Difficulties and Factors of Low Achievers in Speaking

Dyah Kusumastuti
Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia
dyahkusumastuti@ump.ac.id
Elda Resti Utami
Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto,Indonesia
utamielda@gmail.com

Abstract
This study aimed to know the difficulties and the factors causing faced by the low achievers in speaking. The research used a qualitative method by doing observation and interview. The researchers used the purposive sampling technique. This research had 21 participants out of 97 students from the third semester who were taking Public Speaking subject in English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. The data collection was done by using observation and semi-structured interviews. The questions consisted of 11 items. In a conclusion, the problems in speaking refer to linguistic problems (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, performance variables, and fluency), and non-linguistic problems (inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use). The factors causing problems in speaking refer to non-psychological factors (lack of vocabulary, inadequate strategic competence, and teaching strategies), and psychological factors (fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation).

Keywords: EFL teaching, teaching strategy, vocabulary, fluency, anxiety,

A.   INTRODUCTION

English speaking ability for learners in the English Foreign Language (EFL) countries including Indonesia is essential for conveying information, describing something, complaining to others, and introducing certain knowledge and culture. Speaking is an interactive process of meaning construction that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). When the students speak, they put their thoughts into words and express their feelings. The ability of the students to learn to speak varies. Because they have been studying English since junior and senior high school, the students are expected to perform well. The third-semester students of English Language Teaching need speaking skills not only for communicating with each other but also for their work in the future.

Speaking belongs to productive skills. Some students agree that speaking is a difficult skill because speaking has several aspects. According to Husnawati (2017: 13), there are several aspects of speaking namely (1) Accuracy refers to how to correct learners' use of the language system, including their use of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. (2) Fluency in a language means being able to speak easily, reasonably quickly, and without having to stop and pause frequently. (3) Pronunciation is the ability to use proper stress, rhythm, and intonation of a word in a spoken language. (4) grammar, this is included in the aspects of speaking, (5) vocabulary, this is important in People are unable to understand others or express their ideas if they do not have a sufficient vocabulary.

The third-semester students of English Language Teaching belong to EFL learners. They have several speaking activities to develop their speaking skill in their class such as presentations and role-plays. They are expected to be good at speaking. But in fact, the ability of some students is still low. Some students belong to low achievers. Low achievers, according to Wen and Johnson (1997), are students who spend more time learning English and score lower. Some students struggle academically for a variety of reasons. When learning to speak, students may employ incorrect or ineffective learning strategies or study habits. Students' attitudes toward education may be negative, and they may lack the motivation to learn and study.

Some students may find it difficult to learn to speak. There are several aspects of speaking, and they find it difficult to fulfill some of them. According to some experts in language teaching and learning, there are a variety of issues with speaking English. According to Sadtono (1997), there are two problems in language learning, which are classified as linguistic and non-linguistic. Pronunciation is one of the most important skills students must learn to communicate effectively and fluently. (2) Vocabulary is a term that is used in a variety of contexts Vocabulary is an important aspect of teaching and learning a language; without it, speakers are unable

to convey meaning and communicate in the target language. (3) The use of grammar is the foundation of language (4) Variables affecting performance This is the fourth issue with speaking. One advantage of spoken language, according to Brown (2001), is that the process of thinking as you speak permits you to manifest a certain number of performance hesitations, pauses, backtracking, and corrections. It is possible to teach students how to pause and hesitate. In English, for example, our "thinking time" is not silent; rather, people use "fillers" like uh, um, well, you know, I mean, like, and so on. One of the most noticeable differences between native and

nonnative speakers of a language is the phenomenon of hesitation. (5) Pronunciation. Fluency in a language means being able to speak easily, reasonably quickly, and without having to stop and pause frequently.

