

**AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SPOKEN LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OF
THE FOURTH SEMESTER STUDENTS AT ENGLISH EDUCATION
STUDY PROGRAM
OF BATANGHARI UNIVERSITY
IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/2017**

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Abstract: *English Learning is a process where a learner expanding his/her knowledge about English and its implementation. Speaking Difficulty is the inhibition that a learner used to face when they learn to use language orally. The purpose of conducting this research is to know about the difficulties that the students have in English spoken learning. Design of this research uses Qualitative research. The subject of the research is the fourth semester students of Batanghari University in academic year 2016/2017.*

Keyword: *English Learning, Speaking Difficulty*

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of human or any other living things to communicate with each other. Amberg and Vause (2012) state that “Language is foremost a means of communication, and communication almost always takes place within some sort of social context. Speaking is similarly to Communication which is always made by two persons or more, but in another situation Speaking is an ability that also we can do with or without an involvement of two persons or more. According to Hornby (1985) “speaking is making use of words in an ordinary voice; uttering words; knowing and being able to use a language; expressing oneself in words; making a speech. In short, speaking skill is the ability to perform the linguistic knowledge in the actual communication. Speaking is the ability that we need when we want to speak with somebody or a mass, a good speaking will make the user to encourage other to act according to their will”. Moreover, Nunan (2003) states that “Many people feel that speaking in a new language is harder than reading, writing, or listening for two reasons. First, unlike reading or writing, speaking happens in real time: usually the person students are talking to is waiting for students to speak right then. Second, when students speak, students cannot edit and revise what students wish to say, as students can if students are waiting”.

The formulation of the Research is:

- what are the English spoken learning difficulties of fourth semester students at

English education program of Batanghari University?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. English Learning

As a foreign language in Indonesia, English is learned seriously by many people to have a good prospect in the community of international world. Recently, English becomes important. Since it is important, English is taught widely at formal schools starting from elementary school up to universities; even at informal school i.e. courses. Al-Sibai (2004) states that the use of English as a second language in oral communication is complex activities to be considered when teaching the English language. However, Ur (1996) considers speaking learning as the most important skill among four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language.

2. Speaking

Samira (2014) states that basic education aims to make the learner gain necessary skills for life by developing his/her communication skills, self-learning, and ability to use critical thinking to deal with science and modern technology. Al-Abri (2008) also states that it is necessary to develop communication skills. English oral communication skills are part of this skill set, and thus, students should be supported to gain these skills.

3. Oral Language Learning

According to Willis (1996), for a language learning to take place, there are four conditions that should exist, and they are the exposure,

opportunities to use the language, motivation, and instruction. Learners need chances to say what they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened.

4. English System Overview

Hoge (2015) states some important parts of speaking which says that the English system is very simple and consists of three primary areas of mastery: Body, Mind, & Method. By mastering specific techniques in each area, students will powerfully improve their English speaking ability.

5. Speaking Difficulties

Ur (1996) states that there are several speaking difficulties which make the English learner stuck in their learning progress. These difficulties that meant here are also included to the difficulties and factors which affect the learning process and the descent core of these difficulties are Inhibition that consists of Vocabulary lack, Grammar and Pronunciation.

6. Vocabulary

Hetrakul (1995) states that vocabulary is a component in speaking. In speaking English, students need to master a lot of vocabulary, because by mastering many words, they would study way of speaking easily.

Nation (2001) states the aspects of vocabularies knowledge as in the following table:

What Is Involved in Knowing a Word

| Aspect | Component | Receptive knowledge | Productive knowledge |
|--------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Form | Spoken | What does the word sound like? | How is the word pronounced? |
| | Writt | | |

| | | | |
|---------|---|--|---|
| | en Word parts | What does the word look like? What parts are recognizable in this word? | How is the word written and spelled? What word parts are needed to express the meaning? |
| Meaning | Form and meaning Concepts and referents Associations | What meaning does this word form signal? What is included in this concept? What does other words does this make people think of? | What word form can be used to express this meaning? What items can the concept refer to? What other words could people use instead of this one? |
| Use | Grammatical functions Collocations Constraints on use (register, frequency..) | In what patterns does the word occur? What words or types of words occur with this one? Where, when and how often would people expect to meet this word? | In what patterns must people use this word? What words or types of words must people use with this one? Where, when and how often can people use this word? |

Knowing a word is not an all or nothing situation; it is a complex concept.

