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Social-Cultural, Psychological, Linguistic, and World Knowledge as Factors of Speaking Difficulties: EFL Students' Voices from the Border Area of Indonesia

Sosial-Kultural, Psikologis, Linguistik, dan Pengetahuan sebagai Faktor Kesulitan Berbicara: Suara Mahasiswa *EFL* dari Daerah Perbatasan Indonesia

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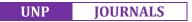
Abstract

This study was conducted to identify students' difficulties with English speaking. This research used a qualitative method involving six students in the fifth semester of the English department at public university in Kalimantan Utara through purposive sampling. Data collection was carried out with in-depth semi-structured interviews. This study showed that students still experienced some difficulties in speaking English. The first factor was sociocultural;1) family engagement, 2) student's environment, and 3) peer engagement. The second factor was psychological; 4) feeling afraid, and 5) shyness. The third factor was linguistic; 6) local dialect, 7) pronunciation, 8) knowledge of grammatical patterns, 9) lack of vocabulary, and 10) fillers. The fourth factor was world knowledge, 11) topical knowledge, 12. limited learning time, and 13) comprehension. This study contributed to the students' reflection on finding their appropriate learning strategies and language exposure. Besides, the teacher needed to develop professionalism to help students reduce their speaking difficulties.

Keywords: Factors, Speaking Difficulties, Boarder area of Indonesia

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi kesulitan siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang melibatkan enam mahasiswa semester lima jurusan Bahasa Inggris di universitas negeri Kalimantan Utara melalui purposive sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara mendalam semi terstruktur. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa masih mengalami beberapa kesulitan dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Faktor pertama adalah sosiokultural; 1) keterlibatan keluarga, 2) lingkungan siswa, dan 3) keterlibatan teman sebaya. Faktor kedua adalah psikologis; 4) rasa takut, dan 5) rasa malu. Faktor ketiga adalah linguistik; 6) dialek lokal, 7) pengucapan, 8) pengetahuan tentang pola tata bahasa, 9) kurangnya kosa kata, dan 10) pengisi. Faktor keempat adalah pengetahuan,





11) pengetahuan topik, 12. waktu belajar yang terbatas, dan 13) pemahaman. Studi ini berkontribusi pada refleksi siswa dalam menemukan strategi belajar yang tepat dan latihan berbahasa. Selain itu, guru perlu mengembangkan profesionalisme untuk membantu siswa mengurangi kesulitan dalam berbicara.

Katakunci: Faktor, Kesulitan Berbicara, Wilayah Perbatasan Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

English has become a need due to the growing flow of globalization. People nowadays desire to learn international languages for educational purposes, particularly mastering the topic to communicate with foreigners and obtain future employment (Ramli et al., 2021). As a result, English speakers in every country are effectively needed because spoken interactions occur in actual time (Hinkel, 2018). In this instance, the students may encounter difficulties speaking English, which appears more sophisticated than their original language. In addition, the fifth-semester students of the English education department face various factors in obtaining their English language skills regarding L2 speaking, not their mother tongue, because language competency appears to be established in mother-tongue teaching (Khasanova et al., 2020). In their daily communication, the students use several languages, including Buginese, Javanese, Dayaknese, Indonesian, and other traditional languages because speech is linked to everyday conversation (Widodo, 2020).

Most students still cannot grasp the words or sentences uttered in verbal English by their interlocutor and react to them, indicating that their English listening and speaking abilities are still inadequate, and the vocabulary they acquire is still entirely restricted (Kurniawati, 2016). Therefore, exploring the factors that made students difficult to speak required more attention. Hence, this study focused on investigating the factors that affected the students' spoken L2 to the fifth-semester English Education department students in a state university in the border area of Indonesia. from this study students were expected to find learning strategies to solve the difficulties and raise their willingness to speak.

Naturally, speaking implies producing some words that represent one's idea. Humans have unconsciously produced thousands of words per day or more. The delivery of language through the mouth is referred to as speaking. To speak, humans use many different parts of our bodies, including our lungs, vocal tract, vocal cords, tongue, teeth, and lips (Firmansyah & Valatansa vegian, 2019). Unsurprisingly, most language learners find communicating in the target language challenging. According to Ainy (2022), the nature of the speaking process means that spoken language's grammar differs significantly from written language. In foreign language teaching, the definition of speaking above indicates that speaking is a skill that must be developed and practiced independently. When speaking in a foreign language, most students feel anxious, as many theorists have argued about anxiety.