Non-linguistic problems are difficulties encountered by a learner in learning a language that is unrelated to linguistic aspects. According to Ur (1996), there are four major issues that students face when speaking: (1) Restriction. Inhibition is a state of mind that causes one to be self-conscious and unable to act in a relaxed and natural manner. (2) There is nothing to say. Even if they are not inhibited, many students complain that they have nothing to say and have no reason to express themselves other than a guilty feeling that they should be speaking. (3) Inadequate or uneven participation. Only one participant can speak at a time if he or she is to be heard, which means that in a large group, each person will have little time to speak. (4) The use of one's mother tongue. When all or most of the students in a class speak the same mother tongue, they may tend to use it because it is easier and feels unnatural to speak to another in a foreign language. When they talk in small groups, it can be difficult to keep some classes, especially the less disciplined or motivated ones, on track with the second language.

Most of the students have difficulty speaking. According to Nakhalah, several factors contribute to speaking difficulties (2016:100). Some of these factors are related to the learners themselves, while others are related to the teaching strategies, curriculum, or environment. Many students, for example, lack the necessary vocabulary to convey their meaning, and as a result, They are unable to maintain the interaction. Inadequate strategic and communication competence may also contribute to the inability to maintain the interaction. Teaching strategies also contribute to this problem because they are insufficient and do not place an emphasis on speaking, resulting in poor development of this skill. Other factors are referred to as psychological factors. According to Burns and Joyce in Nunan (1999), Schwartz (2005), and Thornbury (2005), psychological factors such as anxiety or shyness, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes are the most common factors that prevent students from speaking.

Speaking is difficult in general, according to a variety of research reports and findings. In dealing with this, Heriansyah (2012) stated that English Department students at Syiah Kuala University encountered some difficulties in learning to speak. The students' most common problem was a 'lack of vocabulary,' and the primary cause of the problem was a 'fear of making mistakes.' Meanwhile, Nakhalah (2016) revealed that the study aimed to investigate the speaking difficulties encountered by English language students at Al Quds Open University. Furthermore, the study intends to investigate the root causes of such difficulties. The results revealed and indicated that there were some difficulties in the students' speaking due to various factors such as fear of making a mistake, shyness, anxiety, and lack of confidence.

Based on the explanation above, it is possible to conclude that students face speaking difficulties that are related to both linguistic and non-linguistic issues. Meanwhile, there are factors causing speaking difficulties that are both psychological and non-psychological. The goal of this study was to learn about the problems and factors that contribute to the difficulties in speaking that students encounter.

B. Methodology

This study was conducted at the English Department of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. The population in this research was the third-semester students of English Language Teaching. The researchers took the sample with purposive sampling. Low achievers were the students who had the lowest score on the midterm test in the Public Speaking subject. This subject aims to train the students to speak in public using English fluently.

The lecturer used the presentation technique individually. The researchers used the document to gain data about low achievers in learning speaking. From the interview with the lecturer, and the document score, the samples of this research were the students who were classified in the "Fair" category. The researchers took 21 samples who were categorized into low achievers. The data collection was done by using non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The questions consisted of 11 items of questions, namely (1) While you were practicing speaking in front of the class, was it hard to find the vocabulary? Are there specific themes that make you feel hard to find the vocabulary? (2) How do you learn vocabulary for speaking practice? (3) When you are doing Public Speaking in class, do you have difficulty explaining the topic that you do not know? What do you do if the listeners do not understand what you are saying? (4) In your opinion, how is the current teaching speaking strategy? Do you feel difficulties with the teaching strategy? (5) Do you have a feeling of fear of making mistakes? What do you fear the most while you are practicing speaking in front of the class? (6) Do you feel embarrassed to appear in front of the class? What solution do you provide if this happens? (7) Do you feel nervous while you are practicing speaking in front of the class? What do you think are the trigger factors that make you feel that way? (8) Some people feel less confident while they are doing speaking practice in front of the class, do you feel the same way? What do you think is the cause of the problem? (9) What is your opinion about the Public Speaking course? (10) What did you do when you have free time? Did you use your free time to learn to speak? (11) If you get unsatisfactory grades in your speaking subject, what will you do? The

researchers also observed the speaking class. The observation was intended to crosscheck the problems faced by the low achievers in speaking. The observation was conducted using an observation checklist and field notes.

