

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH ORAL
COMMUNICATION USAGE DURING PRACTICE LEARNING
PROGRAM (Empirical Study on the Seventh Semester Students of
English Study Program of STAIN Bengkalis)**

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Abstract: *The objective of the research was to investigate students' perceptions of English oral communication usage during their practice learning program, this study is important to know students' perceptions on their English oral communication usage during practice learning program. This research was quantitative and qualitative research. The population in this study was semester 7 (seven) students of English Study Program of STAIN Bengkalis. A set of questionnaire was distributed to twenty five students regarding their perceptions on oral communication usage during their practice learning program and a face to face interview was carried out to six students. In this research, measurement of these statements using the Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5 = strongly Agree. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS 22 to know the normality, validity, and reliability of the instrument. The results of this study showed that students had positive perceptions on English oral communication usage during their practice learning program.*

Keywords: *Perception, English Oral Communication, Practice learning program.*

INTRODUCTION

Oral communication skill is very needed in workplace either in government institution or company. A survey done by Maes at al (1997) says that oral communication skill is the most important skill in the workplace. It can be assumed that it determine the success of working and running the

company or institution. Akbari and Shams (2011) also assert the same ideas. They say "People in workplace spend over 75 % of their time communicating". It implies that oral communication skill is vital to be gained by people who are involved in modern business world.

In globalization era, English is used as an important tool for communication. It becomes a vital skill to be perceived by everyone who wants to be active in international communication. Therefore, the usage of English oral communication must be spent a lot either in daily conversation or at workplace. It is because the practice enhances speakers' ability in English including for students who want to do practice learning program. It is important for them as the first step to learning new skills and building a rewarding career to be a teacher.

Students who have good English will be able to communicate with people if English is needed in their workplace. For examples, if they do practice learning program in international school, they can use their English or they can practice it to students or people who are eager to use English in their workplace. Therefore, students who want to the practice learning program should boost their desire and interest to use and improve their English oral communication skill.

Because of the importance of English oral communication skill,

students of English Study Program of STAIN Bengkalis should be confidence in using it during their practice learning program which they take at the end of the sixth semester. They are expected to be able to work and teaching well at company or institution they have chosen. During the practice learning program they can find out how well or confidence they are in English oral communication skill. Therefore, this study aims to know students' perceptions on their English oral communication usage during practice learning program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception

Perception is a final process of observing object. It means that the stimulus is accepted by receptor processed in brain and finally the individual realize about object she/he refers to. Fazio and Williams (1986) assert perception as: Those subjective experiences of objects or events that ordinarily result from stimulation of the receptor organs of the body. This stimulation is transformed or encoded into neural activity (by specialized

receptor mechanism) and is relayed to more central regions of the nervous system where further neural processing occurs.” Meanwhile, Kotler and Keller (2009) describe the perception as the process of selecting, organizing, and translating the information into meaningful picture of world. In addition, Greenberg and Baron (1999) say perception is “The process through which we select, organize and interpret information gathered by our senses in order to understand the world around us. Perception appears spontaneously if someone sees the world that full of stimulation. It cannot stand alone but influenced by the context and experience. There are two kinds of perceptions; a) External perception in which it occurs because of stimulus comes from outside of individual. b) Self perception in which the individual can realize and understand his or her surrounding and condition. According to Walgito (1993), perception is influenced by several factors. They are: a) Self individual who is characterized by someone’s attitude, interest, hope and experience. b) Perception targets. They can be people, things or event. c)

Situation factor which refers to what situation the perception can appear.

English Oral Communication

Communication is a process of delivering ideas by people either in oral or written form. It must be meaningful in order to the process runs smoothly. Oral communication is a skill which involves the speaker and listener in expressing their ideas. The process is related to productive skills; speaking and listening. (Byrne in Alam and Uddin: 2013). Both skills can be developed and improved together because they are integrated to each other. The statement is substantiated by Brown (1994). He also considers the process as oral communication. However, these skills are difficult to master. Students who use English as foreign language often face the problems in those areas. Several studies show the fact that students have no exposure either in listening or speaking so that they have low English proficiency (Bashirudin: 2003). Another study done by Jarupan (2013) showed the result that students’ oral communication skill falls on the

problems of some aspects which grammatical errors and pronunciation and the use of L1 to communicate. In addition, Lim (1994) did a study to Malaysian English teachers who teach school students at different levels. They had the same opinion that their students were not able to use their English oral communication skill. It was found that speaking was the weakest among the four main skills.