7. Grammar

English always deals with reference of time while Indonesian does not have one. Moreover, there are singular and plural forms that the students have to distinguish and still many forms that have to be learned. Most students are very easy to get

confused with English grammar, while grammar is very needed to form a right sentence. Fitikides (1961) mention about grammar mistakes that a learner used to do in English speaking as well as writing:

- a. Misuse of the infinitive
Incorrect : He went away instead to wait.
Correct : He went away instead of waiting.

Note : after the word 'instead' should be followed by 'of', not by 'to', then gerund.

- b. Wrong tense
Incorrect : Did you went to school yesterday?
Correct : Did you go to school yesterday?

Note: 'went' needs to be changed to present verb 'go' because 'Did' is the verb indicator of past tense.

- Incorrect : Rachel asked me what I am doing.
Correct : Rachel asked me what I was doing.

Note: when the verb in the main clause is in the past tense, use a past tense in subordinate clauses.

8. Pronunciation

Pourhossein (2011) states general observation suggests that it is those who start to learn English after their school years are most likely to have serious difficulties in acquiring intelligible pronunciation, with the degree of difficulty increasing markedly with age. This difficulty has nothing to do with intelligence or level of education, or even with knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary.

Factors affecting the learning of pronunciation:

- a. Accent
- b. Stress, intonation, and rhythm
- c. Motivation and exposure
- d. Attitude
- e. Instruction
- f. Age
- g. Personality
- h. Mother tongue influence

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is qualitative. According to Holly (2017), Qualitative research is the research where the researcher can learn about the subject by participating and/or being immersed in a research situation.

This research takes in Batanghari University which is located in Broni, Jambi City. The subjects are taken from fourth semester mixed class (A class and B class) of English Education Program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty. The researcher uses random sampling. The researcher takes fifteen random students to be invited to the interview and one speaking class to be observed.

In analyzing the data, the researcher adapted the method of analyzing an interview by Valenzuela and Shrivastava (2016) which are resulted as the following steps:

1. Collecting the data from Observation and Interview
2. Reduction and Completion data
3. Putting the data into the table to make the data reading become easier
4. Identifying the Inhibition or the difficulty in learning that found from the data that

- included to Vocabulary, Grammar and Pronunciation difficulties
- 5. Analyzing the data by using the tables
- 6. Discussion

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Result of Observation

At the beginning of observation, the researcher sat in the corner of the class, taking notes about everything that happen in the class before the professor came to the class. In the middle of the class, the researcher also taking notes about the students performances and reaction to English speaking subject. Their responses to their classmates’ performances were also included. The students were divided to be several groups that consist of three persons in each group. The researcher has prepared the worksheet table and put the data in the notes to the following table:

