

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NON-ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY AT UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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ABSTRACT

This article to analyze and describe the speaking ability of non-English department students, Universitas Riau in the academic year 2016/2017 covering pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. The study was also aimed to describe the activities done by the English lecturer in the teaching and learning process and the difficulties the students had when speaking. Descriptive qualitative method was used in this study participated by twenty participants at the Faculty of Economics Universitas Riau. The data were gathered using observation, an oral test in the form of interview and documentation. The results of the data analysis of the participants' speaking ability in terms of pronunciation indicated that 11 participants' pronunciation was in fair category, 7 participants' pronunciation was in very good category, 2 participants' pronunciation was in very good category and none of the participants' pronunciation was in poor and excellent categories. In terms the participants' speaking ability in grammar, the findings showed that 12 participants' grammar was in fair category, 6 was in good category, 2 was in very good category, and none was in poor and excellent categories. In terms of the participants' speaking ability in vocabulary, it was discovered that 2 participants' vocabulary was in poor category, 4 was in good category, 14 was in fair category, and none was in very good and excellent categories. The participants' speaking ability in terms of fluency, the findings revealed that 2 participants' speaking ability was in poor category, 5 was in good category, 13 was in fair category, and none was in very good and excellent categories. Finally, the participants' speaking ability in terms of comprehension indicated that 2 participants' comprehension was in poor category, 4 was in good category, 14 was in fair category, and none was in very good and excellent categories.

Keywords: analysis, speaking ability, non-english department.



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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, for example, where English is learned and taught as a foreign language, to possess productive skills especially speaking is one of the goals of learning the language to prepare the students to be able to use the language after they graduate and are able to compete in the job market. It is the fact that English has now been spoken by millions of people around the globe where it is learned as the first, a second or a foreign language.

Nunan (2003) states that speaking is a productive aural/oral skill. This idea corresponds to what Brown (2003) views that speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed that are invariably colored by the accuracy and effectiveness of a test taker's listening skill, which necessarily compromises the reliability and validity of an oral product. It means that when the students interact with other by using a language as a means, certainly they want to convey something important. when speaking one is communicating ideas, thinking of what to say, trying to use appropriate language including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation as well as listening to and reacting to person with whom he

is communicating. Any learner of foreign language can confirm how difficult speaking is (Pollard, 2008). Brown (2007) also states social contact in interactive language functions is a key importance and in which it is not what we say that counts but how we say it, what we convey with body language, gestures, eye contacts, physical distance and other nonverbal messages. Nation (2009) views that formal speaking has same important features. First, it is transactional. Its purpose is to communicate information rather than to maintain social contact as it is the case with most interactional speaking. Secondly, it involves taking a long turn; that is, it is not usually presented as a dialogue but requires speaking for several minutes in a comprehensible and organized way. Thirdly, it is influenced by written language; very often involves speaking from notes and academic vocabulary. Then, speaking is performed in the learner's careful style in a clear and deliberate way with the opportunity for the speaker to monitor the production. Lastly, it often requires teaching as it is a skill that is not part of typical language use.

METHODS

This research was descriptive qualitative which involves collecting data in order to answer the questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. Gay and Airisian (2000) state that the research which collects data in order to answer the questions about the status of a study is categorized as the descriptive research. There are some basic steps that guide descriptive research: identify a topic problem, choose the participants, collect valid and reliable data and analyze the data and report the findings and write conclusions. The researcher describe the speaking ability of non-English department students, Universitas Riau covering pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, to describe the activities done by the English lecturer when teaching and to describe the difficulties the students had while they were speaking. This type of research is appropriate to the objectives of this research since descriptive research attempts to describe, explain and interpret the condition of the present phenomenon that occurs at the specific time and place. The research was conducted at the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Riau. This faculty has three departments; Accounting, Economics, and Management. Two sources of data were used in this research; that is, primary data and secondary data. The primary data was the data obtained from the results of an oral test in the form of interview conducted towards the students of non-English department Universitas Riau, whereas the secondary data were in the form of classroom observations made during the teaching and learning process and documentation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the participants' speaking ability in terms of pronunciation that deals with the way the participants produce sounds, utter words, or sentences using acceptable pronunciation. The contains the participants' scores from the two raters with five categories: excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor with their values, of 20 participants, none of their pronunciation is in poor and excellent categories, 2 are in the very good category, 7 are in a good category and 11 are in the fair category.

