English Foreign Language Students' Strategies in Overcoming Speaking Problems

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Abstract

This study aimed at knowing types students' dominant barriers in speaking and their strategies in overcoming their problems. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research. The participants of this study were 12 students of the second semester in physics education study program at *Hamzanwadi* University taken by opportunistic sampling technique. Observation, interview and questionnaire were used for collecting data. The data analysis was conducted by qualitative methodology. The result finding showed that students' got problems in speaking, the students' dominant problems those were anxiety of speaking, unavailability environment and lack of vocabularies. In solving the students' problem in speaking, the students' used some strategies those were role-play, telling-story and games.

Keywords: Speaking strategy, students' problem

1. Introduction

Listening , reading, writing and speaking are four skills found in teaching and learning English. Those skills are interconnected each other and cannot stand independently. Speaking is one way to communicate and idea through a message or orally. Tarigan (1981) states "speaking is a skill to convey an articulation of speech and to express an utterance in order to produce thoughts and intentions". As one of language skills, speaking is an oral communication between the locutor and interlocutor in order to convey the intention of the speakers. The goals of speaking are to tell the speakers' ideas or purpose all along a dialogue or discussion, when people initites their talk then the interlocutor understand the speaker are telling or share their ideas to the people whom he/she intends to. Nunan (1991) states that "speaking is the same as oral interactions which is a convention way of to deliver information; expressing idea and wish we bear in our mind". Generally, speaking is spoken communication where both the locutor and interlocuter need to consider meaning of ideas during a conversation, the ideas are used to

confirm that someone has understood something or they are doing something. It means that, the interaction between speaker and listener happens when they are communicating. In this case, the locator or the speaker has to understand the correlation between the thoughts expressed orally. In real condition, students' at the second semester of Physics education study program of *Hamzanwadi* University found it difficult to speak English well. Having done the pre-observation, there were some problems that students' face such as lack of vocabulary, less of motivation, and lack of ideas. The results of this study are useful as an additional contribution on how lecturers understand types of students'strategies and how they overcome the encountered problems in English foreign language classroom especially fon non English education study program students in which they do not learn English every day, yet they are demanded to understand technical terms in English dealing with physics field either from oral or written sources.

The difficulties encountered by the students are as follows. 1. Anxiety which related to someone's psychology. Anxiety is a feeling of sweating, chest pain, palpitations and worry that strike suddenly which caused students' fearful of criticism and simply shy to speak English. Essau (2003) states "anxiety is one of the prevalent mental healths concern for children and adolescents". 2). Inadequate vocabulary knowledge. Lack of vocabulary is the biggest obstacles in speaking. According to Huyen (2003) "the reasons causing low proficiency of vocabulary is students assume that the teachers just explain how to define certain words, pronounce, spell and recognize part of speech of each word". In this case, the students felt that those things mentioned have nothing to do to learn vocabulary. 3). Low proficiency of grammar pattern. Grammar is the set of structural rule of words that are put together to form proper sentences. Dykes (2007) defines that "grammar is a rule to talk about language correctly. Some EFL students would think about the particular grammar item being involved before producing utterance". 4) Poor pronunciation. The real difficulty faced by students in mastering English is pronouncing English words. Liu (2007) states "in several contexts, especially for non native English learners, they do not have self-esteem to make a conversation because they are not able to pronounce a certain words". Some students have trouble in pronouncing some particular vowels, consonants and intonations. 5) Lack of motivation. Many students who cannot speak English and do not want to speak become the contribution of problem in speaking. Furthermore, they have low motivation in speaking English and they are not aware of being able to speak English. Littlewood (1987) states "the necessities may be pretty short or long term in learning. It may be because of factors dealt directly to the context of teaching and leaning process, such as short term behavioral targets". 6) Poor listening facilities. Listening is a receptive skill language skill. Without listening, students cannot produce language. Thus, listening plays an important role in enrichment of language, so people's outputs are varieties. In contrast, some students have poor of listening facilities as their obstacle in producing speaking. Vandergrift (1999) states " listening skill is the first skill acquired in English acquisition, yet it is not easy to master by a lot of non native English learners, listening is the skill they feel desperate". 7) Unavailability of the environment to speak English Gan (2012) reveals that "when students finish their classes and

