



THE DIFFICULTIES OF SPEAKING ENCOUNTERED BY THE STUDENTS AT ENGLISH COURSE

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are: 1) to analyze what are the difficulties of speaking encountered by the students, 2) to know what are learning styles that students prefer to use in learning speaking. The researcher applied qualitative method and analyzed the data by using descriptive analysis. thirteen respondents involved in this research. The instrument used in this research were observation and questionnaire. The result of this research shows that all respondents involved in this research have difficulties in speaking. There were five difficulties that found in this research. The first was pronunciation 3.53%, the second was vocabulary 3.46%, the third was grammar 3.07%, the fourth was translation 3.07% and the last was self-confidence 3.07%. While on learning style, there were 85% students agreed on kinesthetic learning style as the best way in learning a language, followed by auditory learning style 69% and the last was visual learning style 54%.

Keywords: speaking difficulties, learning styles, English course.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool used by people to communicate among themselves. Language is also used to convey information, ideas, concepts or feelings, with words as a tool to convey something. According to Fishman (1971:17), "language is not only about how to express ideas but also to explains the meaning of words. Language is not only about explaining things but also as a tool to express identity and social relationships". In this globalized era, the ability to speak English is essential for interact between people especially in places where people speak English almost every day. Many people use English as a medium of communication and make it easier for people who come from different countries to interact and communicate. As one of the international languages, English is also taught in Indonesia both in formal and non-formal institutions. It has been taught from primary school to university level. Although English has been learning from elementary school, many students still get difficulties in using English.

There are three language elements that play an important role in supporting the four skills as mention by Standford (2003), namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. To achieve optimal English proficiency, professional language instructors are needed to produce quality learners. Mastering material and practice must be given in equal portions. However, to realize an ideal language class is not an easy thing. To have sufficient knowledge of the material, a language teacher should know the level of mastery the English language of each learner. If all conditions are generalized, it will be difficult to achieve the expected learning goals. Because basically every student has different characteristics including learning techniques and learning material as in the concept of multiple intelligence (Stanford, 2003)

In the process of learning English, students found obstacles in speaking. These obstacles can cause less than optimal student learning outcomes. This can happen to anyone including students who take an English course at English Training Center (ETC) of Ternate for SMA level. Hasan (2000) states that the difficulty faced by learners of English as a foreign language is the lack of understanding English pronunciation which is spoken at a normal speed through listening. However, speaking skills in foreign languages is uneasy for students to master. Students consider that speaking is the most difficult skill to master because it requires



preparation to speak well such as knowing what topic is going to discuss with our classmates, how to start it, how to extend the talk, and how to end the talk or discussion with a polite way. It is in keeping with Bohari (2019) who informs that students can perform their speaking abilities through discussion activities. It is reinforced by Wahyuningsih (2018) who states if students can do all of those, learning a new language will not be difficult for students even though the language is not our mother tongue or our national language.

Furthermore, Abidin (2011: 125) states that speaking skills occupy a very important position because it is a characteristic of students' communicative abilities. In other words, the ability to speak does not only play an important role in learning but it also plays an important role in other learning (Chien et al., 2019). Speaking skills also means as an indicator of students' success in learning the language. If they can speak English fluently, it will be easy for students to express their ideas verbally in a particular subject class (Pawlak, 2018). The ability to speak is usually seen as a key manifestation of learners' ability in the target language. If all is done well like memorizing the words every day, doing a great deal of practice, knowing a grammatical point well, students will definitely be able to speak English well and their listeners will get a message or main point easily from the words that are spoken by the speakers. In terms of daily life, this has the goal that teaching in speaking skills is to enable students to understand and use language appropriately and in accordance with clear situations.