Table 2. The Observations result

| Group code | Description | Inhibition | | |
|------------|--|------------|---------|---------------|
| | | Vocabulary | Grammar | Pronunciation |
| Group A | The students started the presentation with a few vocabulary | ✓ | | |
| | The students spoke quietly | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | The students read their assignment report in the speaking class presentation | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | The students pronunciations were incorrect like; ‘TH’ sound pronounced as | ✓ | | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|
| Group B | ‘T’ | | | |
| | The students pronunciation were better than the previous group (Group A) | | | ✓ |
| | The students only read some of the report but grammar were still incorrect | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Group C | One of the students spoke a little Javanese | | | ✓ |
| | The students presentation was so short, only some known vocabularies used | ✓ | | |
| | The students pronunciation were incorrect like; ‘D’ sound pronounced as ‘T’ | | | ✓ |
| Group D | The students read their assignment report in the speaking class presentation | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | The students used numerous vocabularies | | | |
| | The students did a little incorrect pronunciation like; putting an extra ‘S’ at the end of word | | | ✓ |
| | The students had some incorrect word in grammar like; the recipe | | | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---------|--|---|---|---|
| | <u>has change.</u> | | | |
| Group E | The students pronunciation were incorrect like; putting extra 'S' at the end of word, using 'D' sound in 'TH' (them, that, etc.) | | | ✓ |
| | The students used present tense for a past action like; when they bring it to.... | | ✓ | |
| | The students used appropriate vocabularies | | | |
| Group F | The students used some same vocabularies | ✓ | | |
| | The students were only reading some parts of their report | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | The students' grammar was incorrect like; <u>That's start when...</u> Correct: That's started when... | | | ✓ |
| | The students pronunciation were not clear enough | | | ✓ |

Source: Adapted from Ur "A Course in Language Teaching, Practice and Theory" (1996)

1. Vocabulary

The students were showing that they had difficulties speaking that caused by Vocabulary mastery. This statement is supported by Hetrakul (1995) who states that in speaking English, students need to master a lot

of vocabulary, because by mastering many words, they would study way of speaking easily. Some students were found speaking quietly to cover their unconfident about the vocabulary use they had that made their pronunciation become unclear. Vocabulary mastery was very important in any speech, their current knowledge about pronunciation caused their confidence decrease. The unconfident made them become shy and spoke so quiet that made them end up of pronouncing incorrect pronunciation.

2. Grammar

The students were found having difficulty in using grammar for speaking. They looked confuse and nervous about making the right structure of the sentence with the right tenses. The mistakes they did were like using present tense in sentence where it needed to be in past tense or past to present tense. They were also having mistakes in the use of words that have difference such like gender, singular and plural words; He or She, Her or His, Goose or Geese, Data or Datum. This statement of difficulties is supported by Fitikides (1961) who states about grammar mistakes that a learner used to do in English speaking as well as writing.

3. Pronunciation

Pronunciation was one of the difficulties that the students had when they were performing the presentation, even though they have advancing their English education to fourth semester but they still have incorrect pronunciation in their speaking. Pourhossein (2011) states general observation suggests that it is those who started to learn English

after their school years are most likely to have serious difficulties in acquiring intelligible pronunciation, with the degree of difficulty increasing markedly with age. This difficulty has nothing to do with intelligence or level of education.

4. Result of Interview

After the researcher got the result of the interview with fifteen students of fourth semester, the researcher found the data as follow:

Table 3. The Interview result

| No | Questions | Responses | | | Remark |
|----|---|-----------|------------|----|-----------------------|
| | | Yes | Some times | NO | |
| 1 | Do you have difficulties in learning English vocabulary? | 15 | - | - | Inhibition |
| 2 | Do you have difficulties in using English vocabulary? | 12 | 3 | - | Inhibition |
| 3 | Are you confused with the spellings and sounds of English vocabulary? | 14 | 1 | - | Inhibition |
| 4 | Do you have difficulties in learning Grammar? | 10 | 3 | 2 | Inhibition |
| 5 | Do you have difficulties in using Grammar? | 12 | 2 | 1 | Inhibition |
| 6 | Have you understood about Grammar structure in speaking practical? | 14 | - | 1 | Non Inhibition |
| 7 | Have you understood about the basic essence of Grammar tenses like; | 11 | 3 | 1 | Non Inhibition |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
| | time signals etc.? | | | | |
| 8 | Are you confused with the practical use of Grammar in speaking? | 14 | 1 | - | Inhibition |
| 9 | Do you have difficulties in learning English Pronunciation ? | 14 | 1 | - | Inhibition |
| 10 | Do you have difficulties in using English Pronunciation ? | 15 | - | - | Inhibition |
| 11 | Have you learned about Consonants and Vowels pronunciation before? | 14 | - | 1 | Non Inhibition |
| 12 | Do you think that pronunciation is hard? | 15 | - | - | Inhibition |
| Total data | | 160 | 14 | 6 | |

Source: Adapted from Ur "A Course in Language Teaching, Practice and Theory" (1996)

According to the table above, the researcher found that the English students of fourth semester of Batanghari University were still had high frequency of difficulties in learning English especially for English Spoken.