The primary objective of teaching and learning English in Indonesia is to improve communicative skills such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing. As a result, the lecturer should assign a speaking task to the students. For example, the lecturer can provide opportunities for students to practice speaking English in front of the class or with their peers. According to Gan (2013), there is no doubt about using English as a second or foreign language because English is an international language. Therefore, direct communication is required in the teaching and learning process when teaching English. It is because we live in a world where the ability to speak English is required to be perfect, especially for those who want to advance in specific fields.

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EFL teachers in schools, colleges, and universities must ensure the learning environment is enjoyable and exciting. Before designing any course, teachers must establish goals based on the needs of the students. They must recognize and employ effective teaching strategies to achieve the desired results. Learning is an ongoing process that must be tailored to the learners' expectations, needs, and interests (Arimbi et al., 2022). The materials and facilities required for EFL students must be sufficient to meet the needs of both teachers and students. Enthusiastic and innovative teachers, despite their desire to bring out the best in their students, frequently fail due to dealing with many students and inadequate facilities. Students who have grown accustomed to learning English from bilingual teachers starting their academic careers are more likely to reject EFL teachers who use only the L2 language in the classroom.

EFL is defined as the study of English by non-native speakers who live in a non-native environment and may be taught by non-native English speakers who need to be proficient in dealing with some cultural values inherent in the target language (Ali et al., 2020). Some factors contribute to the student's difficulties speaking English. For example, Tuan and Mai (2015) discovered that students typically struggled to speak due to several factors, including confidence, listener support, students' listening ability, and pressure to perform well. These factors influence them to speak English in front of the class, and the audience's attention, respect, and appreciation influence students to perform well in speaking English.

Verbal communication includes any form of communication that employs words, whether oral or written, and any form of communication that uses words, whether in speech or writing. This communication style is most commonly utilized in interpersonal relationships. People express their emotions, thoughts, ideas, or intentions, communicate feelings and thoughts, debate and conflict with one another, and impart and explain facts, data, and information (Kusumawati, 2016). Speaking is a crucial skill in everyday life because it allows us to react to other people and situations while expressing our thoughts, feelings, and ideas (Hidayati, 2019). The students must learn to speak as part of their English studies. People who can communicate well in English are in high demand today. English as an international language is frequently spoken by English-speaking foreigners and people from countries where English is not officially used (Asrifan et al., 2020). English is taught as a critical topic in many nations, including the education side, economic, social, and the working world (Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018).

Various factors can be an obstacle to English students in learning English, and those factors affect the students' speaking performances. According to Malik et al. (2021), sociocultural, psychological, linguistic, and world knowledge factors affect the students' performance as English communication apprehension in EFL learners. Speaking involves the ability to learn and practice English continually. As an outcome, various factors hinder students' ability to speak successfully in English (Gumartifa & Syahri, 2021). When communicating or directly telling someone about knowledge, speaking is one of the productive abilities that students must develop (Prastyawan et al., 2021).

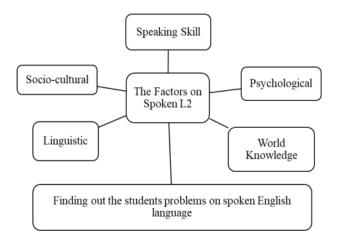


Figure 1 Speaking Factors' Difficulties

Sociocultural related to sociological background determine how people use language. Individuals are socialized to obey implicit rules such as how people manage the flow of discussions, how they interpret our interactions, and how we change topics. Academics, skilled professions, personal connections, and civic contexts use language shift. According to Labov (2011), the sociocultural study of language concerns how people with various social identities (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity, and class) communicate and how their speech evolves in different situations. Some issues discussed include dialect features, such as pronunciation, diction, and word patterns. Group to form personal styles of speech; and why individuals from various communities or cultures can misunderstand what is meant, said and done due to differences in how they use language.

Psychology studies human cognitive processes and behavior as they interact with their environment (Fitriani et al., 2015). Psychological difficulties regularly interfere with a student's emotional or physical state. These psychological difficulties can impair a student's capacity to communicate. For example, more than a quarter of the population worldwide struggles with self-esteem. Another element that contributes to speaking difficulties, according to the participants, is some linguistic difficulties they have when speaking in English. Language study is the scientific branch of linguistics, which includes language structure (grammar), vocabulary, and phonology. According to Spolsky and Hult (2008), language is a type of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Language difficulties impair someone's speaking ability, including poor grammar, a lack of vocabulary, and poor pronunciation. Language learning difficulties can occur due to the linguistic difficulties that foreign language learners face when learning and utilizing the mother tongue (Putra, 2018).

