

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS' SPEAKING FLUENCY OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF RIAU UNIVERSITY

Muhammad Marjan, Mahdum, Syafri K.

Contacts: [bukandimar@gmail.com](mailto:bukandimar@gmail.com), [Mahdum1211@gmail.com](mailto:Mahdum1211@gmail.com), 081365740631

English Study Program  
Language and Art Department  
The Faculty of Teachers' Training and Education  
University of Riau

**Abstract** : This study was about speaking fluency level of the fifth semester students of English Study Program of Riau University. This is a descriptive quantitative research with 2 minutes recorded speech as primary data. 24 students were chosen from population of 75 students. The cluster random sampling was used to choose the students from 3 different classes.. The speeches were analysed through 2 steps: Spectrograms analysis & statistical analysis. The study showed that a small number of students speaking fluency level in English Study Program of Riau University are still in level Intermediate and although most students are categorized Good, at least the number of who are in level Advance is three times bigger then those in Intermdiate. Despite of the fact the students's speaking fluency can be concluded as good, the writer would like to recommend other researchers to conduct similar research upon other speaking fluency test so that we can compare it for deeper analysis, more objective and holistic picture speaking fluency.

**Key Words** : *Fluency, Speaking, Objective*

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS' SPEAKING FLUENCY OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF RIAU UNIVERSITY

Muhammad Marjan, Mahdum, Syafri K.

kontak: [bukandimar@gmail.com](mailto:bukandimar@gmail.com), [Mahdum1211@gmail.com](mailto:Mahdum1211@gmail.com), 081365740631

English Study Program  
Language and Art Department  
The Faculty of Teachers' Training and Education  
University of Riau

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini adalah tentang kefasihan berbicara mahasiswa semester 5 Program Studi Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif dengan rekaman pembicaraan berdurasi 2 menit sebagai data primer. 24 mahasiswa dipilih menggunakan teknik *cluster sampling*. Rekaman tersebut kemudian dianalisa dengan 2 tahap: Analisa Spektogram dan Analisa Statistik. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian kecil tingkat kefasihan berbicara mahasiswa semester 5 di program studi bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau masih berada di level *intermediate* dan walaupun mayoritas mahasiswa termasuk level *Good*, setidaknya jumlah mahasiswa yang termasuk kategori *Advanced* tiga kali lebih besar dibanding yang berada di level *Intermediate*. Walaupun hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara rata-rata tingkat kefasihan berbicara para mahasiswa adalah *Good* atau bagus, peneliti merekomendasikan agar peneliti lain untuk melakukan penelitian serupa agar dapat dibandingkan guna analisa yang lebih dalam dan membantu kita untuk memiliki pemahaman yang lebih objektif dan holistik tentang kefasihan berbicara.

**Key Words:** Fluency, Speaking, Objektif

## INTRODUCTION

To speak fluently has become a dream of most EFL learners. When an EFL learner is able to speak English as easy as the native speaker does, then people will see that person as a successful individual in learning English. It will help him/her in communication more effective and efficient which will be very helpful on pursuing better job, scholarship, networks and etc.

Especially for students of English Study Program of Riau University which are educated to be future English teachers, the need of speaking fluency is paramount. As future English teachers, beside they need to have sufficient pedagogic skill, they also need to have skill in their field which is English or to be more specific, speaking fluency. Speaking fluency is very important for these students since later in the future they need to interact with their students like explaining the lesson, commenting the students, giving instructions and so on. When these *teacher candidates* can not speak fluently then in will directly hamper the effectiveness of teaching and learning process. Moreover it is also can be considered considered as not professional as what Afrianto (2015) said about Professional Identity of English Teacher.

According to Schmidt in Nation and Newton (2009), speaking fluency is the number of words spoken in certain period of time and According to Stockdale (2009) there are two ways speaking fluency assessments. They are perceived or perception based base test and utterance based test.

Perceived or perception based test is the test that relies on listener perception, concept, value or understanding of what fluency is. This kind of speaking fluency is commonly done by listening to the speaker and then filling up short of rating rubric. This kind of test is said as unreliable because it involves rater's bias judgement and also variety or differences of understanding between raters on what fluency is. So one speaker might be considered good by rater A, but considered intermediate by rater B. To overcome this weakness some experts proposed an objective measure of speaking fluency which is Utterance based test or by counting the numbers of words / syllables spoken and the numbers of disfluency markers within the speech.

