



**SPEAKING PROBLEMS FACED BY NURSING STUDENTS OF  
POLTEKKES KEMENKES RI PADANG IN ACADEMIC YEAR OF  
2018/2019**

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**Abstract**

This research is a descriptive research that is aimed to describe students' speaking problems. The research was done at Poltekkes Kemenkes RI Padang. The population of this research were the first year of nursing students at Poltekkes Kemenkes RI Padang. There were 30 students as the sample of this research and chosen by using random sampling technique. The instruments used were the questionnaire (close-ended & open-ended statements) and transcription of video recording. The result of this research showed that disfluency was the significant problem for the students. Then, the significant causes of the speaking problems were inhibition and mother tongue use.

**Key words:** *Speaking problem, causes of the speaking problem*

**A. INTRODUCTION**

Health is one of the sectors that need English. The need of English in this sector can be seen in the field of medicine, midwifery, and nursing. The importance of English in nursing is needed for improving their job and communication. It is found in the operation provision of medical devices. Instruction manuals for various machines and instruments are frequently written in English and also found in terminology & medical abbreviations that nurses will use in their daily routine. In addition, the product of imported drug is also labeled in English. The other uses are in the service to the patient. They will serve patients not only from Indonesia but also from abroad. So, nurses needed to learn English to communicate with them.

On the other hand, English is not only used when working later but also supports nursing students to improve their knowledge and lectures in the university. The need of English is clearly seen in many references to support their lectures, nursing & scientific international journals as learning resources and in many English textbooks, especially in medical and nursing. Furthermore, the university often organizes an international seminar as additional source of knowledge and brings guest lecturers or health experts from abroad. These opportunities will certainly use English. At least, the nursing students are required

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to be able to understand some basic English expressions and vocabulary related to the medical field.

In line with this, becoming a nurse who can compete on a global level, it takes a strong learning process that starts with strengthening existing competencies such as mastery of English. The improvement of nurse competence through teaching English should be a priority starting from the educational institution. The four skills of English are also taught to nursing students. One of them is speaking skill. The nursing students have to be able to speak in English. Later, it will be useful to communicate with patients and communicate with fellow professions in the medical environment if they go abroad.

In fact, nursing students generally do not have the competence to speak English. According to the data of BNP2TKI (as stated by Kusumawardhani in *bisnis.com*, 2017), many Indonesian nurses have qualified under the standard, for example, they cannot speak English fluently. It is one of the obstacles for most of the Indonesian nurses. Consequently, Indonesia was only able to send 200 people overseas while the demand for the requirement is 16.000 nurses every year. The head of BNP2TKI, Nusron Wahid (as stated by Pramudya in *tribunnews.com*, 2017) claimed that Indonesian nurses are much requested in the foreign exchanges. Board for Development and Empowerment Human Resources of Health (BNP2TKI) also reported that the largest number of Indonesia Professional Medical Workers who had worked abroad from 1989 to 2003 were nurses (97.48% of a total of 2494).

In terms of competence, Indonesian nurses have skills as same as nurses from abroad, but however, they still lack in communication. In line with above statement, I Made Karyasa, a nursing lecturer in Indonesia University, says that in terms of core learning competence, Indonesia can also compete and capable, but when their English are tested, the nurses have big obstacles (as stated by SL in *sumut24.co*, 2016). This fact contradicted with the expectation that they are supposed to have a good speaking skill to fulfill the work quota that has been opened and given many job opportunities. Unfortunately, behind these high needs, there are many obstacles that occur and must be resolved.

The obstacles they faced related to some speaking skill aspects such as poor in grammar, lack of vocabulary, disfluency, incorrect pronunciation, and lack of comprehension (Richards, 2008 p.71). According to Ur (2009, p.30), there are many causes of these speaking problems. They are inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation and mother tongue use. In addition, Scarcella (2003, p.101) also pointed out some causes related to affective factors (for example, fear of making mistake, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation), and teacher factors (lack of time, teacher domination, and improper teaching speaking material).

Based on the preliminary research done by interviewing one of the lecturers who has been teaching the Nursing English subject in Poltekkes Kemenkes Padang, the researcher found that the students have low speaking ability. Many students still confuse to make conversation, deliver statements, and give opinion by using English in the classroom. In addition, based on the interview result of six students in the third year who have taken the Nursing

English 1 & 2 subjects, it was also found that they rarely speak English in the class, due to several reasons such as, they do not like English because it is difficult, cannot use grammar appropriately, and do not know vocabulary to convey ideas. These make them get some problems while speaking English in the class. This fact contradicted with the expectation that they are supposed to have good speaking skills because they have studied the Nursing English 1 & 2 subjects and will face the world of work after their graduation. To prepare the nurses to work abroad, nurses should have a capability in communicating in English to do the duty of health services optimally and maximally.

