

Stuttering from a Psycholinguistic Perspective: Social and Academic Implications for Eighth-Grade Students

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Abstract

This study aims to provide an in-depth description of the speech difficulties experienced by an eighth-grade student who stutters. The research employed a qualitative approach using a single case study method, with data collected through direct classroom observation. The findings reveal that the student exhibited various forms of disfluency, including sound repetitions, prolongations, extended pauses, and speech blocks. These speech difficulties were influenced not only by linguistic and motor aspects but also by psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence. Such conditions affected the student's participation in classroom activities, social interactions with peers, and overall academic performance. The study emphasizes the crucial role of teachers in creating a supportive, patient, and pressure-free learning environment to help students who stutter communicate more confidently and engage more actively in their learning process.

Keywords: Psycholinguistics; Psychological; Speech Difficulty; Student; Stuttering

Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk memberikan deskripsi mendalam tentang kesulitan berbicara yang dialami oleh siswa kelas delapan yang gagap. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus tunggal, dengan data dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung di kelas. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa siswa menunjukkan berbagai bentuk kelancaran, termasuk pengulangan bunyi, perpanjangan, jeda yang diperpanjang, dan blokade bicara. Kesulitan berbicara ini tidak hanya dipengaruhi oleh aspek linguistik dan motorik, tetapi juga oleh faktor psikologis seperti kecemasan, ketakutan akan evaluasi negatif, dan kurangnya kepercayaan diri. Kondisi tersebut memengaruhi partisipasi siswa dalam kegiatan kelas, interaksi sosial dengan teman sebaya, dan kinerja akademik secara keseluruhan. Studi ini menekankan peran penting guru dalam menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung, sabar, dan bebas tekanan untuk membantu siswa yang gagap berkomunikasi lebih percaya diri dan terlibat lebih aktif dalam proses belajar mereka.

Kata Kunci: Psikolinguistik; Psikologis; Kesulitan Bicara; Siswa; Gagap

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a fundamental ability that distinguishes humans from other creatures, yet for some individuals, this ability is a source of social and academic suffering. Global data indicates that approximately 1% of the world's population stutters, with most cases emerging during childhood and adolescence, when communication skills are key to identity formation and social acceptance.¹ In the context of middle school, students who stutter often face stigma, ridicule, and social pressure, leading to isolation and decreased self-esteem, which ultimately has a direct impact on academic participation.² Even more surprisingly, research shows that social anxiety and shyness resulting from stuttering can create a negative psychological cycle: the more students fear speaking, the more severe their speech fluency disorder becomes.³ This phenomenon makes stuttering not just a linguistic disorder, but also a social and emotional problem that threatens the well-being and academic development of adolescents in the school environment.

Studies on stuttering from a psycholinguistic perspective indicate that this disorder is the result of a complex interaction between biological, psychological, and social factors. The biopsychosocial approach asserts that speech fluency disorders are not solely caused by motor or linguistic imbalances, but are also influenced by neuroanatomical factors, genetics, and a stressful communication environment.⁴ In the context of education, the research “School Adjustment in Children Who Stutter” revealed that the teacher-student relationship and classroom social dynamics play a significant role in the academic and behavioral adjustment levels of children who stutter.⁵ Speech anxiety, especially that triggered by a fear of negative evaluation, has been shown to worsen disfluency and reduce communication participation in the classroom.⁶

On the other hand, psycholinguistic studies on speaking difficulties in students show that appropriate communication strategies can help reduce cognitive strain during speaking. For example, Prasetyaningrum et al. (2020) found that foreign language students use strategies such as role play and storytelling to overcome speaking anxiety,⁷ while Anggoro (2020) highlighted how

1 Diya Jaishankar et al., “A Biopsychosocial Overview of Speech Disorders: Neuroanatomical, Genetic, and Environmental Insights,” *Biomedicines* 13, no. 1 (January 20, 2025): 239, <https://doi.org/10.3390/biomedicines13010239>.

