Exploring the Challenges in Speaking English among the Students of English Language Education Department of a Private University in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to find out the challenges faced by students at English Language Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta batch 2015. There are two objectives of the research. First is about the challenges in speaking English faced by students of English Language Education Department of private university in Yogyakarta batch 2015. Second is about the strategies used by the students at English Language Education Department batch 2015. The reseacher used qualitative as data collection method. Besides, the data were collected using interviews. There were three students of ELED batch 2015 of private university in Yogyakarta as the participants. The result of the interviews was transcribed and member checked to prove the trustworthiness of the interview. The finding of the research found that the participants have the challenges in speaking English such as poor pronunciation, interference of first language, lack of grammatical structure, fear in making mistake, and lack of confidence. Besides, the participants used seven strategies to solve challenges in speaking English, namely 1.) practicing debate, 2.) sharing with friends, 3.) asking for feedback from friends and teachers, 4.) practicing in speaking English everyday, 5.) listening to music, 6.) watching movie, and 7.) looking up the dictionary and practicing the pronunciation.

Keyword: speaking challenges, strategies.

Introduction

In this global era, English is very important for people to do interaction because most of people speak using English as an international language in the world. Thus, English becomes necessary to be mastered, including in Indonesia. Efrizal (2012) stated that many people use English to communicate and it makes people who come from different countries to be easier in making interaction and communication. When the people make relationship with other countries, they have to understand among the four skills of English language like reading, writing, listening and speaking. These are very important to make interaction with others that have different language.

In addition, speaking has a purpose to communicate ideas and transfer message orally. According to Gert and Hans (2008: 207, as cited in Efrizal, 2012), speaking is a locution that has objectives that can be approved by the speaker and recipient in the process of recognizing their statements. Besides, speaking relies on the information to be spoken, but the speaker sometimes receives it difficult to explain what they want to tell (Brown and Yule, 1999: 14, as cited in Efrizal, 2012). Therefore, speaking is important for every one to deliver their thoughts.

As language learners of ELED of private university in Yogyakarta who had learned English intensively, they have some problems in speaking English. Triyadi (2017) mentioned that the first problem is they are

difficult to find some word to share their ideas through speaking. The next is about fear in making mistakes (Sofia, 2017). The last problem is students still use first language in the class (Hendrawan, 2016).

Therefore, this research then becomes necessary to be conducted to find out the challenges that they encounter when they speak in English. In addition, this research is intended to look for the strategies to overcome their challenges in speaking in English.

Research Methodology

This research used qualitative research as a method to collect the data. Then, the researcher used descriptive qualitative as the research design. In addition, the researcher chose three students at ELED of private university as setting in Yogyakarta batch 2015. The

researcher changed the participants' name into Fani as the first participant, Mega as the second participant, and Lita as the third participant. The research was conducted in the middle of July 2018 and the setting of time for interview was approximately 15 minutes.

Moreover, the researcher used purposive sampling by setting criteria for the participants by determining what the researcher needed and found people who can to provide the information of their knowledge or experience (Bernard 2002; Lewis & Sheppard 2006, as cited in Tongco, 2007).

The researcher used interview as a method of data collection. In other word, the researcher used interview guideline as an instrument of data collection that consist of the research questions. The type of the

interview that the researcher used was open-ended interview.

The researcher used Indonesian language to do interview for the participants. Then, the researcher used voice recorder to record the information given by the participants. Besides, the researcher wrote the information using the original language that was *Bahasa Indonesia*. Another step was analysed the data. The final step was that the researcher interpreted the information that was appropiated with what participants had been said.

