M=4.26, S.D.=1.054) and mispronounced the words (Item 6, M=3.75, S.D.=1.249). What's more, as Table 1 below illustrates, almost all of the students at Tay Ninh high school frequently spoke English at a too low speed (Item 9, M=4.61, S.D.=.674) with undue pauses and hesitation (Item 10, M=4.50, S.D.=.799). Besides, many of them often spent a lot of their given time thinking of and searching for ideas and language serving for their English speaking turns (Item 8, M=4.47, S.D.=.803).

To another problem, many eleventh-grade students did not frequently know how to differ the formal and informal language registers when they spoke English (Item 12, M=4.02, S.D.=1.158). However, it could be a notable finding that only some students ignored sociocultural norms of speaking activities such as setting, participants and purposes when speaking English (Item 11, M=2.90, S.D.=1.254).

Table 1. Linguistic problems as appraised by the eleventh graders

Item	Linguistic problems	M	S.D.
Grammar accuracy			
1	Errors in verb forms	4.24	1.013
2	Errors in verb tenses	3.93	1.167
3	Errors in word order and sentence structures	4.36	.958
Vocabulary accuracy			
4	Lack of needed vocabulary range	4.50	.984
5	Wrong use of word collocations	4.29	1.051
Pronunciation accuracy			
6	Mispronunciation	3.75	1.249
7	Wrong stress and intonation	4.26	1.054
Fluency			
8	Much time consumption of seeking ideas and language	4.47	.803
9	Too slow oral production	4.61	.674
10	Undue pauses and hesitation	4.50	.799
Appropriateness			
11	Ignorance of social norms like setting, participants, purposes	2.90	1.254
12	Difficulty differing formal and informal registers	4.02	1.158

In academia, there exist some linguistic problems that negatively affect language learners in speaking, such as weak grammar knowledge, vocabulary scarcity, and incorrect pronunciation (Richards, 2008). In addition, to be good speakers of English, students are required to know the socio-culturally appropriate ways (i.e. appropriateness) to interact with others in different contextual situations, facilitating their smooth oral flows (i.e. fluency). Unfortunately, the greater part of the eleventh graders at Tay Ninh high school frequently violated speaking qualities of accuracy, fluency and appropriateness. These problems were also sought by some foregoing authors such as Heriansyah (2012), Hosni (2014), and Vo, Pham and Ho (2018).

First, accuracy refers to the degree of which learners' oral production is grammatically acceptable, with clear pronunciation and appropriate choice of vocabulary (Nunan, 2015). In fact, yet, the big proportion of the response community frequently confronted with some grammatical errors in their English oral production such as wrong word forms, word order and sentence structures, and word tenses. Ideally, it is believed that communication in speaking runs meaningfully and understandably if its grammar can be understood to some extent. Therefore, concomitant with Harmer (2001), the high school students should be encouraged to be aware of the prominent role of grammatical rules and structures which they utilize in speaking.

Secondly, a large number of the questionnaire respondents frequently lacked necessary vocabulary range for English speaking activities and were deficient of using correct word collocations when uttering English. It is accepted that exposure to a variety of vocabulary is essential for speaking performance. As their receptive vocabulary is limited, they can hardly put the receptive vocabulary knowledge into productive use (Nation, 2001). Consequently, their dearth of necessary vocabulary for their speaking performance could directly become origin of other speaking problems like fluency. Indeed, this problem was paramount detrimental to the eleventh-grade students' oral proficiency. Also, being deficient of using correct word collocations when uttering English means that these students often got confuse to combine and use the proper vocabulary

needed. Albeit these students could be clearly aware of what they will say in the source language, they frequently switched the mother tongue into the target language. Thus, studying word collocations are important to all the high school students if they want to enhance their English oral quality.

Thirdly, to speak English understandably, language learners need to master the individual characteristic of the language sound (Hinkel, 2005). Lamentably, the majority of the surveyed students frequently put wrong stress and intonation when producing English utterances during the speaking activities, and mispronounced. If the students make correct vocalization while speaking English, they can achieve intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability. On the other hand, mispronouncing a single sound or wrong use of stress and intonation can cause misunderstandings among interlocutors (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Hence, the students should avoid these phonological problems so that a comprehension be grasped.

