

## REVEALING DIFFICULTIES AND CAUSING FACTORS HINDERING STUDENT'S IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

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**Abstract:** Speaking skill is widely considered as the skill that indicates individual's proficiency in a language. Despite of its importance, speaking skill is not easy to master, as it involves many competencies in pronunciation, lexical, grammatical and semantic elements that causes difficulties in speaking English. Therefore, it is essential to identify English speaking difficulties and its factors that encountered by EFL learners. This study carried out descriptive qualitative research method and online semi structured interview as instrument. The data for this research collected from 5 students of English department from University of Islam Malang through the use of WhatsApp voice note. The data are analyzed using qualitative data analysis that consist of data reduction, grouping, coding, display and interpretation. The result finds eight difficulties and ten factors that causes those difficulties in speaking English language. The data also shows that one difficulty can be caused by different factors like nervous related difficulties can be caused by speaking partner and being afraid of mistakes, moreover, one factor are identified to be the causes of many difficulties such as vocabulary that causes many difficulties in speaking. It suggested to understand the speaking problems along with the cause for the students to find solution and anticipation of the speaking problems.

**Key Words:** English speaking skill, difficulties, factors.

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of English language proficiency has increasing in the past few years following the impact of global competition; as the requirements for career and vacancy has emerges everywhere. According to Nunan (1991) speaking skills is the most significant skill that determines English proficiency, and the success in carrying out communication is determined by speaking skill. English is considered as a lingua franca by the wide majority of global population especially in higher education as many media and educational institutions receive the impact of the widespread use of

language. However, despite to its position as global language, English is not widely spoken as practice in Indonesia except for certain people with special affinity for English like those who are involved directly in English language environment such as English class (Heriansyah, 2012). It is described in many literatures that the nature of speaking is to yield some words in order to represents the meaning of message or ideas. The purpose of speaking involve sharing the meaning and building process through the implication of spoken and written symbols, in a variety of contexts (Kayi, 2006). According to Nakhalah (2019) most learners of foreign language, to be able to speak in L2 is not an easy task to be done because it requires more than the understanding of its grammatical and semantic rules in order to properly speak the foreign language.

In speaking English language, learners might face some challenge and difficulties to carry out communication successfully even the proficient one (Irmawati, 2016). According to Ur (1996), speaking difficulties divided into linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties. Heriansyah (2012) stated that linguistic related difficulties are directly related to language proficiency such as vocabulary and grammar while non-linguistic difficulties are related to other factors such as confidence, motivation and anxiety. Moreover, speaking difficulties can be caused by many factors such as lexical, syntactic and language elements (Nakhalah, 2019). As pointed out by Brown (2001), classification, summary, performance variables, and conversational or colloquial use of language are the factors increasing speaking difficulty. In addition, Burnkart (1998) clarifies that three areas of knowledge are needed for language learners in speaking, which emphasizes on the use of suitable words in the correct order together with the correct way to pronounce, those are: language mechanics such as vocabulary, pronunciation and syntactic structure; the second is the language function that involves speaking fluency in arrangement of language transaction and interaction; lastly, the sociocultural norm of speaking such

as turn-taking, tempo as well as length of pauses between speakers, comparative roles of participants, knowing how to take part into the circumstance and the condition of speaking.

There are many studies dedicated to reveal English speaking difficulties, for instance, Nakhalah (2019) aims to explore the causes of many difficulties in speaking encountered by learners of English language using experimental research and found some speaking difficulties of the students caused by many factors like fear to make mistake, being shy, anxiety and lack of confidence. Moreover, the study by Irmawati. (2016) indicated that the common factors causing speaking difficulties are related to learning and instruction such as the material which is considered to be too high, the instructors' lack of experience in handling the class, and the lack usage of English language in society. Another study by Heriansyah. (2012) found that the dominant problem confronted by the students was insufficient word knowledge, followed by anxiety of making mistakes. The students' effort to cope with their problems had not been successful. According to Harmer (2001), common problems in linguistics comprises the detailed problems related to language such as structure and word knowledge. Meanwhile, Frank Middleton (2009), stated that non-linguistic factors are afraid of mistakes, as being afraid of making mistake will make the students have negative feeling when they are speaking.

From all the three previous studies, the researcher found the gaps that most studies applied quantitative research design via observation and questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher aimed to identify the factors and difficulties in speaking encountered by students using interview based on students' experience and perception. From this kind of reason. it is important to identify the speaking difficulty of students that supposedly have good understanding in vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The aims of this study are identifying difficulties that encountered by students of university of Islam Malang and also identifying how the participants resolve those speaking difficulties.