2 Martina Berchiatti et al., “School Adjustment in Children Who Stutter: The Quality of the Student-Teacher Relationship, Peer Relationships, and Children’s Academic and Behavioral Competence,” *Children and Youth Services Review* 116 (September 2020): 105226, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105226>.

3 Hamid Karimi et al., “Behind the Mask: Stuttering, Anxiety, and Communication Dynamics in the Era of COVID-19,” *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders* 59, no. 6 (November 30, 2024): 2454–64, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1460-6984.13096>.

4 Jaishankar et al., “A Biopsychosocial Overview of Speech Disorders: Neuroanatomical, Genetic, and Environmental Insights.”

5 Berchiatti et al., “School Adjustment in Children Who Stutter: The Quality of the Student-Teacher Relationship, Peer Relationships, and Children’s Academic and Behavioral Competence.”

6 Karimi et al., “Behind the Mask: Stuttering, Anxiety, and Communication Dynamics in the Era of COVID-19.”

7 Ari Prasetyaningrum, Zahratul Fikni, and Laila Wati, “English Foreign Language Students’ Strategies in Overcoming Speaking Problems,” *VELES Voices of English Language Education Society* 4, no. 1 (April 25, 2020): 94–103, <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v4i1.1914>.

cross-cultural awareness can boost speaking confidence in academic contexts.⁸ In a broader linguistic context, Tyas (2020) demonstrates that code-switching is a natural mechanism for students to maintain fluency and the meaning of messages.⁹ Santara Merrero's (2020) study expands on this understanding by showing that social perceptions of language variation and semantic construction patterns also shape individuals' linguistic identities and public perceptions of "fluency" in speech.¹⁰

Although previous research has highlighted various dimensions of stuttering, most studies still focus on purely clinical or linguistic aspects, while the social-psychological dimension in primary and secondary educational settings remains underexplored. There haven't been many comprehensive studies examining how the interaction between psychological factors (such as anxiety and shame), linguistic mechanisms, and the social dynamics of class influences the academic performance and social identity of students who stutter. Therefore, this study presents novelty in the form of an integrated psycholinguistic approach that examines the phenomenon of stuttering in eighth-grade students not only from a linguistic perspective but also from emotional and socio-educational aspects. This study aims to map the relationship between forms of disfluency, psychological conditions, and students' social experiences in the classroom, thus providing a holistic understanding that has not been extensively discussed in previous literature.

This research aims to provide an in-depth overview of speech difficulties experienced by stuttering eighth-grade students, examining them thru a psycholinguistic perspective that connects linguistic, psychological, and social aspects. Specifically, this research aims to identify the forms of disfluency that occur in the context of classroom communication, analyze the psychological factors that exacerbate speech fluency disorders, and explore their impact on students' social participation and academic achievement. Thus, this research not only describes linguistic symptoms but also highlights the human and social dimensions that are often overlooked in studies of stuttering in formal educational settings.

Starting from the view that language is a mirror of thoughts and emotions, this research argues that stuttering is not merely an articulatory disorder, but a reflection of an imbalance between cognitive, affective, and social processes within the speaker. Speech fluency disorders in students occur when emotional pressure and social anxiety disrupt the coordination between language planning and speech production. Therefore, an integrated psycholinguistic approach is believed to be able to explain the connection between language structure, psychological conditions, and social context more comprehensively. In the context of education, the main argument of this research is that a deep understanding of the psycholinguistic dimensions of stuttering can help teachers create a more empathetic, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for students with speech fluency disorders.

8 Sapto Anggoro, "Assessing Thai Nursing College Students' Speaking Ability through the Perspectives of Their Indonesian Counterparts," *VELES Voices of English Language Education Society* 4, no. 1 (April 25, 2020): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v4i1.1894>.

9 Novita Tyas, "Code Switching in Discussion Activities in English Class," *VELES Voices of English Language Education Society* 4, no. 1 (April 25, 2020): 11–19, <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v4i1.1797>.