Fourthly, fluency is learners' ability to speak in understandable way not to break down communication (Hughes, 2002; Nunan, 2015). However, in this study, almost all the participants spoke English too slowly with undue pause and hesitation. Similarly, many students frequently spent too much time thinking of ideas and linguistic sources to perform speaking activities. The eleventh-grade students should avoid making frequent pauses, and pauses should occur at meaningful transition points.
Aside from speaking accurately and fluently, speakers should speak English appropriately. According to Harmer (2001), the term of appropriateness is pertinent to some socio-cultural variables such as setting, participant roles, themes and purposes. Interestingly, only some students frequently ignored these socio-cultural norms of English speaking activities. Likewise, according to Kayi (2006), speaking performance requires selecting appropriate words and sentences, that is, formal and informal styles, according to the proper social setting, audience, situation, and subject matter. As a matter of fact, there were still many students who did not frequently know how to differ the formal and informal registers when they spoke English. Hopefully, the teachers can seek some ways to help their eleventh-grade students overcome this dilemma.

Non-linguistic Problems as Appraised by the Eleventh Graders
As Table 2 below indicates, the majority of the student informants frequently expressed their reticence (e.g. being reserved) when trying to say something in English (Item 13, M=4.23, S.D.=1.037). In addition, many of them frequently tended to keep silent for a long time during speaking activities (Item 14, M=3.66, S.D.=1.217). What is more, as per the yielded mean indexes of Item 15 (M=3.83, S.D.=1.164) and of Item 16 (M=4.11, S.D.=1.075), it could be concluded that the non-linguistic problem of "nothing to say" existed among a large number of the respondents. Specifically, they did not frequently know what to say during English speaking activities (Item 15), and want to say something during speaking activities (Item 16). One of the most severe non-linguistic problems in oral communication process is related to the interlocutors' low participation, and this problem was actually experienced by a big portion of the sample (Item 17, M=4.29, S.D.=1.004). Also, a greater part of the respondents did not deny the fact that they frequently exploited their Vietnamese language while speaking English (Item 18, M=4.38, S.D.=.742).

Table 2. Non-linguistic problems as appraised by the eleventh graders

Item	Non-linguistic problems	M	S.D.
Inhibition			
13	Being reticent to say something	4.23	1.037
14	Keeping silent for a long time during speaking activities	3.66	1.217
Nothing to say			
15	Not knowing what to say during speaking activities	3.83	1.164
16	Not having motivation to say something	4.11	1.075
Low participation			
17	Participating in speaking activities at low level	4.29	1.004
L1 use			
18	Using much L1 during speaking activities	4.38	.742

Alongside the linguistic problems, the majority of the students also encountered with some non-linguistic problems such as inhibition, nothing to say, low participation, and mother-tongue use (Ur, 1996; Nguyen & Tran, 2015). These non-linguistic problems also reduced the quality of speaking performance by these target students. Such problems were spotted by previous authors such as Heriansyah (2012), Hosni (2014), Bhattacharya (2017), and Vo, Pham and Ho (2018).

To begin with, inhibition is the most well-known problem experienced by students in language learning (Latha, 2012). Actually, via the questionnaire results, a large number of the students incurred inhibition problems during the speaking lessons, in which they were reticent and tended to keep silent to say something. Reticence and silence are negative psychological states which straight hamper the students' readiness to speak English. Gradually, these students can hardly utter even one simple sentence. Thus, they should replace these negative tendencies by positive ones.

Secondly, in this study, nothing to say problem was acknowledged by a greater part of the target sample. Based on the questionnaire results, the students did not frequently know how to say something during English speaking activities, and they had no motivation to speak English. To elaborate, Rivers (1968) reckons that learners often have nothing to say because their teachers pick up a speaking topic inappropriate for them or they do not have sufficient information on it. In this case, a sufficient provision of topical knowledge from the teachers is of significance. Besides, motivation to learn English speaking should be emphasized as it stimulates the students to say something as much as possible.

