PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS IN MASTERING SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract: This research aimed to analyze and find the linguistic and non-linguistic problems faced by Indonesian EFL learners in mastering speaking skills. This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method. The researchers were involved as observers and informants who were directly engaged in this research. The research data were obtained by involving seventeen participants as the subjects of the study. This research focused on the problems experienced by students in mastering English speaking skills as the object of research. The data collection technique of this research was conducted by observation, interview, and documentation with main informants and additional informants. The researchers used the main data source from the informants’ interviews to find out the problems faced by Indonesian EFL learners in mastering speaking skills. Results of the data indicated that Indonesian EFL learners experienced problems both in linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. The linguistic aspects comprise (1) comprehension, (2) pronunciation, (3) vocabulary, (4) grammar, and (5) fluency. Whereas the aspects non-linguistic included; (1) nervous to speak, (2) no motivation, (3) afraid of making errors, and (4) low participation in class. The result of this research showed that the highest percentage that caused students' speaking mastery problems was the linguistic aspect, which reached 77% while the non-linguistic aspect only reached 23%.

Keywords: linguistic, non-linguistics, speaking problems

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian students are required to acquire the ability to communicate both in oral and written form in English. It aims to prepare themselves for a global society. The ability to use English can improve and help students in developing themselves intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Accordingly, the development of teaching
English as a foreign language has progressed rapidly (Novitasari & Wardhani, 2018).

Based on the curriculum applied in Indonesia, it has been formulated on the competency standard for English subject at the senior high school level that the competency has to be possessed by students include four skills which are; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The formulation of speaking competence includes the skill of expressing meaning in transactional and interpersonal conversation in the context of everyday life (Curriculum, 2012). This means that the success of the speaking learning process can be known and measured by the ability of students to have a conversation with that language.

However, based on the previous observation result that was conducted by researchers found that there are still many students who have difficulty in speaking using English conversation both transactional and interpersonal. Such similar cases have been found in some research conducted by (Fitriani et al., 2015; Tika & Abadi, 2021; Handini et al., 2021). These research studied the difficulties encountered by the students when speaking in English. Such difficulties experienced were varied and experienced by students in different levels. This problem causes the learning process to speak English cannot run properly and the expected goals in the learning design are not achieved.

Based on those problems, this current research investigates the issues the Indonesian EFL learners experienced in mastering speaking skills. The reason for choosing the research topic is certainly based on the facts of the problems faced by students in the field and consideration that even though same problems occurred in the same level of education, the causes might be different.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Language skills cover four important aspects the student should master, speaking and writing as the productive skills and listening and reading as the receptive skills. The speaking ability is a major productive skill (Saed et al., 2021) and a complex one and requires regular practice to reach the most proficient level for effective communication. As it is a complex requiring the simultaneous use of different abilities, the speakers (learners) are obliged to employ vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, intonation, and organization of content speech at the same time (Brown, 2014).
Speaking skill is identical to the ability to master a language. In a general perspective, a person is said to master a particular language if he can communicate orally or verbally in that language. This perspective led to the grouping of two types of foreign language skills among Indonesian learners, namely active and passive abilities. The oral (speaking) skills are posed as the main indicator in assessing foreign performance (Jamshidnejad, 2020). This emphasizes that the ability to speak can indicate the mastery of a language.

The ability to speak is considered as an important ability in language, compared to the other three skills even though all four skills are integrated. People who know a language are referred to as ‘speakers’ of that language as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak (Bergil, 2016) and involves various aspects such as tone, pronunciation, rhythm of speech, fluency, and lexical collocation (Feng & Liu, 2021). This ability to communicate in the context of oral and written form is an obligation for all students in Indonesia, the aim is to prepare themselves for global society as it can improve and help students in developing themselves intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

There are two important objectives for English learners in Indonesia especially in speaking skills. These objectives include transactional and interactional. The former relates to objective oriented to the message, namely giving and receiving information, whereas the latter relates to the activity of sharing opinions and personal experiences by maintaining social relationships (Mafrudloh & Fitriati, 2020). Therefore, the organization of teaching and learning activities in English should be aligned with these objectives, namely developing oral fluency of students, with the objective of improving communication skill and developing the ability to express themselves intelligently.

