

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF LEARNING SPEAKING SKILLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: This research aims to know the students' perception of learning speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic based on four aspects of perception, namely attractiveness, effectiveness, relevance and motivation. This research used qualitative as the design. In collecting data, the researcher interviewed in depth 10 students from twelfth grade of Social Science Class at SMAN 5 Malang. The findings of this study showed that based on 4 aspects of perception, namely from the attractiveness aspect, it shows that the highest 5 students have an interest in learning English, especially in speaking skills, while the 5 lowest students have less interest in learning speaking skills due to the lack of material and no interaction between teachers and other students. From the aspect of effectiveness, it shows that the online learning process is not effective in improving their speaking skills, using online media is considered quite effective in learning activities during the pandemic, students choose offline learning because they think it is more effective in learning speaking skills. From the aspect of relevance, it shows that using media during online learning has advantages and disadvantages and to overcome these shortcomings by increasing internet connections. Finally, the motivation aspect, it shows that students are not motivated to learn speaking skills during the pandemic because there are still many shortcomings, such as students tend to be lazy because they are only glued to their cellphones or laptops and there is no interaction with the teacher or with other students. Students think that they will be motivated to learn speaking skills by watching movies, reading books, listening to music and playing games.

Key Words: Perception; Online learning; Speaking Skills

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2020, many countries in the world including in Indonesia were horrified by the outbreak of the corona virus or Covid-19. The Covid-19 virus is spreading rapidly around the world. The spread of this virus causes impacts in several fields such as economics, politics, governments and education. Most governments around the world had closed educational institutions to avoid the risk of Covid-19 transmission. It is acknowledged by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Indonesian government implemented an order to stay at home and travel restrictions to advice working, worshiping, and learning from home. The Ministry of education's policy has planned to replace the teaching and learning process (KBM) with an online system to optimize learning is done face-to-face, now turned into distance learning or online to optimize various digital devices and applications. Online teaching and learning activities are the choice of many countries throughout Indonesia, especially in Malang, both elementary and university level. The global spread of the Covid-19 pandemic triggered class suspensions resulting in online learning needs (Moorhouse, 2020).

Perception in EFL student learning is that each student responds to perceptions with exceptional perspectives through the potential to think, feel, and experience that individuals aren't the identical. The importance of perception in language learning is crucial due the fact it could affect success in learning. Sobur (2003) explained that perceptions from a narrow sense are a vision of ways does someone sees matters? From abroad experience is a view or knowledge, this is how someone views or interprets something. This definitely indicates that perceptions of the students can provide the idea or argumentation about something especially English learning in online class, because English is absolutely crucial in all educational aspects. The students can have different thoughts, beliefs, and feeling about all the things around them.

Online learning is one of the important activities that must be considered at this time (Michael, 2019; Gacs & Spanova, 2020). In general, online learning activities by interacting between teachers and students online without face-to-face. Nadiem Makarim, minister of Education and Culture, suggested that teachers use various e-learning platforms, such as Rumah Belajar, WhatsApp, Quipper School, Ruang Guru, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Zoom, etc (Azwandi, 2019; Putsanra, 2020; Anggitasari, 2020; Shahrial & Syafryadin, 2020). Currently online learning platforms are already popular in Indonesia because they are widely

used and installed. The use of the platform during the Covid-19 pandemic is now needed to make it easier for teachers to deliver materials to students.

Currently online learning is a learning experience carried out by students which used different devices such as laptops, mobile phones, iPads, etc, with internet access to support teaching and learning activities (Dhawan, 2020; Blake, 2011). In other words, online learning is a learning situation used technology supported by internet access. Through online learning, teaching and learning activities so far can be conducted well, although there are shortcomings in its application.

Speaking is one of the four skills of English learning and also becomes the most important skill because it is always used in daily conversation. Leong et al (2017) also explained that speaking is the most important skill because it is one of the abilities that is needed to perform a conversation. Speaking is crucial part of second language learning and teaching, it is an art of communications and one of 4 productive skills that must be mastered in learning foreign language (Bahadorfar, 2014).