Thirdly, low participation problem was frequently incurred by a large number of the eleventh graders at Tay Ninh high school. This could be an unexpected situation in the Vietnamese high school classrooms. They participated in the speaking activities passively. It is worth noting that the more these students practice oral production, the better they upgrade their English speaking ability. The teachers, thus far, should notice this issue carefully to encouraged to participate in English speaking activities inside class more actively.

Fourthly, nearly all of the participants frequently utilized the Vietnamese language during most English speaking activities. Inferentially, when the students shared the same mother-tongue, they tried to use it in the speaking class because it was very easy for them (Nguyen & Tran, 2015). Nevertheless, this non-linguistic problem can impede the students' fluency development in particular and oral performance in general. Indeed, the core mission of English speaking activities is to help students speak out something in English as much as possible. Therefore, this behavior should be directly prohibited in the speaking lessons.

3.2. Research Question 2: Influential Factors
Influential Factors on Linguistic Problems as Appraised by the Eleventh Graders
Based on Table 3 below, many students confessed that they infrequently did formal linguistic practice of grammar items (e.g. exercises, tasks, activities) to fortify their grammatical competence of the speaking performance (Item 19, M=4.98, S.D.=1.193). In addition, the researcher could be confident of the result that lack of formal linguistic practice of grammar units (Items 1-2-3) resulted in the eleventh-grade students' grammatical problems (B =.498, sig.=.000 < .050).

Similarly, the majority of the respondents posited that their lexical issues derived from their infrequent equipment for vocabulary items before English speaking periods (Item 20, M=4.60, S.D.=.783). Also, Item 20 could make the predictor of Item 4-5 due to Beta value of .241 and significance value of .000<.050.

Next, several participants connected their pronunciation accuracy problems to their inadequate self-training of pronunciation (Item 21, M=4.24, S.D.=1.051). Items 6-7 might be directly impacted by Item 21 considered as the predictor in this significant relationship (sig.=.000<.050) with 26.6% strength (B=.266).

Furthermore, the majority of the sample avowed that their low fluency level may originates from some influential factors such as the dearth of topical knowledge (Item 23, M=4.37, S.D.=1.060), negative inner psychological states (Item 24, M=.426, S.D.=.987), the shortage of lexical and grammatical knowledge (Item 22, M=3.85, S.D.=1.114), current rigid English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum (Item 27, M=4.25, S.D.=1.039). However, there should be a dispute on the linear relationship between materials (Item 25, M=2.84, S.D.=1.128) and teachers' roles (Item 26, M = 2.80, S.D. = 1.037) with the high school students' fluency problems. According to Beta and significance values, the best predictor of fluency problems was Item 27 which had the highest Beta value of .415 and the significance value of .000 lower than .050. It means that the rigid ELT curriculum made the greatest impact on the students' English speaking fluency problems (41.5%). Besides, by descending order of Beta values, Item 22 (B = .174, sig. = .002 < .050), Item 24 (B=.160, sig.=.002<.050) and Item 23 (B=.121, sig.=.016<.050) also became the good predictors of Items 8-9-10 by 17.4%, 16.0% and 12.1%, respectively. In other words, immature language input, dearth of topical knowledge and negative psychological states also were direct influential factors of the high school students' fluency problems. However, there were not any statistically significant correlations between Item 25 and fluency problems (sig.=.770), between Item 26 and fluency problems (sig.=.517). Inferentially, these two items were not

making any unique contribution to the prediction of fluency problems. That is to say, materials and teachers' roles could not be strong influential factors of the students' fluency problems.

As mentioned earlier, only some of the eleventh graders encountered with the appropriateness problems while speaking English regarding their concern about socio-cultural norms of speaking performance. Consistently, not many of the students predicated that materials focused on language structures rather than socio-cultural norms (Item 28, M=3.10, S.D.=1.207). Item 28 might make a significant contribution to the prediction of appropriateness problems (B=.493, sig.=.000<.050). To interpret it, 49.3% of the variation in Items 11-12 was explained by Item 28.