In data analysis, the resarcher divided the data from the participants in several steps. After collecting the data, the researcher transcribed the interview result from the participants' statements from data recorder and the reseacher also wrote the participants' statements. After

that, the researcher conducted member checking in order to prove the validity of interview when the researcher finished do the transcripts. The next step did by the researcher was translated the data related participants' answer. Furthermore, the researcher used coding to make the result of the report to analyze the data. There were four steps in coding that was open coding, analytical coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

Finding and Discussion

The challenges in speaking English among students of English Language Education Department in the private university in Yogyakarta

The first finding is poor pronunciation. All three participants

argued that they found challenges in pronuncing some words in English when they speak. It was shown from Fani's statement that "the problem in speaking that I face is pronunciation. Sometimes I know and understand what I am talking about, but when I say it's not proper and not correct". In addition, Mega who stated that "in pronunciation, I am afraid that is not accurate. For example, there are some unfamiliar pronunciation and vocabulary, which make me pronounce them incorrectly" and Lita who explained that "the other problems is pronunciation. We know how to spell it, but I am hesitant about the pronunciation of the words". According to Rajadurai (2006), poor pronunciation can inhibit communication skill and there are also misunderstanding in conversation caused of poor

intelligibility that disturb the listener. Thus, having poor pronunciation is encountered by students in their speaking activity.

The second finding is interference of first language. Fani stated that "sometimes when I am speaking, my first language accent influences the accent itself". Fani also added that "and also my mother tongue inflences my speaking". It could be concluded that there is possibility for the participants to produce some mistakes or errors in learning second language especially English (Mede, Tutal, Ayaz, Calışır, & Akın, 2014).

Another finding is lack of grammatical structure. Fani said that "when I am developing a sentence, for example 'I will go'. Sometimes I do not know which one use future. Therefore, I just say it without

thinking grammar". Besides, Mega said that "my grammar is still wrong". This finding is in line with Tanveer (2007) who stated that lack of grammar structure is one of problem makes student passive rather than active to participate in speaking activity.

The next finding is fear in making mistakes. It is proven in Fani statement that "sometimes I am afraid in making mistake when speaking". Mega also added by saying "I am affraid of making mistake when speaking". Thus, this explanation describes that they feel afraid of making mistakes in speaking English. According to Goktepe (2014), the problem which is often faced by the students is feel afraid in making mistakes when speaking English.

The last finding is lack of confidence. In this challenge, Mega mentioned that "I am not confident when speaking" and Lita stated that "sometimes I am not confident when speaking, especially with people who have good English skills". At this point, Mega and Lita told that they lack of confidence when they speak with people who have better speaking in English. According to Gruber (2010), lack of confidence is an attitude that affects students' difficulties because confidence could support students to achieve their goals. Thus, lack of confidence is the challenge in speaking activities.

The strategies used by the students to improve speaking skills

Firstly, the participants can improve their critical thinking and communication skills through practicing debate. Fani stated that "I

often practice debate". At this point, she told that she often practices debate to improve her speaking skill. According to Othman (2013:1507), debate is an activity that can encourage students in better learning courses, because they engage in learning course actively, broadly, deeply and personally.

Secondly, the participants need friends to practice the language. Fani talked that "sharing (it means that sharing the idea) with friends". At this point, Fani told that she shared the idea with her friends. On the other hand, Lita stated that "I often practice with my friends to handle my problem which is inconfidence". Based on Lita's statement, it concluded that to improve her confidence, she often practices with her friends.

For example, the participants can practice their speaking skills through group discussion. Discussion makes students more able and suitable to use foreign language as well as to speak about their experiences (Littlewood, 1999, as cited in Kaddour, 2016). Therefore, participating in group discussion is also strategy to improve students speaking skill.

Thirdly is asking for feedback from friends and also from teachers. Lita assumed, "(I will be) asking others about the way to pronounce it". This explanation described that Lita asked others in order to know how to pronounce some words in English. Besides, other participants asked with her friend and her teacher for the meaning and the purpose of the words. Fani shared the same idea with Lita. She said, "asking (the

meaning and also the purpose of the words) my friend and also my teacher". In addition, Mega asserted that "checking the grammar (to know weather the structure of the sentence is correct or not) or asking my friend about that". At this point, Mega told that she asked her friends to help her in monitoring her grammar. Thus, asking feedback is useful for students to improve their ability in learning and teaching process (Titchener, 2008; Evan, Hastshorn & Strong-Krause, 2011).

