

SPEAKING ENGLISH PROBLEMS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS: A CASE STUDY AT SMAN 21 PALEMBANG

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Abstract:

The study was aimed to find out problems encountered by students when they are speaking in English. Qualitative approach was employed by using a case study. The participant in this study was the eleventh-grade students chosen by applying homogeneous sampling technique. In this study, semi structured interview with open-ended questions was applied as the data collection technique. Thematic analysis was used to assess the data gathered from the interviews. This study revealed seven problems encountered by the eleventh-grade students in speaking: 1) Insufficient vocabulary; 2) Insufficient grammar mastery; 3) Insufficient pronunciation; 4) Inhibition; 5) Nothing to say; 6) Uneven participation; and 7) Mother tongue use.

Keywords:

Speaking english;
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INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement of today's world that English is an international language. All over the world, in every international meeting, seminar, and conference between people who do not have the same mother tongue, people speak the same language when they meet. Crystal (2003) asserted that English offers employment opportunities, travel, access to knowledge and even a better life. In addition, English is spoken by non-native speakers from countries which do not classify English as their main language, but as a second (ESL) or a foreign language (EFL).

In Indonesia, English must be actively mastered in both spoken and written form. Haidara (2016) said that Indonesia considered English as the main foreign language and is valued more than other foreign languages taught. English is included in the school curriculum by the Indonesian government and is considered the first foreign language to be taught. English is a compulsory subject that must be taught in middle school and high school (Lauder, 2010).

In learning English, students need to master speaking for communication and academics. Ur (1996) proposed that speaking is considered an important skill and is the most used of the three skills. In addition, according to Brown (2001), speaking is the outcome of the creative development of phonetic strings; the speaker makes judgments regarding discourse, structure, and vocabulary. Furthermore, Thornbury (2005) asserts that we might take speaking for granted because it is a part of daily existence. Tens of thousands of words can be produced daily by the typical person, but some persons, like politicians or auctioneers, can produce more words than that. Furthermore, it was suggested by Richards and Renandya (2002) that speaking is one of the essential elements of communication. It implies that speaking is absolutely necessary for them to express their feelings, emotions, and plans.

Despite its importance, research reports and results show that speaking is difficult. EFL students' English-speaking problem has been the subject of many previous studies. A study conducted by Noprival (2016) at a high school in Jambi revealed several problems that emerged, such as: do not know vocabulary, grammar, fear of negative evaluation, low level of self-esteem and nervous when speaking English. In addition, there are two types of speech problems, they are linguistic and non-verbal problems. Language problems come from the language itself and this makes it difficult for learners.

Preliminary study was conducted by interviewing one of teachers of English at SMA N 21 Palembang. Based on the interview, the teacher said that speaking is a problematic skill to be learned because many students find it

difficult to express themselves in spoken English. The teacher considered that the speaking ability of SMAN 21 Palembang students are still in a lower level with some problems that affected their performance in speaking English (NP, personal communication, May 17th, 2022).

Researchers conducted studies on problems in speaking English. First, a study by Azizah (2016) in a Senior High School in Tegal revealed that the students' difficulties in speaking occurred because: they have limited vocabulary, nervousness, fear of making mistake and their grammar are still bad and students have limited fluency. Second, a study by Noprival (2016) in a Senior High School in Jambi showed that most of students were having lack of lack of knowledge of vocabulary, grammar as a stumbling, fear of others' negative reactions, low bravery to speak in English, anxiety to speak in English. Third, a study conducted by Yendra (2018) in SMAN 3 Kotabumi Lampung Utara found that the students' problem in mastering speaking were lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency.

With that in mind, the researcher is interested to find clearer information on the problems faced by students when they speak in English in a senior high school in Palembang. Thus, this study is aimed to find out problems in speaking English encountered by students of SMAN 21 Palembang.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking

Speaking is one of the essential skills used to process information. Through speaking, any individuals are able to express feelings, thoughts and opinions when communicating with others. According to Susilawati et al. (2017), speaking means sharing opinions, feelings, thoughts and views with others to convey messages and information. To share opinions, views, messages and information should be done in two ways. Thus, in order to achieve interactional communication, a speaker and a listener are needed.