## **METHOD**

This study was conducted using descriptive qualitative research method to get in-depth understanding of actual problems in speaking, and explore the participants responses in detail. The data analyzed is in the form of interview transcript are used represent the findings of the study. The writer implements descriptive method design which is designed to helps the identification of matters in regarding to the fact in real-world. The researcher acts as the interviewer, data collector and as well as decision maker with the guidance of the advisor. The data were taken from students regarding to speaking skill from English department of university of Islam Malang consisting of 5 respondents. The data were collected via semi-structured online interview due to social distancing policy to protects the respondent from coronavirus. The researcher is the instrument of research in a qualitative study, meaning the purpose of this research is to obtain data. The data is the vital validation instruments that are in the field and number in the form of a phenomenon.

The research begins by choosing the field of study based on the researcher's interest in exploring speaking difficulties and collecting the grounding information about the issues related to the chosen topic. Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulated research question and the purpose of the study and designing research method that is suitable to answer the research problems. The study continued with data collection with the sampling of five students, before data collection, researcher have taken the sample of five students from English department students in university of Islam Malang, the sampling used to gain appropriate participant that have lower achievement and score in speaking. The data are collected using WhatsApp voice note in which the respondents will be given in-depth interview in the form of semi-structural interview about the difficulties encountered in speaking English language based on the background information and previous studies. After requiring all the data required for the study, the researcher analyzed using data selection by eliminating of unnecessary data. Grouping involves organization of data

after analysis, the researcher presents the data using table that represents the interview transcripts in and discuss the finding with the theories and previous study related to the current study. The conclusion is drawn based on the summary of the finding and with it, the researcher includes suggestion to the next researcher, teacher and students.

Data collection techniques are used by researcher to collect data is in the form of semi structured interview, the technique can implement through questionnaire, and interview. The data in this study was collected via providing online interview through WhatsApp voice note in the form of in-depth semi structural interview to the participants related to the topic and the problems of the research regarding to student difficulty in speaking English. The steps collecting data are distributing questionnaire and conducting interview. The data collection lasted in four days and the interview are done once to each participant. The data are analyzed by qualitative data analysis which organizes into meaningful whole. The steps to allow the researchers interpret the information from the data more effectively such as organizing and prepare the data, read or observe at all the data, generate a description, discussion and development, and making an interpretation in qualitative research.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

The research reveals eight different speaking difficulties encountered by students. The researcher found that four difficulties considered as language skill related difficulties that comprises of difficulties such as fluency, repetition, out of topic, starting the conversation. The other four difficulties are non-linguistic skill difficulties, those are; being nervous, speaking anxiety, blank and being confused during speaking. Along with speaking difficulties, the researcher also found the causing factors of speaking difficulties. The researcher also listed the difficulties in sequence from the most frequent to the least frequent based on how many times the problems are encountered by the students. This is in line with Heriansyah (2012)

indicates 12 different speaking problems confronted by the students during speaking English and the prominent difficulties according to participants' perception were insufficient or lacking of vocabulary as well as the difficulty to direct words into sentences. The most frequent difficulties are speaking anxiety and problem related to out of topic and being nervous that encountered by most of the participants. As stated by Jannariza and Hendriani (2016), their incapability to express their speaking skills is also inclined by their feeling of embarrassment. Therefore, shyness and insecurity of own's skill might affect speaking fluency.

Based on the data, all participants are having speaking anxiety while there are 4 out of 5 students encounter problems related to out of topic during speaking. This is on line with Nunan (1999) that emotional state might have good or bad effects, and are able to encourage and facilities as well as hindering thinking process. The next most recognizable speaking difficulties is blank during speaking, repetition and the problem of stop and delay during speaking. These problems encountered by 3 out of 5 students followed by four difficulties problem that encountered by 2 participants. According to Nakhalah (2019) Lack of language skills might cause the students to lose their pace during speaking and further cause stop and difficulties in out of topic in speaking.

The four difficulties are being nervous, delay or frequent stops during speaking, difficulties in starting the conversation and being nervous. Their incapability to express their speaking skills is also inclined by their feeling of embarrassment. Therefore, shyness and insecurity of own's skill might affect speaking fluency (Jannariza and Hendriani, 2016). Diao & Paramasivam. (2013) argued that shyness in learners comes mostly by their nature of a very quiet students. Anxiety generally referred as emotional transitory state which explains the mental state that is characterized by tension and nervousness due to the activity in nervous system (Nunan, 1999), Emotional state might have good or bad effects, and are able to encourage and facilities as well as hindering thinking process.

Partner of speaking also becomes one of the causes in being confused during speaking. The interview data about this difficulty caused by the factor of speaking partner, it is reveals different speaking partner such as speaking to a friend is different compared to speaking with lecturer and speaking in front of the class might have different result compared to one on one speaking. Thornbury (2005) argues that who are the students speaking to affects mental factors such as anxiety or shyness related problems as well as lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes, which are common factors hindering students from speaking. There are numerous causing factors of students' anxiety in language learning such as lacking of confidence. Lacking of confidence commonly occurs when the students know that their listener have difficulties to understood them and vice versa. In this kind of state, most unconfident speaker tends to keep silent while others do the talking, this is the most notable indication that students are lacking self-confidence (Al-Hosni, 2014).

