

The Learners' Perceptions of Speaking English at Lia Pramuka English Club

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Abstract

The research was conducted to investigate the learners' confidence towards their speaking skill in English Club in LIA Pramuka, East Jakarta for 2 months focused on perceptions of learners about their confidence in speaking English. The participants involved were 3 participants of English Club members, who were representative about the issue that possessed self-confidence problem. The researcher used questionnaire, interview, observation and documents to collect the data. After experiencing their speaking practice there, the researcher investigated about some perceptions toward speaking activities. The results of this study showed that they could raise their motivation and confidence to speak English since many vocabularies were acquired as they faced listening activity firstly. Besides, they had no anxiety in expressing their ideas anymore although they felt lack of speaking ability. The last, they got new friends there to share many life experiences as it can raise their confidence to express with.

Keywords: Speaking, Self-Confidence-English Club

INTRODUCTION

Learning English is something essential to be learned and acquired nowadays since it is an international language. Listening, reading, writing and speaking are the important skills to be achieved by learners. From those skills, speaking plays more important and more demanding skill to be acquired. In fact, it is not easy to acquire speaking ability quickly since it needs such ability to have it. Nunan (1999) confirms that speaking is difficult for foreign language learners because to make oral communication, become effective, it needs an ability to use the language appropriately in social interaction. Moreover, it must be learned and practiced as same as other language skills. It is reasonable to state that there must be some problems of speaking. In Indonesia, speaking English has been crucial part of foreign language learning since it leaves some possible problems to be faced by the learners. First, low English Proficiency of students. Second, fear of making mistakes and derision: they also avoid of getting laugh and fool by their friends. Third, there is no tolerating of silence given by teachers. Therefore, the students get little chance to speak or even none. The fourth, it shows that the better students become the only participants who involve in speaking. The teachers do not give low students to solicit responses of teachers' question (Nunan, 1999). There is a research which pinpoints students' speaking problems conducted by Togatorop. He found that from the 90 student respondents, there were 89 respondents (98.89%) whose obstacles were related to themselves, 16 respondents (17.78%) whose obstacles were related to the

lecturer and two respondents (2.22%) whose obstacles were related to the environment. From the result, it strengthens the theory of Nunan about speaking resistances belonged to learners. Moreover, those problems are really correlated to another aspect that is psychology because being fear of making mistake in speaking is similar to have anxiety in self that becomes obstacles. If it can relate to EFL learning, it is so closed to be correlated based on Horwitz's statement (Horwitz et.al.) He stated that anxiety is a psychological condition when one person feels the pressure to face certain matters or topics, it may occur to everyone in any subjects. If this thing comes intensively to learners, it will give bad effect on their learning performance. Having anxiety in self might lead to underestimate their ability to learn a second language and have negative expectations about their performance, thereby feeling insecurity or anxiety in the face of the language learning task. (Mac Intyre et.al., 1991). Anxiety also contribute to the existence of lack of confidence in learners

Nowadays, many English atmospheres found in informal class which is well-known as English Club. This place offers comfy of practicing speaking since it is not correlated to academic purpose but learning for pleasure which is free from anxiety. It is strengthened by Sokoloski (1982), states that "the beneficial of English club is providing a pleasant and informal setting which include the objective in its learning and to practice a variety style of English, make friendships and learning about cultural diversity." Besides providing pleasant learning atmosphere, it also gives more experiences to hear more, especially for beginners to get much input first before finally they are able to speak English well. The more they hear speakers, the more comprehension they will acquire. This is what Yan and Horwitz suggest that the learners could perform better when they are in an anxiety-free place since it is a part of listening and speaking activity. The lesser the anxiety is, the more they can hear, and it will ease them to speak. When there is no anxiety, the learners will feel they are not learning English but they are engaging into something authentic which represents their daily situation. It will ease the learners to be happy and enjoyed getting mingled there.