There are also many senior secondary students still lacking in speaking skills such as lack of vocabulary, bad or unusual pronunciation, and poor grammar (Heriansyah, 2012, p.31). In order to make students be able to speak English, the students have to memorize many English words, they know how to pronounce the English words correctly, and they have to be able to arrange a good sentence by comprehending grammatical point (Lail, 2019). In addition, the problem is then considered not only to lie in the instructional methods that have been applied by teachers in the teaching of four language skills, speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). It is assumed that some problems lie with the students themselves because they have crucial roles in learning processes. The most important main factor is that many students who when asked to speak in class will reject the reasons for fear, shame, and fear of being wrong, lack of confidence in students is caused by lack of preparation and lack of understanding of the elements of language and non-language influences in speaking skills (Aprianoto & Haerazi, 2019). Success can be found in themselves. One aspect that is involved in the process is developing speaking skills in terms of language learning strategies undertaken by students.

Previous research identified several factors that inhibit students in communicating or doing speaking activities in class. Inayah & Lisdawati, (2017), found that students have problems with motivation and self-confidence. Students are afraid of being wrong, embarrassed, anxious and lack confidence (Nakhalah, 2016). Speaking learning (Paakki, 2013), too grammar-orientated and theoretical, late start of learning, fear of mistakes, lack of practice and experience, and social pressure. Seligson, (1997) added that students' speaking difficulties include linguistic and non-linguistic problems. Linguistic problems include lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar knowledge, while non-linguistic problems include inhibition, nothing to say, uneven participants, mother tongue disorders, speech disorders, anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence and low motivation. Megawati & Mandarani (2016) in their research found that the difficulty that students often face when speaking English lies in the lack of vocabulary. Rifai, (2019) in his study on students' difficulties in speaking has found five aspects that contributed on their obstacles in speaking such; expression, pronunciation, grammatical, psychology, language environment.

In the process of learning a language particularly a second language, there are many factors including age, gender, motivation, intelligence, anxiety level, learning strategies and language learning styles that determine the academic success of learners (Sharp, 2004). Students learn in different ways by seeing and hearing; reflecting and acting; reasoning logically and intuitively; memorizing and visualizing etc. The ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains, and retrieves information are collectively termed the



individual's learning style. Since the learning style is one of the predominant factors which influence the students' success play a crucial role in the learning process, teachers and educators should not ignore the identification of their students' learning styles. Reid (1995) has developed learning style model based on how students learn best using their perceptions: visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile preferences and also two social aspects of learning: group and individual preferences.

From the findings above, the researcher concluded that the learning process requires communication as a signal of effective and efficient interaction (Bahrani & Soltani, 2008). In addition, students' opportunity to speak directly is necessary to improve their speaking skills (Liao, 2009). All language learners will use language-learning strategy in their learning process. Learners employed language learning strategies consciously when processing new information and performing tasks. The strategies help them to comprehend better and quicker. Therefore, language learning strategies are fundamental to success in learning a new language. Based on above elaboration, this study is aim to answer some following questions: 1. What are the speaking difficulties encountered by the students? What are the students' learning style in speaking skill?

2. METHODS

The researcher applied qualitative method to analyze the students' difficulties and their learning style in speaking English. Leo (2013) stated that qualitative research is a research based on the data collecting, analyzing, and interpreting in narrative form to get deep understanding from the particular phenomenon observed. The subjects were thirteen (13) students from English Training Center (ETC) at Toboko, Ternate of senior high school level.

Instrument used in collecting data were observation and questionnaire. The result of observation data was analyzed using oral proficiency categories that involved three aspects of speaking elements such pronunciation, fluency and vocabulary. The observation was conducted when students performed their conversation in font of class. Researcher used video recording to get accurate visual and sound to analyze students speaking performance. To get maximum score, students' scores were divided by getting scores required, then they were multiplied by 100. To comprehend the data of students' learning style, researcher applied questionnaire for students. Researcher used a rate scale by Likert (1932) and the percentage formula.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

3.1. Results of Students' Speaking Difficulties

Based on the data result of observation and questionnaire, the students' speaking difficulties has been identified as follow: Observation result showed that most of the students obtain difficulty in pronouncing English word. They often made a mistake of English pronunciation in their speaking performance. students also face other problems in speaking such as, less of vocabulary, less of fluency, ungrammatical structure, nervous and lack of self-confidence. Below is the observation checklist data from thirteen (13) students.

