
An Analysis of Students Speaking Problem Faced by EFL College of English Education Students at Perjuangan University: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify EFL college learners' speaking problems and examine these problems from two aspects: linguistic and psychological. This study applied qualitative descriptive research to explain the speaking problems of EFL college learners. A questionnaire was used to collect the data to find the problems in students' speaking. The questionnaire was adapted from Verapornvanichkul (2011). The questionnaire consists of two aspects; linguistics (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) and psychological problems (anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation). The questionnaire was presented using 5 points Likert scale. The sample of this research was the students of the English Education Department at Perjuangan University in Tasikmalaya. The result showed that every student encounter problems both in linguistics and psychological aspect. The mostly faced speaking problem in the linguistic aspect is grammar (112 points), and anxiety is a psychological problem (101 points). The lowest point of the problem is confidence (82 points).

Keywords: Speaking, speaking problems, linguistics, psychological, analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, people need communication. Language is needed while talking with others. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), language is an important aspect of human life since it is used for communication in daily life. Language is a system of communication that enables individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and convey information. It possesses certain key characteristics such as structure, rules, arbitrariness yet systematicity. Moreover, language serves multiple purposes other communication; it helps build relationships, establish identities, negotiate power dynamics in society etc.

Due to historical factors such as colonization and globalization, English has become one of the most commonly spoken languages in the world. It has gained popularity not just in native English-speaking nations, but also as a lingua franca in many situations where individuals with

different mother tongues use it to effectively communicate, including Indonesia. This changing environment makes English essential for those living in non-English speaking nations who want to actively engage on the global arena. Despite this growing importance, many Indonesian learners encounter various challenges when it comes to mastering speaking skills in English.

Speaking skills play a vital role in overall language proficiency. As highlighted by Almalki (2019), being able to communicate effectively orally is essential for various real-life situations such as job interviews, presentations, and social interactions. Mastery of spoken English allows individuals to convey their thoughts accurately and engage in meaningful conversations with native speakers. Then, with speaking, students can have the ability to express oneself clearly, articulate thoughts, engage in conversations, and participate actively in discussions which is vital for students' academic success and future professional endeavors.

Speaking English fluently and confidently is a challenging task for many college learners who study English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In Indonesia, where English is not widely used in daily communication, EFL learners often face various linguistic and psychological difficulties that hinder their speaking performance and development. These difficulties may affect their academic success as well as their future career opportunities. Therefore, it is important to identify and understand the specific speaking problems encountered by EFL college learners in different contexts and settings.

Since the college learners in English Education Department of University at Tasikmalaya are the English Foreign Learners, they may face problems when speak English. Dealing with the problem faced by learners, the researchers is interested to do a research entitled “An Analysis of Students Speaking Problem Faced by EFL College Learners”. This study aims to analyze the speaking problems encountered by EFL college learners.

There are previous research has related to speaking problem faced by learners. First, Franscy and Ramli (2022) conducted study among the seventeen of Indonesian EFL Learners and found that mostly faced speaking problem is the linguistics aspect with 77%. Second, Rizki, et al., (2020) conducted study among the second year of English Department in Universitas at Riau and found that mostly faced speaking problem in linguistics aspect is pronunciation (383 points) and anxiety as the psychological problems (375 points). Third, Rahayu et al., (2020) conducted study among the ten of fourth semester EFL College Learners and found that there are four important themes which emerged; students are lack of vocabularies, the grammar is not well mastered by the

students, the students are afraid of negative responses from others, and the students have low self-confidence in speaking English.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative descriptive research. The researchers utilized a qualitative research design with 30 EFL college learners as participants. The objectives of this research is to identify the speaking problems of EFL college learners and to examine these problems from two aspects: linguistic and psychological. The data were collected using questionnaire through Google Form link and accessed by the learners. The questionnaire of this study were presented using Likert-scale to get information to participant. The responses from the questionnaire was analyze by perceiving the mostly checked item in scale. The score of the questionnaire was calculated by using Likert five point rating scale starting from Strongly Agree = 5 point, Agree = 4 point, Undecided = 3 point, Disagree = 2 point, Strongly Disagree = 1 point.

