WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN LEARNING TO SPEAK ENGLISH

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Abstract: This study deals with speaking achievement of eighth semester students in English Department of one university in Nusa Tenggara Barat - Indonesia in academic year 2013/2014. The purpose of this study was to find out factors that help students succeed in learning speaking. The method of this research is qualitative research that focuses on case study. The subjects of this study were the eighth semester students who got an A in Speaking I, II and III subjects. Four students were recruited as the research subjects consisting of one female and three males. The data about the students were obtained from the academic databases in the English Department. In collecting the data, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The data, then, wer**e** analyzed through some stages namely transcribing data, reducing data, displaying data and drawing conclusion. The result of this study showed that factors contributing to students speaking achievement consist of internal and external factors. The internal factors include motivation and interests, while the external factors involve family, school condition and society.

Keywords: *success in learning, speaking, case study*

INTRODUCTION

English is also called lingua franca because it is used in business, travelling, tourism, and many other aspects in human's life (Latha & Ramesh, 2012). Many business people from different countries meet and use English to communicate when running their business. In other aspects, tourism object and travelling promote their services through English to interest not only domestic tourists but also those from foreign countries. Realizing the importance of English, Indonesian government has established English as one of compulsory subjects in Indonesia from junior high school up to university. It is aimed to prepare citizens to face the globalization where the ability to master the language is compulsory.

Like students in many other countries, Indonesian students also have difficulties and obstacles in learning English. This is partly due to the status of English as a foreign language, a situation which provides relatively limited exposure to the language and also factors relating to the learners themselves. Regarding the context of learning, most of foreign language learners only learn English at school or college. Students who choose English as their major will have only approximately five hours a day to learn English. However, it is not enough for them to learn and practice their knowledge because they have to master a performance level in which the students have to be able to use their skills in appropriate situations. This condition is one of the challenges for teachers to create teaching and learning process effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, it affects students' ability in mastering four language skills namely listening, writing, reading and especially speaking.

Speaking is more than just conveying the message from speaker to the hearer. The speaker also has to know the linguistic competence such grammar and vocabulary and sociolinguistic competence that include when, where and why he speaks. Chaney& Burk (1998:13) mentions "to speak means to produce some words representing one's ideas". It is a process of sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in variety of context." Simply speaking is the activity in producing utterance from speaker to his interlocutor through verbal or

non- verbal way in appropriate condition, so the speaker not only focuses on his message but also the context before he delivers the message. Consequently, it is not surprising if many learners assume that speaking is difficult because they need more skill rather than just speak. Shumin (2002: 204) states, "speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication require the ability to use the language appropriately in social interaction." Therefore, some EFL learners evaluate their knowledge of a language based on their ability in speaking (Bashier, *et al.* 2011).

The difficulty in learning speaking is also faced by students in English Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at one university in Nusa Tenggara Barat - Indonesia especially those in the eight semester. Some students can be said successful and some other are not despite the same teaching and learning process at college. This condition is caused by some factors which according to Shumin (2002:205-206) affect adult EFL learners in oral communication. These factors include age or maturational constrains, aural medium, socio-cultural factors, and affective factors.

Realizing the fact that students differ in their competency despite having the same formed education. It was conducted a research on this phenomenon. Then, the title of the research is "what helps students succeed in learning speaking". Thus, the aim of this research is to know factors which have contributed to students' success in speaking subject.

Learning style and learning strategy affect students speaking achievement. According to Oxford (1990:110) learning strategies is "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations". Oxford (1990) also divides language-learning strategy into direct and indirect classification. Direct strategy includes memory strategy for remembering and retrieving new information, cognitive strategy for understanding and producing the language and compensation strategy for using the language despite lack of knowledge and indirect strategies such as metacognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating emotions and social strategies for learning with others.

Moreover, it is found that there is a strong correlation between learning strategy and students' proficiency (Lee, 2010). Those who are successful in learning commonly use more than one strategy in their learning.

Another factor that can affect students in learning is learning style. Learning style is a particular way of learning preferred by a learner, (Richards & Schmidt 2010). Reid (1995) recognized six types of learning style. They are known as visual learners, auditory learners, kinaesthetic learners, tactile learners, group learners, and individual learners.