There were several studies which showed oral skill can be improved through various techniques and treatment. First, a study was conducted by Fuller (2011). The objective of his study was to investigate the impact of the use of strategies on students' oral language development. The result showed that activities which include visuals were shown to enhance students' oral language ability. Second, a study was done by Cordova and Lepper's (1996). The result of the study showed that students performed better on oral language tasks which were given many opportunities to use and hear the language. Third, Kent (2001) did a study to assess the oral skill level of the students. A method was suggested to

Korean EFL teachers when conducting oral test with the students. The result was students felt more comfortable, and relaxed during oral testing process.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The data was gathered quantitatively and qualitatively. A survey was carried out using the questionnaire consisting of closed ended questions which investigated the respondents' perceptions using English Oral Communication in their practice learning program. The qualitative data was collected by face to face interview with six respondents who participated in the activity. There were required to give feedback on how the English oral communication had increased their confidence to speak in their practice learning program. The participants were semester seven students in the fourth year of their course from the English Study Program. There were five male and twenty female students.

The questionnaires was made using the Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS

22 to know normality, validity, and reliability of the instrument.

RESULT & DISCUSSIONS

After the data was taken, it was analyzed by using SPSS 22 to know the normality, validity, and reliability of the instrument. It was obtained that the data was distributed normally (0.053). The data was also analyzed to see the validity and reliability. It was obtained that all items were 100% valid. Meanwhile, in term of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items showed 0.735. It means that the questionnaire was reliable to measure students' perceptions on English oral communication during practice learning program. Based on the result of questionnaire analysis, for the item about students who enjoyed using English Oral Communication during practice learning program, it showed that 64% students agreed that they enjoyed using English Oral Communication during practice learning program, 24% students undecided that they enjoyed while 12% students did not agree.

Then the students were asked about their confidence in speaking, 40% students agreed and 48% undecided that they were confident in speaking while 12% students did not agree. It indicated that a few students were not confident in speaking English during practice learning program.

For the item about using English oral communication support me during my practice learning program, the students responded 16% undecided. In line with English oral communication is important skill, the students 64% agreed that English Oral Communication was important skill, and 20% students strongly agreed. These indicated that English oral communications support them during their practice learning program and English oral communication was important skill for them. This was substantiated by their comments "Speaking is important; it supports me during the practice learning program."

In addition, for the item about "I change my speaking style depending on the audience being addressed", 56% students undecided and 16% students did not agree. Only 20% students agreed

and 8% students strongly agreed. It indicated that the students had difficulties in changing the speaking style depending on the audience being addressed. The same case with the item “I speak English well; I have a good vocabulary; and I use clear pronunciation and good tone of voice”, 56% students undecided, 32% students did not agree, and only 12% students agreed about it.

The statement about “I understand the difference in delivering messages of fact, inference, opinion, and judgment”, 60% students agree, 4% students strongly agreed, and 36% undecided on the statement. In line with the item “I can easily and effectively communicate what I mean”, 64% students agreed and 36% students undecided. These indicated that majority of the students which was over 60% showed positive perceptions.

Furthermore, it was about 56% students responded that they agreed and 8% students strongly agreed that they often used English oral communication during practice learning program. Only 32% students undecided and 4% students did not agree about that. It

indicated that they never used English oral communication skill during practice learning program because at their workplace English was not spoken. Then, 60% students agreed and 8 % students strongly agreed that they understood easily what people said, and only 32% students undecided. It can be seen that the majority students (60%) agreed and strongly agreed. It showed that students had positive perceptions on English oral communication usage during practice learning program.

CONCLUSION

English oral communication skill can be enhanced through practicing a lot. English exposure can build students' confidence in speaking. This study showed that students had positive perceptions on English oral communication usage during their practice learning program. It reveals that most students who had English oral communication skill had no difficulties in communication during practice learning program. Meanwhile, a few students didn't use their English because English was not spoken at their school. From this study, it can be said that

English oral communication skill is very important to be mastered. People who have good English speaking skill will succeed in their careers. Therefore, this skill should always become a focus on teaching and learning process. There are some points should be maintained in teaching English; students should be exposed with English either in classroom or outside as well as the various teaching methods should be regarded as important aspects to build students' motivation in improving their speaking skill.

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