Meanwhile, a comprehensive understanding of general world knowledge is a type of effort toward being an advanced and qualified individual. Reading is an excellent place to start for students. When the students acquire a broad general knowledge, they can easily face any difficulty or discussion. Therefore, general knowledge is an important thing that can affect how a person thinks. People with extensive knowledge will always want to learn and process various information (Kusumaputri, 2015). Those factors are considered to affect speaking performance. Therefore, this study explored students' challenges or difficulties in those factors.

METHODS OF THE STUDY

A qualitative method was used to explore the factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking. Through purposive sampling technique this study investigated the fifth-semester English education students at public university, Kalimantan Utara, Indonesia. The researchers selected local A1 and local A2 2020 in the fifth semester because the students had learnt several speaking courses; integrated English, speaking for informal interaction, speaking for formal interaction. There were six students from the classes selected; three men, and three women, as informants. This semi-structured interview was used to collect the data. During the interview, recording and interview sheet were provided to validate the data result. Then, after gathering and collecting the data, this study organized, analyzed the data for the insights, and reported on the insights derived from the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociocultural Factors

1) Family Engagement

Families are engaged in meaningful ways when they commit to actively supporting their children's learning and development (Mekonnen, 2017). As the first environment for children, it has also evolved into a primary environment for acquiring knowledge. However, several students needed more family engagement in learning English. Data 1: "My family does not care about my English development, and my family rarely gives me some motivation and support to learn English more." Furthermore, Data 2: "My family does not have an English educational background." Aside from that, Data 3, stated that "having no proper educational background from family made the student obstacle in improving his English performance".

The students' parents should have given more attention to their child's language development, making them unmotivated to learn and practice. The family must know the value of an education in which all family members assist and complement one another. If the student has difficulty learning, other family members can advise and support them. It can be concluded that their parents provide little care and incentive, causing the students to become unable to have a solid determination to hone their English skills continuously (Suleimenova, 2013). The students need a stable and sustainable learning focus due to the need for more attention from their families. Parents have a legal and social responsibility to play significant and primary roles in their children's development of self-confidence, trustworthiness, awareness, and interest (Mekonnen, 2017).

2) An Unsupported Environment for English Exposure

Data 1 "My society environment is quite unsupportive of my English development; instead, they find English odd. Therefore, I do not have a free space to express the English I have learned, which has been one of my barriers". Moreover, Data 2 "The lack of a supportive environment for me because the local language is the dominant language utilized in daily communication in my environment." Along with the elaborations above, students have less English involvement, which causes their English speaking to suffer. They were not aided by their English-speaking surroundings, particularly in their homes and neighborhoods. They only speak English with their classmates in speaking class. This condition indicates that strengthening 112

speaking abilities among English department students may present various difficulties and complications, including a lack of input in English communication (Indah et al., 2020). The environment serves as a platform or means for students to communicate and apply what they have learned in communication in everyday life. Therefore, the environment will significantly affect students' motivation to improve their abilities, especially speaking skills, where speaking skills are one of the abilities that can determine the extent of our knowledge of the application of English itself (Tawfiq, 2020).

3) A Few Partners for Intensive Speaking Practice

Regular speaking practice may assist students in enhancing their skills (Tridinanti, 2018). The students needed the practice to improve their skills in learning tasks such as speaking. Many difficulties were discovered as a result of a shortage of practice students. Data 1: "I rarely talk about using English in my classroom with my classmates." Additionally, student two needs help to find practicing English daily conversation in the classroom. Data 2: "I have some classmates with whom I used to practice speaking English, but we rarely did that because of our activities." It means there is no cohesiveness in supporting each other to speak English in the classroom. Their classmates tend to refuse when one of them invites them to speak in English when communicating. Thus, not supporting the classroom environment or, in this case, the classmates, then it will be able to dispel the enthusiasm of the student who wants to improve their speaking ability, and inevitably he will follow his friends not to speak using English when with them. The learning environment in the classroom assists the students in learning English more effectively. Qutob (2018) stated that the students' environment is one of the difficulties faced by students who exhibit speaking difficulties in the classroom.

Psychological factors

Psychological implies affecting or occurring in the mind, relating to the mental and emotional state of someone. When it comes to performing English, students' biggest concern is anxiety.

