(CASE REPORT)

Difficulties in speaking English among the first-year students of English education study program of Nusantara Islamic Religious Institute Ashidiqiyah Lempuing Jaya

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Abstract

Difficulty speaking English, especially for beginner students, has become an ongoing problem. Looking at this phenomenon, this research aims to see the difficulties in speaking English among first year students of the English Language Education Department at IAI Nusantara Ashidiqiyah OKI. What difficulties do first year students of the English Department face in speaking English? and what factors cause difficulty speaking English among first year students of the English Department? This research used a qualitative approach by choosing a place in the English Language Education Department at IAI Nusantara Ashidiqiyah OKI and selecting three students from the class of 2023 as participants in this research. Participants are selected based on recommendations from each lecturer who teaches the course. Regarding difficulties in speaking English, this study revealed four difficulties, difficulty in pronouncing English words, lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence, and confusion in using grammar. Second, factors that influence difficulty speaking English are lack of knowledge, lack of practice, audience attention, environment, accent or mother tongue, differences in writing or spelling, and finally lack of motivation.

Keywords: Speaking English; Difficulties; Factors; Qualitative Research

1. Introduction

Speaking English is considered an important and fundamental language skill in human communication. Many people around the world use English to communicate with each other. By being able to speak English, people can interact with other people without obstacles. Apart from that, people speak English to improve themselves so they can survive in the era of globalization. According to Al-Sibai (2004), we as students live in an era where the ability to speak English fluently has become a necessity, especially for those who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor.

Even though speaking is considered a key language skill that students must improve, that does not mean it is an easy skill to master. Therefore, students need to be encouraged to master this skill. According to Zhang (2009), speaking is still the most difficult skill to master for most English language learners, and they are still not competent in communicating orally in English.

Based on the researcher's experience, there are many difficulties faced by students of the English Language Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta when speaking English. Students have their own difficulties in speaking English, such as difficulty pronouncing English words, fear of making mistakes, difficulty understanding different syntax, and confusion in transferring language (from mother tongue to English and vice versa). From the explanation above, researchers are interested in knowing the problem: what are the dynamics and factors that cause students' difficulties in speaking?

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2. Literature review

2.1. Speaking Students' Ability in the First Year

Students' speaking ability is one of the important skills in the English department. Students must be capable in these skills not only understanding pronunciation but must also be capable in grammar, self-confidence etc.

According to Brown (2001) speaking is a productive skill that can be observed directly and empirically, this observation is always colored by the accuracy and effectiveness of the test taker's listening skills, which of course compromises the reliability and validity of oral production tests. In accordance with this statement, students' speaking skills can be observed for accuracy and effectiveness. As long as speaking skills are productive skills, students must create their own language to convey opinions or when communicating with other people. As a productive skill, speaking skills should be trained more so that students can express their ideas. This is not to consume someone else's language but to produce a language. In connection with producing a language, students must master speaking skills. Speaking skills consist of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. This is also supported by attitude, self-confidence and motivation. Brown (2001) further argues that speaking is an interactive process of building meaning that involves the production, reception and processing of information. In relation to information processing, students must understand the spoken language they acquire. They will easily process information if they master linguistic competence. At least, they are familiar with the words or sounds they heard.

Furthermore, Riddle (2002) argues that speaking accuracy is supported by fluency and correction at certain stages will become more important. When conveying his opinion, a speaker should consciously pay attention to fluency and correction of linguistic elements such as vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation and grammar. This will make speaking accuracy easy for listeners to understand. Lynch (2017) argues that speaking is the ability to express ideas, feelings and emotions to other people. Language is used to express oneself so that it can be understood by others. Therefore, speaking is a skill in conveying ideas to other people in spoken language. Language as a communication tool is used to express one's ideas to other people. How well the other party receives the speaker's message is determined by the speaker's skill in conveying his ideas. In line with this it is argued that communication expectations are enduring patterns of anticipated verbal and nonverbal behavior. Apart from that, Nunan stated that learning to speak in a second or foreign language can be successful if students are actively involved in communication practices. Sometimes when communicating, people expect language that is easy to understand. Understanding a person's opinion is supported by their knowledge of linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. Linguistic aspects such as how many words he has and how he uses them in communication according to the context.

