

The Students' Difficulties In Speaking English at Eleventh Grade Of PPTQ Muallimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan terkait dengan permasalahan yang paling banyak terjadi pada siswa kelas XI di PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan. Masalahnya adalah sebagian besar siswa sulit untuk berlatih berbicara bahasa Inggris di depan kelas. Selain itu siswa terlalu malu untuk memberi izin dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan berbicara dengan teman yang secara refleks akan menertawakan mereka jika mereka melakukan kesalahan. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mendeskripsikan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kesulitan siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris di kelas XI PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan. Jenis penelitian ini adalah deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan dari wawancara kepada informan. Sumber penelitian adalah siswa kelas XI, informan berdasarkan guru yang menentukan siswa yang bermasalah. Teknik analisis data menggunakan Model Miles dan Huberman, terdiri dari : pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Berdasarkan analisis data, ditemukan bahwa faktor yang mempengaruhi kesulitan siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris adalah kurangnya kosa kata, kurangnya kemampuan dalam menulis kalimat, ketika siswa berbicara bahasa Inggris mereka gugup dan gagap dalam mengungkapkan kalimat, kurangnya ide untuk membuat dan mengembangkan kalimat, dan kurangnya minat belajar bahasa Inggris. Faktor utama yang mempengaruhi kesulitan siswa adalah kurangnya minat belajar bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, mereka diberikan waktu beberapa menit untuk memahami topik yang diberikan oleh guru, dan menyarankan menggunakan media bahasa Inggris yang memiliki kosakata yang lebih mudah dipahami oleh siswa.

Kata kunci: Kesulitan, Speaking

Abstract

This research was done related to the problem that happen at most the eleventh grade students at PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan. The problem was most of students difficult to practice speaking English in front of the class. In addition the students were too shy to make permission by using English and speak with friends that reflexively would laughed to them if they make a mistake. Furthermore, this research is conducted to described that factor affecting of the students' difficulties in speaking English

at Eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan. The type of the research was descriptive qualitative approach. The data was collected from the interview to the informants. The source of the research was the eleventh grade students, the informant based on the teacher who determines the students who have problems. The technique of data analysis used Miles and Huberman' Model, consisted of: data collection, data reduction, display the data, and conclusion. Based on analysis of the data, it was found that the factor affecting of students' difficulties in speaking English are lack of vocabulary, lack of competence in writing sentences, when the students perform speaking English they are nervous and stutter in expressing the sentences, lack ideas to create and develop the sentences, and lack of interest in learning English. The main factor affecting of the students' difficulties are lack of interest in learning English. In addition, they are given a few minutes to understand the topic that is given by the teacher, and suggest them to the English media that have the easier vocabularies to be understood by the students.

Keywords: *Difficulties, Speaking*

Introduction

English is recognized as an international language that plays a significant role in education, science, technology, business, and global communication. As globalization continues to develop, the ability to communicate in English has become an essential competency for students in both academic and professional contexts. In learning English, students are expected to master four fundamental language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are integrated and cannot be separated because each skill supports the development of the others. Among these language skills, speaking is considered one of the most important because it reflects learners' ability to use the language for real communication. Through speaking, students can express ideas, opinions, feelings, and information directly to others. Therefore, speaking has become one of the primary indicators of successful English language learning, particularly in countries where English is taught as a foreign language (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Rao, 2019).

Speaking is a productive language skill that requires learners to use language actively in authentic communication. It involves not only the production of words and sentences but also the ability to communicate meaning effectively according to the context of interaction. To speak successfully, learners must integrate several linguistic components, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Brown (2004) argues that speaking is the productive skill resulting from the creative construction of linguistic forms through the selection of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse strategies. Likewise, Al Hosni (2014) explains that speaking is the active use of language to express meaning and that spoken language serves as the primary medium through which learners encounter, understand, practice, and acquire a new language. Consequently, speaking is regarded as a complex skill because it requires both linguistic competence and communicative competence to convey messages clearly and effectively (Brown, 2004; Al Hosni, 2014).