In fact, not many students incurred the appropriateness problems in their speaking performance, and some students considered materials as the influential factor of these problems.

Table 3. Influential factors on linguistic problems as appraised by the eleventh graders

Item	Influential factors on linguistic problems	M	S.D.	B value	Sig.
Accuracy					
19	Infrequent doing formal linguistic practice of grammar items leads to grammar problems	3.98	1.193	.498	.000
20	Infrequent equipment for vocabulary items before English speaking periods causes vocabulary problems	4.60	.783	.241	.000
21	Inadequate self-training of pronunciation leads to pronunciation problems	4.24	1.051	.266	.000
Fluency					
22	Immature language input decreases fluency	3.85	1.114	.174	.002
23	Dearth of topical knowledge hinders fluency	4.37	1.060	.121	.016
24	Negative inner psychological states hamper fluency	4.26	.987	.160	.002
25	Material emphasizing accuracy aspects hinders fluency	2.84	1.128	-.022	.700
26	Teachers' roles inside class decrease fluency	2.80	1.037	-.035	.517
27	Rigid ELT curriculum hampers fluency	4.25	1.039	.415	.000
Appropriateness					
28	Material focuses on language structures than sociocultural norms	3.10	1.207	.493	.000

Influential Factors on Non-linguistic Problems as Appraised by the Eleventh Graders

Apropos of mean indexes by descending order in Table 4 below, the students' inhibition strongly derived from the high school students' fear of making mistakes (Item 29, M=4.36, S.D =.800), shyness (Item 32, M=4.34, S.D.=.772), anxiety (Item 30, M=4.27, S.D.=.983), and lack of self-confidence (Item 31, M=4.20, S.D.=1.000). The statistical data show that the best predictor of Items 13-14 was Item 31 which had the highest Beta value of .523 and the significance value of .000 lower than .050. This positive and significant correlation between the two set of variables indicates that lack of confidence greatly impacted the students' inhibition problems like reticence and silence. Besides, 21.2% of the variance in Items 13-14 was explained by Item 29 (sig.=.002<.050). That is to say, fear of making mistakes was a good predictor of the students' inhibition. However, there were not any statistically significant correlations between Item 32 and Items 13-14 (B=.052, sig.=.301>.050), between Item 30 and Items 13-14 (B=.009, sig.=.898 >.050). Inferentially, these two items were not making any unique contribution to the prediction of Items 13-14. That is to say, shyness and anxiety could impact the students' inhibition problems when accompanied by other factors namely lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes.

Nothing to Say problems were non-linguistic ones which existed among the large number of the participants (Items 15-16 in Table 2). These students admitted that the dearth of topical knowledge (Item 33, M=4.10, S.D.=1.124) and no goal-oriented motivation (Item 34, M=3.88, S.D.=1.042) were main influential factors for these. Through inferential statistics, it might be concluded that Item 33 was the good predictor of Item 15 (B=.202, sig.=001<.050), and Item 34 was the statistically significant predictor of Item 16 (B=.210, sig.=.000<.050). Indeed, the dearth of topical knowledge (Item 33) and goal-oriented motivation (Item 34) could generate the students' nothing to say problems (Items 15-16).

Low participation was one severe non-linguistic problem among the high school students spotted in this study (Item 17). In this paper, some influential factors resulting in low participation were ultimately appraised by a large number of the students such as high time pressure (Item 35, M=4.37, S.D.=1.007), their uncomfortable classroom environment where there were a lot of students (Item 36, M=4.24, S.D.=.985). However, only a very smaller proportion of the sample acknowledged the lack of teachers' support and guidance (Item 37, M=2.98, S.D.=1.141) and the teacher-centered approach (Item 38, M=2.83, S.D.=1.182) as the direct factors engendering their low participation in English speaking activities. Data in Table 6 reveal that there were two possible predictors of Item 17, namely Item 35 (B=.247, sig.=.000<.050) and Item 36 (B=.220, sig. =.003<.050). Inferentially, high performance pressure yielded a more powerful contribution to the students' low participation than inconvenient classroom environment did. Nevertheless, there were not any statistically significant correlations between Item 37 and Item 17 (B=-.070, sig. =.310 >.050), between Item 38 and Item 17 (B=.038, sig. =.576>.050). Inferentially, these two items were not making any unique contribution to the prediction of Item 17. Clearly, teachers' roles and teaching approaches could have a little contribution to the students' low participation, if any.