The researchers analyzed the data in a descriptive qualitative analysis. The researchers described the result from the observation checklist, field note, and the result of the interview. The researchers took the conclusion after presenting the data and analyzing the data.

In this research, the researchers used triangulation by using methods. The researchers were gathering data such as observation and interviews. Invalidating the data, the researchers observed the process of the teaching-learning process, while also observing the problems that appeared, the researchers did the cross-checking by comparing them to the data of interviews.

C. Finding and Discussions

1. The Student's problems in Speaking

Based on the result of research findings, low achievers have problems when they speak the English Language. Sadtono (1997) stated that there are two problems in language learning and this problem is divided into a linguistic and non-linguistic problem. There are several linguistic problems such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, performance variables, and fluency. There are four non-linguistic problems according to Ur (1996) there is inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use.

The first problem is pronunciation. There are 20 of 21 respondents who had the problem of pronunciation. They were hard to pronounce some words accurately. The information about the pronunciation problems is presented in the following table.

Table of the Pronunciation Problems

No	Words	Wrong	Correct*
1.	Consume	/kɔnsum/	/kənˈsjuːm/
2.	Blood	/blɔd/	/blʌd/
3.	Answer	/ʌnswer/	/ˈɑːnsə(r)/
4.	Lung	/luŋ/	/lʌŋ/
5.	Produce	/prɔduːs/	/prəˈdjuːs/
6.	Lack	/lʌk/	/læk/
7.	Actually	/ˈʌktuʌli/	/ˈæktʃuəli/
8.	Other	/ˈɔðə(r)/	/ˈʌðə(r)/

*(Source: Oxford Learner's Dictionary)

The second problem is vocabulary. Vocabulary can be the cause of poor reading skills and makes learning every subject challenging. The students could not find some words such as tired, homework, data, graphic, increase, definition, burnt, and matches. The students struggled to communicate what they were thinking, this can be a lack of words to describe what they wanted to say.

The third problem is grammar. Grammar is the main component of any language in the world. There are 9 of 21 respondents that have the problem of grammar. The students had several grammar mistakes. The first is about auxiliary verb and singular and plural noun, the students said: "the junk food is many kinds". Second, the students also had a problem with verb+infinitive, the students said: "I want to presentation about the first topic". The third is about modal auxiliaries, the students said: "we to see junk food everywhere". The fourth is about auxiliary verb and determiner, the students said: "Pablo Picasso have a inspiration". The fifth is about preposition, the students said: "that is definition to insomnia". The sixth is about simple future tense, the students said: "I will continued". The students are even ignorant of the basic rules and structural patterns that they are supposed to have learned at the lower level.

The fourth problem is the performance variables. The students spoke with hesitation and filler such as uh, um. They used fillers when they are confused or felt blank.

The fifth problem is fluency. Fluency means being able to speak easily, quickly, and without having to stop and pause frequently. Some students in this study spoke with pauses. They were perplexed as to how to generate ideas while presenting in front of the class.

The sixth problem is inhibition. The students could not act in a relaxed and natural way. Some students kept look downstairs not to the audience, the students moved their body while they were presenting in front of the class, some students froze, another students laugh in front of the class, another student had tremor, spoke very fast, read the text, and they were presented in a very lower volume.

The seventh problem is nothing to say. The students had problems when they should start the new paragraph because they were memorizing the words, another student felt blank and confused, Some students were at a loss for words, they read the PowerPoint slide and the text that they brought.

The eighth problem is low or uneven participation. The students spoke very little, and they just read the text in performing their work, some students spoke very little and too many pauses, and they just read the PowerPoint slide, another student spoke very little, just within two minutes.

The ninth problem is mother tongue use. Some students asked their friends some meaning of words. Moreover, they used to have Bahasa Indonesia in asking what they did not know to express. The students might tend to use it because it was easier for them.