The importance of speaking skills has increased significantly in today's global society, where communication in English has become an essential requirement in education, employment, and international collaboration. Students who possess good speaking skills have greater opportunities to participate in academic discussions, access international educational resources, pursue higher education abroad, and compete in the global labor market. Furthermore, speaking competence enables learners to build confidence in expressing themselves and interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. According to Fitriani et al. (2015), speaking is one of the most important skills to acquire in learning a second or foreign language because learners' success is commonly measured by their ability to communicate orally. Similarly, Rao (2019) emphasizes that speaking is the most practical skill for achieving communicative competence since language learning ultimately aims to facilitate meaningful interaction among individuals. Therefore, developing students' speaking ability should become one of the primary objectives of English language instruction (Fitriani et al., 2015; Rao, 2019).

Despite its importance, speaking remains one of the most difficult language skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to master. Many students understand English grammar and vocabulary theoretically but encounter difficulties when they are required to speak spontaneously in real communication. This challenge arises because speaking demands the simultaneous use of multiple language components, including grammatical accuracy, vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Moreover, unlike writing, speaking occurs in real time, allowing little opportunity for learners to revise or reorganize their ideas before expressing them. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) explain that speaking is a complicated cognitive process involving linguistic, psychological, and social aspects simultaneously. Consequently, many EFL learners experience communication breakdowns even though they possess sufficient knowledge of English language structures (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Al Hosni, 2014).

In addition to linguistic difficulties, psychological factors substantially influence students' speaking performance. Many learners experience anxiety, nervousness, fear of making mistakes, lack of self-confidence, and low motivation when speaking English. These emotional barriers often discourage students from participating actively in classroom communication. They prefer remaining silent rather than risking grammatical or pronunciation errors that might lead to embarrassment or negative evaluation by their classmates. Fitriani et al. (2015) found that lack of confidence and

fear of making mistakes were among the dominant factors preventing Indonesian students from speaking English confidently. Similarly, Al Hosni (2014) identified anxiety, limited vocabulary, and insufficient motivation as the major obstacles affecting students' speaking performance in English classrooms. These findings indicate that improving students' psychological readiness is as important as improving their linguistic competence in developing speaking skills (Fitriani et al., 2015; Al Hosni, 2014).

External factors also contribute significantly to students' speaking difficulties. Teaching methods that emphasize grammar rather than communication, limited opportunities for oral practice, insufficient exposure to English outside the classroom, and classroom environments that do not encourage interaction often reduce students' motivation to communicate in English. In many English classrooms, students spend more time completing written exercises than engaging in communicative activities, resulting in limited speaking practice. According to Rao (2019), speaking proficiency can only be developed through continuous practice in meaningful communicative situations supported by interactive teaching strategies and encouraging classroom environments. Likewise, Leong and Ahmadi (2017) argue that regular speaking practice and meaningful interaction are essential for improving learners' fluency, confidence, and communicative competence. Therefore, teachers should provide sufficient opportunities for students to use English actively in authentic classroom communication (Rao, 2019; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

Based on preliminary observations and informal interviews conducted by the researcher in January 2021 at the eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan, several problems related to students' English speaking ability were identified. Most students experienced considerable difficulty in expressing ideas orally, participating in classroom discussions, and delivering simple presentations in English. During classroom observations, many students appeared reluctant to speak because they lacked confidence and were afraid of making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes. Interviews with several students revealed that they felt embarrassed when speaking English in front of their classmates because they were worried that their friends would laugh at them whenever they made mistakes. As a result, most students preferred to remain silent rather than attempt to communicate in English. Furthermore, many students were unable to produce even simple English expressions fluently despite having studied English for several years. These findings indicate that students' speaking ability remains relatively low and requires serious attention from English teachers.

PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan is one of the well-known Islamic boarding schools in Agam Regency, West Sumatra, attracting students from various regions throughout the province. The school is supported by adequate