Components of Speaking

Brown (2001) proposed components that should be considered when speaking, as follows:

(1) Pronunciation

Correct pronunciation makes English easier to understand and less confusing for the listener, thus helps the learners feel more at ease when they speak English. Pronunciation is critical for oral communication, according to Hismanoglu (2006). It is also an important component of communicative competence.

(2) Grammar

According to Harmer (2007), grammar is the description of how words in a language can change forms and be combined into sentences. Grammar is an important component in language learning. Because of their ability and understanding of grammar, speakers and writers can communicate and convey their messages clearly and meaningfully.

(3) Fluency

Fluency refers to how quickly and easily a language learner performs one of the four core language skills, such as: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Although fluency applies to all four language skills, it is most closely associated with speaking.

(4) Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the fundamental aspect of language in order to master English. Problems with vocabularies occur when a person lacks the vocabulary required to speak and does not know how to combine the vocabularies into a correct sentence. According to Khan (2005), students learning English as a foreign language struggle with word and expression used when speaking.

Students' Problems in Speaking English

The problem in speaking is divided into two parts: Linguistic and Non-Linguistic issues. Linguistic issues come from the language itself and it caused problem for the language learners. Nonlinguistic issues are the problem that derives from the outside of the language.

Richards (2008) proposed three linguistics problems that affect the students' speaking ability, they are: insufficient vocabulary, insufficient grammar, and insufficient pronunciation, as follows:

(1) Insufficient Vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary can become a problem for EFL students because students do not know what to say correctly and correctly some words in English. Students will just spend time thinking about the words to say or they will be silent. According to Cook (2013), many researchers have demonstrated that true communications are the outcome of learning the correct and sufficient vocabulary rather than simply learning grammar convention. However, the majority of EFL learners reported that they comprehend new vocabulary, but quickly forget them.

(2) Insufficient Grammar Mastery

One of the difficulties in speaking English is insufficient knowledge of grammar. Grammar is the logical and correct arrangement of tenses and positions in a language. Noprival (2016) argued that enabling the learners to convey their thinking or information in the conversation is the essential purpose of oral communication. Too much focus on using correct grammar

(accuracy) when speaking prevents students from actively speaking in English.

(3) Insufficient Pronunciation

Correct pronunciation can help learners when listening to the language. Standard and good pronunciation also helps learners to speak more accurately, so that others can understand that language. Therefore, there will be no misunderstanding between listeners and listeners. The ability to speak English, according to Zhang and Yin (2009), demonstrates accuracy not only in pronunciation but also intonation which affects proper communication directly in a conversation without being misunderstood.

Ur (1996) proposed four non-linguistic issues that students encountered during speaking in English, as follow:

(1) Inhibition

Because students are afraid of committing mistakes during speaking, they are often inhibited on their attempt to speak. Furthermore, students tend to embarrassed to speak in public. Inhibition is one of the psychological issues that many learners experience during speaking (Juhana, 2012).

(2) Nothing to Say

Students are unable to speak because they are not motivated in expressing themselves beyond their guilt that speaking English is an obligation. According to Andas (2020), when students were speaking English, they had no idea what they wanted to share with others since most of them have insufficient vocabulary and grammar; thus, they chose to be silent no matter how interesting the topics were.

(3) Uneven Participation

This happened when there is only one person who could speak in a given time and each student had limited time to speak. According to Ur (1991), low or unequal participation occurs when only one to two persons are able speak in a particular time, thus each person has very little speaking time.

(4) Mother Tongue Use

Learners tend to speak in their mother tongue since it is less complicated for them to use and they tend to feel less noticed when they perform verbal communication in their own mother tongue. Khati (2011) claimed that mother tongue is a language learned prior to learning other languages; thus, people learn their mother tongue naturally, beginning from their childhood.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach with a case study research design was applied for this study. Creswell (2012) proposed that qualitative research has proven to be a research method that aids in the investigation and comprehension of central

phenomena. In addition, one of the qualitative approaches, case study design, was employed for the study.