While the function of speaking is as a communication tool, speaking skills play an important role in interactions with other people in real life. Mastering speaking skills shows who is a speaker in society. Chomsky (1965) provides a definition of ability as skill, strength, competence, knowledge. Speaking ability is competence or speaking power in delivering a conversation. The recipient of the message will understand the conversation if the speaker speaks clearly. Speaking clearly means the speaker speaks according to grammatical rules, pronounces them correctly, and uses the right words. Apart from that, it is supported by mimicry, intonation and body movements so that conversations can be understood well and clearly. There are no misunderstandings due to lack of speaking ability.

Furthermore, Richard (2008) groups speaking functions in real life into three classes, namely speaking skills as interaction, speaking skills as transactions, and speaking skills as performance. If we look at the function of speaking, it can be interpreted that speaking is the life of society. They can interact in social life, can make transactions to meet their needs, and can demonstrate their abilities in society by speaking.

Apart from that, difficulty in speaking English is a difficulty that makes a person lacking in speaking skills. defines difficulty as something that is not easy, requires effort or skill, is full of problems, causes difficulties, is difficult to do or understand. The discussion of speaking can be said to be full of problems that arise when someone speaks or understands spoken language. Similar to the definition above, Doris and Jessica (2007) argue that language problems can be an obstacle for students to improve their language skills. Language problems may occur due to poor grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Those problem is caused by linguistic factors. Other problems that may arise when speaking are lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, anxiety, and lack of motivation. These problems are caused by psychological factors. Juhana in her research concluded that several psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, anxiety and the like hinder students when speaking English in class. This means that students' success

in speaking performance is not only caused by low linguistic knowledge but also caused by psychological factors. Fitriani in her research found that 20.70% of speaking difficulties were caused by psycholinguistic factors, followed by linguistic factors, namely 19.59%. Students need effort to have speaking competence. Moreover, to learn foreign speaking skills, many obstacles can prevent them from mastering spoken language. Brown (2003, p 140) believes that the problems students face are in aspects of speaking, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and fluency. Various studies have shown the difficulties students experience in speaking English conducted by other researchers. They found several problems that caused students to fail in speaking competency.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study used qualitative as research method. It is to help the researcher to reachher aim for the study, which is to reveal the difficulties in speaking English among the first year students of English Department. If the research objective is exploring the phenomenon under study, then it is recommended to use qualitative methods (Khan, 2014, p.300). The researcher believes that this study will obtain deeper and more detailed understandings about a phenomenon, which are the difficulties in speaking English and the problems causes difficulties in speaking among first year students. Therefore, using qualitative is appropriate for this study.

3.2. Setting and Participants of the Study

The setting of this study was at English Education Department IAI Nusantara Ashididiqyah Lempuing Jaya OKI South of Sumatera and the participants for this study were three first year students of English Education Department IAI Nusantara Ashididiqyah Lempuing Jaya OKI.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. Difficulties in Speaking English among the First Year Students English Education Department of IAI Nusantara Ashididiqyah Lempuing Jaya OKI

After conducting interviews to the participants, the researcher found that they faced similar difficulties in speaking English in terms of pronouncing English words and vocabulary mastery. These following findings below are the difficulties in speaking by first year students' English Education Department IAI Nusantara Ashididiqyah Lempuing Jaya OKI.

4.1.1. Difficulties in pronouncing English words.

The first finding was difficulties in pronouncing English words. The participants got difficulties in pronouncing English words during speaking English activities. It was shown from a statement of participant three that in speaking activities, the problem was in pronunciation" (P3.1). According to Hetrakul (1995), the problem which is often faced by the students in speaking is about pronunciation. They felt difficult to pronounce certain words. In English, pronunciation and spelling are different. For example, „o" sometimes could be pronounced "ɑ" like in "on" and "a" just like in "our". Therefore, the students did not easily recognize the pronunciation.

4.1.2. of vocabulary mastery.

All of the participants that the researcher interviewed were lack of vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary is an essential part of speaking. Due to lack of vocabulary, students cannot express their ideas in sentences. It was proven by the statements of the participants. Participant three asserted that "sometimes I was nervous to speak because I lack vocabulary" (P3.6). Lack of vocabulary is one of the difficulties faced by all participants. Based on Shahzadi, et al. (2014), the students could not also express themselves well or adequately because they lack adequate and appropriate vocabulary. Although the students had slightly different experiences in speaking, they told that lack made them being scary.

