

PROBLEMS TO SPEAKING ENGLISH OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF DARMA AGUNG MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

Studying English for at least seven years does not necessarily make students proficient in practicing English language learned include speaking. When the ability to use English orally has become one of the factors to get a good knowledge, economic independence and job security, it is deemed necessary to find out what problems are the students have to speaking English in order to build strategies to overcome the problems to students' speaking ability in the future. Thirty persons from second semester students of English department at University of Darma Agung Medan participated in this study. The data regarding students' English speaking were collected through questionnaire and speaking test. This study found that students experienced problems to speaking English. It was also revealed that the major problems of the students to speaking English due to the lack of effective transition of knowledge into practice which is caused by the lack of English basic knowledge and the influence of first language used, the disadvantaged socioeconomic factor, non-English classroom instructions, and English speaking anxiety.

Keywords : problems speaking English

ABSTRAK

Belajar bahasa Inggris selama setidaknya tujuh tahun sejak masuk sekolah menengah tidak serta merta membuat mahasiswa mahir dalam mempraktekkan bahasa Inggris yang dipelajarinya dan berbicara dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris juga termasuk didalamnya. Ketika kemampuan untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris secara lisan telah menjadi salah satu faktor untuk mendapatkan pengetahuan yang baik, kemandirian ekonomi dan keamanan kerja, maka dipandang perlu untuk mengetahui masalah apa yang dihadapi mahasiswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris yang bertujuan untuk menciptakan strategi yang tepat untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut demi peningkatan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris mahasiswa di masa depan. Tiga puluh orang dari mahasiswa semester dua jurusan sastra Inggris di Universitas Darma Agung Medan berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Data mengenai kondisi dan kemampuan berbahasa Inggris mahasiswa dikumpulkan melalui angket dan tes berbicara. Studi ini menemukan bahwa mahasiswa mengalami masalah-masalah dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Melalui penelitian ini juga diungkapkan bahwa masalah-masalah utama mahasiswa mengalami kendala dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris adalah kurang efektifnya transisi pengetahuan ke dalam praktek berbahasa yang disebabkan oleh kurangnya pengetahuan dasar bahasa Inggris dan pengaruh bahasa pertama yang digunakan, faktor sosial ekonomi mahasiswa yang kurang mampu, pembelajaran mata kuliah yang tidak diterapkan dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris, dan mengalami kecemasan ketika berbahasa Inggris.

kata kunci : Masalah Berbicara Bahasa Inggris

I. BACKGROUND

English plays a vital role for English department students. It is prudent for obtaining good knowledge, achieving economic independence and job security. Mastering English will help them to understand the information being exposed in English. Having a good English can create enormous opportunities for innovation and healthy competition amongst students which primarily put fluency in English as the first priority.

Ur (1996) says that the importance of spoken performance of a language is becoming more prudent than the written performance because people who know a language are actually referred to speakers of that language. It indicates that just knowing about a language is less beneficial than using it because knowing a lot about a language is not a great point if someone can not use it. (Scrivener, 2005, p.146).

English Speaking skills are needed for both students and alumni. For students, it is used in performing their presentations asking and answering questions or information, and delivering speech in an occasion or a ceremonial event, and so on. For graduates, the speaking skill plays the main role in doing the business communication or for having a good career as staff-workers in a multinational factories or companies. The mastery in presenting the information in English will give the essential opportunities to workers or pre-workers to be succeed in their job at international relationd-factories. It helps them to communicate in a clear manner of the important messages inside and outside of the companies or organization. It is prominent since the business works deals with asking and giving information or questions, stating the needs of the companies, representing position on an issue and building consensus. Therefore, knowing how to communicate in English is a must because it is needed to inform, to persuade, or to convince others in order to realize the goals for their companies' business.

These days, due to the global trend of internationalization, English speaking skills is mandatory for being employed in a high competitived muliti-national companies. The ability to communicate in English is needed as an essential skill. Harefa (2006) says that the course's main purpose is to teach the students the communicative competence or the ability to communicate in English. It is important to know that the development of spoken language is not simply a matter of learning skill such as pronouncing English sounds or being able to produce single utterance or phrases. Knowing how to speak English becomes a must in order to achieve the realization of the companies' business goals.

