DIFFICULTIES IN SPEAKING FACED BY THE FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM AT SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

A Thesis By

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Language and Arts Education Department



FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY INDRALAYA

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved family, my mother (Christina Murniningsih), and my sisters (Elisabeth Ratih Puspita Sari, Atanasia Linda Ervina, and Margaretha Anggraini Putri) who always support me, thank you very much for being a good family who always prays for me and never stops giving motivation, my another supporter, Daniel Brian Gamayon Rodriguez, who always supports, motivates and helps me, and my best friends, Natasza Astari Putri, Elia Agusta, Annisa Amalia Utami, and member of Keluarga Bahagia, thank you so much for supporting me this far.

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The Writer,

Agustina Sinta Erlina

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ABSTRACT

As foreign language learners, students tend to face difficulties in speaking English. This study was aimed of finding out the speaking performance, difficulties, factors of difficulties, and the association between the difficulties and factors of difficulties in speaking. The participants are 67 fifth semester students of English Education at Sriwijaya University. The instruments are speaking test, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview. The speaking test was scored by using SOLOM speaking rubric. The questionnaire was adapted from Irismet (2006). The interview was used to find factors of difficulties. The findings showed that 58% did not perform well in the speaking test. The difficulties are affected-related difficulties (selfconfidence 74% and anxiety 67%), socially-related difficulties (students' comprehension to find opportunities to learn English 51% and students' comprehension in speaking class 31%), linguistically-related difficulties (fluency 59%, grammar 79%, vocabulary 77%, and pronunciation 54%). The factors of difficulties are lack of general knowledge, lack of speaking practice, fear of mistake, less of new words usage and memorization, lack of grammatical usage practice, hard courses, low motivation, low participation, reading laziness, shyness, less of dictionary usage, nervousness, fear of criticism, and lack of pronunciation practice. The data was calculated by percentage analysis and Chi-Square Association. The Chi-Square analysis showed that (p-value 603.508 > critical value 70.003) there is a significant association between the difficulties and the factors of difficulties

Keywords: Students' Speaking Performance, Speaking Difficulties, Factors of Difficulties, Significant Association

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes background, problem, objective, and significance of the study

1.1 Background of the Study

As human being, we naturally communicate with each other by doing several ways of communication. One of them is having a direct conversation or we call it as speaking. Speaking plays an important role in today's communication because people speak most of the time and everywhere just like in public places such as hospital, school, airport, bus station, supermarket, university, bank, or in a transportation vechicle. They speak in order to ask or to give information, to clarify something or to give command. Relating to those situations, we can conclude that speaking is one of the most effective ways to communicate because when people speak, the message is undoubted or will not be misunderstood compare to other way of communication like picture or text (Gillis, 2013).

Verbal communication is at the edge of importance to conduct the information transfers. Therefore, speaking skill is essential to learn, especially for students, so they can communicate well among others. The communication process occurs when students speak by constructing ideas, expressing their feeling, and sending the message to the interlocutors in order to make them capturing the meaning at the end. This process seems very complicated because when speakers speak, they do not only produce words but also produce meaning. It is the reason why spoken language production is often considered as one of the most difficult aspects of language learning (Brown & Yule, 1983).

The changing of the modern world is positively related to the demand of English proficiency. Students who master English as a second language or as a foreign language will have tons of advantages such as opportunity to an international relation and employment, tourism and travel, and educational mastery. In other words, mastering English means owning the key to the development of knowledge as over eighty percent of the information stored in the world's computer is written in English (McCrum, Cran, & MacNeil, 1986).

However, mastering English without the ability to use it orally is kind of useless as quoted by Scrivener (2005, p.146) "there is no point knowing a lot about language if you can't use it" because there will be no communication sequence happening in order to transfer the message. That is why students should master the speaking skill.