10 Juana Santana Marrero, "Percepción de Las Variedades Andaluza y Castellana de Los Jóvenes Sevillanos: Un Análisis Contrastivo," *Onomázein Revista de Lingüística Filología y Traducción*, no. 50 (2020): 71–89, <https://doi.org/10.7764/onomazein.50.05>.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single case study design to provide an in-depth understanding of speech difficulties experienced by an eighth-grade student who stutters. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to examine the phenomenon within its real classroom context without manipulating variables. The participant was selected through preliminary classroom observation with input from the English teacher as a key informant. The primary data were obtained through direct classroom observation of the student's speech behavior, while supporting data were derived from school documentation such as teacher notes, learning records, and academic reports. These data sources were used to describe both the linguistic manifestations and the social and academic effects of stuttering.

Data were collected through observation and documentation techniques. Observation was used to identify forms of disfluency such as sound repetitions, prolongations, extended pauses, and speech blocks that occurred during classroom interactions. The researcher also noted the student's physical responses and the situational factors that triggered speech tension. Documentation served as supplementary evidence to validate the observation results, including teachers' reports and student performance records. All data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach through coding and thematic categorization. The analysis generated both tabulated and narrative descriptions illustrating the relationship between linguistic patterns, emotional conditions, and the social context influencing the student's stuttering.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

General Overview of Speech Difficulties in Eighth-Grade Students Who Stutter

Speaking ability is an essential skill in both academic and social contexts. Through speech, individuals express their ideas, opinions, and emotions directly.¹¹ However, not all students are able to speak fluently. Some experience speech fluency disorders, commonly known as stuttering (a condition characterized by the repetition of sounds, prolonged articulations, or unnatural pauses that disrupt the flow of speech). For junior high school students, stuttering can become a significant obstacle to classroom participation, particularly in subjects that demand oral performance. This difficulty often leads to reduced self-confidence and limits opportunities for verbal expression and active communication within the learning environment.

Students who stutter exhibit distinct verbal and nonverbal behaviors that reveal their speech difficulties. Verbally, they often repeat initial sounds, prolong certain phonemes, or abruptly stop mid-sentence. Nonverbally, physical signs such as rapid blinking, lip tension, or shoulder lifting often accompany their speech attempts.¹² These behaviors do not stem from a lack of vocabulary or linguistic competence but rather from a disruption in the coordination between cognitive processing and motor control of speech organs. As a result, students require

11 Svetlana Bylkova, Elena Chubova, and Igor Kudryashov, "Public Speaking as a Tool for Developing Students' Communication and Speech Skills," ed. D. Rudoy, A. Olshevskaia, and N. Ugrekhelidze, *E3S Web of Conferences* 273 (June 2021): 11030, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202127311030>.

12 Bipin Bihari Dash and Keith Davis, "Significance of Nonverbal Communication and Paralinguistic Features in Communication: A Critical Analysis," *International Journal for Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Field* 8, no. 4 (2022): 172–79.

more time to articulate words, and their speech rhythm becomes fragmented, making their communication appear hesitant and effortful.

Observations revealed several common patterns of stuttering, including sound repetition, sound prolongation, extended pauses, and speech blocks. Visible muscular tension and facial strain frequently accompanied these patterns as students struggled to complete their utterances. The following data summarize the types and frequencies of disfluencies identified during classroom observation:

Table 1. Types of Disfluency Observed in Student Speech

Type of Disfluency	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Initial sound repetition	2	7	4.8	1.12
Speech blocks	1	4	2.9	0.88
Facial tension	2	6	4.3	1.02
Pauses	3	8	5.6	1.28

Source: by author

The table above shows that the most common type of sound repetition was initial sound repetition, followed by long pauses and facial tension. There were also speech blocks that happened a lot, especially when students had to talk in front of teachers or classmates. These patterns show that fluency problems are not just language problems; they also happen when the brain is planning how to speak. When students feel stressed or anxious, their ability to coordinate their speech movements becomes unstable, which can cause them to repeat themselves or stop speaking. This shows that stuttering changes based on the situation and the needs of the person who is speaking.