As a matter, almost all the eleventh-grade students frequently relied on the Vietnamese language for their accomplishment of the given speaking tasks or activities (Item 18). A large number of the respondents reckoned that their weak linguistic input (Item 39, M=4.50, S.D.=.693) and topical knowledge (Item 40, M=4.15, S.D.=.940) urged them to used much L1. As evidenced in Table 6, both Item 39 (sig.=.000<.050) and Item 40 (sig.=.000<.050) made a great contribution to the prediction of Item 18. More specifically, it seemed that Item 39 (B=.575) made a better predictor of Item 18 than Item 40 (B=.314).

Table 4. Influential factors on non-linguistic problems as appraised by the eleventh graders

Item	Influential factors on non-linguistic problems	M	S.D.	B value	Sig.
Inhibition					
29	Fear of making mistakes causes inhibition	4.36	.800	.212	.002
30	Anxiety causes inhibition	4.27	.983	.009	.898
31	Lack of confidence causes inhibition	4.20	1.000	.523	.000
32	Shyness causes inhibition	4.34	.772	.052	.301
Nothing to say					
33	Dearth of topical knowledge makes nothing to say	4.10	1.124	.202	.001
34	Unclear long-term speaking goal causes nothing to say	3.88	1.042	.210	.000
Low participation					
35	High time pressure leads to low participation	4.37	1.007	.247	.000
36	Inconvenient classroom environment causes low participation	4.24	.985	.220	.003
37	Lack of teachers' support makes low participation	2.98	1.141	-.070	.310
38	Teacher-centered approach makes low participation	2.83	1.182	.038	.576
L1 use					
39	Immature linguistic input causes much L1 use	4.50	.693	.575	.000
40	Dearth of topical knowledge causes much L1 use	4.15	.940	.314	.000

Commonly, both internal and external factors caused the sought speaking problems. The former factors consisted of the students' limited preparation for language input sources, constrained topical knowledge and negative inner psychology conditions such as fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence as well as dearth of motivation. Meanwhile, the latter causal factors included pressured performance conditions, rigid ELT curriculum, counter-productive ELT materials, inconvenient classroom environment, teachers' inflexible roles, and fixed teaching methods.

Limited Investment of Language Input

Based on the multiple regression analysis, there was a direct correlation between the students' low investment of language sources and the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation problems. In addition, there was also a linear relationship between this insufficient language preparation and the students' fluency level. Especially, when the eleventh graders infrequently invested the necessary vocabulary items for the ongoing speaking activities, they were obliged to use their mother tongue. It is clear that the eleventh-grade students' insufficient investment caused them to incur these accuracy speaking problems, decreased their oral fluency, and urged them to use Vietnamese for speaking task completion. As a result, their speaking performance was still weak. Inferentially, a good investment and preparation of language knowledge is actually necessary to

all the target students. In sum, in order to speak English well, the students have to invest their time and efforts to widen their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

Inadequate Topical Knowledge

In theory, topical knowledge is the speakers' knowledge of relevant topical information (Bachman & Palmer, 1996), greatly impacting the learners' speaking performance. However, as a matter of fact, a large number of students seemed to lack their topical knowledge severely. By the multiple regression analysis, it is concluded that the students' lack of topical knowledge and information on a certain topic led to their low fluency level, made them to have nothing to say during speaking activities. Especially, this scantiness engendered the eleventh-grade students' utilization of the Vietnamese language while speaking English. Literally, having enough knowledge about a certain topic enhances the students' oral fluency since they have something to speak out, while sparse of knowledge about a topic is likely to engender the students' circumventing communication (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998), and spurs them to deploy their first language. Therefore, preparation and exploration of content and knowledge on topics is necessary as this behavior can improve the students' oral fluency, discourage their tendency of using Vietnamese during the speaking tasks.