Success in learning especially learning English as second or foreign language is affected by two factors. Generally, those are divided into two-board classification namely internal and external factors. Internal factors are factors that influence someone from himself whereas external factors are factors that affect someone from outside or his environment (Slameto, 2010). Internal factors include motivation, interest, intelligent, and aptitude. Furthermore, the external factors involve family, school and society.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design

This study is a qualitative research. Creswell (2007) states "Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem". It can be said that qualitative research concerns two main points either social or human problem. Moreover, this research tries to explore what contributes to students' success in learning to speak English, which refers to human problem.

Subjects of the Study

This research was conducted in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, especially to the eighth semester students of English Department in academic year 2013/2014 at one university at Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia. The students who became the subjects of this

research were those who met the criteria; they got an A in Speaking I, II and III courses.

Research Instrument

Researcher is the instrument in this study. The researcher plays an important role in conducting the research because of her position as the main instrument in processing data. Other instruments used to collect the data were questionnaire, tape recorder and note taking. The tape-recorder was used to record all interviews with the informants while note taking to highlight the main points of the interview. The questionnaire was used to find out their learning styles and strategies.

Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected through semi-structured interview. This type of interview differs from structured or standardized interview in which respondent receives questions with fixed response categories. It has aimed to understand the meanings of one's experience. Thus, it uses open-ended questions to allow both the researcher and respondent to explore their ideas freely relating to the issue within the frame of conversation (see Appendix 1). Two interviews were conducted to each informant to ensure adequacy of information from each of them.

Data Analysis

After collecting data the researcher continued with data analysis through some stages. They were:

  a. Transcribing Data

   The first step in the data analysis was transcribing the recorded interviews. Data transcription was intended to be the basis for the next stages of data analysis.

  b. Reducing Data

   Having transcribed the recorded interviews, the researcher reduced the data. Reducing data is a process of selecting and simplifying data

in the transcription and notes. First, the researcher selected the data based on their relevance to the research questions.

c. Displaying Data

The next stage is displaying data. The displaying data is a process of organizing the data to make relation between them. Usually, there are two ways of displaying data in qualitative research: matrices and network. In this study, the researcher used both of them. This has made the researcher easier to understand what is happening in her research.

d. Drawing Conclusions

The last stage in analyzing data in this research was drawing and verifying conclusions. Conclusions were drawn by constantly comparing and contrasting data from all the subjects, their answers to the questionnaire, and the notes taken by the researcher during the interviews.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the findings of the research study. Based on the interviews, two main factors have been identified to have contributed to the students' success in the Speaking courses: the internal and external factors.

Internal factors

Internal factors are factors which come from the inside of the informants. The internal factors found in this study include motivation and interest.

a. Motivation

After interviewing the students, it was found that there are some different reasons why they were motivated to learn speaking. Each student has different reasons for learning English, which can be broadly divided into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Madrid (1995) divides motivation as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a kind of motivation drives from an

inherent interest in learning task without influence from external factors. Extrinsic motivation is the opposite of intrinsic motivation and it is a result of external factors. Half of the students in this research learned English because of their own desire or they have intrinsic motivation. A student (L) learned English because she likes the pronunciation of the native speaker and another student (D) learn English because he wants to be able to use English as a means of survival. Two other students got motivation from their environment. A student (A) was motivated by his brother while another student (R) was persuaded by his father. Those are included into extrinsic motivation.

The purposes of students in learning speaking English are also different. Two of the students learn English because they believe by mastering English they can find job easier or as a means of survival. However, one student (A) has a different reason in learning English. He studies English because he wants to know the international language so that he can communicate with native speakers. In contrast, another student (L) learns English without specific purposes. She learns English because she likes the pronunciation of native speakers when they speak. Referring to types of motivations stated by Gardner (1985), their purposes of learning English are categorized into integrative and instrumental motivation. When learners study an L2 because they have interest in the people who speak it and in their culture then it is called integrative motivation. However, they feel motivated by the L2 practical value as an instrument of communication in today's society and for the advantages it may have. Thus, students who learn English to get job easier, to use English as means of survival or to use English in communication are classified into instrumental motivation. Nevertheless, a student (L) who learns English because she likes the pronunciation of English native speaker. This type of motivation is categorized into integrative motivation.