The serious situation problem of the speaking class is the online class, because of the pandemic, the students can't recognize the mastering procedure. Based on Rajab (2020), the effect of the coronavirus is now also perceived by the education world. So it makes education for the students obstructed. To the online classes students always learn by using zoom meeting. The teacher should give the material from the internet. That is one of the weaknesses of online learning because most students do not recognize on the material and they do not recognize how to speak and just listening what the teacher give and explained. Through doing this research, the researcher intends to know the students' perception of online learning on speaking skills based on four aspects of perception. There are attractiveness, effectiveness, relevance and motivation.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method. According to Ary (2002: 24-25), "Qualitative research is the study of understand phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variable". Qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the perceived meaning of individuals or groups of human social problems. Therefore, because the researcher is intended to attract and interpret perceptions from data, the research design is qualitative research.

The subject of this research is 10 students of twelfth-grade at SMAN 5 Malang with category of 5 students with highest score and 5 students with lowest score in English class. The instrument is used to accumulate the data as entire and valid as possible, the researcher used interview, due to the pandemic, the researcher gathered the students but constantly following health protocols. The instrument is a semi-structured interview to answer research questions about students' perception of learning speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically based on aspects of perception, namely attractiveness, effectiveness, relevance and motivation. There are eight questions in the interview, while conducting the interview, the researcher used Indonesian to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity.

In this activity, the researcher must be doing some of the criteria of the research. Firstly, the researcher must observing the data collection method and writing a report explaining a specific procedure for gathering assessment details. The data used in this study were: the researcher must know the perception of online learning especially in teaching speaking and give some questions to the students. In this study, monitoring is achieved with a systematic trend being studied. Participant assessment will be used as the participation researcher in the learning process and cooperates, so that this interview aims to know the participation of the students. When the researcher already doing the observation in SMAN 5 Malang, after that the researcher must be knowing the number of students in the classroom. There are 10 students in twelfth classes. But in this condition of a pandemic, it's impossible to make the observation directly. So the researcher only can follow the online learning of the students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the student's opinion about their perception of the online learning speaking skills during Covid-19. As previously explained, to get more information about students' perception in learning speaking during Covid-19, the researcher has interviewed some students in SMAN 5 Malang. The researcher takes 10 students from class twelfth to know about their perception during online learning.

Attractiveness

The researcher took from the question: 'What do you think is interesting during the English learning process so far, especially in improving speaking skills?'. The answers of the highest students:

“In my opinion, learning English so far has been quite interesting, especially in improving speaking skills, because I am used to listening and interacting in English so I enjoy learning, especially in improving speaking skills”.

Then the perception of the lowest students:

“In my opinion, so far learning English has not been interesting enough in improving my speaking skills, because the teacher still gives material only fixated on textbooks so it is not interesting to learn, especially in improving my speaking skills”.

From the students’ perceptions through their observations and experiences, it shows that the 5 highest students enjoyed and had an interest in learning English, especially to improve their speaking skills. In contrast to the opinion of the 5 lowest students who are less interested in learning speaking skills during the pandemic because of the lack of material that students get in online learning and there is no direct interaction with teachers and other students to be able to improve their speaking skills.

Effectiveness

First, from the questions: ‘Is learning English online effective in speaking skills?’. The following are the perceptions of the highest-achieving students:

“In my opinion, it is still not effective, because in a pandemic situation that requires learning to use online media so learning is limited and inefficient, it causes students to find it difficult to understand the material delivered by the teacher and does not improve my speaking skills”.

Other perceptions of the lowest-achieving students:

“In my opinion, online learning is still not effective enough, especially for improving speaking skills. Lack of interaction with other students and teachers which causes no progress in speaking skills”.