their first language is dominantly used in environment". Students' are unable to speak and improve their speaking skill, because their environment is first language and make the students' get the difficulties in speaking. 8) Inappropriate strategy .Teaching strategy acts as an main role during an instruction process. Al Hosni (2014) claims that "lack of teaching speaking strategy gives negative impact in students speaking performance". In line with Gan (2012) stated that style of teaching speaking such as little interaction in small group can be a difficulty in speaking in EFL students. 9). Inappropriate curriculum. Curriculum is an important role in classroom circumstances because the entire classroom activities are run by curriculum. A study by Al Hosni (2014) reveals that "curriculum implementation was not appropriate to teach English speaking skill".   Brown (2004) states" speaking refers to a skill and thus has to be designed and learnt separatedly from the curriculum of grammar. It indicated that all of the problems above are the main speaking problems encountered by EFL students either from the students itself or from the environment. Thus, one of ways to solve those problems is the students' must be able to solve it by certain strategies in overcoming their speaking problems in the classroom.

Strategy meant a series of procedure to obtain a certain goal. During instructional process, strategy contains certain steps which have to be followed by an instructor with the purpose that he/she could manage the classroom intruction process smoothly. It is well-known that teacher has the first place to plan strategy and then followed by the students in classroom instrucion. Hamruni (2009) states that 'strategy is a plan, method, or series of procedures intended to obtain a certain pedagogical aims'. Then Silver, et al, (2007, p. 1) state "the aim of teaching is to encourage a conversation that unifies the unfamiliar people into similar subject matter". Strategies were the different kinds or types of procedures that teachers apply to reach certain objectives. Appropriate strategy has been chosen and applied by a lot of teachers and lecturers as well. Having done observation in the classroom, the present researcher was interested in investigating about "English Foreign Language Students' Strategies in Overcoming Speaking Problems. The present author intended to find out speaking problems and how to overcome the problems by the non english education department students, specifically physics education study program students in which during their daily course,they did not learn English skill and other elements of language, yet the author had a commitment to teach them speak English well where a lot of studies have been conducted to know high school students or students' in English department problem and strategies in learning speaking.

2. Method

The present researcher conducted a case study as the research method. Yin (1984) defines "case study is a hypothetical analysis that examines latest issues within its real environment; when the limits between phenomenon and context are not clearly proved; and in which various sources of proofs are used". In addition, case study is the one of methodology in qualitative research that observes directly the real life phenomenon through detail contextual by knowing the dominant problems of the students' speaking and their strategies in overcoming the problems.

2.1 Participants

In this study, the author present focused on types of students' speaking problems and their strategies to solve the obstacles of speaking faced by the second semester students in academic year 2019-2010 and the participants of this research consisted of 12 students' of the physics study program at *Hamzanwadi* university. They were taken through opportunistic sampling technique (Gokhale, Nair, & Chaudhuri, 2016; Hamada & Ryan, 2016; Sugiyono, 2008; Wilson, 2016)

2.2 Data Collection

In this research, the author presented to collect data by doing the following techniques. Those were observation, interview and questionnaire.

a.   Observation

Observation was a way to collect data which involves selection, observation and recording action and characteristics of human, object or events. The present researcher conducted the research at the second semester of physics education study program at *Hamzanwadi* University in the academic year 2019-2020. The author observed the situation of the class and checked the lesson plan. Then, the researcher focused on the students' motivation during instructional process. In the classroom, the students' were not able to speak well in English due tolackof vocabulary and poor pronunciation. When the teacher asked them to speak in English they took long time to think what they want to say. Finally, the researcher focused on how students' strategies to overcome their speaking problems.

b.   Interview.

An interview was a conversation to collect information and opinion. As Ary (2010) states "interviews are conducted to collect data about participants' idea, decribtion and opinion about the situation in their own describtion". In this study, an interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks interview. In this interview the researcher used face to face with the participants related to students strategies to overcome speaking problems. In-depth interviews are basically used to get more data and to re-check the trust in previous information in the questionnaire; so the protocol was almost similar to the questionnaire.

c.   Questionnaire.