Negative Psychological States

As acquiesced by numerous theorists, unhealthy psychological factors cause the students' speaking problems. Indeed, some negative psychological indications such as fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, self-confidence, and lack of motivation were found on course to bring negative effects towards the eleventh-grade student's speaking performance; for example, their fluency was extremely unacceptable, their motivation to produce English utterances were at a very low level, and their inhibition was not circumvented. First of all, based on the questionnaire results, all these negative psychological indications such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, self-confidence, and lack of motivation directly decreased most of the high school students' fluency level. Secondly, being fearful of making mistakes, shy and anxious as well as lowly self-confident drove the majority of the participants to encounter with inhibition problems, either reticence or silence. Thirdly, lack of motivation generated the problem of nothing to say among a large number of the students.

In academia, many theorists argue that fear of making mistakes may be one of the eminent factors of students' resistance to speak in English in the classroom. Specifically, the students were fearful of being laughed at by other students or being criticized by the teacher. Incrementally, these students lost their smoothness in their flow of ideas as their fossilized tongue-tiedness. Therefore, it is important for teachers to persuade their students that making mistakes is not a wrong or bad thing as students can learn from their mistakes (Juhana, 2012). Next, shyness is an emotion that many students suffer from when they are required to speak in English class, threating in students' speaking performance (Baldwin, 2011). As a result of this, their mind can go blank or that they will forget what to say. Thus, the students need to diminish this negative psychological tendency so that their fluency and confidence can be ameliorated significantly. Likewise, anxiety is a feeling of nervousness with the situation of learning a foreign language (Horwitz, 2001), making them uncomfortable when uttering something. So, the students need to be encouraged to reduce this negative psychological tendency so that their fluency and confidence can be ameliorated significantly. Besides, the students at Tay Ninh high school tended to keep silent while others do talking showing that the students were lack of confidence to communicate. Nunan (2015) opines that students who have low confidence about themselves will suffer from communication apprehension like low fluency. On this account, the teachers should more give attention in building their high school students' confidence when they are speaking. Most strikingly, the students did not have their long-term goal of being proficient speakers and they realized that the speaking skill was not genuinely assessed in their ELT curriculum. As a consequence, they lost their motivation when learning English speaking. Thus, the students should nurture their motivation for their speaking learning.

Pressured Performance Conditions and Inconvenient Classroom Environment

The results show that the students participated in speaking activities at low level, and one of the powerful factors for this problem was the pressured time. According to Nation and Newton (2009), students perform a speaking task under a variety of conditions, and performance conditions are deemed to affect speaking performance. Indeed, when the students realized that the time to complete the given speaking tasks was limited, they tended to rely mostly on other students and only kept silent during these tasks. By the same token, their low participation also originated from the classroom environment where there were a lot of the students. Conjecturally, the atmosphere of the class, the size of the class and the arrangement of seats affect the speaking performance of the students (Bhattacharya, 2017). Inferentially, due to the restricted period time for speaking lessons and the big number of the class members, there surely existed low participation among the students, especially weak students. In reality, complete the speaking activities successfully, the students need to "have time to think about a given topic,

have time to prepare what to say" (Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 34). Therefore, these two causal factors hampered the students' active participation into the class activities.

Rigid ELT curriculum
Another external hindering factor to speaking skills of learners is the content of teaching syllabus and English teaching curriculum (Vo, Pham & Ho, 2018). However, as per the study findings, the rigid ELT curriculum prescribed by Vietnamese Minister of Education and Training made a predictor of the students' low fluency level of speaking performance. In fact, the tests or exams did not actually assess the students' speaking ability, but vocabulary, grammar and reading became the main concern of evaluation and assessment in the high school context, including Tay Ninh high school. The teachers should encourage their students to speak out English and their speaking performance is also scored as its own right.

