

Speaking English Problems Among the Efl Students in Higher Education

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dihadapi mahasiswa universitas Bina Bangsa Getsempena siswa ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris. Masalah dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa mengalami kesulitan berbicara bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan kuesioner untuk mengetahui sejauh mana kemampuan berbicara siswa dalam bahasa Inggris. Peneliti melakukan wawancara dengan siswa untuk menyelidiki tantangan yang dihadapi oleh pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing dalam mengembangkan keterampilan berbicara mereka. Sepuluh orang mahasiswa yang dijadikan sampel dalam penelitian ini. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa masalah berbicara merupakan hasil dari kesiapan siswa untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Kesulitan yang mereka hadapi terutama dalam pengucapan kata-kata bahasa Inggris, kurangnya pengetahuan dan kompetensi tata bahasa, dan terbatasnya jumlah kolokasi dan frase dalam bahasa Inggris yang membuat siswa kesulitan berlatih berbicara. Akhirnya, peneliti merekomendasikan agar dosen dan pembelajar mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih lengkap dan waktu untuk berlatih berbicara. Guru harus membiasakan siswa dengan teori dan praktik mengajar berbicara dan membuat siswa tertarik untuk berlatih berbicara.

Kata Kunci: membuat kalimat, Tata bahasa, Pengucapan, Berbicara

Abstract

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by students in higher secondary schools while trying to achieve proficiency in English speaking. The problem of this study is that most of the second-year students produced incorrect communication for many English words. This study used a questionnaire to determine the extent of students' speaking skills in English. The researcher did interviews with students in order to investigate the challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in developing their speaking skills. There were a total of ten students in the study. The findings showed that the problems of speaking are the result of the readiness of students to use English. The difficulties they face are mainly in pronunciation of English words, lack of knowledge and grammatical competency, and limited number of collocations and phrases in the English language that makes students impossible practice speaking. Finally, the researcher recommends that teachers and learners getting of intelligibility, and the language laboratory should exist in all higher education to practice speaking. Teachers must familiar students with the theory and practice of teaching speaking and make the learners interested in practicing speaking.

Key Words: Build sentences, Grammar, Pronunciation, Speaking

A. Introduction

Most EFL students in different EFL conditions desire to become proficient in speaking abilities. The attempts of the teachers to have the students study grammar and acquire and recall a large vocabulary do not help in that regard. Most EFL situations, it is generally agreed, are defined by their formal teaching and learning environments, where there is little to no opportunity for the learner to use the language in a natural communicative situation (Diaab, 2016). At the same time, English has developed into an essential and required academic subject in schools as well as a worldwide language (Ahmed, 2017). For nonnative speaker, English is a common problem in speaking and become one of the most difficult skills language learners face in language learning than the other four language skill (Dalem, 2017). Furthermore, experts believe that speaking is considered one of the most essential competencies for speakers of other languages at all levels of education, particularly in schools, language institutes, and even at the university level (Khatoony, Rahmani and Khatoony Candidate, 2021).

Within Indonesia, English is instructed as a foreign language where a practice community is needed. Educating and learning English as a remote language still confront many challenges. Subsequently, different alterations within the instruction framework have been made; one of these changes has been receiving communicative language teaching (CLT) as an endorsed approach in EFL classrooms; be that as it may, challenges are still confronting in articulating English perfectly. For instance, the students lack vocabulary, do not well master the language structure; the students, are anxious about adverse reactions from others, and the students have low self-confidence in speaking English (Rahayu *et al.*, 2020). Students who experience high levels of fear, worry, and anxiety have low self-confidence levels in foreign language classes (Tridinanti, 2018) and show their attitudes to speaking (Ghafar and Amin, 2022).

In addition, instructors and students pay less attention to speaking skills and focus on speaking skills. Students also focus more on the listening, reading, and writing sections. Therefore, the researcher wants to examine more deeply the challenges faced by students in practicing speaking skills in class.

B. Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the challenges encountered by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in their oral communication skills. In a study conducted by Susilawati (2022), she explored the problems and opportunities associated with enhancing English communication skills through online learning. The study's findings indicated that the issues were attributed to various factors, namely the lack of preparedness exhibited by the institution, professors, and administrative staff, as well as the first-year students's insufficient readiness to adapt to online learning.