Questionnaire was the list of questions or statements that are given to the participants. Brown (2001) states "questionnaires refers to all written instruments that provides respondents with the several questions or statements to which they will respond either by joting down the answers or selecting the existing choices". In this research, the researcher used 1-5 items with Likert's scale that related to students strategies in overcoming speaking problems. First, the researchers constructed a questionnaire related to (1) participants' motivation in learning English, (2) their opinion on the learning environment, (3) strategies of learning they preferred, (4) their statement on English course in delivering the materials, and (5) their problems in learning English. The questionnaire consist of 10 items and has five scale (strongly agree, agree,

moderate, disagree, strongly disagree).Then the researchers developed interview protocol as interview guide.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data in qualitative research was analyzed by using observation, interview and questionnaire. The data analysis was done based on some steps. First, all questions item were collected to be processed by the present researcher. Second, the data were tabulated using percentage. The data were classified into two that correlated to the students' problems and students' strategies. And then, the researcher classified the students' dominant problems of speaking and their strategies to solve their problems.

3. Results

The result study was divided into three types of data collection those were observation, interview, and questionnaire.

1.   Observation Result

The author tried to know the students' problems in speaking for three months and observed the classroom for three times. During this step, the researcher observed the students' condition during teaching and learning process. Having done the observation, the researcher discovered that the students' problems in speaking were anxiety of speaking, low proficiency of vocabulary, lack of participation, motivation, self-confident and finally lack of ideas. In observation time, when the teacher asked them to speak they were still confuse how to say and took long time to connect they needed to say. On the other hand, the students' were really not confident when they want to say something and arrange the ideas in English speaking.

2.   Interview Result

After observation, the researcher interviewed the students. The present researcher asked 10 questions that related to the students' problems and the strategies to overcome their speaking problems. The researcher focused on the participants' strategies to overcome their speaking problems. Most of students stated that they have some problems when they learn English speaking. In the interview, the researcher tried to invite them to speak and the researcher finished the interview one by one face to face with the students' as participants. After interviewing the students', the researcher recorded the students' answer as the result of interview section.

3.   Questionnaire Result

To collect data from the field research, the present researcher conducted questionnaire research. The type of questionnaire used two close-ended. Close-ended questionnaire used to record the dominants type of students' problems in speaking and their strategies to overcome their problems and there were 12 participants of the eleventh grade of the study. In this study there were two questionnaires first questionnaire consisted of 8 items and the second consisted of 8 items to be asked. The result of two close-ended in the questionnaire was presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Problems in Speaking Class

No	Students' Problems in Speaking	Score	Percentage
1	Anxiety of speaking	60	15.1%
2	Lack of vocabularies	48	12.15%
3	Lack of grammar pattern	24	6.0%
4	Poor pronunciation	28	7.0 %
5	Lack of motivation	48	12.1%
6	Poor listening facilities	48	12.1%
7	Unavailability environment	54	13.6%
8	Inappropriate teaching strategy	45	11.3%
9	Inappropriate curriculum	40	10.1%
	Total	**395**	

Based on the illustration from the table above, the author discovered the dominant students' problems in English speaking. The first was anxiety of speaking (15.1%), the second was unavailability environment (13.6%) and the third was lack of vocabularies (12.15%).

Speaking anxiety referred to fearful of something make worry that strike suddenly and simply shy when the students' begin to speak in English. This anxiety was one of factor that the students' were feeling afraid about something especially in English speaking. Unavailability environment referred to the students' unable to speak in English because their environment used first language. Lack of vocabularies referred to the students' who have poor vocabularies because students' considered of teacher explanation only to find out the definition of words, pronounce the words and part of speech.

Table 2. Students' Strategies in Solving Their Speaking Problems

No	Students' Strategies	Score	Percentage
1	Prepared talks	60	17 %
2	Role-Play	72	20.5 %
3	Brainstorming	24	6.8 %
4	Oral interview	30	8.5 %
5	Debate	36	10.2 %
6	Games	60	17.1%
7	Telling-Story	64	18.2 %
8	Discussion	40	11.4 %
	Total	**350**	

Having analyzed the table above, the researcher discovered that the students' strategies in overcoming their English speaking problems were Role-Play (20.5%), Telling-Story (18.2%) and games (17.1%).

Role-Play referred to the activities that pertinent manner of integrating skills in the language classroom that getting the students' to speak in different social context. Telling-Story referred to

tell other people stories about what, where, when, why and how something happened. In this context, teacher asked studens to read story in their books, understood the story content, noted the important points, and encouraged them for a retelling story activity. Games refer to entertainments or an activity in which the learners use their motoric skill and mingle with the other and also games can be one of the alternatively manner in comprehend the learner study quickly by some games that making player became creative.