Looking at the results, it is proven that the participants' ability in the category of being fair and good is more dominant than other categories. In this case, it should be acknowledged that to have good speaking ability is not that easy as the sound systems of English are different from that of Bahasa Indonesia. The production of vowel and consonant sounds and diphthongs of these two languages, in particular, are also different in some respects. These differences can easily influence how the speaker speaks the language in an appropriate way and how his/her message can be understood by the listener apart from other components that contribute to the difficulty in speaking a foreign language like English. This idea is in line with what Baker & Westrup (2003) claimed that it is difficult for many students to respond to the question being asked by the teacher to say something in a foreign language as they may not have knowledge of what to say, what words to use and how words can be put into correct sentences in limited time.

The two raters' assessment on the students' speaking ability in terms of grammar. The raters put an emphasis on how the participants used words in sentences correctly and how they changed them in different situations based on the rules of grammar. On the basis of the participants' scores from the two raters, there is no participant in poor category, 12 participants are in fair category, 2 participants are in very good category, 6 participants are in good category and none of the participants are in poor and excellent categories.

This scores given by the two raters and the average score that was taken from the combination of the two raters' assessments. The focus was on the participant's knowledge of words and how they express their meanings, of 20 participants, only 2 participants are in poor category, 14 participants are in fair category, 4 participants are in good category, no participants are in very good category and excellent category. Similar to the results of the participants' speaking ability in pronunciation and grammar, the most dominant category in terms of vocabulary is fair (14 participants) followed by good (4 participants).

The scores given by the two raters and the individual average score in terms of fluency. Based on the table, it is noticeable that of 20 participants, only 2 participants are in poor category, 13 participants are in fair category, 5 participants are in good category, are there are no participants in very good and excellent categories.

It seems that the participants' speaking ability in terms of fluency is still dominated by the category of being fair followed by good and poor. That means that the participants were speaking with frequent hesitation and incomplete sentences as they might not know what to say.

The individual score and its average in terms of comprehension. It is clearly seen that of 20 participants, 2 participants are in poor category, 14 participants are in fair category, 4 participants are in good category and there are no participants in excellent category. The findings show that the participants' ability in terms of comprehension is not far different from their speaking ability in other components where the category of being fair is more dominant than other categories.

Discussion

Looking at the results of each components of the speaking ability in previous part. Pronunciation is the first speaking component to be discussed. It is proven that the participants' ability in the category of being *fair* and *good* are more dominant than other

categories. In this case, it should be acknowledged that to have good speaking ability is not that easy as the sound systems of English are different from that of Bahasa Indonesia. The production of vowel and consonant sounds and diphthongs of these two languages in particular are also different in some respects. These differences can easily influence how the speaker speaks the language in an appropriate way and how his/her message can be understood by the listener apart from other components which contribute to the difficulty in speaking a foreign language like English. This idea is in line with what Baker & Westrup (2003) claimed that it is difficult for many students to respond to the question being asked by the teacher to say something in a foreign language as they may not have knowledge of what to say, what words to use and how words can be put into correct sentences in limited time.