From the perception of the students above, the online learning process is not effective in improving their speaking skills. The reason is because there are many limitations that have been felt so far, ranging from poor internet connections, the surrounding environment is not supportive, teachers do not understand online applications and students and teachers cannot interact directly in speaking English to improve speaking skills. Therefore, their perceptions

are included in the perception aspect of perceived effectiveness because they have felt the conditions of learning while online.

Second, from the questions: ‘What media are used during online learning and are these media enough to help you in the online learning process?’. The following are the perceptions of the highest students:

“We often use zoom, gmeet, google classroom during online learning nowadays. In my opinion, the media has been quite helpful and effective in the learning process so far. We also have supporting media from schools, namely SIMS (School Management Information System) which also makes it easier for online learning so far”.

Furthermore, the perceptions of the lowest students:

“The media that have helped us so far are zoom, gmeet, google classroom and also the school's website, SIMS. Using this media is quite easy for us and teachers to carry out learning activities so far, especially for learning English to improve speaking skills”.

From the perception of the 5 highest students and the 5 lowest students stated that the use of online media is considered quite effective as a learning tool to help students and teachers in carrying out teaching and learning activities during online learning which requires studying at home or online. This relates to aspects of the perceived effectiveness of students in using online media during the pandemic.

Third, from the questions: ‘In your opinion, which online/offline learning do you think is effective in improving speaking skills?’. Researcher got answers from the highest students:

“For me offline learning is more effective, because I can better understand the material clearly and well when it is explained directly by the teacher. I can also practice my speaking skills directly if done directly or at school”.

Furthermore, the perceptions of the lowest students:

“In my opinion offline learning is much more effective, because I can communicate directly to practice my speaking skills and also more freely without any obstacles like when learning online”.

From the perceptions of the students above, all students prefer the process of teaching and learning activities that are carried out offline or face to face, because for them it is an effective learning process to be able to improve learning skills, especially in English speaking skills. With offline learning, they will be better to understand the material explained directly by the teacher and can practice their English speaking skills directly.

Relevance

First, from the questions: question 'Is online learning with the media provided enough to make it easier for you to adjust learning activities? Explain the advantages and disadvantages?'. Researcher got answers from the highest students:

“Yes, I think it is enough to facilitate us in learning so far. The advantage of using online media is that I can access it anywhere and for free via my cellphone, laptop or iPad. Online media for me is also easy to learn and use so it is very helpful for learning activities so far. Then the drawback is that I tend to be lazy to carry out learning activities because I am only fixated on my cellphone, iPad or laptop so there is no direct interaction with the teacher or other friends”.

While the perception of the lowest students:

“Yes, in my opinion, it is quite easy to learn while online. The advantage is that I can carry out learning activities anywhere and am more skilled in using online media. As for the drawbacks, with online learning activities I tend to be more lazy because I'm only fixated on my cellphone, laptop or iPad”.

From the students' perceptions above, students have the same perception in the use of media which is considered quite easy for them in teaching and learning activities during online learning. However, there are advantages and disadvantages, in terms of advantages of online media, they can do learning and access it anywhere that is connected to an internet connection. Then in the shortcoming, there are obstacles in the poor internet connection network so that they cannot participate in teaching and learning activities properly and conducive. Therefore, this relates to one aspect of relevant perception where students have clearly felt the advantages and disadvantages during the online learning process.

Second, from the questions: 'Based on the previous question, what do you think are your own ways/tips to overcome the shortcomings that arise?'. Researcher got answers from the highest students:

“In my opinion, online media is enough to facilitate learning activities so far, because online media can be accessed easily and for free, which can be done anywhere. But the drawback is an internet connection, so we must have good and smooth internet to carry out learning activities without any obstacles”.

Furthermore, the opinions of the lowest students:

“The way to overcome the deficiencies above is by using a good internet so that the network does not have errors during the learning process”.

From the perceptions of the 5 highest students and the 5 lowest students, they said that the ways/tips in overcoming these deficiencies were by improving a better internet network connection to minimize disturbances during online learning.