From the data, the researcher also found that each participant has different difficulties and the same difficulties are sometimes have different causing factor. For instances the participants who have difficulties related to the speaking anxiety, lack of vocabulary always has the difficulties like out of topic during speaking and tend to stop speaking due to not knowing what to talk next or lack vocabulary to express their meaning. In this study, all participants that consist of five students have difficulties related to speaking anxiety. This is in line with Rochelle (2011) investigates that factors causing anxiety in learners when speaking English language, and the students have bigger chance of encountering problems related to nothing to say on their speech to the listener as they confront negative emotions like being nervous and anxious, anxiety or perhaps fearful towards something bad that might happen if they are trying to speak. Moreover, Wooten (2008) explains anxiety as a feeling categorized by tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes. If this negative emotion accumulated in the students and causes confusion in

communicating their thoughts, feeling and ideas, by using foreign language that they are learning.

The other speaking difficulties that commonly encountered by students are repetition during speaking. Repetition means that the speakers are repeating one or more words with the same message or meaning in a row (Ilmiani, 2014). Based on the data, repetition is caused by lack of vocabulary and lack of practice. With lacking vocabulary, the students are less likely to produce good quality of diction that might result in repetition. Repetition of a word is commonly treated as a non-analyzable event but it is actually a sequential process with its own options and limitations (Clark and Wasow, 1996). Repetition often occurs during the speaker's attempt to correct something that has been said, repetition of words before the correcting words that the speakers aware of their errors, and correct the word by using repetitive words (Ilmiani, 2014).

The data shows that all participants that of five students is considered to have vocabulary related problems that results the difficulties such as out of topic and 2 of them mentions out of speaking topic situation, but this problem also mentioned to be caused by lacking vocabulary. This indicates that vocabulary is one of the important factors that determine success of the whole speaking process. In the data the researcher also found that lack of practice causes many difficulties such as difficulties in keeping the conversation going or out of topic, nervous and ability to speak in English. Vocabulary plays an important part in language learning. Vocabulary is also a crucial skill in learning to listen, read, speak and write. Without sufficient amount of vocabulary, conveying and expressing thought and feeling in the form of spoken and written are likely to confuse them (Rohmatillah, 2007).

The other speaking problems encountered by students are stop and delay during speaking or lacking fluency, this makes the speaker rather speak slowly and often without constant flow. In response to this, Brown (2001) conveys that student

who lack of self-confidence about in their English skills are automatically suffer from communication apprehension. According to the data, not fluent in speaking problem is caused by lack of speaking practice, vocabulary, reluctant to speak and shyness. Fluency requires both speaking skills and good knowledge in vocabulary. Seffar (2015) stated that English speaking fluency is another challenge to EFL students, however, students can overcome by partaking access to a wide range of vocabulary learning strategies. Study conducted by Hanunah (2009) indicates some causes of students' problems in relation to fluency found in learning speaking such as felt that they had no time to practice, being lazy or reluctant to participate in class, nervous to speak English in class and felt ashamed if their friends laughed at them.

The next speaking problem is related to the difficulties in starting conversation during speaking. Based on the finding the problems caused by some factors such as afraid of mistakes that resulting lack of confidence as well as vocabulary (Frank Middleton, 2009). The students who are not confident are tend to be shy as they find that speaking English towards their friends or teacher is intimidating. Additionally, it is also identified that English students are shy when having to speak English as the tendency to think they will produce mistakes (Saurik, 2011). The fact is, Jannariza and Hendriani (2016) identified that shyness happens due to their own perception of their own ability. In this case, they are afraid of being object of shame and laughed at by their peers and friends due to their low speaking ability.

Kurtus (2001) reported that being afraid of making mistakes are caused by the assumption that they will be laughed and receive undesirable comments from their peers if they commit a mistake. In addition to the fear of making mistakes, MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) deliberated that the speaking error and anxiety of being assessed either by their peers or their instructor are caused by negative perception that make students very anxious in learning English oral communication.