This study also revealed that individuals with negative perceptions about their English language proficiency experience heightened discomfort and less readiness to engage in appropriate spoken communication. Also, Students who perceive their English proficiency as inadequate tend to experience more anxiety and demonstrate more uncertainty in engaging in English language sessions, compared to learners who perceive their English proficiency as satisfactory or excellent. In another study, the challenges faced by Amoah and Yeboah (2021) investigating students' English-speaking abilities are examined. The results of the study indicate that Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners exhibit a somewhat higher degree of instrumental motivation compared to integrative motivation. The study proposes that educators should establish a supportive atmosphere to mitigate anxiety and shyness among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Additionally, instructors are advised to employ effective techniques such as frequent oral presentations and classroom debates to enhance the speaking confidence of these learners. The students' dissatisfaction derives from their perception of an educational program that fails to provide equitable

opportunities for acquiring and honing proficiency in many languages and a dearth of diverse assignments designed to facilitate grammar instruction. Consequently, students have challenges enhancing their oral communication abilities due to the substantial class sizes.

Another study conducted by Abugohar and Yunus (2018) examines the challenges that prevent the accurate and fluent pronunciation of English vocabulary and basic sentences among high school students. They found that a considerable number of second-grade high school students have notable difficulties in accurately pronouncing English. Kurdish universities have a significant foreign language speaking anxiety problem regarding speaking English fluently, even among students with high English competence. It may hurt students' ability to learn English, mainly speaking. As a result, it is vital to study this phenomenon to determine the valid reasons for speaking fear among Kurdish university students and provide potential strategies for reducing it. By identifying students' different needs and situations, instructors can enhance their understanding of successful instructional methods and facilitate positive learning outcomes. This understanding enables instructors to employ appropriate approaches that cater to the unique requirements of individual students. (Crandall, 2000; Goss, 2022; Marini et al., 2022; Chan, 2023)

In addition, teachers and students do not assess spoken communication and give it less priority. Similar to the findings Vu and Peters (2021) study, in which she discovered that students concentrate more on the listening, reading, and writing sections that are similar to exam questions and that teachers and students pay little attention to speaking activities in their textbooks because speaking is widely accessible from exams.

C. Methodology

This study explores the challenges confronting EFL learners when learning to speak. This study is conducted in one of the higher education institutions in Aceh State, Academic year 2022-2023. All participants in this study were undergraduate students enrolled in the English Department in the second stage of their academic program. These students had the lowest passing grades in the speaking component of their coursework.

The researchers collected the data and translated it into English following the interviews. The data is categorized into distinct sections, including issues, causes, and remedies. The data was further analyzed to determine the speaking difficulties experienced by the learners, the underlying causes of these obstacles, and their endeavors to enhance their speaking skills. The data analysis aimed to establish a connection between the identified issues, the reasons behind them, and the corresponding efforts to address them.

The sample for this study consisted of 25 male and female students in the second grade. They were selected using a convenience sampling method. Participants were assigned to respond to the questionnaire. The researcher chose the participants and expressed their willingness to participate in the questionnaire. A purposive sampling was employed to select ten students to complete the questionnaire. The criteria for selection were based on the students' English results before the final examination. One student was selected from each category: the highest score, the post-average score, the average score, the pre-average score, and the lowest score.

The questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS of Version 24.0 to determine the descriptive statistics. In contrast, an in-depth review of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews was conducted. This involved scrutinizing the phrases presented to students to gather their opinions and delve into their remarks about verbal communication. Subsequently, the data was presented to an academician to assess the study's objectivity level.

D. Findings and Discussion

The researchers found that the student had a number of difficulties speaking English. The writer analyzed the data and discussed the results to answer the research questions. (1) what are the problems confronting EFL learners in learning English speaking, and what are the causes of the pronunciation problems. Here is a description of the speaking issues second-year English Department students encounter

1) Problems with the pronunciation of English words

The first issue was having trouble pronouncing English words. The participants had difficulty pronouncing English words when participating in spoken English exercises. Participant one admitted in a statement that 65% was difficulty agreeing in pronunciation. According to Abrar *et al.*, (2018) and (Fatimah, 2021), students take the longest to pronounce their words in speaking. It was difficult for them to pronounce some words. Spelling and pronunciation in English are different. The researchers discovered that several interviewees used certain erroneous English sounds. For instance, they mispronounced the words "thank" and "theng" reading them as "Z" and "very" respectively, and pronouncing them as "fery". This problem stems from the fact that there are no sound in Indonesia. As a result, when reading aloud, they mispronounced words. Additionally, it appears that the kids struggle to grasp the language used in instructional materials. As a result, individuals needed help understanding phrases and sections. The study's findings add evidence of difficulty learning the receptive mode of textual communication, such as (Feng, 2020; Kan and Ito, 2020; Maiza, 2020; Qizi, 2021). Early education students may find it challenging to gain literacy because of the discrepancies between spoken languages they have learned outside of school and written ones they have studied inside. Specific characteristics could confuse learners, especially in a language like Indonesia. To assist students to overcome the challenge, essential issues must be carefully considered.