METHOD

The subjects for this study were the members of LIA Pramuka English Club. They come from vary background which is started from junior high school students up to employed people. Each week, the maximum members are 15-20 participants. The researchers chose school and university students as the subject of the research since they were the most active ones joining English Club. From the observations done by the researcher, the most active ones were 10 participants. The researcher chose purposive sampling to determine the subjects to make it in purpose oriented. Finally, the 3 participants had been chosen as research participants who suited the criteria. The criteria of the chosen members were:

- a. The participants were school and college students. The school student was chosen since the participant still faced English subject at class and the college students were chosen since the participants have passed English subject at their class, therefore the experience of English learning still be reminded by them.
- b. These participants were chosen because they had same speaking problems found in open-ended question, which was lack of confidence problem.

Case study was chosen as the research design strategies since the focus was referring to a study of persons' experience involving in a phenomenon. Descriptive case study was chosen as a research design since it refers to research focus on investigating the experiences of English learners in encouraging their confidence in English club for 2 months. Therefore, the research findings were transcribed and would be interpreted into descriptive forms.

There were some steps conducting this study: (1) open ended question to the participants was the first phase to get to know their speaking problems (2) the researcher started to be the observer there in getting data through doing mingle with their speaking activities and making documentation related to the participants' activities (3) Doing interview with the participants to get to know about their feelings practicing speaking there and how they could solve their lack of confidence (4) data analyzing was the next step to be done. The analysis covered reviewing, coding, categorizing, synthesizing and interpreting the gathered information from the data sources. (5) Finally, all the data analysis was formulated into conclusion and suggestion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the findings, it reveals many facts on their participation in English Club. During the study, the researcher sought that all participants did not really often attend there, but they possibly got something in their mind related to their activeness in English Club to increase confidence. Through interviewing them and reading their narrative experience, the researcher found positive things remained into their speaking activities there. They were getting motivated to speak English in front of people, as in the following example:

Participant 1

"hal positif yang saya dapatkan ialah menjadi lebih termotivasi untuk mau berbahasa Inggris ketika berbicara di depan umum."

The above statement confirmed that she got increase of practicing speaking after joining English club after she had terrible speaking experience previously. She stated that she was not often to practice English and she used to get difficulty in finding a partner to speak English with and sometimes she felt unconfident when uttering opinions in English in some occasions. Although she felt not perfect in trying to speak English, she always gets practice it more at least she has tried it.

"Saya menemukan kesulitan karena jarang untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris karena ga ada lawan bicara saya dan juga dalam bidang akademis tidak dituntut untuk berbahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan sehari-hari saya. Pernah ketika saya dalam satu lingkup acara yang menggunakan full English disitu saya merasa minder untuk menyampaikan suatu pendapat menggunakan bahasa Inggris karena kemampuan English saya ga terlalu bagus dan kosakata yang saya miliki juga ga terlalu banyak, dan juga saya terbata-bata ketika"

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berpendapat menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Awalnya ga terlalu percaya diri namun makin kesini semakin mencoba untuk membangun kepercayaan diri tersebut dengan cara latihan lebih banyak walaupun bahasa Inggris saya belum terlalu fasih tapi setidaknya dicoba."

The researcher captured part of statement above that when experiencing speaking practice more, it would give essential input related to confidence. The more she tried to speak, the more courage she had during English speaking occasion although she was not perfect or fluent enough to utter it. It leads to trial error of speaking and making mistakes during the speaking process is natural phase of English learning.

Participant 2

"hal positif yang saya dapat itu semisal lebih percaya diri berbahasa Inggris, lebih terbuka dengan orang lain, nambah temen atau link, nambah skill impromptu saya."

The expressions above slightly represented about making broad friendships within English Club atmosphere. It relieved closed-personality in oneself becomes opened and being extrovert to share with friends. This expression is in line with the research conducted by Chen (2011) in Department of Educational Studies Goldsmiths, University of London. He investigated English Learning Settings, such as English Corners, Christian Church and English Club to be concerned from students' expectations of involving there. One of the results found that those learning settings enabled the students in appealing to their interest, increase their self-confidence and develop bilingual and bicultural capability.

Moreover, adding another impromptu speaking skill is positive output owned by the participant since it is another part of speaking activity which enables him to be spontaneous in delivering speech individually. This gives the participant advanced progress of speaking activity.