educational facilities, including classrooms, a mosque, science laboratories, a computer laboratory, a multimedia room, and a library, which should facilitate effective learning activities. However, despite these favorable facilities, many students still experience difficulties in learning English, particularly in speaking. Most students perceive English as a difficult, boring, and uninteresting subject, resulting in low learning motivation and limited classroom participation. Consequently, their speaking proficiency remains unsatisfactory, and many students are unable to communicate fluently in English. Considering these conditions, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "The Students' Difficulties in Speaking English at the Eleventh Grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan." This study is expected to identify the factors contributing to students' speaking difficulties and provide useful information for English teachers in developing more effective instructional strategies to improve students' speaking competence.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a descriptive qualitative design to explore students' difficulties in speaking English at the eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan. Qualitative research is appropriate for investigating social phenomena in their natural settings and for obtaining an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors. Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research seeks to interpret meanings and describe phenomena comprehensively through direct interaction with participants. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research enables researchers to explore complex issues by collecting detailed information from participants within their real-life contexts. Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that qualitative descriptive research is suitable for studies aiming to provide a rich description of events or situations without manipulating variables. Therefore, this approach was considered the most appropriate method for identifying and describing the factors contributing to students' speaking difficulties based on authentic evidence obtained from the research setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The descriptive qualitative design allowed the researcher to present an objective and systematic description of the students' speaking problems as they naturally occurred during the English learning process. The study focused on understanding the challenges experienced by students rather than measuring relationships among

variables or testing hypotheses. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to obtain comprehensive information regarding linguistic and psychological factors influencing students' speaking performance. The findings were then interpreted inductively to reveal patterns and themes emerging from the participants' responses. By applying this research design, the researcher expected to produce a detailed explanation of students' English-speaking difficulties and provide valuable insights that could support English teachers in designing more effective instructional strategies to improve students' speaking competence (Miles et al., 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Result and Discussions

Result

The findings of this study revealed that attitude was one of the most dominant factors contributing to students' difficulties in speaking English at the eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan. Based on the interviews, sixteen out of twenty-one informants acknowledged that their attitudes toward English learning negatively affected their speaking performance. Most participants admitted that they frequently paid little attention during English lessons, preferred talking to their classmates instead of listening to the teacher, and rarely practiced speaking English either inside or outside the classroom. Several students also expressed that they perceived English as a difficult subject, leading them to develop a negative attitude toward learning the language. Consequently, they were reluctant to participate in speaking activities and tended to avoid classroom interaction. Some respondents further explained that they memorized speaking texts only when they were required to perform in front of the class rather than attempting to understand or use English communicatively. Others admitted that their willingness to participate depended heavily on their mood, while several students reported that they lacked confidence because English was rarely used in their daily environment. These findings indicate that students' attitudes toward English learning strongly influenced their willingness to communicate and practice speaking. Learners with negative attitudes tended to demonstrate lower classroom participation and less engagement in speaking activities, ultimately limiting the development of their oral proficiency. This finding is consistent with previous studies reporting that learners' attitudes significantly influence language achievement because positive attitudes encourage greater participation, persistence, and confidence during language learning (Abdullah et al., 2021; Derakhshan et al., 2022).

Another important factor identified in this study was learning motivation. Twelve informants reported that low motivation substantially hindered their English-speaking development. Most participants admitted that they were interested in

speaking English but lacked sufficient motivation to practice consistently. Fear of making mistakes, anxiety about being laughed at by classmates, and limited encouragement from family members, teachers, and peers reduced their willingness to communicate in English. Several students also stated that they were often too lazy to memorize vocabulary, read English materials, or practice speaking because they considered English to be a difficult language. Others explained that they quickly forgot newly learned vocabulary due to the absence of continuous practice, while some admitted that they only became motivated when facing classroom assessments or speaking performances. These findings suggest that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play a crucial role in developing students' speaking competence. Students with low learning motivation generally demonstrated less persistence, fewer learning strategies, and lower confidence when communicating orally. This result supports the findings of recent studies indicating that motivation remains one of the strongest predictors of foreign language achievement because highly motivated learners are more willing to take risks, practice regularly, and actively participate in communicative learning activities (Pawlak, 2022; Al-Hoorie, 2023).

The third factor influencing students' speaking difficulties was personality. Seven informants explained that personal characteristics such as shyness, introversion, low self-confidence, and emotional instability negatively affected their speaking performance. Many students stated that they felt uncomfortable speaking English in front of large groups because they believed that their pronunciation and vocabulary mastery were inadequate. Some participants admitted that their confidence depended on their emotional condition or mood, while others preferred remaining silent rather than expressing themselves in English. Several respondents also explained that they often translated ideas from Indonesian before speaking, making them hesitate and lose fluency during communication. In addition, students who described themselves as quiet or reserved experienced greater difficulty participating in classroom discussions and oral presentations. These findings demonstrate that personality traits significantly influence students' willingness to communicate in English, particularly in foreign language classrooms where speaking anxiety frequently occurs. Learners with stronger self-confidence generally participate more actively and demonstrate better oral communication skills than those with anxious or introverted personalities. These findings are in line with recent research emphasizing that self-confidence, emotional regulation, and willingness to communicate are important psychological variables affecting speaking performance among EFL learners (Dewaele & Li, 2021; MacIntyre et

al., 2022).