Materials
Materials play a key role in the speaking classroom. Luckily, based on the multiple regression analysis, there was no statistically significant relationship between the textbook and the students' fluency problem. To interpret, the currently used textbook namely *Tieng Anh 11* not only presented the linguistic forms of sample utterances (i.e. structural view), but it also introduced social settings, participant roles, functions and intention (i.e. functional view). Besides, this textbook also provided different tasks from controlled to freer modes, facilitating the interactional patterns among the students (i.e. interactional view). On this account, only some students accepted the relationship between the textbook and their appropriateness problem. Alternatively speaking, when the students participated in speaking activities, they easily recognized the socio-cultural norms of English speaking activities. Consistently, only some students incurred the appropriateness problem. Yet, the teachers should remember that many students did not differ formal and informal registers of their oral productions. This aspect was not emphasized in the textbook. Therefore, some supplementary materials need introducing into the speaking lessons.

Teaching Methods
Teaching methods and styles is an important factor affecting student performance (Snehi, 2011). From the questionnaire results, only some students considered that the current teaching methods hindered their speaking participation. In fact, these methods focused on pair and group work among the students through collaborative tasks and activities. However, there were still some students finding out that the teaching methods seemed to focus on language accuracy in lieu of oral fluency development, attributing to their low participation level. In sum, the teachers should vary their teaching methods, and instructional behaviors to stimulate their students to participate in the class actively.

Teacher Roles
Apropos of the questionnaire results, teacher roles were only appraised by some students as the origin of their low fluency level and participation degree. In other words, the teachers' roles did not hinder many students' oral productions. In reality, the teachers instructed speaking activities clearly and they set up collective work among the students. It is believed that the vital role the teacher plays in making learners willing or unwilling to speak cannot be ignored (Bhattacharya, 2017). Luckily, this seems to be a positive signal of the picture of speaking teaching at Tay Ninh high school.

4. Conclusions, limitations and recommendations
4.1. Conclusions
In common, the majority of the target sample frequently incurred both linguistic and non-linguistic problems when learning speaking skill. To the linguistic problems, a greater part of the eleventh graders at Tay Ninh high school frequently experienced these problems, violating speaking qualities of accuracy, fluency and appropriateness. To the non-linguistic problems, the majority of the surveyed students also encountered with some typical problems such as inhibition, nothing to say, low participation, and mother-tongue use.

The influential factors directly or indirectly devalued the speaking performance and resulted in calamitous speaking problems, as appraised by the eleventh-grade students. These recognized causal factors derived from the two categories, that is, inner and outer students. To the internal factors, there were three noteworthy types of causal factors, including the students' insufficient preparation for and infrequent practice of language input, dearth of topical knowledge, and negative psychological states (e.g. anxiety, shyness, fear of making mistakes, lack of self-confidence and low motivation). To the external factors, there were several types of possible factors, including counter-productive materials, rigid ELT curriculum, teachers' inflexible roles, pressured performance conditions, inconvenient classroom environment and teaching methods.

4.2. Limitations

To the first pitfall of this survey, the sample of this study was quite small with only nearly three hundred of the eleventh-grade students. In reality, since this research was conducted as a case study at Tay Ninh high school. Thus, the research findings could be hardly applicable to other subjects and to other schooling settings.

To the second shortcoming of this mixed-methods study, there should be a lack of visual methods to keep track of what was happening in the speaking classes. In other words, the actuality of the students' speaking problems and causal factors could become more scrupulous and concretized if the study exploited other instruments such as classroom observations or diaries.

4.3. Recommendations

Inferring from the limitations recognized above, the researchers contrived some recommendations for further study in the research arena of the speaking teaching and learning quality. First of all, the further study should broaden the time fund since the sufficient length of time makes it possible to utilize different data collection tools as well as to get an access to a larger size of the sample. The multiplicity of the research instruments can be of service to address the research phenomenon in depth and breadth.

Secondly, the possible bigger sample of the participants enables the researchers to generalize the results. It means that the further study should be conducted on other grades of the upper secondary schooling system like Grade 10 or Grade 12. This recommendation is made because of the reality that every grade may exist its distinguished picture of speaking problems and accompanied factors. Lastly, the further study should supplement other data collection instruments such as classroom observations, field notes, or documents to keep a more credible record of what actually happens with the participants' speaking learning.