These kinds of speech problems have a direct effect on how well people can learn. Students who stutter usually don't want to do things like class discussions, question-and-answer sessions, or group presentations. Teachers might think they are not paying attention or are not interested, even though they understand the lesson well. The stress and fear that come with talking often make them stay quiet to avoid being embarrassed. As a result, they have fewer chances to practice speaking fluently, which hurts their self-esteem.¹³ This behavior of avoiding things can hurt both schoolwork and socializing in the classroom over time.

The general overview of speech difficulties among eighth-grade students who stutter indicates that this condition encompasses intricate linguistic and motor aspects. Repetitions of sounds, long pauses, and visible physical tension are the main things that make speech less fluent. The patterns we saw also show that stuttering gets worse when you have to speak in front of a lot of people, like when you have to give a speech. So, a learning environment that is supportive and understanding is very important. Teachers and classmates should help students be patient, understanding, and supportive so they can speak their minds without worrying about what others

13 Tarafa Muhammad Abdul Rahman Al Habib, "Disorders of Speech and Pronunciation and Their Relationship to Self-Confidence among Those Disturbed in Communication in the State of Kuwait," *Educational Research and Innovation Journal* 1, no. 1 (April 2021): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.21608/erji.2021.178092>.

will think. To help stuttering students improve their communication skills and confidence, they need emotional support and a classroom environment that isn't too stressful.

Factors Causing Speech Difficulties in Eighth-Grade Students Who Stutter

Stuttering, a speech fluency disorder, has numerous interconnected causes. This challenge does not stem from a singular factor but rather from the interaction of biological, psychological, and social components. Adolescence is a delicate time of development for middle school students. During this time, their emotions and social pressures can make stuttering worse.¹⁴ For teachers and parents to come up with the right ways to help, they need to know what causes stuttering. By fully understanding these contributing factors, schools can better help students who have trouble speaking by being more understanding and effective.

The initial factor contributing to stuttering resides in neurological and biological mechanisms. This entails disturbances in the brain's coordination system that regulates the interplay between cognitive planning and motor speech execution. The left hemisphere, especially Broca's area, which is responsible for making speech, often shows unusual activation patterns in people who stutter. This imbalance makes it challenging to start speaking because it messes up the timing between forming thoughts and saying them. This situation is especially true for consonant sounds at the beginning of words. Physiological symptoms like muscle tension in the face or neck are more signs that the motor system is under stress.¹⁵ These neurological irregularities frequently manifest in early childhood and may continue into adolescence if inadequately managed.

Along with neurological factors, genetic predisposition significantly contributes to the manifestation of stuttering. Research indicates that children with relatives who have a history of stuttering are more prone to exhibit analogous symptoms, implying a genetic predisposition. But genetics doesn't work alone. Its expression interacts with environmental conditions that either induce or inhibit the manifestation of disfluency. A student with a genetic predisposition to stuttering may exhibit more severe symptoms in stressful or unsupportive environments.¹⁶ For eighth graders, genetic factors often work with stressors in the classroom to make speech problems that may have been there since childhood worse.

Psychological factors are among the most significant contributors to stuttering, particularly in school-aged children. Speech disfluency can worsen due to fear of judgment, anxiety when speaking in front of others, and social pressure. Emotional states significantly influence the frequency and severity of stuttering episodes, as demonstrated by interviews and classroom observations. The table below shows the psychological factors that were observed to have an effect on the student's fluency levels.

14 Francesca Mastorci et al., "The Transition from Childhood to Adolescence: Between Health and Vulnerability," *Children* 11, no. 8 (August 2024): 989, <https://doi.org/10.3390/children11080989>.