In the vocabulary matters, the students were still having difficulty in learning vocabulary. They found that they were confused about the vocabulary. The difficulty was getting bigger when they had to learn new words with new spellings. The knowledge about vocabulary which was not enough had made them become nervous and confused not

only in speaking but also writing and listening. When the students were trying to speak English, the nervous of speaking were affecting their speech and forget about words they supposed to say. New words also sometimes made them hard to understand about the conversation line. Some of the students said that they learned for about seven to fifteen vocabularies a week. Unfortunately, not all vocabularies they had learned were recorded in their memory.

In grammar, the difficulty that the students had was still so high. Ten from fifteen students that were interviewed said that they had difficulties in learning English grammar. Some of them were saying that sometimes they found parts of grammar which was hard to be learned. In another hand there were some students who did not have problem with learning English grammar but unfortunately they had problem in using the grammar practically. Many of fourth students said that they had difficulties in using grammar in writing especially when they had to use it in speaking. The most difficult in grammar was the tenses. They were confused about making the structures which used past tense, perfect tense, continues tense, perfect continues and past perfect continues tense. These tenses difficulties made them become confused when they were trying to speak English. Even though, in the interview the students were saying that they had already understood about the basic essence of vocabulary such as simple tenses or time signals (past, present and future), but they still could not made the right use of grammar in speaking practice. Almost

all of the students in the interview were having problem with grammar as oral practice.

The pronunciation, in the matters of pronunciation, almost all of the students in the interview were having difficulty in pronunciation learning or practice. They had trouble learning it due to some aspects of pronunciation that included to the use of accents when they heard lecturer or their friends spoke in different accents. Moreover, the learning trouble would become bigger when they heard English native speakers' speaking. These problems were found because there were so many accents of English like American or Australian or British accents and each accents had different intonation, sounds, rhythm, Speakers' voices. The students were also had problem with pronunciation because they used to speak Indonesian to make the conversation that students' had became clearer. In the interview, the students told that they had already learned about English consonants and vowels sounds but sadly, learning English pronunciation was still so hard for them. Based on the interview result above, the researcher could see that the biggest frequency of difficulty which students' were the pronunciation.

According to the analysis above, the researcher could conclude that almost all of the students from random samples had difficulty in learning English Vocabulary, Grammar and Pronunciation as oral practice and also written. These difficulties were also the reasons why the students occasionally became confused when they spoke English. This conclusion is supported by Ur

(1996) who states about Inhibition in Speaking. It is also supported by the result of Afisa's research result in 2014 (Difficulties in Speaking at The Tenth Grade of SMAN 1 Sine in 2014/2015 Academic Year) which states that the difficulties of what students had in speaking were low Vocabulary mastery, English Grammar and Structure and Pronunciation as well as afraid in making mistakes.

Discussion

1. Vocabulary

The first difficulty that made the students having problem in learning English spoken was their 'vocabulary'. Majority, the students did not have enough vocabulary to make conversation in English. They were easy to get confused by native English vocabulary. It had made them became a passive speaker especially when they were talking to their teacher or friends who had better amount of vocabulary. Some of the students said that they learned for about seven to fifteen vocabularies a week. Unfortunately, not all vocabularies they had learned were recorded in their memory. In this matter, the caused was because the students were not practicing the new vocabularies that they learned in conversation. They also did not use those vocabularies in self practice so they forget the vocabularies easily. In English conversation the students were easily distracted by new vocabulary that put them to nervous states where they did not know about the meaning of the word or how to response to it or even use the word to another expression. This vocabulary lack had affected their confidence so sometimes they would rather spoke in

Indonesian when they wanted to convey an idea in an English use conversation or discussion. Then the students would always felt shy and nervous when they had to speak English in front of another people. They were afraid that they would make mistakes like accidentally say something in Indonesian to replace the English word they were trying to say which make people judge them. Otherwise, there were some students who got enough vocabulary and mental to face those worry of being wrong and laughed.