To improve students speaking ability, English Department of Riau University offers three courses – Speaking 1, Speaking 2, and speaking 3. However based on writer's daily interaction with students in the campus, it is found that the students rarely used English among them. Those who used English also spoke with many pauses and disfluency markers like “uh, hmm, aaa”, repetitions and corrections. Although most of classes attended by them are in English when writer asked them to judge their own speaking fluency, most of them rate them in level 2 out of 5 levels. They said that their speaking still considered bad due to constant pauses, fillers, repetitions and correction in their speech.

So far English Department of Riau University in measuring student's speaking ability and fluency is only through Perceived or Perception Based Test. As what stated by the experts of the weaknesses of this measurement, writer is interested to do a

descriptive quantitative research of students' speaking fluency of English Department of Riau University.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is a descriptive research. This research described the speaking fluency level of the fifth semester students of 2014 academic year University of Riau. According to Williams (2007), descriptive research is research design used to examine the situation involving identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational or Analytical basis.

To collect the data speaking test was used. The students were given choice of 5 topics and then spoke for 2 minutes and be recorded. The recording was done after the writer set an appointment with every sample individually. The students were given 10 minutes preparation, and not allowed to bring any helping aids like note, picture, and etc.

There are 2 ways to analyze the data: Spectograms Analysis & and Statistical Analysis. Spectograms Analysis is a process of audio forensic to determine the where each word started and ended, and also for transcription using an application called Audacity. After the audio forensic analysis, the analysis then continued to statistical analysis using the measurement proposed by Stockdale. It consists of 4 element, they were Speech Rate, Pause Rate, Disfluent Syllable, and Mean Length of Run. Finally the result of the analysis was matched with speaking fluency scale called Fluency Scale Ordinate as proposed by Jong and Hultjsin (2009).

## **THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **A. Data Description**

Based on the speaking test, it is found that the average speech rate of the students is 129 syllables which means student could utter 129 syllables per minute. The students could cover 56% from the normal amount of syllables spoken by adult native speaker per minute which is 162–230 syllables.

The pause rate average is 51 per 120 seconds. The disfluent syllables is only 14 per 120 seconds. While the mean length of runs average percentage is 64% of total utterance. After all, in term of speaking fluency level, it is found that there are 17 students in level 3 (Good), 2 students in level 2 (Intermediate), and 5 students in level 4 (Advanced). The result of the students speaking fluency level analysis summary is described in the following tables:

Table. 1.1  
The Students' Fluency Level

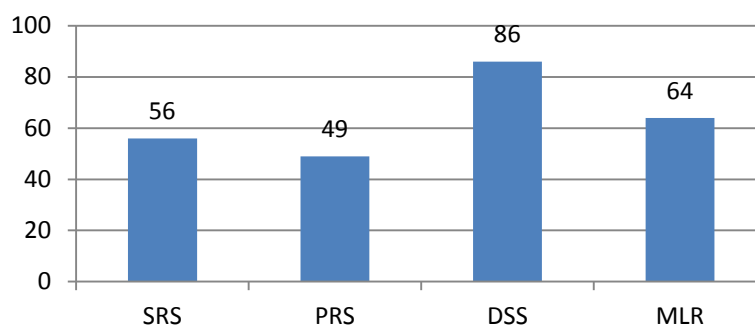
Speaking Fluency level	Number	Percentage
1 (Disfluent)	0	0%
2 (Limited)	0	0%
3 (INTERMEDIATE)	2	8%
4 (GOOD)	17	71%
5 (ADVANCED)	5	21%
6 (NATIVE-LIKE)	0	0%
Total	24	100%

## B. Data Analysis

The first research question was the students' speaking fluency level viewed from speech rate, pause rate, disfluent syllable, and mean length of runs factors.

To analyze the data Stockdale's theory in speaking fluency scale and level were used. Since the fluency and the disfluency in this research were viewed only from the typical fluency or disfluency perspective, the four indicators were used to measure fluency level. They are the speech rate score, the pause rate score, the disfluent syllables score, and the mean length of runs. In order to combine all score, 0 – 100 scoring system was used in the measurement. The measures are described in the following figure:

Figure 2.1  
Fluency Indicator Mean Score



It seen above that the students' highest score is on Disfluent Syllable Score which is 86 and the lowest score is on the Pause Rate Score which is 49. It also found that the students have quite high Score on Mean Length of Run and Speech Rate Score; the score are 64 for Mean Length of Run and 56 for Speech Rate Score. The data is described in below:

### 1. Speech Rate (SR)

Comparing the students mean number of syllables found on the research which is 129 per minute to the normal mean number of syllables which is 196 syllables, it is seen that the students could covered 66% of the normal mean number of the syllables or the 34% lack compared to normal speech rate.