15 Nicolas Fougere and Bernard Fleiter, "Temporomandibular Disorder and Comorbid Neck Pain: Facts and Hypotheses Regarding Pain-Induced and Rehabilitation-Induced Motor Activity Changes," *Canadian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* 96, no. 11 (November 2018): 1051–59, <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjpp-2018-0100>.

16 Jaishankar et al., "A Biopsychosocial Overview of Speech Disorders: Neuroanatomical, Genetic, and Environmental Insights."

Table 2. Psychological Factors Influencing Speech Disfluency

Psychological Factor	Influence Level	Observation Summary
Fear of negative judgment	High	The student avoids speaking in front of peers
Anxiety	High	Disfluency increases during oral performance tasks
Low self-confidence	Low	Hesitation despite knowing correct answers
Social pressure	High	More stuttering occurs in group settings
Emotional regulation	Moderate	Physical tension observed during speech

Source: by author

The table's data reveals that anxiety, fear of judgment, and social pressure significantly impact the severity of stuttering. When students feel like they're being watched, their bodies respond with muscle tension and irregular breathing, which makes it challenging for them to speak clearly. This pattern becomes worse when people are embarrassed or afraid of making mistakes. This creates a cycle where stuttering makes people more anxious, and anxiety makes stuttering worse.¹⁷ On the other hand, students find it harder to get over moments of disfluency when they don't have much self-confidence or emotional control. So, it's vital to make the classroom a safe, supportive place for students to learn to control their emotions and become more resilient when talking to others.

Another important part of why teens stutter is how they control their emotions. Students who discover it difficult to calm down when they are stressed often have more physical tension, strain on their faces, and trouble breathing. These symptoms happen because the sympathetic nervous system becomes too active when you're stressed, which makes it challenging for the brain to coordinate speech planning and motor execution.¹⁸ Students who have better control over their emotions tend to stutter less, even if they still stutter occasionally. This indicates that emotional self-regulation serves as a moderating variable that differentiates between students who can adapt and those whose stuttering exacerbates under pressure.

Stuttering is also caused by cognitive and linguistic factors. To speak, your brain has to work quickly to choose words, put sentences together, and say them clearly. Disfluency tends to happen more often when cognitive load goes up, like when students have to answer challenging questions or speak in a language they don't know. The brain takes longer to understand language, and the extra stress on the mind makes it harder to control movement.¹⁹ Because of this, students may repeat themselves more often, take longer breaks, and pause more often. This phenomenon is why students who stutter often speak more fluently when they are not being judged or

17 Karimi et al., "Behind the Mask: Stuttering, Anxiety, and Communication Dynamics in the Era of COVID-19."

18 Trae Stewart, "Anatomy and Physiology of the Brain and Nervous System," in *Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program Companion and Board Certification Exam Review Workbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024), 53–92, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-60894-0_4.

19 Bradley D. Hatfield, "Brain Dynamics and Motor Behavior: A Case for Efficiency and Refinement for Superior Performance," *Kinesiology Review* 7, no. 1 (February 2018): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.1123/kr.2017-0056>.

structured. Therefore, linguistic complexity and cognitive demand are two of the main things that cause stuttering to happen when doing schoolwork.

In conclusion, speech difficulties in eighth-grade students who stutter arise from a confluence of neurological, genetic, psychological, emotional, social, and linguistic factors. Each factor has a different effect, but together they create a unique pattern of disfluency for each person. To come up with flexible and caring ways to learn, you need to know what these underlying causes are. Teachers and counselors should work together to make classrooms that are safe and supportive, allow students enough time to talk, and lower the pressure to communicate. A complete approach like this can help students reduce stuttering, improve their speaking fluency, and feel more confident when they talk.