2. Pronunciation

The pronunciation was the most difficulty that every EFL students (English as Foreign Language) had. The students had difficulty in learning it and of course it would cause them to have difficulty in using it. They usually had the problem with consonant sounds and confused about making the vowels sounds. The student used to pronounce 'TH' vibrating or non-vibrating sound with 'D' sounds or 'T' sounds. They also sometimes like to put 'S' word at the end of every word or sentence they said. This difficulty was grown mostly because they rarely listen to English native speaker and never practice the pronunciation in home or with friends. An understanding of whether a learner's first language is stress based or syllable based will help a teacher plan appropriate pronunciation exercises. In examining the role of stress—"the degree of force used in producing a syllable" (Crystal, 2003, p. 435)—in intelligibility, Field (2005) asked trained listeners to transcribe recorded material when the variables of word stress and vowel quality were

manipulated. He determined that when word stress is erroneously shifted to an unstressed syllable, without a change in vowel quality, utterances are significantly less intelligible than when only vowel quality is manipulated.

3. Grammar

The students were still confuse by the use of past tense, present tense, perfect tense, continues tense and moreover for perfect continues. They only understand a very little knowledge of grammar. Even though, grammar or structure was not a significant part that student had to learn about when they wanted to begin to speak English but it still had an effect to students' difficulty problem. Some students were not having a big problem with learning English Grammar but it became different when they had to speak English. The students who wanted to speak English would feel so nervous about making mistake with their structure of sentences. Sometimes the students needed to repeat their speech when they felt that they made mistake in their speech. This would also give them more nervous and low confidence about their English spoken ability.

The structures of English sentences which were so different with Indonesian structure also making the students confused and stress. They usually had a hesitation in their speech because they were trying to figure out about the correct grammar for their speech. They were afraid they would be laughed or judge by the one they are talking to or judge by them. Actually, their weaknesses were easy to be fixed if only they could understand about the key of

making sentences based on time which are divided to three; past, present and future, and type of sentences; verbal and nominal sentence, as well as its structures. This problem is supported by Fitikides (1961) who mentioned about grammar mistakes that a learner used to do in English speaking as well as writing. The mistakes that usually happen are such like; Misused forms, incorrect omissions, unnecessary word, unnecessary preposition, use of infinitive, misplaced words, wrong tense, confused words, etc.

4. Lack of Practice, Ineffective Learning and Mother Tongue Use

This was the biggest issue that Batanghari university English student had now. They rarely or even never practice their English. They were usually merely use English in special occasion when they had a mood to speak English or when they were about to perform a presentation about their assignment. Based on the observation and interviews, we also could see that the students preparation about assignments were very little. Their English practice was also very poor. They did not do any meaningful practice with their English spoken ability. Some of them only wanted to be fluent in English but they did not do anything much for it. The role of English spoken practice was still extremely important.

The students had to practice their English spoken comprehension if they wanted to speak. Unfortunately, in speaking class, almost all student become a silent learner. They turned to be a passive learner and merely taking lesson and instruction that the professor said.

They did not have enough motivation nor intention to make conversation in English. In the speaking class, we also could find some students who still use Indonesian. It was hardly caused by the mindset which said that it would be easier to say what they wanted to say if they said it in their native language. This mother tongue use was also affecting the other student who was about to learn to speak English to do the same thing. English student needed to know how to speak English, they need to know about what they need to do to be able speak fluently. Practice or preparation, ineffective learning and mother tongue use were the difficulties that almost all of the students had and a lot of them do not aware about these issues. They were clueless about what they need to do to break the line of influent English spoken comprehension.