## 2. Pause Rate (PR)

From the data on Table 2.4, it could be seen that the pause rate of the students is quite high which is 51 point. It makes lower point on Pause Rate Score. It is not to deny the fact that there were some students who had more pauses and better speaking fluency level. Having score 49 out 100 points is considered not good with more than half of speech is filled with pauses, filled pauses error and repetition. Generally, it can be concluded that most students are not fluent because of the high pause rate. It is clearly described that the pause rate even exceeded 50 % of the total utterances. Therefore, it is understood that they did not reach the common expectation on the students' fluency which was supposed to be good.

## 3. Disfluent Syllables (DS)

According to the collected data, it is found that the students' disfluent syllable rate is quite low; it is 14. It can be concluded that most students did not find so many difficulties in minimizing the disfluent syllables involvement in their speech. It is proven by their high disfluent syllable score at 86 points.

The disfluent syllables average is only 7 syllables / minute or 4% of the normal mean syllables. It is a very good achievement since the students are EFL learners.

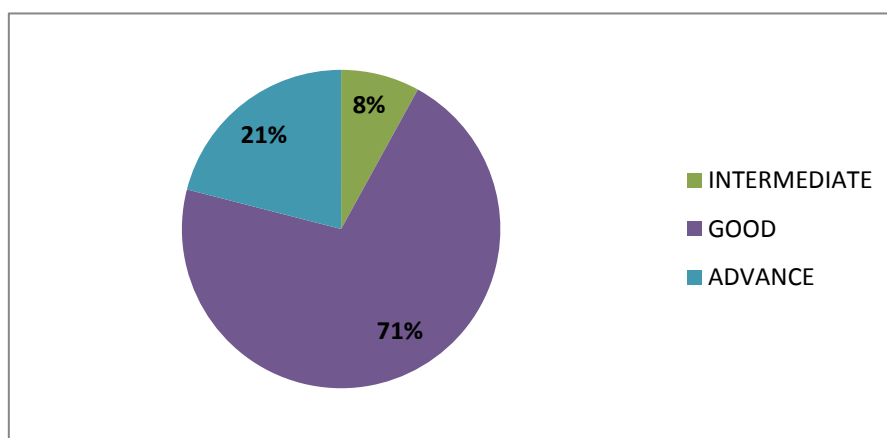
## 4. Mean Length of Runs (MLR)

The current mean length of runs of the students on the speaking test shows that the average mean length of runs of those students' speech is still low. It is around 56% of the total short talks delivered. Generally, the average score still shows the unexpected number.

After all four measures of fluency in which maximum score is 100 the mean score is figured out then converted to Stockdale Speaking Fluency Scale

Finally, the result of the 24 samples analysis shows that 8% students or 2 students out of 24 in level 2 or Intermediate, 71% students or 17 students out of 24 in level 5 or Good, and only 21% students or 5 out of 24 get level 4 or Advance and there is no student categorized in level Disfluent, Limited nor Native-Like. In average the students are in level 3 or Good. The data is described in the following figure on the next page:

Figure 2.2  
Students Speaking Fluency Level



### 1. Finding

From the research data above, the answers to the research question was found clearly. The question was on the speaking fluency level. It was found that the answer to the question seemed to be beyond the preliminary study result which said that most students think they have low speaking fluency level. As a matter of fact, the average speaking fluency level of the students of University of Riau is level 3 or Good with the average of 63 for the 4 measurements. The research analysis result shows that 71% of the students got level 3 or Good, 8% of the students got level 2 or Intermediate, and the rest or 21% of the students got level 4 or Advanced.

It is seemed that the students with fluency level 3 or Good have fair amount of syllables produced per minute. For the pause rate score, there were a number of students who have low pause rate score but also there were a number of students who has fair pause rate score. However, the data generally shown that pause rate of the students is 46 score from the total speech sample recorded. In term of the disfluent syllable of the students, it is shown that the disfluent syllable rate is considered not bad. Lastly, about the mean length of runs, the students with level 3 had adequate score of the mean length of runs at average.

Although, many students in the intermediate level have less speech rate compared to the students in level 3 or good. Not only in the speech rate aspect but also in the pause rate, and the mean length of runs, students in this level generally earned lower score. However, one exception was found on the disfluent syllable aspect which shown that most of them have less amount of disfluent syllable. It means that they don't have many difficulties in minimizing or even omitting the number of disfluent syllables in order to be able to speak fluently.

Differently, 5 students showed up as speakers with advanced fluency level. Students in this level are considered to have been able to achieve the objective of learning speaking skill. It is considered so because the students in this level have shown their ability to speak and produce the utterances with fewer amount of pauses, fillers, repetitions, corrections, and restarts. However, it is undeniable that there were few amount of those disfluencies appeared but not in a big number of them.