Social and Academic Impacts on Eighth-Grade Students Who Stutter

Stuttering affects not only linguistic performance but also the broader social and academic dimensions of a student's life. This disorder often leads to diminished self-confidence, heightened anxiety, and difficulties engaging with the surrounding environment. During adolescence, communication skills are central to both social development and academic success.²⁰ For students who have trouble with fluency, the problems go beyond just speech. They also have to deal with social pressures that affect their daily lives at school. Understanding the social and academic consequences of stuttering is therefore essential, ensuring that interventions address not only speech fluency but also the emotional well-being and social inclusion of affected students.

One of the most visible effects of stuttering is a decline in self-confidence. Students who stutter often perceive themselves as less capable or different from their peers. They become overly cautious when speaking, frequently avoiding situations that require verbal participation. This avoidance leads to feelings of shame, embarrassment, and low self-esteem that influence their sense of identity.²¹ Over time, these negative self-perceptions may solidify into internalized beliefs of inadequacy, causing students to view stuttering as a personal failure rather than a manageable condition. Such feelings can limit their willingness to engage with others, ultimately constraining opportunities for both personal growth and academic participation.

In a school environment, communication serves as the foundation for forming friendships and peer relationships. Students who stutter often struggle to integrate socially due to fear of ridicule or misunderstanding. They tend to remain silent or interact only with trusted peers who are familiar with their condition. This results in limited social circles and reduced engagement in group activities.²² Some students exhibit mild social withdrawal, avoiding situations that demand spontaneous speech. Not having regular interactions makes it even harder to practice natural

20 Vicki A. Reed and Susan Trumbo, "The Relative Importance of Selected Communication Skills for Positive Peer Relations: American Adolescents' Opinions," *Communication Disorders Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (May 2020): 135–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525740118819684>.

21 Konrad Piotrowski et al., "Perfectionism and Community-Identity Integration: The Mediating Role of Shame, Guilt and Self-Esteem," *Current Psychology* 42, no. 2 (January 2023): 1308–16, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01499-9>.

22 Marco Chacon, Rebecca S. Levine, and Amy Bintliff, "Student Perceptions: How Virtual Student-Led Talking Circles Promote Engagement, Social Connectedness, and Academic Benefit," *Active Learning in Higher Education* 25, no. 3 (November 2024): 569–87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14697874231179238>.

fluency, which makes the cycle of anxiety and disfluency worse. Less interaction makes people more anxious, and more anxiety makes people stutter more.

Speech difficulties also have a direct impact on classroom participation. Students who stutter often refrain from answering questions or volunteering to speak in front of the class. Teachers may mistakenly interpret this silence as a lack of understanding or motivation, when in fact the student fears experiencing a disfluent episode. During oral activities, students with stuttering may need more time to formulate and deliver their responses, potentially leading to a perception of poor academic performance. Misunderstanding students repeatedly can lead to frustration and disengagement.²³ As a result, students lose valuable chances to demonstrate their knowledge and may become less active participants in the learning process.

Although students who stutter typically possess normal cognitive abilities, it can indirectly affect their academic achievement. Limited verbal participation reduces opportunities to practice oral communication and demonstrate comprehension of subject material. In language classes, especially English, fluency is often a big part of the grade. This situation makes it harder for students who stutter to do well. Many perform well in written and reading tasks but struggle in speaking assessments, leading to academic imbalances that do not reflect their true abilities. Over time, this mismatch can erode motivation, reinforcing the perception that academic success is unattainable, even when their intellectual capacity remains strong.

The emotional toll of stuttering is also significant. Students who experience frequent disfluency often report frustration, anxiety, and mental exhaustion. They may develop social anxiety or mild depressive symptoms due to constant fear of speaking. Each stuttering episode can feel like a personal failure, leading some students to withdraw entirely as a form of self-protection. This emotional burden can hinder psychological and social development.²⁴ Because of this, targeted psychological support, like counseling or peer mentoring, is very important for helping students deal with emotional stress, keep a positive self-image, and improve their fluency.