The second, It is clear that most participants made various mistakes in grammar covering misuse of tenses, no subject + verb agreement, the absence of s/es-ending marking the plural form, the absence of articles apart from mistakes in using appropriate words and the absence of apostrophe for marking possession. The mistakes or may be errors made the following participants can become examples: I have ...brother and ... sister. My father is a lawyer. He is work in Medan (Participant 2 or P2). I have one brother and two old sister. My father ... civil servant and may mothera housewife (P7). My hobbies ... fishing, football, sports (P5). He live with his family. My father name is Khairuddin and my mother name is Rosidah (P6). Such mistakes may have happened because the participants might be worried about making mistakes, feeling fearful and shy. They normally had low participation in using the language in the classroom or at school or out of class hours, but not because they had no knowledge about the topics being asked (UR, 1996) as the topics were just about self-introduction, family, daily routines and educational backgrounds that were not very new to them at all. However, because of limited time possessed by the participants while speaking in that they needed to think of what to say and what words to use, it was natural that they had grammatical errors. What was important was that what they were saying in the interview was understood very well. This is what speaking is about where the two-way communication between the speaker and the listener runs well despite grammatical mistakes. So, the participants' difficulty in terms of grammar lied on how they structure sentences according the correct grammar and vocabulary as these two language components go together in the construction of sentences in a language.

Many researchers view that learners should be taught from the beginning as many as productive vocabulary as possible of at least 2000 high frequency words as claimed by Meara (1995) saying that students should learn or be taught very large vocabularies when they first start to acquire a language. This idea is supported by Carter (1998, p. 207) saying that knowing words provides access to about 80 per cent of the words in any written texts and in return stimulates motivation so long as the words acquired can be seen by learners for communication. In the case of the participants' vocabulary in speaking, it is clearly seen that they had errors in using words such as derivatives and word formation from one class of word to another class using affixes and suffixes and misuse of words in sentences as can be seen in the following examples taken from the interview records.

- I am so comfort with him. Someday later I become a success person (P3)
- I am from University of Riau Faculty Economic (P4)
- I life with my parents and my little sister (P6)
- I want is happy and happiness my mom,. My mom is everything (P9)
- I was born in twenty nine Juni nineteen nine seven (P9)

Looking at the errors made by the participants, at this level of study such errors should not happen as they were already taught grammar and vocabulary when they were at the secondary schools. It can be interpreted that the participants only had very limited vocabulary and limited knowledge of grammar where both of them go together in sentences. On the other hand, it can also be interpreted that teachers had no much knowledge of grammar and vocabulary teaching.

Some researchers also stress that for certain groups of students a base of two thousand words will be insufficient. Learners with special goals such as university students need to acquire one thousand high-frequency words in addition to the two thousands base as well as the strategies to deal with the low-frequency words they deal with. In this part, the participants had difficulty in using correct words while speaking so that hesitation appeared.

The findings show that the participants' ability in terms of comprehension is not far different from their speaking ability in other components where the category of being *fair* is more dominant than other categories. To be good in comprehending an oral message does require a good listening skill to understand the message when a conversation is taking place. Moreover, the message being sent is not one's mother tongue. In the case of the results in the table, it is not much a matter of not understanding the message, because the topics were not beyond the knowledge of the participants, but more on how the participants responded to the questions being asked by the interviewer to be answered in English. The participants' difficulty was how to speak appropriately using acceptable language in that correct pronunciation was important.

Leaver, *et al* (2005: 15) claimed that good speaking includes building a good lexical collection and using proper grammatical forms regularly enough so that mistakes or errors do not break down communication. By so doing, one can speak with fluency without much hesitation and with no psychological burden. This is in line with Hughes's statement (2002) that someone is speaking fluently s/he expresses herself/himself in intelligible, reasonable and accurate ways without too much hesitation, in other words, s/he speaks with ease.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and research findings that were conducted to Universitas Riau regarding the speaking ability of the non-English department students, the Faculty of Economics Universitas Riau fell into *good category* after all speaking components in the rubrics were combined. Second, the students' difficulties in speaking were more on the pronunciation of words and sentences covering incorrect production of English sounds, rhythm, stress and intonation. Such difficulties are common to be experienced by most students of all levels of study whose mother tongues are not English especially in Indonesia. In addition, the students also expressed their ideas when answering questions using incorrect grammar and vocabulary which affected their fluency as they felt inhibited and did not speak

with ease. Those difficulties and errors they had made cannot be separated from how they were taught the language since they were at secondary schools. Therefore, the following recommendations may be very useful to be practiced by the English teachers at schools or lecturers at higher education institutions in order to equip the students with good ability in using English for their bright future.

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