Furthermore, students' motivations in learning are not only present in English speaking subject, but also in other subjects. It can be seen from their grade point averages which had never been below 3.50 from the first up to seventh semester. These students also indicate that they have good academic performance from elementary school up to

senior high school. They would always be the high achievers in their classes.

Those facts show that motivation has a great effect on students' success in learning speaking. Both of internal and external motivations as well as integrative and instrumental motivation have played a part in students' learning of speaking English.

b. Interest

Interest was the second factor explored in this research. Interest is found to be one of the factors that can keep students enjoying in learning as they do the learning activities without pressure. Thus, it is important to know when they began to learn English and what makes them interested in learning speaking.

Data in this research shows that students did not firstly get interested in learning English at the same level of education and has own way in learning speaking. In order to be able to analyze the data easier, two questions were asked to the students: when they began to learn English and what media that they used and have been using in learning speaking.

The data collected in the study show that students started to get interested in learning speaking at different level of education. Two of students were (R and L)were interested in learning speaking when they were still at junior high school. In contrast, a student has learned English since elementary school and another student was interested in learning speaking when he was at senior high school.

The differences in the students' starting point to learn to speak English not only relate to when they first developed their interest in learning English but also the way they learn speaking English. Students have their own way in learning speaking. They realize that vocabularies play important role in speaking so that the students try to find the way they learn to increase their vocabulary and at the same time, they can learn speaking.

Two students (L and A) are learning speaking by watching western movie and listening to western music. By watching movies or

listening to the music, they can practice the pronunciation and they know the contexts when certain expressions are used in conversation. However, the other students have different ways in learning speaking. One student (R) learns speaking by memorizing ten vocabularies which have no relation between one another every week and he uses them as his phone passwords. Then he tries to make relations between those words when he is practicing the speaking. The process of making relation between those words is called build a critical thinking. The examples of those words are sin, merit, queasy and destruction. Another student learns speaking by writing vocabularies or certain expression on his diary then using those words in conversation with his friends. He also practices his speaking when he phones his friends or send a message by using English.

Furthermore, to increase their speaking ability, generally the students joined English club either at senior high school or/and at university. They interact with the club members by using English so that they are trained to speak English. Thus, their ability in speaking was proven by some of competitions that they have participated in in junior high school up to university.

Relating to students' motivations in joining the competitions some differences were found. Two students joined the competition because they wanted to evaluate their ability in speaking English. However, a student joined the competitions because he wanted to get a certificate and another student joined the competition because he wanted to make his mother happy and be proud of him.

External Factors

Family, school condition, and society also were also identified to have contributed to students speaking skill. Those three factors are classified into external factors.

a. Family

Some experts have studied the influence of family toward students' achievement and most of them stated there is a strong relation

between family attention and students' achievement. In line with the previous studies, this research also found the influence of family toward students speaking ability. As mentioned in the data, there are   two findings relate to this matters. Two students (A and R) were successful in learning speaking because their parents or their families gave them more support in learning while the other two other students (L and D) managed to be successful despite lack of attention from their parents.

The data below were obtained from the interviews related to the influence of family on students speaking ability.

Table 1 the Influence of Family on Students Speaking Ability

Students	The influence of their family
L	*I did not get support from my family because I do not live with my parents, I live with my grandmother and she does not care about my study.*
A	*My parents do not understand English but they allow me freedom to learn what I want. They just support me to get what I want without giving me pressure in learning.*
R	*My parents give suggestion that learning English has good opportunity in the future.*
D	*About my parents, actually they do not care about my education, so they never ask me about my achievement. In addition, they never give me motivation. But I don't know what they actually thinking about me.*

The above findings contradict Slameto's theory (2010) of academic success in relation to attention and support from parents. According to him, parents who are less attentive to or being careless about their children learning will make the student have low chance of being success. However, as can be seen in this study, two of students succeed in their academic performance without getting much attention from their parents.

b. School

There were various opinions about the way teachers deliver their material in English speaking class. The students explained their ideas related to the appropriate way in teacher speaking and they are described below.