Table 1. The result of students' observation Checklist

No.	Respondents	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Fluency	Total
1.	N.P.R.M	3	3	4	67
2.	F.A	3	3	3	60
3.	N.B	3	3	4	67
4.	M.A	3	2	3	53
5.	M.F	3	1	3	47
6.	N.G.B	3	3	3	60
7.	A.A.S.F	3	3	3	60



8.	M.I.P	4	3	4	73
9.	N.W.I.M	3	3	2	53
10.	J.S.W	1	2	2	33
11.	V.Y	1	2	2	33
12.	G.I.M	2	1	2	33
13.	N.K.A	1	1	2	27

The result of students' observation in speaking showed that students still have difficulties in speaking English. There are five students have lowest score in poor level of their speaking ability. There are two students have poor to average level of their speaking ability. The last, there are six students have average to good qualification level of their speaking and none have a good to excellent score.

The data result of questionnaire is supported the observation result. The percentage of 3.53% respondents choose English pronunciation as the first problem that students face in speaking performance. The second difficulty is lack of vocabulary the percentage is 3.46% and the level of problem is moderate. The third is about English grammar with the percentage is 3.07%. The fourth is translation from Indonesia to English the percentage is 3.07% and the last difficulty encountered the students was lack of confidence with the same percentage that is 3.07%.

Table 2. The results of student's questionnaire

No.	Statement	Knowledge Level					Level of Problem	Agreement	Percentage %
		SL	S	A	GT	SP			
1.	I am able to speak English	1	1	1	4	4	Low	Disagree	3.46%
2.	I find difficult to speaking English because of my/our oral communication	1	4	6	1	-	High	Agree	4.52%
3.	It is more difficult to speak English than I am speaking English. I find it more difficult to speak.	1	-	2	4	2	Low	Disagree	2.53%
4.	I find difficult to speaking English because of my vocabulary	2	2	4	2	-	Moderate	Uncertain	3.46%
5.	I find difficult to speaking English because of my limited to understanding grammar	1	2	2	2	1	Moderate	Uncertain	3.07%
6.	Learning from the media is more difficult than learning from the teacher in English because English is more difficult	1	4	4	2	1	Moderate	Uncertain	3.07%
7.	I am afraid that people will laugh at me if I make mistakes while speaking English	2	1	2	4	4	Low	Disagree	2.53%
8.	I lose my self-confidence when I make mistakes in speaking English	2	2	2	3	2	Moderate	Uncertain	2.53%
9.	My English teacher does not speak English in the class	-	-	1	2	14	Very Low	Disagree	2.53%
10.	My English teacher does not encourage me to speak English	-	-	-	3	14	Very Low	Disagree	1.53%
11.	My teacher does not encourage me to support activities in speaking	1	-	4	4	4	Low	Disagree	2.53%



12.	I like English, but I have lack of confidence when I speak	2	3	3	4	1	Moderate	Uncertain	3.07%
13.	I am shy to practice speaking with my smart friend because I am afraid that they will laugh at me.	-	2	1	6	4	Moderate	Uncertain	2.53%
14.	I am shy to speak English in front of my classmates.	-	1	3	3	6	Low	Disagree	1.92%
15.	I hardly ever speak English with my teachers	-	1	3	3	4	Low	Disagree	2.07%
16.	I hardly ever speak English with my classmates	1	3	2	4	5	Moderate	Uncertain	2.61%

The percentage on statements above showed that English pronunciation was the first difficulty that encountered by the students in speaking English. The respondents agreed that pronunciation was the most difficulty that students faced in learning speaking.