Having a proficiency in speaking skill is the major objective of learning a target language (Richards & Rendaya, 2002). Students who master speaking skill in ESL or EFL tend to perform well in their classroom as they have the skill to express agreement or refusal, clarify the materials taught, and convey meanings. It will also lead people to have better qualification in the future that helps them finding good career such as lawyers, politicians, educators, business managers, motivators, and other kinds of occupation. A good speaking skill will be a bridge to strengthen the relation towards the clients, employee, students, or their interlocutors. Hence, among the four skills in English, speaking skill in a second or foreign language is often known as one of the most demanding skills of all (Bailey & Savage, 1994), and plays as the most important role, without underestimating the other skills, in the success of the students' studies.

However, EFL learners tend to face many difficulties in English speaking (Baker & Westrup, 2003). It is because students are not only required to have a good pronunciation and diction, but also the knowledge in using the language. They also need to master the sub skills of speaking which are accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility (Heaton, 1989). The accuracy concerns on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation which mean the speakers are producing the utterance in sequence correctly and pronouncing it well. The fluency means be able to speak fluently and accurately. Meanwhile, the comprehensibility means the ability to require and response towards the subject discussed. At the end, the message should be delivered and understood well by the interlocutors, although in fact students did not perform well in speaking.

Students tend to make errors in the accuracy sub skill in speaking because they mostly use the wrong grammar when expressing something, then followed with the diction they chose, and the way they pronounce the words (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016). They somehow are lack of understanding on what tense they should use when explaining a condition or the situation of the subject. In addition, they also are lack of vocabularies which led them to use the same diction and repeat it over and over. When students keep doing it, they will not enrich their vocabulary and it means the ability in speaking will be in a stagnancy phase. Furthermore, students also tend to pronounce the words without following the linguistic features. Thus, their pronunciation is considered poor.

Basically, the major difficulties that are faced by the students in speaking English are divided into affective-related difficulties, socially-related difficulties, and linguistically-related difficulties (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016). The affective-related difficulties include attitude, self-confidence, motivation, anxiety, duration of the exposure to the language, classroom conditions, environment, family background, students and teachers' competencies (Verghese, 2009). The socially-related difficulties include comprehension to practice English outside the classroom, and comprehension in speaking class. Meanwhile, the linguistically-related difficulties include vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and pronunciation (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016).

Students tend to have affective-related difficulties in speaking due to some reasons, such as anxiety, low level of confidence, and nervous (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016). They will likely freeze when talking to their lecturer in the classroom. That is why speaking slowly and less fluently is becoming a trend for students as they hope not to produce mistakes, although in fact they still actually do. Some of the students are even shy to speak in the classroom and like to make frequent pauses while speaking. They also try to avoid speaking by answering the questions from their lecturers with a *yes*, or a *no* answer only.

The most difficulty faced by students in affective-related difficulties is the level of confidence. Many students actually said that they have many things that distract their mind regarding to the materials they are learning, but they are not confident to speak up in front of their friends. As a consequence, they remained silent until the class finish. It is followed by the anxiety of the students to produce mistakes when they try to speak up. They keep thinking what actually will not

come to the reality or something bios such as the feeling of fear to be seen and to be judged by their friends while speaking.

In Socially-related difficulties, students face the difficulty to have a comprehension in order to practice their speaking outside of their classroom (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016). The usage of English in speaking is ended once they finished the class because they do not comprehend the skill well thus they are hardly to use the skill to practice outside of the classroom. Another difficulty is the speaking classes were not useful enough to help students communicate with English speaking people due to the lacks of students' comprehension to understand what the native speakers are meant.

Meanwhile, students face linguistic difficulties due to their personal reasons such as lazy to read the book, and rarely practice to speak at home (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016). They also are considered as failed to conveying the meaning of the language.

Therefore, there are some previous studies that were related to the speaking difficulties. The first one was the study conducted by Hadijah (2014) resulting of the difficulties faced by students of Islamic Boarding School Program Samarinda are grammar (42.20%), pronunciation (36.60%) vocabulary (35.20%), fluency (36%), and comprehension (34.40%). It was also followed by personal reasons, which was included in psychological difficulties (affected-related difficulties), such as shy to perform speaking, lack of self-confidence, and lack of speaking practice, etc. The second one was the study done by Hosni (2014) which also stated that the major difficulty faced by the fifth grade students in speaking skill is the linguistic difficulty.