4. Discussion

This research was conducted to discover the students' dominant problems in English speaking and the students' strategies in overcoming their speaking of the second semester of physics education study program at *Hamzanwadi* University. Several main findings could be found from this study. First, regarding the result analysis of observation, interview, and questionnaire, the most dominant of students' speaking   problem was anxiety. MacIntyre (1998,p.27) says "language anxiety means the fear and physicological uneasiness emerged during studying or speaking a foreign language because they were afraid when they want to speak in English, the role of anxiety was in line with Zheng & Cheng (2018) statement that worried learners are often more confused easily,and the way they cope with the situation caused by nervosity will impede with the access of insight in learning. The second was unavailability environment because the students' environment using first language and that making them low in understanding English speaking. According to Miller (2016) " learning environment plays an important effect on the students' interest- a setting for unstressful language learning will improve outcome for achivement". The third students' problem was lack of vocabulary. Vocabulary learning is an imperative part of learning foreign language (Shmitt & Carter, 2000). If students who learn English are without having enough vocabulary stock, they will not show the desired results in language learning process. Auguto,Carlo, Dressler and Snow (2005) express "foreign language learners who have limited vocabulary take more time to learn new vocabulary item and are less able to involve in comprehending text and lack involvement in oral communication with their peers".

Second, regarding the students' strategies, it was showed that that the their problem in speaking in English speaking could be solved by the students' with some strategies that included as follows; the first was Role-Play, telling- story became the second and the third was games. Those were the strategies that students' needed to solve their speaking barriers. In general, the relationship was observed among all   students'problem and their strategy. specifically, students'problem in speaking dominantly was anxiety of speaking,then they cope the anxiety by making a role play because in role play activity, they must perform in pair or in team so their anxiety could be decreased. Bailey in Nunan (2003, p.57) states "role plays are also acceptable technique to speaking in the very comfortable setting classroom. In a role-play, each student will act as a particular character and then talk in the target language. Role play offers learners to practice the foreign language orally before they implement in a real setting".Then because of lack supported environment, the students created a telling story activity among them to improve their speaking and listening skill as well. Cameron (2001, p.11) says that "storytelling can be

applied as an appropriate technique for improving both listening and oral skill". Besides, storytelling as a teaching technique has been extensively used in preschools and elementary schools up until university level where the teacher can choose stories from folk tales, guide books, literary tales, real life stories, festivals, and mythology.

A similar study was conducted by Lukita Sari (2008) which described students'strategies in overcoming speaking problems. The study purposes were to find out students' problems in speaking and   the strategies in overcoming speaking problems at the first semester of English department *Muhammadiyah* University of Malang. The results of the study showed that the students get the problems with their speaking ability particularly in term of inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participant and mother tongue used. The second study was taken from Hanunah (2009). She investigated about students' strategies in overcoming speaking problems in speaking class of second semester at English Department of Tarbiyah Faculty *IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.* There were three purposes in this thesis, those were to find out problems that the second semester students faced in learning speaking, the causes of the problems and their strategies in overcoming those problems. The result of this study showed that the students' had difficulties in their speaking ability particularly in terms inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, mother tongue used. Based on the description previously, this study has similar titles as mentioned by the researcher above. Besides, the difference of the previous studies with the recent study was Lukintasari (2008), and Hanunah (2009) chose participants of English department, yet this study was conducted for physics education students (non English study program participants).

5. Conclusion

Based on the finding result that the researcher got the data from observation, interview and questionnaire, that learning speaking process emerged cerrtain problems along with the strategies to cope with the problem. During this study,the problems encountered by the participants were anxiety of speaking, insufficient vocabulary, inability of grammar pattern, poor pronunciation, low motivation,poor listening facilities, unavailability environment,inapproprite teaching strategy and inappropriate curriculum. At the same time, the students struggled by performing some strategies. As the result showed that, the students strategies were prepared talk, role play, brainstorming, oral interview,debate, games, telling story, and discussion. With these points, the study presented here aims to offer an idea about the possibilities of designing an appropriate curriculum and strategy which fulfills the students' needs in learning speaking. Students who learn speaking with proper curriclum and stratgey are expected to be competence in English as general knowledge and English for profession. They may prefer learning English since they received strategy which enable them to learn in comfortable environment.

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