Due to these problems, the researcher thinks that an investigation of speaking problems needed to be conducted in order to find the problem. The researcher's focus is to find out the speaking problems faced by nursing students in Poltekkes Kemenkes RI Padang and also followed by finding the causes of the speaking problems. Furthermore, this study is hoped to give the contribution and reflection of English teaching especially speaking skills for the nursing students. It will be a useful input to improve and fix up the English language teaching there. A better understanding of students' problems hopefully make the teachers plan the suitable teaching materials and media to improve students' ability in speaking.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was descriptive research because the researcher's aim was to describe speaking problems and the causes of speaking problems. The population of this research was 114 students of first year in Poltekkes Kemenkes RI Padang who were selected because they were learning Nursing English 1 subject in the first semester (July-December 2018). For the sample of the research, the participants were chosen by using random sampling technique. Thus, the researcher took 25% of 114 students in population, so there were 30 people chosen as the sample. The researcher used questionnaire and speaking performance video recording as tools to collect the data.

The researcher collected the data by distributing the questionnaire about speaking problems and the causes of the problems which consist of 43 close-ended statements and 2 open-ended statements. The students were expected to answer the questions by choosing one of the possible answers (based on Likert Scale) such as strongly agree, agree, less agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, the result of questionnaire was analyzed by using the percentage formula by Arikunto (2013, p.112) in the following:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = the percentage of the students' answer

F = the total of the students' answer

N = the total of the students' sample

To determine which problem was the most significant one, it was needed to calculate the total percentage of each problem then divided it into mean

percentage. The calculation of mean percentage was used to be analyzed and described in each categories of speaking problems and the causes of the speaking problems. Students who chose strongly agree, and agree dominantly are categorized as having speaking problem. For those who chose less agree, disagree, and strongly disagree dominantly are categorized as having no speaking problem.

After interpreting the questionnaire, data analysis of video recording was conducted. The video were analyzed using conversation analysis by watching the video recording from students' speaking performance, and then the students' conversation written in the transcript form. The researcher observed what happen during the performances, described what was in the video, and found the speaking problems related to the students' speaking skill aspects to support the data obtained from the questionnaire.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Research Finding

#### a. Speaking Problems

The students' speaking problems are based on the following indicators: 1) incorrect pronunciation, 2) poor grammar, 3) lack of vocabulary, 4) disfluency, and 5) lack of comprehension (Harris, 1974; Brown 2010). Based on the finding, disfluency is the only significant problem among the other speaking problems. The mean percentage of disfluency is 40% (12 students) who chose 'agree' whereas the other problems are less significant. It is proven by the mean percentage of students' answer that chose 'agree' on the incorrect pronunciation only 22% (7 students), 29% (9 students) on poor grammar, 28% (9 students) on lack of vocabulary, and 22% (7 students) on lack of comprehension. In order to get the detail data about students' speaking problems, the detail is described more below.

In term of disfluency, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose agree is 12 students (40%). It is the most frequently chosen by the students, higher than less agree (34%) that is only 10 students. It indicates that the students have significant problem in fluency. In addition, disfluency was also represented in video recording that almost all students made a lot of hesitation, repeated the words, and paused for a while to think the sentence, for example, student 2 said "and now *aaa* but if we have a money but we not feeling happy, it just be *aaa* make we *aaa* feeling down and we.. we lost the money". The disfluency also happened because students could not continue the conversation because of limited English vocabulary, for example, student 13 said, "is right *ee apah* you.. we can get the scholarship, but before it *aaa* for the better.. eh for we can better knowledge or we..of course we.. need *emm* example we need money for *hmm* buy uniform"

On the other hand, in term of incorrect pronunciation, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 44% (13 students), higher than agree that is 22% (7 students). It indicates that the students have less significant problem in pronunciation. For poor grammar, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 40% (12 students), higher than agree that is 29% (9 students). It indicates that the students have less significant problem in grammar. For lack of

vocabulary, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 48% (14 students), higher than agree that is 28% (9 students). It indicates that the students have less significant problem in vocabulary. The last for lack of comprehension, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 44% (13 students), higher than agree that is only 22% (7 students). It indicates that the students have less significant problem in comprehension.

In addition, at the end of the questionnaire also consist of 1 open-ended question. The researcher asked students to write down the additional speaking problems other than mentioned in the questionnaire. Some students wrote that they faced speaking problems because lack of learning, difficult in listening to native speakers if they speak English quickly, lack of confidence, and had difficulty in understanding English quickly.

#### **b. Causes of the Speaking Problems**

The causes of speaking problems are based on the following indicators: 1) inhibition, 2) have nothing to say, 3) low participation, 4) mother tongue use, 5) affective factors, and (6) teacher factors (Ur, 2009; Scarcella, 2003). Based on the finding, mother tongue use and inhibition are the significant causes of the speaking problems than the other causes. The mean percentage of students' answer that chose 'agree' in mother tongue use is 40% (12 students) and inhibition is 38% (12 students). While the other causes are less significant. It is proven by the mean percentage of students' answer who chose 'agree' on having nothing to say only 23% (7 students), 18% (5 students) on low participation, 27% (8 students) on affective factors, and 21% (6 students) on teacher factors. In order to get the detail data about the causes of students' speaking problems, the researcher explained more below.