Then, all three participants stated that they need to practice their English everyday. Fani mentioned that "regarding accent, I am learning a lot and continue to practice everyday. For example in reading and googling, I listen and imitate the sound of native speaker". Besides, Mega asserted that "to build my

confidence, firstly I prepare what I am talking about and then practice it. For example in presentation, I have time to prepare about what I want to say, then I practice it". It was in line with Baggour (2015) who argued that practicing English speaking as much as possible is the essential step to build up self-confidence. Thus, this strategy can be used for students to build their confidence.

The next strategy is listening to music. Fani stated that "listening to music". Mega also added that "other strategies are listening to the speech and music in English". At this point, Fani and Mega assumed that listening to English music is one of strategies to cope up their challenges in speakimg English. Based on Kurnianto (2016), English songs are the effective tool to improve vocabulary and pronunciation. By

listening to music, the students can develop vocabulary and pronunciation when they speak English fluently.

Another learning strategy is watching movie. This strategy is an interesting activity that can help participants to improve English speaking skill and to learn about pronunciation. It can be seen from Fani's statement who asserted that "sometimes I am watching movie to learn pronunciation". At this point, Fani told that sometimes she watched movie to improve her ability in pronouncing some words using English. According to Krashen (1989, as cited in Chuang, 2001), drama and movies are good for students' input in speaking English. Thus, watching movie gives some benefits for students to learn about the component in English and to get input in speaking English.

The last strategy is looking up dictionary and practicin the pronunciation. The participants need to open dictionary to know the meaning of some words that they find in speaking English. Lita stated that "I am looking up dictionary" and Mega who asserted that "look up the dictionary and practice the pronunciation". According to Berthier & Ralph (2014), students can do repetition, imitation, and drilling in learning words or pronouncing words accurately, because it can help them and support them in learning the language to achieve functional communication in daily life. Thus, by looking up some words in dictionary and practicing the pronunciation, it makes students

easier to practice in speaking English fluently.

Conclusion

The students of ELED of private university in Yogyakarta stated that speaking is one of important skills in English for them. When the students are able to speak English, they will get benefit a lot to communicate and to interact with other people from different countries. Besides, the students will be successful in their academic and career for their future life. Thus, every students should master speaking skills using English language.

There are two research questions explored in the research. firstly, the challenges in speaking English faced by the students at ELED of private university in Yogyakarta batch 2015. Then, the strategies of the students in overcoming their challenges in speaking English at ELED of private university in Yogyakarta.

Based on the interviews from the participants, the researcher found five findings related to the challenges in speaking English faced by the students. These findings are poor pronunciation, interference of first language, lack of grammatical structures, fear in making mistakes, and lack of confidence. Other findings related to the strategies to overcome the participants' speaking into seven categories, comprising practicing debate, sharing with friends, asking for feedback from friends and teachers, practicing in speaking English everyday, listening to music, watching a movie, and looking up the dictionary and practicing the pronunciation.

To sum up, the students should be able to speak English in this global era. The students will be aware about the importance in speaking English. Besides, the students should pay attention to the challenges that they faced when they speak English. In other word, the students should focus of several strategies to solve their challenges in speaking English. Thus, each challenges can solve with several strategies that the students will use it.

Recommendation

The students should be aware the challenges that influence speaking skills like unconfidence and fear to pronunce English words, grammar structure, and mother-tongue use. Then students can apply some strategies to improve their ability to speak English by active in practicing English with friends in learning English. Thus, they will not face the challenges in speaking English.

The English teachers should create comfortable environment to make their students do not feel afraid in English speaking activities. The English teachers also can make group discussion to increase students' ability in speaking English.

The researcher recommended that other researchers who will conduct research on the same topic, can develop and conduct the research to get deeper data about challenges and strategies toward speaking skill in different levels. Thus, other researchers can produce new findings from previous research.

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