From the analysis of the research finding, the researcher found about the relation between problems is different one to another from each participant. Every participant has different causes as well as effect of speaking difficulties. The researcher also presents the overview about causing factors of speaking difficulties in the form of the list of causing factors speaking problems, detail of participants who encounter the problems and the encounter frequency of the problems. Here are the overview of the findings.

| Speaking difficulties | Causes of speaking difficulties | Category       | Participant      |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Out of Topic          | Lack of Vocabulary              | Linguistic     | : P2, P3, P4, P5 |
|                       | Lack of Practice                | Non-Linguistic | : P2, P5         |
| Being Confused        | Lack of Confidence              | Non-Linguistic | : P2             |
|                       | Lack of Vocabulary              | Linguistic     | : P2, P3         |
|                       | Partner of Speaking             | Non-Linguistic | : P2, P3         |
| Blank in Speaking     | Partner of Speaking             | Non-Linguistic | : P1             |
|                       | Lack of Vocabulary              | Linguistic     | : P4             |
|                       | Lack of Practice                | Non-Linguistic | : P2, P4, P5     |
| Repetition            | Lack of Vocabulary              | Linguistic     | : P2, P3         |
|                       | Lack of Practice                | Non-Linguistic | : P2, P3         |
| Lack of fluency       | Lack of Vocabulary              | Linguistic     | : P2, P3, P4     |
|                       | Lack of Practice                | Non-Linguistic | : P2, P3, P4     |
|                       | Being shy                       | Non-Linguistic | : P2, P3         |
|                       | Afraid of Mistakes              | Non-Linguistic | : P2             |
| Starting Conversation | Lack of Vocabulary              | Linguistic     | : P3             |
|                       | Afraid of Mistakes              | Non-Linguistic | : P1             |
|                       | Being shy                       | Non-Linguistic | : P2,P3          |
| Nervous               | Afraid of Mistakes              | Non-Linguistic | : P1             |
|                       | Lack of Practice                | Non-Linguistic | : P1, P4         |
|                       | Lack of Vocabulary              | Linguistic     | : P4             |
|                       | Lack of Confidence              | Non-Linguistic | : P1, P4         |
|                       | Partner of Speaking             | Non-Linguistic | : P1             |
|                       | Lack of Grammar                 | Linguistic     | : P1             |
|                       | Lack of Pronunciation           | Linguis Non-   | : P1             |
|                       | Being shy                       | Linguistic tic | : P2, P3         |
| Speaking Anxiety      | Being shy                       | Non-Linguistic | : P4             |
|                       | Lack of Motivation              | Non-Linguistic | : P3,P4,P5       |
|                       | Lack of Confidence              | Non-Linguistic | : P3             |
|                       | Afraid of Mistakes              | Non-Linguistic | : P1,P2          |

Based on the data presented in the table above there are seven factors causing speaking difficulties. The most frequent cause of speaking difficulties are lack of vocabulary and confidence. In the findings it can be concluded that lack of vocabulary is the cause of almost all speaking problem except nervous while lack confidence causes problems such as nervous, speaking fluency, confusion, starting the conversation, out of topic and blank. The next factor is lack of practice that causes most all language skill related speaking such as stops and repetition during speaking. Partner of speaking which contributes the difficulties such as blank and nervous followed by the factor of pronunciation and grammar. The least recognized cause of speaking problems is when participant afraid of making mistakes. From the overview of speaking difficulties and what factors causing it the researcher draws the conclusion about the connection between the speaking difficulties and factors affecting it. Many foreign language learners assumed that speaking in target language is not an easy task as it requires more than knowing syntactic and semantic understanding (Heriansyah, 2012). According to Harmer (2001), common problems in linguistics comprises the detailed problems related to language such as structure and word knowledge. Richards (2008) claimed that there are some issues in speaking that comprises of basic things like lacking of vocabulary as well as low proficiency in grammar and pronunciation.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the data of the study collected to answer the problems of the research, the researcher concludes that there are eight difficulties in speaking. The findings reveal ten different causes of speaking difficulties. The most frequent speaking problems in speaking is anxiety to speak in English followed by out of topic during speaking then being confused, blank, repetition, fluency, starting conversation that is all caused by lack of vocabulary and the least frequent problems is being

nervous in speaking, this problem is not related to lack of vocabulary. There are also ten causes of speaking difficulties; the most common problem is lacking vocabulary that causes difficulties in speaking aside from nervous. Lack of confidence is in the second place that causes mostly in non-skill related difficulties followed by lack of practice that mostly affect skill related speaking difficulties. Partner of speaking also affect how well students speak, as students tend to speak well with someone they know or with the same level as they are. The next three problems which are reluctant to speak the cause of many speaking problem such as anxiety, nervous and blank. The problem related to grammar, punctuation and afraid of mistake are the least frequent cause of speaking problem, and only affect the speaking difficulties such as anxiety and nervous.

In the consideration with the conclusion of the current study, the researcher suggested for the students to realize their own speaking problems along with the cause to be able to find their own solution of the speaking problems by finding how to avoid or get the solution for the cause of speaking problems. It is also suggested to the lecturer to give more explanation about the problems that might be encountered during the speaking and the cause of speaking difficulties early to enables the student to anticipate difficulties in speaking. Moreover for the next researcher It is suggested to do more research deeper on speaking difficulties both high and low achiever students with more participants for more valid data, it is also important to conduct more research about how the students find solution to their own speaking difficulties.

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