Fluency, the ability to keep the conversation going by expressing their ideas or messages without spending a lot of time searching for the vocabulary items needed, is the objective of many language learners. Indonesian government makes English as a compulsory subject right from the elementary up to senior level or even tertiary university level in order to gain this aim. It is also the purpose of teaching the speaking skill to university students of English Department that is to direct students to apply the language in and out of daily life communication.

Although the students have learned English for more than six years because the government of Indonesia has been decided that English as one subject that has to be taught since elementary school to senior high school in order to accommodate the students to master English, in fact of the field, the students still cannot express their ideas and meanings in formal transactional well. They also still have barriers in sustaining the dialogue or discussion accurately and properly both in daily context and scientific area. The students still face problems in equipping language skills include speaking.

This study is done in order to find out what are the problems of the students in speaking English.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. SPEAKING

2.1.1 Definition of Speaking

Speaking is one of ways of people in telling stories, expressing emotions, conveying messages, sharing feelings, delivering a speech or remarks which mediate them to relate and communicate each other. People can exchange their experience, express and receive ideas, thoughts, or feelings while speaking.

Slamet and Saddhono (2012) reveal that speaking and listening are complementary and contributed to oral communication such as question and answer, talks, discussion, interview, and so on. In doing those activities, the speaker and the listener can change the role easily and smoothly, from the listener to be a speaker and vice versa.

2.1.2 The Elements of Speaking

According to Harmer (1998:269-270) there are two elements of speaking. They are:

1. Language Features

- a. Connected speech: the speaker needs to produce individual phonemes and use connected speech.
- b. Expressive devices; students can deploy some supra-segmental features and devices in order to be an effective communicator.
- c. Lexis and grammar; the speaker can use a number of common lexical phrases in the performance of certain language functions.
- d. Negotiation language: the negotiator language people use to seek clarification and to show the structure of what people are saying.

2. Mental or Social Processing

1. Language Processing

Language process means the speakers process language in their heads and put it into coherent order so that it comes out in forms that are intended.

2. Interaction with others

The speakers have a good deal of listening, understanding others' feeling and the knowledge of how linguistically to take turns or allow others to do so.

3. Information processing

It is the ability to process and to response the information given or taken.

2.1.3 Characteristics of Successful speaking activity

According to Ur (1996:121) there are some characteristic of successful speaking they are:

1. Learners talk a lot

The learners talk as much as possible based on the period time allowed to do the activity. It is very obvious but in reality, most of time it is taken up with teacher's talk or pauses.

2. Participation is even

The classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants. All of the learners get the same chance to contribute in the speaking activity.

3. Motivation is high

The learners are eager to speak as they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it or simply because they want to contribute in order to achieve task objectives.

2.2 PROBLEMS TO SPEAKING ENGLISH

2.2.1 The problems with speaking Activities according to Ur

According to Ur (1996:121), those problems are:

1. Inhibition

Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. They are worried of making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

2. Nothing to say

The learners complain that they cannot think of anything to say. They have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking.

3. Low or uneven participation

If the communication or learning are in a large group, it means that each one of the speakers will have only very little talking time as only one participant can talk at a time if he is to be heard. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some

learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.

4. Mother tongue use

The learners may tend to use their mother tongue because it is easier and it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language. Moreover, they feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The data analyzed in this research are the result of the speaking test and questionnaire. The number of sample who joined in this research is 30 students. They are the second semester students of english departments students at University of Darma Agung, Medan.

3.1 SPEAKING TEST

A speaking test is formulated by the researcher to get the data of the students achivement in speaking English. The students are given some easy topic and they must prepare them in verbal or written form. They are asked to to speak about their personal profile, describing something, giving direction, and participating in a discussion as a respond to other students' presentations.

3.2 Questionnaires

The researcher asked the students to fill in the prepared quetionnaires which aim to identify their situation and collect their opinion about speaking in front of the classroom in order to find the problems faced by the the students of English department of University of Darma Agung (UDA) in speaking English.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 RESULTS

4.1.1 Students' Problems to Speaking English

Speaking English is one of problematic subjects faced by the English department students in UDA. Beside the linguistic problems, it is also difficult

because of non-linguistics problems the students had. The various difficulties can hinder the students performance, as a consequences, they can not fullfil the basic requirements of having successful English communication during their course.