The role of educator is very important in improving the ability of students in teaching and learning process. Educator is not only required to be able to deliver the material to students but also must be able to motivate students to increase their English learning capacity. In order to achieve this aim, educator needs to work towards the achievement of learning objectives that have been programmed effectively in the curriculum.
Based on the curriculum that applied in Indonesia, it has been formulated on the competency standard for English subject at the Senior High School level, that the competency has to be possessed by students include four skills which are; listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The formulation of speaking competence includes the skill of expressing meaning in transactional and interpersonal conversation in the context of everyday life (Curriculum, 2012). This means that the successful of speaking learning process can be known and measured by the ability of students to have a conversation with that language. In line with this, Namaziandost et al., (2019) suggest mastering speaking skill is a central element in second language learning and teaching and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language and can communicate confidently and fluently (Masuram & Sripada, 2020). It means that speaking skill has an important role in learning English, so we have to give more attention in teaching and learning process especially in the students problem in learning speaking.

The characteristics of good and productive conversations in English can be interpreted if students are able to speak with accuracy and fluency. Accuracy is the ability to speak correctly without making many serious mistakes so educator does not make many corrections from speaking activities that have been carried out. natural language use and the imitation of native speaker use. While fluency is natural use of language and communicating performance in a native-like way (Sasson, 2013).

The fluency in English speaking involves with speech rate, continuity, logical sequencing of sentences (Enayat & Derakhshan, 2021). It means that the communication between speaker and listener have to focus on understanding the message and the listener is able to get the information from the speaker, so fluency is one of other aspects that important in support speaking skill because it can avoid misunderstanding communication. The combination between those aspects in fluency are very important, not only focus on pronouncing the words clearly but also understanding how to arrange the sentences correctly. However, non-linguistic aspects should be considered in the teaching and learning of speaking skills.

Non-linguistic aspect becomes an additional factor the Indonesian students run into to develop their speaking skill. Those problems can be caused by several factors, problems that may arise can be in the form of a sense of excessive anxiety (Alotumi,
2021; Sholikhi, 2021) caused by poorly preparation. Feeling of fear of making mistakes can also cause problems for students in conducting verbal communication activities using English.

Speaking skills are not merely of mastering the linguistics patterns. Consequently, the Indonesian EFL learners find it difficult to speak in English. The ability to speak is a very complex ability to be mastered, knowledge of other additional components is required. According to Burnkart (Heriansyah, 2012), the mechanics of language elements, the functions of language, and the sociocultural norms areas of knowledge involved within speaking skill. The first area involves the use of right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary). The second area is concerned with transaction and interaction in speaking performance. And the last are is deal with turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants, understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason.

The ability to speak becomes a very basic difficulty for English language learners. This constraint can be understood because speaking naturally requires learners to be able to realize the characteristics of speaking fluently. The accuracy and fluency are the two fundamental factors which verify the success of English language users from non-proficient ones (Safdari & Fathi, 2020).

However, based on the observation conducted by researchers found that there are still many students who have difficulty in speaking using sentences of English conversation both transactional and interpersonal such as anxiety (Sholikhi, 2021) and the difficulty in expressing ideas (Lestari, 2019; Lumbangaol & Mazali, 2020). These conditions certainly cause the learning process to speak English cannot run properly and the expected goals in the learning design are not achieved.

To avoid this problem, it is very important for educators or teachers to introduce and familiarize students with practicing their communication in real communication. If this is ignored, it is very possible that students are not accustomed and not ready to communicate spontaneously and cannot overcome all demands simultaneously.

Based on those problems, the aim of this research is to conduct an analysis and investigation related to what hinder the Indonesian EFL students in mastering speaking skill. The reason for choosing the research topic is certainly based on the facts of the
problems the students experienced in the field and to get solutions how to solve those problems.

METHOD

The aim of this research is to analyze and find the problems the Indonesian EFL in senior high school level experienced in acquiring their speaking skills. This research used a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis method was chosen with the aim to describe the facts on the object of the research through data and sample that had been collected and then carried out with descriptive analysis.

The researchers were involved as observers and informant this research. The research data obtained by involving seventeen participants who were divided into fifteen students who were poor in scores and performances based on the teachers’ data, and involved two additional informants namely English teachers.