4.1.3. Low self-confidence.

One of the difficulties commonly faced by students was having low self-confidence. This could be seen from the participants" statements. Participant one stated that "the difficulty in speaking was having confidence" (P1.1), and participant two asserted that "the difficulty in discussion is a lack of confidence" (P2.4).It proved that lack of confidence became one of the difficulties in speaking. Low self- confidence was a crucial factor that affected students" difficulties

because confidence could support students to reach their goals (Gruber, 2010). This also supported by Shahzadi, et al. (2014), the students feel fearful to speak English in front of other people because they lack of confidence. Fear and worry are a part feeling that are similar. Being fearful refers to „frightened or worried about something".

4.1.4. Difficulties in grammar use.

This difficulty was faced by participant one and participant two. Both participants had difficulties in grammar use especially in direct or spontaneous time. Participant one stated "for example, when I forgot one of my speeches,I replaced with my own words that are not in line with the grammar. After that, I can be fluent again" (P1.9). It was added by participant one who stated "practically, I did not know whether my grammar was wrong or right" (P1.11). Moreover, it was followed by participant two who asserted that "speaking is spontaneous, and it makes me confused (inusing grammar)" (P2.8). Factors Affecting Students' Difficulties in Speaking English

From the data, the researcher found seven factors leading to the difficulties in speaking English faced by the first-year students of the English Education study program of IAI Nusantara Ashidiqiyah OKI. The difficulties faced by students are explained in each factor. Here are the factors affecting students" difficulties in speaking English.

4.1.5. Lack of Vocabulary Knowledge.

Knowledge is an important aspect in study so that the students should enrich their knowledge. The knowledge that should be increased by students is in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Some of difficulties that happened because of a lack of knowledge were stated by participant one. He told "the factor (lack of vocabulary) was because we lacked vocabulary knowledge" (P1.14). The lack of knowledge could also be caused by less reading, and it made students becomeless knowledge. It happened to participant two who explained factors affecting lack of vocabulary. "I am not reading enough" (P2.16). Based on the explanation, the students faced difficulties especially in vocabulary because they are lack of knowledge.

4.1.6. Lack of Practice.

Practice regularly could improve student's skills. Practice was needed by students to increase their skills in learning activities such as speaking activities. Many difficulties were found due to lack of students of practice. The first was lack of vocabulary because the students lacked practice. Participant two stated that "the main reason (lack of vocabulary) was because of lack of practicing" (P2.14). The explanation above described that practice affected the vocabulary. If the students practice continuously, the vocabulary will improve. On the other hand, if the students lack practice to memorize, they will forget those words.

The second one was that lack of practice influenced the difficulties in using grammar. Participant one stated that "In my opinion, it was because of lack of practice. For example, I can still think about grammar directly when writing, but it was so hard to arrange grammar in my mind when speaking" (P1.16). Based on the explanation, the difficulties in speaking were affected by many factors. One of them was lack of practice that affected lack of vocabulary and using grammar.

4.1.7. The Attention of Audiences.

Audiences are another influential factor in speaking. It was proven by participant two who stated "I became nervous when people in front of me paid attention to me" (P2.25). The audiences were not only the students but also the teacher. The teacher also became the factor affecting the difficulty in speaking as participant two stated that "The lecturer assessed what we said in a question and answer session" (P2.27). Audiences became a factor affecting students" self-confidence, and it was a kind of difficulties in speaking English faced by students.

4.1.8. Environment

Environment was a factor that affects individuals. Students also learned from environment because it also helped them to develop their skills. Participant one stated "I am not from an environment that habitually uses English as my language so that I cannot obtain vocabulary from the environment. If my environment used English as a language, I would certainly know a lot" (P1.15). It also happened to participant three that an environment in where he previously occupied did not use English. He told that "My base was not in English (environment) so that I only know few vocabularies" (P3.7). Thus, from the explanation of participant one and participant three, environment really takes an important role in enriching vocabulary that will lead to students" confidence in speaking.