## **1. Discussion**

Based on the findings stating that the students' speaking fluency level is on level 3 which means Good, it is believed that they still have to improve their fluency in several concerns. First, the students mean length of runs was still very low as it almost a half of the total delivered short talk. Supposedly, the students should have better mean length of runs score but unfortunately they did not. Second, the pause rate was also high which nearly reach a half of the delivered short talk. Third, despite of the fact that the speech rate score was good but it should have been better too. As a matter of fact, there were only 5 students who delivered more than 400 syllables in 2 minutes. Furthermore, there were 10 students who delivered fewer than 300 syllables in 2 minutes. For all facts about the three aspects, it is believed that most low scores were caused by the fewer amount of syllables delivered by most of the students. This means that their ability in producing the syllables did not achieve the least normal amount of syllables stated by the Tennessee Study program of Education Fluency Resource Packet (2009) which is 324 syllables for 2 minutes.

## **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Conclusions**

As it was mentioned in Chapter I, the purpose of this research is to answer question which is to identify the speaking fluency level of the University of Riau students. This speaking fluency and disfluency assessments are viewed from the typical disfluency perspective. Therefore, it only considers the language learning aspects and does not take the natural physical causes into account.

Based on the collected data through the instrument which was the speaking test, the analysis result of the research found that most students achieved level 3 or Good fluency level. Although the data also showed that some students were at a higher level (Level 4 or Advanced) and at a lower level (Level 2 or Intermediate). Therefore, it is believed that the English Study program of Riau University still need to be aware and to concern more on how to improve the fluency level of those in level 2 or Intermediate, moreover it is also necessary to concern about the improvement of the students in level 3 to level 4. As a matter of fact, it was found that the students' mean length of runs and pause rate were considerably high. The mean length of runs and the pause rate were their main holders and problems so that they could not achieve a higher level or an Advanced level.

### **B. Recommendations**

Based on the research analysis, findings, discussions, and limitation of the research, the writer gives some suggestions.

1. To the students of English Study program of Riau University the writer suggest them to practice their speaking more so that they could improve their speaking fluency.
2. To next researcher it is expected to include more variable like perceived base test so there will be more comprehensive study of fluency.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Afrianto. 2015. *Constructing Professional Identity through Teaching Practicum: An Indonesian Case Study of Pre-service English Teachers*. (Unpublished Thesis). Sydney: Monash University.
- Bhat, Suma. Hasegawa Johnson. and Richard Sproat. 2010. *Automatic Fluency Assessment by Signal-Level Measurement of Spontaneous Speech*. Illinois: University of Illinois.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2004. *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Cucchiari, Catia. Helmer Strik. and Lou Boves. 2002. *Quantitative Assessment of Second language Learners' Fluency: Comparisons Between Read and Spontaneous Speech* (Unpublished Thesis). Nijmegen: University of Nijmegen.
- Florez, M.A.C. 1999. *Improving Adult English Language Learner's Speaking Skills*. Washington DC: ERIC Digest.
- Gay, L. R. and Peter Airasian. 2000. *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Harris, P. David. 1974. *Testing English as a Second Language*. New Delhi: Tatoo Mcgraw Hill Publishing Company Ltd.
- Jong, Nivja de. and Jan Hulstijn. 2009. *Relating Ratings of Fluency to Temporal and Lexical Aspects of Speech*. Amsterdam: Utrecht Institute of Linguistics.
- Kormos, J. and Denes. M. 2005. *Exploring Measures and Perceptions of Fluency in the Speech of Second Language Learners*. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University.
- Luoma, Sari. 2004. *Assessing Speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mairi, S. 2014. *An Analysis of Speaking Fluency Level of The English Study program Students of Universitas Negeri Padang* (Unpublished Thesis). Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang.
- Margono, S. 2003. *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan*. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta.
- Nation, I. S. P. and J. Newton. 2009. *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*. New York: Routledge.
- Resource Packet. 2009. *Assessment of Speech: Fluency*. Tennessee: The Tennessee Study program of Education.

- Richards, Jack C. 2006. *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmidt, R. 1992. *Psychological mechanisms underlying second language fluency. Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stockdale, D. Ashley. 2009. *Comparing Perception of Oral Fluency to Objective Measures in the EFL Classroom* (Unpublished Thesis). Birmingham: University of Birmingham.
- Zhang, Shumei. 2009. *The Role of Input, Interaction and Output in the Development of oral Fluency* (CCSE English Language Teaching Journal). Vol. 2. No. 4. On December.