3.2. Result of Students' Learning Styles

The result of students' questionnaires related to students' learning style as explained below: There were three kinds of students learning styles that has been identified by researchers. The first is kinesthetic learning style which selected by 7 students (50%). The second is Auditory learning styles which identified 4 students (35%) and the third is visual learning style which identified 2 students (15%). The result can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. The Scores Qualification of Students Learning Style

Learning styles	Respondents	Percentages %
Kinesthetic	7	50%
Auditory	4	35%
Visual	2	15%

3.3. Discussion

This study is aimed at finding the students' speaking difficulties and identifying students learning style in learning English. During this research, the researchers noticed that almost of students could not speak English well. There were some reasons or difficulties to make them difficult to speak English. Actually, they knew how to make themselves good at speaking. They knew the strategies but the question was whether the students applied those strategies. These are the reasons why the students were difficult in speaking English.

3.4. Students' difficulties in speaking performance

Pronunciation

Students' speaking difficulties occurred in students' pronunciation as the highest percentage (3.53%). It means that students frequent do errors in pronouncing words and sentences but it can be understood dealing with unfamiliar word or terminology. Their accent is intelligible though often quite faulty. They made errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker, and sometimes their accent may be obviously unclear.

Vocabulary

Some students understand and participate in speaking performance and short conversation within the



range of their experience with a high degree of precision of vocabulary. Some still lack of vocabulary inadequate to express their experience and daily life activities. Their speaking vocabulary is sufficient to express simply with some circumlocutions. Students able to speak the language with sufficient vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics.

Fluency

Students able to use the language fluently on perform speaking in front of the class although the pronunciation quite in problem. They can participate in some short conversation within the range of this experience with a high degree of fluency. Hesitation to speak when certain words are not familiar for them still recognized, and the un-confidence with what they speak also existed.

Questionnaires data reported that pronunciation still become obstacles in speaking practice. They lack of vocabulary, problem in English grammar, difficult to translation from Indonesia into English. Another factor that recognized were students lack of confidence to perform, hardly to speak English with classmates and with teacher, shy to practice English with friends, do not want to continue speaking when someone laughing.

The issues of students speaking difficulties may support the previous research from Seligson (1997), Megawati & Mandarani (2016) that students' speaking difficulties include linguistic and non-linguistic problems. Linguistic problems include lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar knowledge, while non-linguistic problems include inhibition, nothing to say, uneven participants, mother tongue disorders, speech disorders, anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence and low motivation.

Students' Learning Style

Recognizing students' learning style may contributed to motivate their learning process. Based on data questionnaire, it has been identified some learning style from students at ETC English course.

Kinesthetic

The data showed that seven (7) students (50%) agree that kinesthetic is appropriate style to learn English speaking. Students like to study language by doing and practicing such making Role-Play. They prefer to learn best in class when participate in related activities. It is approved when speaking practice, students were snatched to be first performance.

Auditory

Four (4) students (35%) choose auditory learning style because they tended to learn by hearing and listening to the music, like to have discussion and more understand on teachers' explanation. Most of the students in these types of learning, like listening English songs thus, making more comfortable in studying English by listening songs.

Visual

Two (2) students (15 %) like studying by seeing English videos such film, reading a book, reading magazine to understand the subject. Those finding showed that students tended to learn in active way, they are motivated in class game design, students like lots of hands-on movement and enjoy working. They love to learn through music or song and like to watch video or film. This evidence is supported previous research by Reid (1995) has developed learning style model based on how students learn best using their perceptions: visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile preferences and also two social aspects of learning: group and individual preferences. Thus, in this learning style, researcher only focused on three learning style such kinesthetic, auditory and visual.

4. CONCLUSION

Learning speaking need a lot of communication practices in class especially in English courses. Students needed to practice their pronunciation, mastery vocabulary, speaking fluently, and learn grammatical features for good English communication. By practicing speaking regularly, speaking obstacle



such fear, shy, un-confidence will easily be overcome. Recognizing students' learning style, will help teacher to attain their learning goals for students. Teacher will design model, method and strategy to meet the students' need.

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