This research focused on the problems experienced by students in mastering English speaking skills as the object of research. The data collection technique of this research was conducted by observation, interview, and documentation with main informants and additional informants. The researchers used the main data source from the interview with informants to find out the problems faced by Indonesian EFL learners in mastering speaking skill. The interview helped the teacher know the speaking ability of students (Krisdiana & Majapahit, 2021) The procedure of this research includes six stages; (1) assigning informants, (2) conducting observation and interview, (3) keeping diaries, (4) conducting interview analyzes, (5) making component analyzes, and (6) making analysis reports.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this research, the data were divided into three categories comprising of observation, interview, and documentation. The researchers collected these data by involving the primary and additional informants.
Observation

Based on the observation that has been done by researchers, the data showed that the Indonesian EFL learners experienced difficulties in four important aspects in mastering speaking skill. These four aspects include pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and nervous to speak. The observation result we can see in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>S3,10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nervous to Speak</td>
<td>S8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>S9, S11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result: 11 100%

From the table above, it can be concluded that the knowledge and understanding of linguistics becomes the main obstacles main the Indonesian EFL learners experienced in developing their speaking skill. Pronunciation becomes the most significant aspect that giving problems in mastering speaking skill, with a percentage more than 50%. While non-linguistic aspect such as nervous to speak (Sholikhi, 2021) had a less significant impact only 9%. In addition, vocabulary (Al Hosni, 2014) becomes the moderate issues as well as grammar the students experienced in mastering speaking as what Garcia-Ponce and Tagg (2020) suggest that both should be balanced with teaching speaking.

Interview Data

The results of the interviews asking the participants a number of questions that have been collected by the researchers shows that there are several important aspects that hinder the Indonesian EFL learners in acquiring speaking skills. These aspects can be classified into two aspects: linguistics and non-linguistics (Al Hosni, 2014; Bergil, 2016). The interview with the students resulted in the classification of the problems into linguistic and problems in non-linguistic aspects. The interview results suggested that the problems in linguistic aspects included; (1) comprehension, (2) pronunciation, (3) vocabulary, (4) grammar and (5) fluency. The interview result we can see in the following table.
Based on the table above, it shows that students have problems in mastering speaking skills in the linguistic aspect. The problem is dominated by knowledge and understanding of linguistic aspects. Important aspects that have a significant impact are aspects of comprehension and pronunciation, the result of interview shows that the students' problems in the comprehension aspect reached 44% while the pronunciation aspect reached 29%. Compared with other linguistic aspects, both aspects have a very significant impact on the mastery of students' speaking skill.

Non-linguistic aspects that become the problems of students, based on the result of the interview included; (1) nervous to speak, (2) no motivation, (3) afraid of making errors, and (4) low participation in class. The interview result we can see in the following table (Al Hosni, 2014; Lumbangaol & Mazali, 2020; Sholikhi, 2021).
Table 3 indicates that the students have problems in mastering speaking skill not only happened in the linguistic aspects but also in the non-linguistic aspect. The problem is dominated by nervous to speak and afraid of making errors aspects (Al Hosni, 2014; Lumbangaol & Mazali, 2020; Sholikhi, 2021). Important aspect that has a significant impact is the aspect of nervous to speak, the result of interview showed that the problem of students in the nervous to speak aspect reached 61%. Compared with other non-linguistic aspects, the nervous to speak aspect has a very significant impact on the mastery of students' speaking skill.

Table 4. The Comparison of Linguistic and Non-linguistic Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-Linguistics</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in Table 4, it shows that the students' problems are dominated by the aspect of understanding and mastery of linguistic which reached 77%, while non-linguistic aspect only reached 23%. Of course this result proves that in mastering speaking skill students cannot be separated from the knowledge and understanding of linguistic aspect, because linguistic aspect has an important role and contribution in the mastery of speaking skills (Al Hosni, 2014; Bergil, 2016; Lumbangaol & Mazali, 2020; Sholikhi, 2021).

The researchers also conducted interviews with English teachers to obtain supporting data related to students’ problems in mastering speaking skills. The interviews’ results indicate that the problems faced by students as seen from their educators’ perceptions included the lack of vocabulary knowledge, difficulty in composing sentences in accordance with grammar, a tendency to be afraid and ashamed of making mistakes in speaking English. This result confirms the interviewing results.
conducted with students, the main problems faced by students arise from the knowledge and understanding of linguistic aspects.