Table 1. The Specifications of Questionnaire

Variable	Indicators	Aspects	Number of Items
Problem in Speaking English	Linguistics	Vocabulary	1,2,3,4
		Grammar	5,6,7
		Pronunciation	8,9,10
	Psychological	Anxiety	11,12,15,16
		Shyness	13,14
		Lack of Confidence	17,18
		Lack of Motivation	19,20

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this research, the data were collected by questionnaire. The result of this research answered question about the speaking problems faced by students of English Department of Perjuangan University at Tasikmalaya. It shows that they still have problems when they are speaking. The result shows that mostly faced problems of the students are grammar with 112 points and anxiety with 101 points.

Table 1. Score of The Questionnaire

No	Problems in Speaking	Total Respondents					Total Score
		Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	

Linguistics Aspects							
1	I feel afraid to speak in English because my vocabulary is limited	4	16	7	2	1	110
2	It feels difficult for me to express ideas verbally when speaking.	1	15	5	8	1	97
3	I often get confuse to combine and use the proper vocabulary to speak.	4	16	5	4	1	108
4	I rarely response to my partner when speaking because they speak faster.	0	12	9	7	1	91
5	I have difficulty to arrange the words into sentences to speak in English.	2	13	3	11	1	94
6	I just want to speak when I think my grammar is correct.	6	10	3	10	1	100
7	I have a habit of using mother tongue when speaking to avoid misunderstanding.	5	17	4	3	1	112
8	I have difficulty responding to speakers with various accents.	1	16	6	5	2	99
9	I have trouble responding to a conversation if the speaker's intonation is not understandable.	3	18	4	5	0	109
10	I get ashamed to speak in English because I do not have a good pronunciation.	2	9	9	8	2	91
Psychological aspects							
11	I do not want to make a mistake in speaking because I am afraid of getting correction.	1	12	8	6	3	92
12	I have less confidence to speak English because I think my friends	1	9	7	10	3	85

	will laugh at me when I speak.						
13	When I start to speak in English, I get blank and forget everything suddenly.	3	10	10	6	1	98
14	I feel ashamed to speak English because I do not have fluent English ability.	1	14	6	7	2	95
15	I feel nervous when I have to speak English with and or in front of other people.	4	13	5	6	2	101
16	I feel anxious when speaking and end up saying nothing.	0	12	9	4	3	94
17	I do not want to speak in English because I am afraid that my partner will not understand what I am saying.	0	11	6	10	3	85
18	I do not understand what my speaking partners say so I would rather keep silent.	0	7	9	13	1	82
19	I would rather work alone than work in a team which will force me to speak English.	4	8	9	9	0	97
20	I speak English just because my lecturer told me to do so.	0	13	8	3	6	88

From 30 learners as the sample of this research, it can be conclude that there are varieties of speaking problems faced by English Education students of Perjuangan University in Tasikmalaya. Out of 20 items in questionnaire, students answer are varied from likert scale. From the data, students mostly experienced problems in grammar (112 points) as linguistics aspects when they speak. Meanwhile, the psychological aspect that mostly they encounter when speaking is anxiety (101 points). In conclusion, grammar and anxiety are the most speaking problem experienced by by English Education students of University in Tasikmalaya.

Discussion

The linguistic problems identified among EFL college learners, such as vocabulary limitations, grammar challenges, and pronunciation difficulties, impact their ability to express

themselves accurately and fluently. On the other hand, psychological problems like anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and motivation hinder their willingness to engage in spoken English activities. These factors are interconnected, as linguistic difficulties often contribute to psychological barriers that impede language development.