Stuttering also profoundly affects the teacher-student relationship.²⁵ When teachers lack understanding of the disorder, communication in the classroom can become strained. Impatience, interruptions, or failure to provide adequate response time can make students feel disrespected or embarrassed. Conversely, teachers who demonstrate empathy and patience create a safe space for students to express themselves without fear of judgment. Simple things like giving a student more time to talk, recognizing their hard work, and giving them positive feedback can really boost their confidence and make the teacher-student relationship stronger.

Overall, stuttering exerts multidimensional impacts on students' social and academic lives. Beyond speech disfluency, it influences confidence, classroom engagement, and social relationships, often resulting in lower participation and academic imbalance. Long-term effects may include social isolation and diminished academic motivation. Therefore, schools must foster

23 Daeun Park and Gerardo Ramirez, "Frustration in the Classroom: Causes and Strategies to Help Teachers Cope Productively," *Educational Psychology Review* 34, no. 4 (December 2022): 1955–83, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09707-z>.

24 Jingxun Zhong and Yiqing Zhong, "Emotional Breakdown and Inability to 'Lighten the Burden': A Qualitative Study of the Emotional Burden of Contemporary Rural Teachers in China," *Asia Pacific Education Review*, December 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-024-10023-0>.

25 Berchiatti et al., "School Adjustment in Children Who Stutter: The Quality of the Student-Teacher Relationship, Peer Relationships, and Children's Academic and Behavioral Competence."

supportive, inclusive learning environments free from ridicule or stigma. To help students who stutter feel safe and accepted, teachers, counselors, and peers need to work together. Such an approach enables them to develop not only speech fluency but also self-assurance and a stronger sense of belonging within the classroom community.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that stuttering in eighth-grade students is a multidimensional phenomenon that is not only related to linguistic disorders but is also deeply rooted in psychological and social factors. From a linguistic perspective, students exhibited various forms of speech disfluency such as sound repetitions, phoneme prolongations, extended pauses, and speech blocks that hindered fluency. This phenomenon is exacerbated by emotional conditions such as anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-esteem. Field findings also show that disfluency often increases in situations that demand verbal performance in public, such as presentations or answering teacher's questions, indicating a direct relationship between social pressure and psychomotor tension. Additionally, the social effects of stuttering are evident in avoidance behaviors, reluctance to speak, and limited participation in academic interactions. Thus, stuttering cannot be understood solely as a neurological or phonetic issue, but as a complex manifestation of the interaction between language, thought, and social context.

The main contribution of this research lies in the integration of a psycholinguistic approach to understanding stuttering in the context of secondary education. Unlike previous research that emphasized medical aspects or speech therapy, this study places the students' experiences as socio-psychological subjects within a dynamic classroom environment. By combining linguistic observation and emotional analysis, this research demonstrates that stuttering serves as a mirror reflecting students' internal processes in coping with communication pressure and academic expectations. This approach enriches the literature by offering a holistic perspective that links psycholinguistic theory with pedagogical practice. However, this study has limitations because it only uses one case subject, so the findings cannot be widely generalized. Variations in social background, school culture, and the severity of stuttering in other individuals have the potential to create different dynamics. These limitations open opportunities for further research using multi-case designs or longitudinal approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the speech fluency development and social adaptation of stuttering students.

Based on these results and limitations, this study recommends that teachers and education practitioners pay special attention to the emotional and psychosocial aspects of students with speech fluency disorders. A stress-free, empathetic, and supportive learning environment can be an effective early intervention to reduce public speaking anxiety levels. Teachers are advised to implement inclusive communication strategies, such as providing additional time for students to speak, avoiding interruptions, and offering positive reinforcement for every communication attempt. Additionally, collaboration between teachers, school counselors, and parents needs to be strengthened to build a consistent emotional support system, both at school and at home. In an academic context, educational institutions are expected to develop inclusive policies that recognize the diversity of students' communication abilities and integrate the principles of psychological well-being into learning practices. With these steps, stuttering is no longer seen as a weakness, but rather as a condition that can be managed thru a scientific, empathetic, and understanding-based approach to the nature of humans as linguistic and social beings.

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