Discussion

In her study of speaking skills, Lestari (2019) revealed that the Indonesian learners mostly are afraid of making mistakes as they only have limited vocabularies. These reasons are also reported by the previous researches (Al Hosni, 2014; Lumbangaol & Mazali, 2020; Sholikhi, 2021). This statement indicates that the learners’ problem in speaking mastery is influenced not only by one aspect but also involves other supporting aspects. The data of this research confirm that the mastery of speaking skills is a complex skill because it involves other supporting aspects, both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects.

On the basis of the observation and interview data regarding with the problems the Indonesian EFL learners encountered in acquiring speaking skill, the researchers conduct analysis and identify solutions to those problems, especially related to linguistic aspect, because this aspect has a very significant impact in mastering students’ speaking skills. This is confirmed by Al Hosni (Al Hosni, 2014) who suggest that the students are challenged to make sentences in expressing their ideas. One of them said, “We do not know how to say it”. The solution of the problem is classified according to the aspect of the problem faced in the linguistic aspect. The following identification and solution provided as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the result of the interview, students expect that their educator or teacher can provide interesting and fun teaching methods so that they will be more enthusiastic in learning English.</td>
<td>Educators or teachers have to improve their knowledge of English teaching methods and be always up to date with the development of technology-based teaching.</td>
<td>The way to overcome this problem is teachers have to increase their skill, make adaptation with the technology. Moreover, they have to provide attractive and fun way to teach English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Problems and Solutions for Difficulties in Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the observation, most of students have an issue with their English Pronunciation. Even just simple word like punishment, diet, patience, etc.</td>
<td>Possible solution to overcome pronunciation issue is through audiovisual media. The use of audiovisual-based technology has a good impact on learning.</td>
<td>The way to overcome pronunciation issue is through audiovisual media.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Problems and Solutions for Difficulties in Pronunciation
They cannot to pronounce correctly because students can hear and see forms of conversation using English directly with native speakers.

Table 7. Problems and Solutions for Difficulties in Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the observation, students have difficulty not only in the form of understanding passive vocabulary but also active vocabulary.</td>
<td>Possible solution to overcome vocabulary issue is through practice the language regularly and push students to maintain old vocabulary while acquiring new words.</td>
<td>The way to overcome vocabulary issue is push students to maintain old vocabulary while acquiring new words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Problems and Solutions for Difficulties in Grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the observation, students have difficulty in composing sentences using the appropriate tenses and differences in the use of active and passive sentences.</td>
<td>Possible solutions to overcome grammar issues is through the frequency of problem exercises related to tenses and passive voice must be improved and supported by reference books that are appropriate to the level of learning.</td>
<td>The way to overcome grammar issues is to push students to work on practice questions and be supported with appropriate reference books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Problems and Solutions for Difficulties in Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the observation, students have difficulty in fluency in speaking English because they are not accustomed to using the language in daily life and only often use it in written sentence form.</td>
<td>Possible solutions to overcome the issue of fluency is through speaking practice. push students to get used to using English as a communication tool with friends and educators at school.</td>
<td>The way to overcome the issue of fluency is to push students to use English as a communication tool with friends and educators at school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The research findings show that the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects become the problems the Indonesian EFL learners experienced in mastering speaking skills. The data of interviewing with participants showed that the highest percentage that caused students’ speaking mastery problems is the linguistic aspect, which reached 77% while the non-linguistic aspect only reached 23%.

The aspect of knowledge and understanding linguistics covered comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and fluency. From these aspects, comprehension
(44%) and pronunciation (29%) have a significant contribution in inhibiting the mastery of English-speaking skills. For this reason, it is needed a way and a solution that can solve these problems with the aim of students being able to master their speaking English. It needs support from all elements of education ranging from students, teachers, schools and other education stakeholders to jointly contribute to achieving the educational goals that are expected in Indonesia.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of this research, the researchers have suggested for the teachers and other researchers. For the teachers, they have to make the speaking class more interesting by reach all students participation in teaching learning process. For research that will be carried out in the future, this research will be an additional reference to conduct the next research or similar problem on analyzing students’ problems in speaking skill.

REFERENCES