In their study of speaking skills, Octaberlina et al. (2022) revealed that grammar is a challenge for these learners when it comes to speaking skills. Incorrect usage of grammatical structures often leads to communication breakdowns and a lack of clarity in spoken English. Based on the questionnaire with the problems of the EFL college learners of the English Education Department in Tasikmalaya, it is also shown that grammar is the highest point of linguistics aspect with 112 points with the statement "I have a habit of using my mother tongue when speaking to avoid misunderstanding." Then, learners' problem in speaking is not only influenced by one aspect but also other supporting aspects, which is the psychological aspect, which is anxiety. It can be seen that the highest point of psychological aspect is anxiety, with 101 points with the statement, "I feel nervous when I have to speak English with and or in front of other people." As Sheerah et al. (2022) state, anxiety is one common issue experienced by these learners when speaking English.

Analyzing the significance of these problems for EFL college learners' overall language proficiency reveals that practical speaking skills are crucial for successful communication in academic settings and future professional endeavors. Developing proficiency in spoken English enables these learners to actively participate in class discussions and convey ideas effectively during presentations or group work exercises (Franscy & Ramli, 2022).

Understanding the specific speaking difficulties of EFL college learners of English Education students at the University in Tasikmalaya allows instructors to develop targeted teaching strategies tailored to address these challenges effectively. For instance, addressing vocabulary acquisition through contextualized learning activities can enhance students' lexical knowledge (Rahayu et al., 2020). Incorporating explicit grammar instruction with ample practice opportunities can improve students' grammatical accuracy when speaking. Pronunciation can be improved through focused pronunciation exercises and feedback provided by instructors.

For most speaking problems in linguistics experienced by English Education students of Perjuangan University, the researchers have a solution to overcome the habit of using the mother tongue. First, learners should immerse themselves in English as much as possible. This means learners should read, listen to, and watch English content as much as possible. Then, they should

practice speaking English as often as possible with native or fluent speakers. Also, learners should make sure to keep learning and expanding their vocabulary. These are the possible solution to overcome their problem in linguistics aspects.

For most speaking problems in the psychological aspect experienced by English Education students of Perjuangan University in Tasikmalaya, the researchers have a solution to overcome anxiety, especially the nervousness in speaking in front of people:

1. Learners should relax to relieve the physical stress of nervousness.
2. Learners should do a preparation; they should prepare everything they need to do public speaking, such as planning, writing a note, etc. This is to determine how confident the learners may be in their performance.
3. Learners should have positive thinking and focus on creating positive thoughts. Also, the audience's depreciation, the attendance of the listener, who is accountable for the unpleasant connection, has to be disregarded.
4. Concentration; learners should fully concentrate on the goals and speak carefully.
5. The resignation, the public speaking scenario, should be maintained out of the speaker's head so that no bad ideas linked with it that may haunt the speaker.

Implementing support programs and interventions is crucial to further support EFL college learners in overcoming their speaking problems. Language centers or speaking clubs can be established within the university to provide a supportive environment where students can practice speaking English with peers (Octaberlina et al., 2022). Additionally, incorporating technology-mediated approaches like flipped classrooms, videoconferencing platforms, or language exchange programs can enhance students' exposure to real-life communication situations and increase their motivation to engage in spoken English activities (Asaad et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, EFL college learners face various linguistic and psychological problems that hinder their ability to speak fluently in English. Linguistic difficulties such as limited vocabulary, grammar challenges, and pronunciation issues contribute to communication breakdowns. Psychological barriers including anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and motivation further impede these learners' progress in developing effective speaking skills. Understanding these specific difficulties enables instructors to design appropriate teaching strategies and implement support programs that address these challenges effectively. By providing targeted instruction and

creating a supportive learning environment, EFL college learners can enhance their English-speaking proficiency and overcome the obstacles they face.

As mentioned in the research question in the previous chapter, the most common speaking problems faced by the students of English Education Department at University in Tasikmalaya are grammar (112 points) and anxiety (101 points). This research founds that students are usually use their mother tongue when speaking in English because they avoid misunderstanding. Students also encounter problems with anxiety because they always feeling nervous when they speak with and or other people.

Another speaking problem also having a high score is the limited vocabulary. They feel afraid to speak English because their vocabulary is limited. On the other hand, suprising finding also can be seen in the lowest point of the result that students' confidence is good, they don't have a serious problem in it (82 point).

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