References

[1] Bachman, L., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language Testing in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[2] Baldwin, C. (2011). How to Overcome Shyness during an Oral Presentation? Bhattacharya, S. (2017). A study on the factors affecting ESL learners' English speaking skills. *International Journal of English Research, 3*(4), 31-37.

[3] Brown, J. D. (2001). *Using surveys in language programs.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[4] Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

[5] Dao, T. T. H. (2017). Task-Based Language Teaching: An Insight into Teacher Practice. *International Journal of Education Culture and Society, 2*(4), 126-131.

[6] Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2000). *Success in English Teaching*. Oxford University Press.

[7] Dörnyei, Z. (2010). *Questionnaires in second language research: construction, administration, and processing* (2nd ed.). London, Routledge.

[8] Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.

[9] Heriansyah, H. (2012). Speaking problems faced by the English Department students of Syiah Kuala University. *Lingua Didaktika, 6*(1), 37-44.

[10] Hinkel, E. (2005). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. London: Seattle University.

[11] Horwitz, E. K. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 21*, 112-126.

[12] Hosni, S. (2014) Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL), 2*(6), 22-30.

[13] Hughes, R. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Speaking*. New York: Pearson Education.

[14] Iswara, A. A. (2012). Improving students' speaking fluency through the implementation of Trivia-based activity in university students.

[15] Johnson, R. B. & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: a research paradigm that time has come. *Educational Researcher, 33*, 14-26.

[16] Juhana (2012). Psychological Factors That Hinder Students from Speaking in English Class (A Case Study in a Senior High School in South Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia). *Journal of Education and Practice, 3*(12), 100-110.

[17] Kayi, H. (2006). Teaching Speaking: Activities to Promote Speaking in a Second Language. *The Internet TESL Journal, 12*(11).

[18] Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). Teaching Grammar. In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3rd ed., pp. 251-66). Boston, MA: Thomson/ Heinle.

[19] Latha, B. M. (2012). Teaching English as a Second Language: Factors Affecting Learning Speaking Skills. *International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology (IJERT), 1*(7), 1-6.

[20] Le, V. C. (2011). *Form-Focused Instruction: A Case Study of Vietnamese Teachers' Beliefs and Practices* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). New Zealand: University of Waikato.

[21] Leong, L-M. & Ahmadi, S. M. (2017). An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skill. *International Journal of Research in Language Education*, 34-41.

[22] MacIntyre, P. D., Noels, K. A., & Clément, R. (1997). Biases in self-ratings of second language proficiency: The role of language anxiety. *Language Learning, 47*, 265- 287.

[23] McDonough, J., & McDonough, S. (1997). *Research methods for English language teachers*. UK: Arnold.

[24] Ministry of Education and Training (2006). *The English curriculum for the secondary school*. Vietnam: Hanoi Publisher.

[25] Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[26] Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking. ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

[27] Nguyen, H. T. & Tran, N. M. (2015). Factors affecting students' speaking performance at Le Thanh Hien high school. Asian Journal of Educational Research, 3(2), 8-24.

[28] Nguyen, T. T. Minh. (2007). *Textbook evaluation: the case of English textbooks currently in use at Vietnam's upper-secondary school* (Unpublished research report). Singapore: RELC SEAMEO.

[29] Nunan, D. (2015). *Teaching English to speakers of other languages: An introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.

[30] Pallant, J. (2005). *SPSS Survival Guide: A Step by Step Guide to Data Analysis Using SPSS for Windows*. Open University Press, New York.

[31] Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching Listening and Speaking*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

[32] Rivers, W. M. (1968). *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[33] Snehi, N. (2011). Improving teaching-learning process in schools: A challenge for the 21st century. *Learning community, 2*(1), 1-12.

[34] Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching. Practice and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[35] Vo, P. Q., Pham, T. M. M., & Ho, T. N. (2018). Challenges to speaking skills encountered by English-majored students: A story of Vietnamese university in the Mekong Delta. *Can Tho University Journal of Science, 54*(5), 38-44.

[36] Zhang, D. (2009). *The problems and solutions of formative evaluation of classroom teaching of primary school* [Unpublished master's dissertation] China: Xi'an University.