The interviews also revealed that limited exposure to English was another major factor affecting students' speaking difficulties. Fifteen informants stated that they rarely used English beyond classroom activities and had minimal opportunities to practice speaking in authentic situations. Most respondents admitted that they possessed limited vocabulary, insufficient grammatical knowledge, and inadequate pronunciation skills because English was seldom used in their daily communication. Several students reported difficulty pronouncing English words correctly despite repeated explanations from their teacher, while others experienced nervousness, hesitation, and stuttering whenever they attempted to speak English before their classmates. Some participants acknowledged that they rarely memorized vocabulary, seldom read English texts, and were not accustomed to bringing dictionaries or other learning resources to class. Furthermore, many students believed that English was a foreign language with little relevance to their everyday lives, resulting in low exposure and minimal communicative practice. As a consequence, students found it difficult to produce spoken English fluently and accurately during classroom activities. These findings reinforce previous research suggesting that frequent exposure to English through meaningful interaction, extensive reading, listening activities, and communicative practice significantly improves learners' speaking proficiency, pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary acquisition, and communicative confidence (Sato & McDonough, 2021; Teng, 2023).

Discussions

Based on the findings, it could be explained that there were some causes of the students' difficulties in speaking English at eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan. The researcher found out that there were 5 causes of the students' difficulties, they were: attitude, motivation, personality, expose to English, management in teaching and learning English.

The cause of the students difficulties in speaking English at eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan were lack vocabulary mastery, lack of competence in writing the sentences, when the students performed speaking English they nervous and stutter in expressing the sentences, lack of ideas to create and develop the sentences, and lack of interested in learning English. The main cause of the students' difficulties was lack of interested in Learning English.

According to the researcher, the researcher gave opinion that eleventh grade students of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan as foreign language learners felt difficult in speaking English was something tolerable. Moreover, they were

also being in learning process, because English was a foreign language subject at school. That issue was corrected by Jack. C Richard in his book, he said speaking is a language where foreign language learners are difficulty in learning it, because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions.

Based on findings, the researcher evaluated that most the students' competence in English is extremely less. In addition, they had less desire to wanted to speak English and they also did not like to English. A half the students thought that English was not our language why we were too serious learnt it, and they thought such "English was a scare monster".

Furthermore, the researcher argued that the students often got the problem from mother tongue used, lost of idea when spook English, nervous, and passive in learning English. Those problems were supported by Penny Ur, she explained the student problem in speaking, such as: inhabitation, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue.

Nevertheless, the English teacher was seen less serious to lift up her students skill in speaking English. Moreover, speaking English did not become her main teaching in English and more emphasized skill and reading and writing in her teaching at eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan.

Based on the explanation above could be concluded that the causes of students' difficulties in speaking English at eleventh grade of PPTQ Muallimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan were most the eleventh grade of PPTQ Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Pakan Sinayan felt difficult that was caused by attitude total of 16 the informants attitude. Next 16 the informants felt difficult in classroom activity, dan 15 the informants to exposure to English. Moreover, 12 the informants felt difficult that was effected by motivation, 7 the informants felt difficult in personality, 6 the informant felt difficult in the teachers' techniques, 3 the informants extra curricular and 3 the informant felt difficult in speaking English that caused by the course syllabus.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it is found that the causes of the students' difficulties in speaking English are lack of vocabulary, lack of competence in writing sentences, when the students perform speaking English they are nervous, and stutter in expressing the sentences, lack ideas to create and develop the sentences, and lack of interest in

learning English. The main cause of the students' difficulties are lack of interest in learning English. In addition, they are given a few minutes to understand the topic that is given by the teacher, and suggest them to the English media that have the easier vocabularies to be understood by the students.

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