The interaction between teacher and students in the classroom also affect the students' achievement. A good relationship can build motivation of students in learning. In contrary, bad relationship may cause less motivation of students in learning. Another factor that influences students is the way the teacher in delivering the materials.

In this study, all of students have the same opinion about teaching speaking at their college. Comparing between speaking I, II and III subjects, they felt only in speaking I they were given more opportunity to practice their speaking skill. The lecturer of the speaking I invited them to share anything they wanted to say in front of the class. He did not pay much attention to grammar use. Therefore, students could speak freely without being afraid of making mistake. However, the lecturers in speaking II or III only asked the students to make conversation and practice it in the class, so that the students cannot speak freely and naturally because the speaking process was controlled by the conversation that they made. This condition was not appropriate with the real purpose of teaching speaking itself in which the most appropriate way in teaching speaking is giving the students chance to speak freely and in natural condition.

Because students have limitation of time in practicing their speaking at school, it makes them try to find another way in practice their speaking. At home, they practice with their mother or another family member such as their siblings. One of the students (A) also practices his speaking by talking to the mirror.

c. Society

As a member of society, students also interact with other people such as their friends and mass media that exist around them. The people

they interact with and the television programs that they usually watch have been found to influence the subjects' speaking ability.

One of students usually watches a TV program which uses English in their speaking such as football commentator. Another student prefers to read song lyrics while singing along certain songs. This way he says that he drills his pronunciation. However, two of students really like watching movie and listening to western music. They often spend a long time watching their favourite films and according to them this activity has helped them improve their speaking ability.

Moreover, in daily life students also interact with their friends. One of them (D) felt that their friends help him in practicing his speaking, but three of students thought that their friends are demotivating factor to train their speaking. When they tried to speak English, their friends considered them to be arrogant so that some of them.

Learning Style and Learning Strategy

Other factors that have strong correlation with students' achievement are learning style and learning strategy. It was found in the study that students have their own learning styles and strategies. Three of the students (A, D, and R) prefer to learn through kinesthetic style. It means that they learn best through experience such as actively participate in classroom activities or doing the role-play. However, a student (A) may have more than one learning style. It can be seen from the table that a student has four major learning styles namely tactile, auditory, kinesthetic and individual style. Whereas, two other students (D and R) only have one major learning style, that is kinesthetic, and another student (L) has three learning styles.

Students also apply strategies in learning. Those who are successful in learning commonly use more than one strategy and apply them more frequently. Generally, the students use at least two learning strategy and three of them use metacognitive strategy in learning. A metacognitive strategy is a strategy which employs for managing the learning process overall such as planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that there are some factors that have contributed to the students' success in learning speaking. Generally, the factors are categorized into internal and external factors. The internal factors involve motivations and interest. Motivation is divided into four types namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and integrative and instrumental motivation. Two of the subjects are affected by internal and instrumental motivation while others are affected by external and integrative motivations. The external factors that help students succeed in learning speaking include family, school condition (teachers) and society. In addition to internal and external factor, learning strategy and learning style also help students in learning speaking. Every student has their own way in learning to speak English. Two of them enjoy learning through audio, visual and tactile while the other two prefer to learn by doing, or what is known as kinesthetic.

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Appendix 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name: ………………………….Students' number/Class:
……………/……...

1. Would you like to tell me about your academic performance from elementary school up to senior high school?
2. Can you explain about your academic performance in university?
3. When and how did you start learning English?
4. What wasyour reason for learning English?
5. Have you ever joined English-speaking competition?
6. Do you do any activities which you think help to learn English?
7. Would you like to tell me the way you learn English especially speaking?
8. Did you get support from your immediate family members to learn to speak English?
9. Have you ever sat an IQ test? What was your score?
10. What do you think was your teachers' rolein helping you to learn speaking subjects?
11. Could you tell me how you usually learn to improve you speaking ability?

Thank you for your participation.