1) Feeling Afraid

Data 1: "When I am instructed to come to the front of the class unexpectedly, I get stage fright because I am afraid of the negative judgment from my friends." Furthermore, afraid of negative judgment was the difficulty that student 4 confronted. It proved with his excerpt. Data 2: "I often had stage fright, such as being shy, nervous, lacking in confidence, and afraid of being poorly judged by my friends. I was, moreover, feeling afraid of making mistakes made the students unwell speaking performance. Data 3: "I often get stage fright because I lack confidence. Sometimes lecturers give speaking tests suddenly without any preparation by the students. The students who lacked preparation and were unfamiliar with the theme of the discussion would feel excessively anxious, resulting in them being quickly frightened, such as shaking and not daring to look at their friends. Arimbi et al. (2022) conveyed that the students worried about losing face in the oral language classroom. The students kept quiet and waited until they were required to speak English because they feared and felt embarrassed to make mistakes.

2) Feeling shy

Shyness is an emotional condition that many students experience when they are expected to speak in English class. Shyness is one of every student's difficulty when

learning a new language. The student asserted that being ashamed made her tough to speak English. Data 1: "I used to have often stage fright, such as being shy, nervous, lacking confidence, and afraid of being judged badly by my friends." Data 2: "Sometimes for fear that what I say is not by the material or topic being discussed. Further, shame and do not want to be said to be stupid or do not know". It implies that shyness may be a source of difficulty in students' learning activities in the classroom, particularly in the speaking class.

Furthermore, through interviews and reflection on theory, the study revealed that students were hesitant and uncomfortable speaking in front of the class. Furthermore, according to a study by Pramuditha (2015), students experienced difficulties speaking English due to a lack of knowledge of grammatical patterns, vocabulary, self-confidence, and shyness. Furthermore, Nijat et al. (2019) claim that shyness is crucial for students to talk. It is tough for them to express themselves vocally when they wish to explain anything to others. Shy students will blank their minds and need to learn how to speak English.

Linguistic Factors

1) Dominant Local Language Use

The mother tongue interfered with the foreign language when they tried to produce some words or sentences in a foreign language because they had no facilities or media to help them learn English. Data 1: "The dialect influences how I talk; occasionally, I use too much "ng" at the end of the words." The interview results revealed that the Bugis English students made mistakes in various areas of phonemes because English was not their first language. The local language influenced how the students spoke English, for example, in accent. Accent refers to the way speakers produce various sounds of speech. Sometimes an accent happens because of the mother tongue, making it difficult to speak English. An accent is attached to each individual, and it is usually difficult to change an accent on an individual. Indirectly, participant three stated that the mother tongue accent is the most comfortable. Finally, when all or several learners share the same mother tongue, they use it because it is easier for them (Tuan & Mai, 2015).

2) Inappropriate Pronunciation

The students need help pronouncing particular vowels, consonants, and intonations (Tokoz-Goktepe, 2014). Data 1: "When I found it difficult to read my new vocabulary correctly, I had to open a dictionary to learn the correct pronunciation; the local dialect significantly slowed down my language growth because my mother tongue is a regional language." The students exposed to regional languages since childhood will have different pronunciations and accents, which can impede their growth as English speakers. Students' lack of use of English due to the dominance of regional languages and Indonesian as a colloquial language has an impact on students' English skills. Hamjah (2012) defined the most dominant language in society as the spoken language. The mother tongue interfered with the foreign language when they tried to produce some words or sentences in a foreign language because they had no facilities or media to help them learn English. If the students are unfamiliar with the language, it makes them uninterested and confused about speaking about it. On the other hand, they have a high initiative and strong enthusiasm for learning. Fitriani et al. (2015) explain why students use their mother tongue in class.

3) Poor Grammatical Knowledge

According to the interview data, most students needed more grammar patterns. When the students attempted to talk, the researchers discovered they needed help blending the wrong grammar words. All participants encountered this difficulty. The participants needed help with grammatical usage, particularly in direct or spontaneous situations. Data 1: "Although my grammar is incorrect, the information I wish to express is conveyed and understood by others." Understanding the meaning of the interlocutor is the most important thing for the person in the process of language use. It has a vital role in both spoken and written language. Learning English will be more effective if the students master the grammar as well (Tambunsaribu & Galingging, 2021). Grammar, as we know, is the pattern or structure of a sentence. As a result, grammar will assist students in comprehending the meaning of the statement. Learners will understand the point of others through utterances or paragraphs rather than sentences. Grammar is used to identify the grammatical form that best expresses the message.

4) Lack of vocabulary mastery

Data 1: "The vocabulary knowledge is highly influential when I speak English; sometimes, if I forget, I keep quiet to remember the equivalent of the term and repeat the sentence from the beginning to refresh my memories of the information." Based on the statement above, it can be found that the students need help remembering words in English. Besides that, they also need to learn how to interpret the word in English. Interpreting becomes difficult because it is easier for someone to speak if they need more vocabulary. All of the participants that the researchers interviewed needed more vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary is an essential part of speaking. The lack of knowledge could also be caused by less reading, making the students less knowledgeable. Due to a lack of vocabulary, the students cannot express their ideas in sentences (Nguyen & Tran, 2015; Shahzadi et al., 2014).