4.1.1.1 Student's Attitude Toward Speaking English

Table 1. Student's Attitude toward Speaking English

Student's Attitude	Yes	No
Facing difficulties in speaking English	20	10
Feeling confident while speaking English	10	20
Prefer speaking English than vernacular or Indonesian language	6	24

A close look to the table 1 reveals that most of the students face difficulties in speaking English, feeling less confident while expressing thoughts in English, and they are likely to choose to speak in their vernacular language if they want to discuss about something among their peers though it is in English subject time. They felt handicapped while presenting their opinions or stories in English.

4.1.1.2 Classroom Instructions

Table 2. Language Activities Required to Speak English

Activities	E	G	A	B
Participating in telling personal profile	3	2	15	10
Participating in describing something	2	1	13	14
Participating in giving direction	1	2	10	17
Participating in class discussion	2	1	10	17

Note: E: Excellent G:good A :Average B:Bad

The lecturer manages the class to ensure each of the student will have a much talking time and every student gets same opportunity. Unfortunately, as the data described in table 2, it indicates that the

students with vernacular or Indonesian language as their medium of instruction earlier before joining the English department agreed that they face difficulties while performing speaking activities. There are only few students who are consistently participate in every voluntered class performance and disussion. The classroom interaction is mostly dominated by some students while other students almost not talk if only the lecturer did not directly pointed them to do so. In other words, the conversation is not even because it is mostly dominated by students who has fluency in speaking English. Most of the students need alot of time, it can take at least twenty to thirty minutes to complete, to comprise the details of their personal profile, stories for their life, giving direction, etc. Those students are rarely participate spontanously in class discussion,too.

The lecturer tries to manage the class meeting as an English class learning but the students experienced handicaps in undertanding the materials, so the lecturer performs mostly as a translator than a genuine lecturer because she simply translates the language into Indonesian language (their mother tongue) and continue to explain the subject. Students are not placed in situations where they are required to improve their English skills personally because inevitably he must know English learning in class meetings presented by the lecturer in full English. They are not triggered to speak English as they they will feel if they are studying in a native classroom interaction. Therefore, the students still face difficulties in learning English because the students can not code and decode the messages in English appropriately due to the lack of effective use of spoken English in the classroom.

2. The lack of of effective transition of knowledge into practice.

The most common students' speaking English obstacles include lack of effective transition of knowledge into practice. It was found that students face difficulties in translating their thoughts, ideas, and perceptions into English. It is revealed that the students face difficulties in

translating their expressions and ideas into English because they have lack of basic knowledge of speaking English such as lack of vocabularies mastery, tenses, preposition, sub-verb agreement, can not pronounce words in correct way, producing grammatically incorrect sentences, failed in choosing appropriate words based on context, or in general it can be said that they are unable to frame a proper sentence and structure in English much less making the main idea stand out from the supporting ideas or information outlined.

It is necessary to note that the structure of the students' first language confused them while doing translation of information given into English. The students record the information given or taken in Indonesian language first, and then try to translate them into English by following their first language structure. Therefore, they regularly commit alot of mistakes or language errors , moreover by doing so it took much of their time and made them more hesitant, when they are assigned with various speaking activities.

Furthermore, the students' socioeconomic background lead them to have low exposure to English. Belonging to weak financial background, first language medium of instruction and vernacular language used of daily life interactions, and remote rural areas hometown, they are not provided by a good English educational facilities and environtment

3. English Speaking Apprehension/ English Speaking anxiety

Table. 3. English Speaking Anxiety Symptoms

Students reactions before and while having speaking test/ class performance	N	Se	S	A
Do not enjoy speaking in front of others	2	0	5	20
Feeling nervous before and / or while speaking	2	1	15	10
Feeling afraid of committing the wrong words/tenses	1	2	13	14
Fearful of lecturer and audience bad responds	1	2	10	17

Suddenly forget what to say	2	1	10	17
Feeling stressful before and at the day of speaking test	1	1	9	19
Knees began shaking	6	2	8	12
Prevent eye contact with the audience	4	2	9	15
Having voiced quivered	10	5	10	5
Uncontrol eyelid movement	14	3	9	3
Trembling legs	26	0	2	2
cold hands in a sudden time	10	2	6	12
Racing heartbeat	4	3	6	17

N:never;Se:seldom;S:sometimes;A: always

It is found that most of the students face the nervousness to talk in English. For English department students, who struggle to utter sentences in English, speaking on different situations and tasks for a duration of only five minutes could be a nightmare for them. Some of them agreed that they forget what to say because they cannot control and conquer their fears so they even cannot finish their speaking as the total talking time allotted for them. They may seem intimidated by the listener(s) and this fearful of lecturer and audience bad responses caused problems to across their messages because they are busy with their plan to speed up and end up the talks. They feel embarrassed and afraid that others will not understand what they said and they feel reluctant to speak the words because they thought that they can not generate words as good as them should be managed.