In choosing the participants on this study, Homogeneous Sampling was applied. Homogeneous sampling technique, according to Creswell (2012), is a sampling technique based on individuals or groups that have specific traits. Thus, 4 tenth-graders were chosen since they received the lowest speaking scores on their teacher's speaking exercises.

The data was collected by using 13 interview items based on Richards (2008) and Ur (1996). The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Creswell (2012) stated that semi-structured interviews allow for the elicitation of narratives about participants' personal experiences as well as the evaluation of their opinions, statements, and convictions. Then, the data gained from the interview was analyzed by using thematic analysis. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), thematic analysis is a technique used to identify patterns or themes in qualitative data. Thematic related to purpose of searching for aggregated themes within data.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

FINDING

This study revealed problems encountered by students of SMAN 21 Palembang when they speak English. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data obtained during the interviews. The following information described the interview's outcome:

Tabel 1
Problems Faced by SMAN 21 Palembang Students

Themes	Sub- Themes	Codes
Linguistic Problem	Insufficient Vocabulary	(a). The students lacked sufficient vocabulary to communicate effectively in English. (b). The students are frequently silent due to the lack in vocabulary to understand what the speaker say and to say something in English.
	Insufficient Grammar Mastery	(a). The students did not master English grammar.

Themes	Sub- Themes	Codes
		(b).The students were confused about the grammatical rules to be used when they speak in English.
	Insufficient Pronunciation	(a).The students could not pronounce the words correctly when they were speaking in English. (b).The students were afraid of being misunderstood when they mispronounce words in English.
Non-Linguistic Problem	Inhibition	(a).The students were afraid of making mistakes and misunderstood. (b).The students felt fear of their classmates' critic. (c).The students were lack of confidence with their English.
	Nothing to Say	The students did not have enough vocabulary to translate their sentence from Bahasa Indonesia to English.
	Uneven Participation	The students felt intimidated with students who speak English more dominantly.
	Mother Tongue Use	The students usually used mother tongue, Bahasa Palembang, in their English class because it is easier to use.

Based on the data analysis obtained from the interview, the researcher discovered several main problems and it was divided into two categories, they were: linguistic and non-linguistic issues. The issues in linguistic were: (1) insufficient vocabulary; (2) insufficient grammar mastery; and (3) insufficient pronunciation. In addition, the issues in non-linguistic covered: (1) inhibition; (2) nothing to say; (3) uneven participation; and (4) mother tongue use.

DISCUSSION

The first problem in linguistics perceived by the students is insufficient vocabulary. Based on the interview, most of the students do not have adequate vocabulary to communicate effectively in English. The students stated that they did not understand the significance of using the correct words when they are speaking in English. Due to the insufficiency in vocabulary, the students encountered difficulty in grasping what the speakers are uttering. Thus, they remain silent because they are unaware of the way to combine words in one go and naturally translate words because their vocabulary is limited.

The second issues in linguistics in speaking English is not mastering grammar. In accordance with the interview data, most of the students perceived that they do not understand the English grammar to use to speak English because they have never studied it seriously and they think it is not important. important so they never use. grammar in their daily lives. conversation. As a result, students said they felt insecure when they speak in English and worried about making mistakes which would prevent their friends from understanding what they were saying. According to Noprival (2016), grammar is one of the elements of language in the practice of communication skills, since the primary purpose in verbal communication is the convey of thinkings or information between participants. into the conversation.

The third issues in linguistics in speaking English is insufficient pronunciation. Students who study foreign languages are required to naturally speak English similar to the native speakers. Based on the data obtained from the interview, the pronunciation problem is very influential in the conversation. Most students still have pronunciation difficult for friends because they are not native speakers. For them speaking English by mispronouncing words can be a big problem as it can confuse their friends what they are talking about because in English they agree that When they pronounce it wrong, the meaning will be different. According to Fitrianti, et al (2915), the pronunciation problem that the students encountered occurred due to frequent mispronunciation of words in English because of the influence of mother tongue on their pronunciation. In order to produce native-like pronunciation, the students encountered difficulty with correct pronunciation, word stress, and intonation.