5) Fillers

Fillers were the ums, uhs, and ers that clog up our talks whether the students like it or not (Firiady & Mahendra, 2019). The students' excerpt proves it. Data 1: Regarding fillers, I usually experience them as a distraction to remembering the material. Moreover, student 5 said that fillers assisted him in remembering the topic. It proves that with the student's excerpt. RP: Regarding fillers, er, erm, I usually remember while repeating the first word I wanted to say earlier to refresh my mind; that usually works for me. According to the student excerpt above, fillers might be lexical and sound to maintain control when the speaker is performing and thinking about the following phrase. Auamara (2022) added fillers such as, "You see, hmm, mm, ah, sort of, ok, right. Baalen (2018) also provides examples of unlexicalized filled pauses such as ehm, uh, err, ee, ah, um, and so on. These kinds of statements are known as fillers. Fillers are sounds, words, or phrases that can emerge at any point in an utterance. In this situation, the researchers discovered that students used fillers as their pauses during their speaking performance. The study discovered the sources of the problem, which is why students always make fillers. It happened because students utilized fillers, indicating they were unskilled and needed more mastery of the offered materials or themes. Students use pauses as fillers while the speaker considers what to say next.

World knowledge Factors

1) Unprepared topic mastery

Data 1: "I am the type of student who does not participate in class because I lack information about the topic of discussion makes me passive in the class." Inadequate or unequal involvement; just a few students may speak at once to be heard. Everyone in a considerable gathering can have the shortest speaking time (Nyoman et al., 2018). Some students dominate the entire class, while others speak little or nothing at all (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). In this instance, the lecturer must educate the students about their learning progress expectations. As a result, before beginning learning activities, lecturers must communicate the learning objectives. Lack of general knowledge and limited time for material preparation are the common difficulties that the researchers discovered. Most of the students could have performed better on the speaking test, which indicated that the speaking performance of the fifth-semester students is still considered low.

2) Low Rehearsal

The last difficulty that the students encountered when speaking English was comprehension. One part of this skill is undoubtedly the ability to grasp the language and acquire new knowledge through that ability (Panjaitan et al., 2022). The student needs help comprehending if the lecturer used full English to deliver the material. Data 1: "Sometimes I ask if I do not understand, and the lecturer explains again by mixing Indonesian and English." Data 2: "Even though I frequently read the material, I occasionally find it difficult to put things forward easily, possibly because I did not prepare it well." It means that when students are given a speaking test with little time to prepare and think about the difficulty, they are pressured, resulting in poor speaking test. Furthermore, the study revealed through the interview and reflection on the theory that the students are reluctant to speak up because they lack an idea. Students can speak English and participate in all activities (Astuti & Panjaitan, 2019).

3) Comprehension

Data 1: "When the lecturer delivers the material using English, I can sometimes misunderstand it." Furthermore, the student found it challenging to understand the meaning of the English conversation if their friends were talking in English fast. Data 2: "Well, sometimes I find it difficult to understand what my friends mean, not only when my friends can speak English well, but also with my friends whose English is still messy; usually, I will ask them back or tell them to speak slowly." Based on the findings of the interviews, some students were occasionally understandable but sometimes needed to be more comprehensible. The concept of comprehension is critical in education since being educated involves learning new understandings and integrating them in some meaningful way with previously acquired knowledge. One part of this skill is undoubtedly the ability to grasp the language and acquire new knowledge through that ability (Panjaitan et al., 2022). Furthermore, the listener must grasp the speaker's words to avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

CONCLUSION

Several factors affected the students' difficulties in their English performances. The factors come from linguistics and non-linguistics aspects. To overcome those difficulties, students need to expose their speaking daily to reduce interference from their native tongue. Furthermore, students should prepare their topics to speak English in front of the class quickly and confidently. They do not have to worry about making mistakes when speaking English because they can contribute to their experience and insights. They need to be confident in expressing their ideas when speaking English to obtain improvement. Besides the students' reflection, the teachers' professional development is required. Through teachers' guidance, the speaking activities can be more entertaining and make students enthusiastically participate in the class. To achieve that progress, the teachers should select an appropriate media and strategy for teaching and the material circumstances. To maintain the students' confidence and self-reflection, the lecturers should gently correct the students' mistakes with positive feedback and support. Finally, future researchers can carry on this study by delving into the academic aspects of students' accomplishments and the lecturers' teaching methods and outcomes.

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