Furthermore, Fitriani, Apriliawati & Wardah (2014) stated in their research that the dominant factor that affects the speaking skill is the students' psychological difficulties like the lack of self-confidence (20.11%) and anxiety (21.27%). Then, followed by the linguistic difficulties such as grammar (22.16%), vocabulary (20.19%), and pronunciation (16.2%). Based on those previous studies, we can conclude that the difficulties faced by the students in English

speaking are vary and affected by some factors which influence the students' performance in speaking.

Before conducting the study, the researcher conducted the pre-research to follow up this study by observing the students' speaking score and interviewing some students indirectly. Based on the semi-interview that had been done before with the fifth semester students, the speaking score that they got in the previous semester were degrading. In the first semester, 73% of the students got A, and 27% of the students got B. Meanwhile, in the second semester only 66% of the students got A, and 34% of the students got B from 67 students. The students who got A are decreased by 7%. Although their score were still considered well, as it was in range of A and B, when it came to the pre-interview most of the students said that there were several things that distract their concentration in speaking such as the lack of grammar and the fear of being criticized in the classroom. Thus by doing this study the researcher wanted to confirm the theory by Baker and Westrup (2003) which stated that foreign language learners have high number of difficulties in speaking. Moreover, as the fifth semester students will not have any speaking class anymore, so the researcher also wanted to know the exact speaking performance, the difficulties, factors of difficulties in speaking faced by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, and the association between the difficulties and the factors of difficulties which aimed to understand various issues about speaking so students and lecturers can increase their awareness in speaking and teaching speaking.

Furthermore, as the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University are EFL students, according to the semi-interview, they tended to have difficulties in English speaking. It might be caused by the culture shock of the first and target language's syntax, lack of lexemes, or the pressure from lecturer to master fluency, accuracy, and complexity which then will lead to an experience cognitive overload which will cause anxiety. Therefore, the aim of this study was to find out how the speaking performance of the fifth semester students was, to find out the difficulties faced by the fifth semester students in English speaking, and to find out the factors that contribute to the

existence of speaking difficulties. By answering those questions, it could be easier for the lecturer to do the treatment towards the students in order to have a good proficiency in speaking. It could also provide significant information that can be used for further research about difficulties in English speaking.

The reason why the researcher chose the students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University was because the participants of the study were easy to access. The consideration to choose the fifth semester students was because reflecting on the speaking class they had taken for two years which means they had been taught about foreign language for a sufficient time already. It means the difficulties analysis would be deeper. The result of this research would also help the lecturer to then find out the solution in teaching the fifth semester students in the following semester. Furthermore, it also could be a tool for building knowledge and act as a facility for learners who have an intention to conduct the similar study. The researcher focus on the speaking skill only because considering that speaking is the most important skill that an English Education student should master of, without underestimating the other three skills in English.

1.2 Limitation of the Study

As we know that there are a lot of difficulties in speaking and it is too wide to discuss, so this research is limited only to find out three major difficulties in speaking which were affective-related difficulties, socially-related difficulties, and linguistically-related difficulties. The affective-related difficulties were limited to two sub-difficulties; self-confidence and anxiety. The socially-related difficulties were limited to students' comprehension to practice English outside classroom and students' comprehension in speaking class. Meanwhile, the linguistic difficulties were limited to vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and pronunciation.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. How is the speaking performance of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University?

- 2. What are the difficulties in English speaking faced by the students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University?
- 3. What are the factors that contribute to the difficulties in speaking English faced by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University?
- 4. Is there any significant association between the difficulties and the factors of the difficulties in speaking?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- 1. To find out the speaking performance of the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University
- 2. To find out the difficulties in English speaking faced by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University
- To find out the factors contributing to the difficulties in speaking English faced by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University.
- 4. To find out whether there is the significant association between the difficulties and the factors of difficulties in speaking or not

1.5 The Significance of the Study

1. For Lecturers

This research is expected to help the lecturers resolving the speaking skill difficulties of English Education Study Program students.

2. For Students

This research is expected to make the students aware of their own difficulties of speaking that will help them improving their speaking skill.

3. For Researcher

This research is expected to be useful to provide relevant data that will be used for further research with the same theme.

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