Besides the linguistic issues of speaking in English, the research revealed non-linguistic issues, such as inhibition, as follows:

Firstly, students' inability to speak in English was primarily due to their fear of masking mistakes. According to the interviews, most students do not speak English since they were worried about mistakes that they make and appeared foolish in the eyes of their classmates. In addition, if they do make mistakes in speaking English, they are afraid that their classmates will laugh

at them. Riadil (2020) stated that inhibition is speaking problems which are related to the students' worries when they are speaking in English.

Secondly, the interviews revealed non-linguistic problems such as fear of being criticized when speaking in English. The data showed that most students demonstrated that the reactions of other students to a student's speaking performance had a notable role in English speaking. They worry a lot about what their friends are doing or saying when they are talking. In contrast, Andas' study (2020) suggests that only a few students think so, most of them see other people's criticism as a way to show their weaknesses, so when giving a speech, students Employees tend to be passively involved, they don't have the courage to come up with even a simple idea. The fear of being criticized also makes students hesitant to speak up because most students believe their English is poor and that they do not speak English very well.

And lastly, low confidence was a barrier to students speaking English. The researcher discovered that the students lacked confidence in speaking English. The majority of the students stated that they have ever felt that other students speak English better than them. They discovered that they lack confidence in speaking English with others. According to Andas (2020), lack of confidence is an emotional state experienced by students when required to speak during English subject. Students' lack of confidence is generally understood to occur when the students aware that their partners in conversation did not understand them or when they cannot understand the speakers.

The next non-linguistic issue perceived by the students was nothing to say. In accordance with the interview, the students did not acquire enough vocabulary to translate their sentence so it make them lost the idea to speak in English. Even though the students are no longer shy or anxious, they will be reminded on their role as silent participants because they do not have anything to say (Ur, 1996). In this study, the students had no idea what to share with others, not because the teacher presented an uninteresting topic, but because most of the students lacked vocabulary; thus, they chose to remain silent even though they were interested in the topic.

In addition, the non-linguistic issue was uneven participation. The interviews show that the students having a problem in amount of the participant in the class. The students said they have problem when only there is one or two students can speak at that time with the minimum time. It was seen that when a talkative student dominates the class activity, participation is unequal, and other students do not have enough opportunity to contribute any ideas or express their thoughts. It usually happened when their classmates who were good at speaking English were more active in class. According to Ur (1991), low or unequal participation occurs when one or two participants can speak at the same time.

And the last non-linguistic problem perceived by the students was mother tongue use. According to the interviews, students have difficulty speaking in English because of their use of their mother tongue is easier for them because they never use English in their daily lives, making it difficult for them to use English in their English class. According to Khati (2011), the mother tongue is typically the first language learned. People naturally learn their mother tongue as children, picking up this language from their social environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that the researchers discovered some problems in speaking English encountered by students, namely: they were often shy and nervous when speaking in English, and too nervous to speak English with their classmates or teacher. The researcher found several main problems and it was divided into two categories, they were: linguistic and non-linguistic issues. The linguistic issues consisted of (1) insufficient vocabulary; (2) insufficient grammar mastery; and (3) insufficient pronunciation. The nonlinguistic problems covered: (1) inhibition; (2) nothing to say; (3) uneven participation; and (4) mother tongue use.

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My name is Elsa Kurnia Lestari, I was born in Palembang on December 14th 2000. I have completed my education at Raden Fatah State Islamic University Palembang in March 2023. I work at SD Muhammadiyah 28 Palembang as an English teacher. I am interested in taking up this research because the phenomena that exist in the school are very interesting to study and this problem has never been studied in that school by previous researchers and I conducted this research at my own expense.

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