2) Lack of Grammar Knowledge

The students involved were required to manage and navigate through this particular circumstance. Both individuals exhibited challenges in using grammatically correct language, particularly when communicating indirectly or spontaneously. "In instances where I inadvertently omit certain elements during a presentation, I compensate by improvising using terminology that may not adhere to grammatical conventions. Consequently, a significant proportion of pupils perceive their restricted vocabulary as a formidable obstacle. One additional person among the cohort of twelve individuals expressed similar sentiments, stating, "I encounter challenges in selecting the appropriate tense during verbal communication with my friends." Another participant asserts, "I encounter difficulties in effectively identifying and utilizing the appropriate vocabulary during verbal exchanges." "We will regain our ability to communicate smoothly after that has been accomplished". Participant one, expressed uncertainty over the quality of their language, questioning if it was viewed as poor or accurate. In contrast, Participant two expressed their perspective by stating, "The act of speaking is characterized by spontaneity, which presents challenges for me in terms of language.". According to Syafiqah Yacob and Md Yunus, (2019; Farooq, Uzair-Ul-Hassan and Wahid, (2020); Hampp, Kumayas and Lengkoan, (2021), individuals who are learning the English language encounter several grammatical challenges, such as difficulties with the third person singular, articles, the past tense, and the incorrect usage of prepositions. Both individuals experienced a similar challenge in their utilization of grammar; nevertheless, their circumstances diverged due to the specific nature of their respective grammatical difficulties.

3) Difficult to build sentences

In conversation, the students make sentences is difficulty. There are 65% students agree that making sentences in English, they said the sentences in English was really different than Indonesian. The study revealed that individuals possess a singular structure for constructing utterances. The students preferred employing polysyllabic vocabulary and complicated phrase structures with a higher frequency than substitute sentence patterns. English has some linguistic features in its writing, such as; sentence patterns, phrase patterns, specific word choices (specific lexicons), cohesion, coherence patterns, and the selection of citation verbs (reporting verbs).

According Xie (2019), Linguistic accuracy poses a significant challenge for authors learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In other words. The instructor frequently encourages classroom engagement by requesting students to respond orally to the word and sentence level. Moreover, most assignments dictate what the students are required to recreate, typically at the level of individual sentences or phrases, as provided by the textbook. As a result, using textbook exercises can limit learners' creative expression and impede their ability to begin and engage in interactive exchanges. It is to provide students with information on complex sentences and corrections to students' writing problems. Feedback serves as a means of overcoming the information gap between the degree of knowledge demonstrated by students and the expected level of performance. Crandall (2000) The author contends that it is fundamental to give students opportunities to engage in extensive discourse or presentations to encourage the development of their discourse skills within the classroom setting. Nevertheless, the analysis demonstrates that the unit on examination needs to afford students the chance to engage in prolonged oral discourse, which is an anticipated outcome.

4) Limited knowledge of phrases and collocations

Teachers' presence and instructional approaches within the classroom setting significantly influence students' learning outcomes. Most of the students reported that the teacher's role in fostering the development of speaking fluency was the most influential factor. Based on feedback from students, the level of instructor involvement was higher in class than the students and most of them assumed a passive role as listeners only. According to Selvaraj *et al.*, (2021; Tay, Lee and Ramachandran, (2021; Iyamuremye *et al.*, (2022), it is recommended that students engage in more discussion than teachers to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Several students observed a lack of need for more among their lecturers and classmates. Instructors must be able to inspire and motivate students in language classes. According to the participants, individuals within their social circles engage in criticism when someone makes an effort to communicate in the English language.

E. Conclusion

The researchers identified three issues in the English-speaking class of Getsempena University students. Among these problems are difficulties with pronunciation, comprehension of grammar, and sentence construction. This study considered and explored the problems of EFL students with English-speaking difficulties. It is important to emphasize that this study assessed and evaluated participants' perceptions of speaking difficulties. Speaking abilities have caused many problems for non-native speakers worldwide; aside from that, learners face the same difficulties. It is possible to infer from the study's findings and comments that the English department students encountered some speaking challenges. Most students need help speaking in class due to their limited vocabulary, lack of speaking confidence, lack of classroom experience, and difficulties expressing themselves in words or phrases. Fear of making mistakes was the most frequent reason for difficulties among students. The researchers identified

two difficulties speakers face: linguistic and non-linguistic problems. The discussion led to several recommendations from researchers. The most important thing to remember is that speaking talents do not suffice independently. Students who struggle with vocabulary, grammar, and word pronunciation must increase their knowledge. In order to address these problems, the researcher suggested modifying present English courses, switching up the way that instruction is delivered, and changing the role of the teacher in the classroom. It also recommended creating a welcoming environment in the classroom where English is spoken.

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