So how the students could learn to speak English and pass the difficulties they found? From every explanation above, the researcher could say that the students needed more passion, preparation, practice and as well as confidence that grown by these three factors. If only the students could see their positive side in learning English as their passion and challenge, the researcher believed that they would make a significant progress with their English. Especially when the students practice their English orally, it would make their English grow even better. There were so many ways to improve students' English comprehension and they also had different effectiveness that depends on the students.

West (2013) stated methods that a English learner need to do to

overcome their weaknesses. The first thing that suggested to do was having an effective method because if they did not have any effective method in learning English they would had inhibition on the progress. Nowadays, in Indonesia the English lesson that usually taught in schools and course was mostly like grammar and written lesson so when they tried to speak English they would unawarely made sentences as if they were going to write them. So they translated and created whole sentences in their head. When they were in a conversation and had to respond quickly to keep the communication going, the more they tried to create grammatically perfect sentences the more pressure they experience. It also made the student became more unconfident with their own ability when they made mistakes with their sentences. All language learners needed some time to absorb and get used to the basic line of communication in English. It was fine for them not to talk and just read and listen. The more they did this and the more they understood of what they read and heard the better. This was how they got going and laid their foundations for speaking. If they were a real beginner and had never studied English before the best thing they could do was to start reading like small child and get used to the sounds and patterns of very simple sentences. They did not need to know grammar but if they really wanted something to be a bit clearer it was fine to look up the grammar or someone explanation.

CONCLUSION

Based on discussion before, the researcher presents several items or conclusions about the difficulties that the students had in learning English speaking:

1. Students' low Vocabulary mastery

There were a lot of students who did not have enough vocabulary so they could make a conversation in English as it would help them to learn to speak English easier. They were not having a good basic vocabulary to support their study in Batanghari University and did not do anything that meaningful to improve the amount of vocabulary that they had mastered. The current vocabulary they had was only made them to understand about small conversation between friends.

2. Low Pronunciation practice

The students were still confused with the English native pronunciation. They were confused by how the correct pronunciation produced. They were also got confused by the accents of English that were usually heard or used in so many places in the world. They were used to their own current accents that had led them to confusion when they heard another accent of English with a different stress, intonation and rhythm. They were also felling difficulties in pronouncing new words. The mistake in pronunciation that they usually made was replacing 'vibrating TH' and 'Non-vibrating TH' with another consonant. These pronunciation difficulties they had usually appeared when they were getting nervous which triggered by condition such like; talking to their English teacher

or professor or talking to someone who put them under pressure.

3. Grammar

Grammar or structures were the parts were their confusion getting worse. The students push themselves to speak in a correct way so they would not be laughed or judge by their friends or professors. It had triggered their nervous and hesitation. Usually the students were repeating the sentences that they had said to fix it. Even though, grammar or structures were not the most significant problem in learning to speak English. It still had a bad effect against the confidence of the students so it will be better if the students knew about the basic lessons of grammar. Unfortunately, majority, Batanghari university English students were still confuse about it. They were seemed to still wondering about past tense, present tense, continues tense and perfect tense.

4. Lack of practice, ineffective learning and mother tongue use

Finally, a lot of English student were lack of practice, having ineffective learning method and usually used their mother tongue in daily activities where they supposed to practice their English spoken ability to make it fluent. They rarely practice their English with their friends or even themselves when they were alone. Some of the students did not have any method in learning English and some of them were having one or two method but the method they currently used seemed not working because they were never really use it and practice their English spoken. There were also many students liked to use Indonesian or their mother tongue when they were

talking to their classmates or professor. These difficulties were something that the students made and things that always be inhibitions for their own progress in learning English in Batanghari University.

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