Feeling more hesitant and less confident caused the students avoid speaking whenever it is possible. They cannot deal effectively with their stress related to speaking in front of others, so it is crystal clear that it will make them speak incoherently under stressful feeling before and at the day of speaking test but the level of the stress will fall after speaking.

Other nervousness or anxiety symptoms as a reaction to a stressful condition are also experienced by some students such as having voice quivered, knees began shaking, one eyelid began to

twitch uncontrollably, the legs felt like soft rubber, the memory apparently left some of them in a sudden, feeling their heartbeat are racing and their hands suddenly cold and preventing eye contact with audience.

4.2 DISCUSSIONS

It is revealed that unconducived classroom instruction influences the ability of the students in speaking English. It is in the same state of Concilianus Laos Mbato who says in his journal that conducive learning environments, right coaching and learning strategies are likely to increase the possibility of students' success in speaking in front of the public.

Revealing about English speaking anxiety which also plays a significant role in students reluctant to speak, this study findings also equal to the ones revealed by Concilianus Laos Mbato in his journal. In addition to this, Ahmad Al-Khotaba, et.all who study the speaking achievement of the students in Saudi Arabia also finally found in his study that different language anxiety (personal and interpersonal anxiety, classroom anxiety, and learners' perceptions about foreign language anxiety) significantly affected the speaking performance of the students. It is similar with findings of Jyothi, Vijaya and V. Serwan (2016) who reveales students in vernacular media generally have the same attitude regarding speaking difficulties. It is suggested that encouraging the students by themselves, is the best way to adapt to the learning ability. Therefore, the students have to shed their inhibition and shyness, and try to mingle with their peers from English medium so that it will enable them to acquire the language faster. In equal state, Horwitz concludes that the anxious learners report feeling apprehension, worry and even dread of their language class. Moreover, the speakers also experiencing difficulties in having concentrations become forgetful, sweating and having palpitations. They also tend to great length to miss class, postpone homework and avoid studying.(Horwitz and young in Bowen, 2004: 32). Adding to the similar findings, Liu (2007:119) says that there are three aspects that contributed to speaking anxiety

or students' anxiety in the class, they are: lack of vocabularies, low English proficiency and memory dissociation. It can be seen when the students displayed a lack of confidence or froze up in participating in many activities or when they forget previously learned vocabulary and grammar in evaluative situation as they avoided to convey complex messages in English. Though Puspita (2012) found that anxiety and vocabulary mastery are important variables and have significant contribution in speaking skill but she also states that speaking skill doesn't completely depend on those two variables

Besides speaking anxiety, the disadvantaged socioeconomic background also gives influence in barriers to speaking for the students, as Yellapu in Jyothi (2010) reveals that in India, the students who come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds especially in educational institutions in rural areas face difficulty in learning English especially listening and speaking skills, as reflected in Andhra Pradesh. It is added by Underwood, Julie who finds that parental participation is a key ingredient for student success, if parents are foreclosed from participation because of their limited English skills, their children are equally fore closed from opportunities. It is similar with Hak (2018) who reveals that English-speaking Migrant Domestic Worker (MDW) in working mother households increase children's like hood of speaking English if the mother in the household does not speak English and significantly arise if the mother is capable of speaking English. Non speaking-English MDW, however, are found to have little such effects.

Lack of effective transition of knowledge into practice caused by lack of English basic knowledge and the influence of first language structure and used also problems of the students to speaking English revealed in this study. In his journal, Concilianus Laos Mbato also says not only the lack of English competence and speaking anxiety (as stated previously) but also cultural barriers may lead to English

Foreign Language students' failures in public speaking,

V. Conclusions

Most of the students experienced problems in speaking English. Most of oral performance done imperfectly and should get better scored or left uncriticized in the future. The problems faced by the students are lies on linguistics and non-linguistics aspect. They are the lack of of effective transition of knowledge into practice, unsupporting classroom instructions, the influence of the first language used, the disadvantaged socioeconomic factor, and English speaking anxiety

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