2.   The Factors Cause the Student's problems in Speaking

Most of the respondents had several problems in speaking. Based on the result of the interview, several factors cause the student's problems in learning to speak. According to Nakhalah (2016:100), Some of the factors are related to the learners themselves, while others are related to the teaching strategies or the environment. There are other factors called psychological factors. Burns and Joyce argue in Nunan (1999), Schwartz (2005), and Thornbury (2005) that psychological factors such as anxiety or shyness, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes are the most common factors that prevent students from speaking. Each of them is explained below:

The first factor is the lack of vocabulary. The students felt hard to find the vocabulary when they were presenting in front of the class. Some students said that they have several difficult themes. The topic that difficult is health, education, environment, politics, and society. The students said that the topic was difficult because it had never been discussed at all so it was still unfamiliar. The students did not learn the vocabulary enough, so they did not have enough vocabulary. The students were rarely open a dictionary, they often study vocabulary through song, film, and electronic dictionaries.

The second factor is inadequate strategic competence. The students had difficulty explaining the topic that they did not know. The students would nervous, very confused, and blank if the listeners did not understand the explanation. The students had a lack of preparation. Another student was confused about what methods they could convey.

The third factor is teaching strategies. Usually, the lecturer gave the material, he explained the material, and the method, after that the students came forward to present their work in front of the class. The lecturer taught the material clearly, but sometimes the students felt panic with the teacher's teaching method. Some students thought that the lesson is too tense, not relaxed, even it makes them depressed.

The fourth factor is the fear of mistakes. The students were not ready, and they were afraid to be laughed at by others. Another student was afraid that their friends did not understand the explanation. Some students were afraid when they came forward they were blank, so everything they had prepared was gone.

The fifth factor is shyness. Some students felt ashamed when they should present something in front of the class. The students felt embarrassed even with their friends. Sometimes they liked to look down when they were presenting.

The sixth factor is anxiety. The students felt nervous because the preparations were not ready yet. Some students felt nervous because of being seen by the lecturer. There was a student who said he was nervous because he has not mastered English. Other students were still nervous because sometimes they were confused about what material to convey, and how to deliver it.

The seventh factor is the lack of confidence. Some students felt a lack of confidence because they had a lack of preparation. There was a student who felt intimidated by the gazes of their friends. They felt a lack of speaking skill so it makes them not confident yet. Another student felt they had limited knowledge.

The eight-factor is lack of motivation. The students thought that this subject is good, to make progress in speaking, to increase vocabulary, and to increase knowledge. They like this subject but it depends on the lecturer. Some students felt Public Speaking is complicated, and this subject made them panic, not relax, and some students became insecure. They felt this subject is difficult, but they did not study. The students doing some activities in their spare time such as playing mobile phones, hang out, playing the game, watching movies, playing guitar and singing, or just lie down. The students were disappointed with themself because they could not optimal in this subject. Some students said that it makes them down, but they realized their ability.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that there are several problems in speaking. There are linguistic problems and non-linguistic problems. Students struggle with pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, performance variables, and fluency when it comes to linguistic issues. While non-linguistic problems include inhibition, a lack of words, low or uneven participation, and the use of one's mother tongue.

Finally, the result also shows that there are several factors causing problems in speaking. There are non-psychological factors and psychological factors. Lack of vocabulary, inadequate strategic competence, and teaching strategies belong to non-psychological factors. Fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation are all psychological factors that students face.

Based on the findings, the researchers would like to make some recommendations to help students overcome their difficulties in learning to speak. First, it is hoped that the students will prepare the material before attending the speaking class. Students should speak more in their daily lives and explore their ability to speak confidently and enjoy speaking class. Aside from that, students should not be hesitant, shy, or fearful of making a mistake when speaking English. As a result, they will be able to improve their speaking skills.

Second, it is hoped that the lecturers will make the class more interesting so that the students are not bored during the teaching-learning process. The lecturer should provide more motivation to the students for them to be motivated to speak fluently. Aside from that, the teaching and learning media must be optimized, and the learning activity must be evaluated regularly to determine whether or not the learning objectives have been met.

The third is for the organization. It is hoped that the institution will always improve its organization system, facilities provision, and maintenance. The appropriate time and duration of the speaking class are required to ensure

that the learning activity is effective for the students and that the learning goals of clearing the students' speaking problems are met.

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