4.1.9. Accent and mother tongue

An accent is the way in which people in a particular area, country, or social group pronounce words. Mother tongue is the first language that you learn when you are an infant, rather than a language learned at schoolor as an adult. Sometimes an accent happens because of the mother tongue, whichsometimes makes difficulties in speaking English. An accent is attached to each individual and it is usually difficult to change an accent on an individual. It was supported statement from participant three that "because I am Javanese, my accent affectsmy English accent (P3.8). Indirectly, participant three stated the most comfortable accent to use is the accent of mother tongue. Finally, when all or a number of learners share the same mother-tongue, they tend to use it because it is easier for them (Tuan & Mai, 2015).

4.1.10. Different spelling

The Indonesian language has different spelling of alphabet from the English language. It troubles the students in pronouncing. It was stated by participant two that "The Indonesian language is clear to be heard while the English language sometimes sounds unclear. In the Indonesian language, the spelling and pronunciation are the same, but English language is inconsistent. Sometimes "o" can be read as "a" while in Indonesian language "a" still pronounced as "a", "baca" just read by "baca". In English language the spelling and pronunciation are different" (P2.20). From the statement of participant two, the difference of spelling of words from pronunciation makes a difficulty in pronouncing. This difficulty was one of the difficulties in speaking English faced by students. Based on Goldsmith (1995) as cited in Pallawa (2013), each language is a structurally different system. In English language and Indonesia Language have different structural systems. It was proven based on explanation above explained that the spelling and the pronunciation were different.

4.1.11. Lack of motivation

Motivation is very influential for the students. Less motivation can affect them to be undesirable. It happened to participant one who stated "we were usually less confident because we lacked to force (motivate) ourselves. If we wanted to gain something, we have to force ourselves" (P1.12). It means that motivation is needed to gain something, such as having self-confidence. Less motivation will impact on the low self-confidence. Low self-confidence was known as a difficulty in speaking English faced by students. Talked about motivation, based on Lai (2011) motivation refers to reasons that underlie behavior that is characterized by willingness and volition. Motivation appeared from the student's desire and influenced the thing that students did. Student with lack of motivation mean that student did not interest, pleasure or enjoymade the student's confident were decrease.

4.1.12. Previews study

The first study was conducted by Himmah (2018) entitled "Speaking Problems Faced by EFL Learners in Individual Presentation (A Study at Fourth Semester English Department Students of UIN Walisongo Semarang in The Academic Year 2017/2018)". The method used in this study was qualitative method with descriptive approach. The results of the study were shown in three factors; they are linguistic knowledge point of view (vocabularies, pronunciation, and grammar), psychological point of view (lack of confidence, shyness, nervous, fear of mistake, and confuse) and non-linguistic knowledge (lack of preparation, lack of motivation and teaching vocabulary).

The second previous research conducted by Rahmadani (2021) entitled "An Analysis of Students' Speaking Problems at Senior High School 15 Pekanbaru". The purpose of this research is to find out the problems of students" in speaking. There was one variable used in this research (students' speaking problems). In collecting the data, the researcher distributed the questionnaire which consisted of 20 item statements that was constructed based on the indicators. The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the data. The result of this research showed that 16,71% students were inhibition, 33,04% students were nothing to say, 23,93% students were lack of participation, and 26,30% students were frequently used first language. In conclusion the students faced problems in speaking so that they get hard to mastering speaking skill.

The similarity from the research above is try to see and find the difficulties students' speaking skill and the differentiate from the article above is sample of the research and the conclusion.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is showed that many difficulties and factors that faced by the students in IAI Nusantara Ashidiqiyah OKI. Based on discussion, factors and difficulties affected each other. Each factor can cause several

difficulties, or a difficulty can be affected by a number of factors. The difficulty in pronouncing English words was affected by accent, mother tongue, and different spelling. The second one lack of vocabulary was affected by lack of vocabulary knowledge and practicing. The third, low self-confidence was affected by the attention of audience and lack of motivation. The last, the difficulty in grammar use was affected by lack of practicing. On the other hand, one factor also affected two difficulties that lack of practicing affected vocabulary mastery and the use of grammar. Moreover, the factors only affected one difficulty, such as; lack vocabulary of knowledge and environment affected lack of vocabulary, accent or mother tongue and different spelling affected the difficulty in pronouncing English word, and the last the attention of audience and lack of motivation affected low self-confidence.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

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