"sesi di English Club yang menumbuhkan rasa percaya diri adalah ketika sesi mempresentasikan atas topic yang E Club berikan kepada kita. Karena selain kita belajar berkomunikasi di depan khalayak ramai/teman-teman kita, kita juga belajar manage perasaan supaya tidak terlampau grogi maupun panic, maka kalau sudah terbiasa, rasa percaya diri kita akan tumbuh secara sendirinya."

The utterances above implied the nature of experience in increasing speaking performance. As stated before that more often someone speak, more courage someone will become is totally clear to consider. This is also found as the result of research conducted by Liu (2013) who investigated the effects of an English Bar on Chinese college students' self-efficacy enhancement. It is revealed that for those who often go to the Bar to speak and those who seldom or never visit the Bar had different self-reported self-efficacy levels. Although they had different frequency of attendance, both have passion to be good English speakers through joining English Bar. Moreover, for those who did not speak English well are encouraged by the foreign teachers and their fellow students the last, those who were shy and nervous for lack of confidence or skills could raise their self-efficacy.

Participant 3

"lebih percaya diri dan juga punya banyak kata tambahan yang di tempat lain ga bisa aku dapet"

This statement shows that from the experience of speaking practice there, she could get more vocabulary to be used in oral speaking. This progress is acquired by the process of listening more that previously emphasized by Horwitz in the beginning of discussion. Moreover, through facing listening process, it is beneficial for learners to grasp more input as Howatt and Dakin (1974) stated. Briefly stated by them that in listening, it has much essential language knowledge that learners be able to absorb and to acquire as their language input and lead them to the process of language production as their language output.

"kadang-kadang suka malu ngomong depan kakak di E Club karena ya mereka kan punya kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang bagus ya jadi kadang suka minder gitu deh, nah kalo untuk masalah kepercayaan diri di kelas ya udah pasti ada kemajuan dong secara hampir setiap minggu aku sering kumpul dan berinteraksi dengan kakak-kakak E Club yang bahasa Inggrisnya udah pasti gak diragukan lagi, jadi ya kalau untuk di sekolah aku udah agak berani ngomong bahasa Inggris di depan teman-teman, so yup membantu banget E Club ini buat aku, selain bisa sharing juga aku juga bisa memperlancar bahasa Inggrisnya, kita juga bisa sedikit demi sedikit menambah kosakata bahasa Inggrisnya.

These statements confirm good impacts of participating in English club activity. Again, the confidence is highlighted to be significant increased toward learners' speaking experience. Through joining English Club, she is brave enough to practice speaking at informal class. Grasping many vocabularies is also possessed by her during listening speaking activity there. Finally, these three participants have implied three crucial elements of community of practice, such as domain, community and practice suggested by Wenger.

CONCLUSION

Through involving the learners to the new environment, it is hoped that they might get experience during their speaking practice there. The experience will bring them into varied learning situations. From the varied situations, the learners will experience their confidence until they realize how much confidence they possess. Moreover, through experience, confidence makes learners own their level confidence into the same and different situations. This statement is in line with Sander (2003),

"Experience tells us that confidence differs between people in the same situation and that people have differing levels of confidence in different situation. Thus, someone who is highly confident in familiar setting, for example may lose confidence in unfamiliar and challenging environment"

What Sander stated above is obviously highlighting the power of self-efficacy in learners during their existence in challenging environment like English Club has. Motivation plays important here to maintain their spirit and confidence. Once they think that making mistakes in speaking is the natural thing in learning, they will become more enthusiastic in

facing new challenge of making speaking is better than before. Moreover, the more they involve in speaking practice, the more the speaking chance will be good.

SUGGESTIONS

Teachers should become inspired figures who always make their students comfort and enthusiastic to learn and to practice English. Giving more values of delivered materials is also a must owned by them to let learners think that they learn for a purpose. Moreover, teachers should maximize exposures at class to gain the learners' proficiency. The last, the teachers should motivate for every single moment at classroom to maintain the students' mood and students' confidence in learning and in practicing English.

In every learning situation, having courage to practice speaking by learners is urged, try not to be shy ones, no longer of feeling afraid of making mistakes when practicing it and be confident. It will be very helpful for their speaking performance if they are confident to speak. Through joining English Club, it might be easier for them to get used to speak with no worries since it gets many experience of practicing.

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