In term of mother tongue use, the mean percentage of students' answer in agree is 40% (12 students), higher than less agree that is 30% (9 students). It indicates that the students have significant causes of speaking problem in mother tongue use. Similarly in inhibition, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose agree is 38% (12 students), higher than less agree that is 33% (10 students). It indicates that the students have significant causes of speaking problem in inhibition.

On the other hand, in term of having nothing to say, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 53% (16 students), higher than agree that is 23% (7 students). It indicates that the students have less significant causes of speaking problem in having nothing to say. For low participation, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 37% (11 students), higher than agree that is 18% (5 students). It indicates that the students have less significant cause of speaking problem in low participation. For affective factors, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 40% (12 students), higher than agree that is 27% (8 students). It indicates that the students have less significant causes of speaking problem in affective factors. The last for teacher factors, the mean percentage of students' answer that chose less agree is 32% (10 students), higher than agree that is only 21% (6 students). It indicates that the students have less significant causes of speaking problem in teacher factors.

## 2. Discussion

The finding of the first research question -about the students' speaking problem- indicated that students only have significant speaking problem in disfluency which is proven by the mean percentage of agree dominantly about 40% (12 students) as the highest, compared to less agree about 34% (10 students). It was also supported by the data of video recording that all of students often made hesitation "eee" "mmm" and repetition in almost every sentence during their speaking performances. They often paused at a few words and stopped to think about what to say and how to deliver their statement. They need to take a breath, think an idea, and sometimes rearrange what they should explain or say, but hesitation almost happened in each word or sentence and also repetition of the sentences. Moreover, it can make the message not too clear and very harmful, because the communication is hampered. Furthermore, Nation & Newton (2009, p.49) states two causes of disfluency that are lack of planning, have no enough preparation in practice, and do not repeat the task.

In addition, Iswara et. Al (2012) also states that repetition, pause filler, and habit in using Indonesian are the aspects triggered students' fluency in speaking. Those students who showed hesitation in almost every sentence sometimes because of lack of vocabulary and nervousness. As a result, the lecturer cut off their sentences and chose to continue the topic to other students. Thus, they must know how to make the hesitations not too be visible. On the other hand, the other speaking problems such as incorrect pronunciation, poor grammar, lack of vocabulary, and lack of comprehension are considered as less significant because the findings revealed that the students mostly chose 'less agree' rather than 'agree'.

Meanwhile, the finding of the second research question indicated that mother tongue use and inhibition are the significant causes of students' speaking problems. To turn to mother tongue use, the data finding reveals that the mean percentage of agree dominantly about 40% (12 students) as the highest, compared to less agree about 30% (9 students). This is also supported by the data of video recording that they prefer to use Minangnese and Indonesian when the material is difficult, and some of them do not master vocabulary in promising ideas. The presented data above is suitable with the theory from Ur (2009) that the students feel mother tongue is easier than the second or foreign language. Thus preventing them from being active in English and trigger the students lazy to remember the English vocabulary, so they often use mother tongue when they speak English, because they do not know what they want to speak in English. They feel comfortable to use mother tongue although in English class. The unwillingness to speak in English is also caused by lack of practice on the students' part (Rico, 2014).

Similarly, to turn to inhibition, the data finding also reveals that inhibition is one of the significant causes which create problems in speaking English. It is proven by the mean percentage of agree about 38% (12 students) dominantly higher than less agree about 33% (10 students). The finding above suitable with the theory from Littlewood (2007) that speak a foreign language in the classroom can create inhibition and anxiety easily. The students were too worried about

making mistakes, fear of criticism and felt shy when talking in front of the class, especially in front of teacher and friends. These also made them afraid that people would laugh at them if they did not speak English properly or could not recall the appropriate words. In line with Nunan (1999) says that fear of mistake and derision inhibit them to speak up in front of their peers because they might have bad experiences learning English, may have been laughed at by their friends because of their pronunciation, or may have had a teacher who put too much emphasis on speaking English grammatically correctly. Due to their own fears and inhibitions about speaking in English, students found it difficult to improve their English. On the other hand, the other causes of speaking problems such as having nothing to say, low participation, affective and teacher factors are considered as less significant because the findings revealed that the students mostly chose 'less agree' rather than 'agree'.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the explanation in the previous chapters, the researcher concludes that disfluency is the significant speaking problem for the first year of nursing students of Poltekkes Kemenkes RI Padang. Whereas inhibition and mother tongue use are the significant causes of the students' speaking problems. From the conclusion above, it is suggested for lecturer emphasizes students to often speak English during the learning process and prevent them to use minimum mother tongue use. The lecturers should encourage students to be brave speaking English in the classroom or outside of the classroom.

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