Motivation

First, from the questions: 'According to your perception, is learning English online enough to increase motivation to improve your speaking skills?'. Researcher got answers from the highest students:

“In my opinion, during online learning it still doesn't increase my motivation to improve my speaking skills, because there is no direct interaction with the teacher or other friends to be able to practice our speaking skills”.

Furthermore, the perceptions of the lowest students:

“In my opinion, it still doesn't increase motivation because we tend to be lazy when learning is done online and there is no interaction with friends or teachers so that speaking skills don't improve.”.

From the perception above, it is concluded that online learning does not improve the students' speaking skills, because there is no direct interaction or communication so that they tend to be lazy and there is no motivation to learn to improve their speaking skills.

Second, from the questions: 'What is your motivation in improving your speaking skills during this online learning?'. Researcher got answers from the highest students:

“In my opinion, motivation in improving speaking skills is by learning while having fun such as watching movies, dramas, series, reading books, novels, comics, listening to songs, so by doing these activities can increase motivation in our speaking skills”.

Next from the lowest students:

“In my opinion, the motivation in improving speaking skills so far is by utilizing media and English learning applications”.

From the perceptions of the students above, the motivation that can improve speaking skills so far is by trying to learn from media and learning applications to add more insight into speaking skills. They can also do things for their own pleasure, such as watching movies, reading books, novels, or comics, playing English games, listening to music. This makes them motivated to learn English, especially to improve their speaking skills.

DISCUSSIONS

Attractiveness

It can be seen from the findings above that 5 of the highest students claimed to have an interest in learning speaking skills. They enjoyed it because they are used to listening and interacting in English. While the lowest 5 students admitted that they lacked of interest in learning speaking skills. They found it difficult because there is no interaction or communication with the teacher or other students so they cannot express their pronunciation to improve their speaking skills. According to Horton (2003), attraction in perception, personality about attraction and disinterest in something that has been formed through observation and experience.

Effectiveness

When the pandemic comes, they have limited time to study. The limitations that they feel are constrained by poor internet connections or networks, from the environment that is less comfortable when carrying out learning activities, and teachers still do not understand the use of online media so as to make the learning process ineffective. Gunawan et al. (2020) found that 78% of the students answered that online learning problems came from limited and expensive internet packages. During online learning, not only students have difficulty in adapting, but teachers also experience difficulties in adapting, for example the selection of online learning media/applications, presentation of teaching materials, giving quizzes that

must adjust to the time allocation provided by the institution. The students said that it is more effective when learning is done face-to-face or offline, because they can interact or communicate directly which can express pronunciation and practice it to speak English. They need to conduct discussions or dialogue in class directly (face to face). This is more fun than having a discussion with just a virtual conference.

Relevance

In the use of online media so far it is considered quite easy in teaching and learning, especially in speaking skills. But there are advantages and disadvantages, for the advantages they can do learning by accessing it anywhere that is connected to an internet connection. By using media and online applications in learning so far, making the learning system flexible and an alternative that can help the process of teaching and learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. While the disadvantages is that they have a bad internet connection, so they cannot access or participate in activities properly and conductively. This makes it a waste of time to study and less effective. Internet connection is one of the important elements in online learning. Without internet access, they can't do distance learning. The first problem with internet access is the unstable internet connection. This finding is in accordance with Rahmawati's research (2016), the second crucial problem is the limited internet quota. Internet quota assistance from the government has not been fully distributed, but the students still have to access a lot of material, not only text but also videos. In addition, most students only have one device to follow the teaching and learning process. Not all of them have a home computer or laptop. Using only one device continuously can make the device hang and lag.

Motivation

With online learning, the students felt that they are not motivating enough to improve their speaking skills. One of the successes in learning is related to the motivation of students (Schunk et al., 2014). Santoso (2017) explained, "Motivation has an important role to encourage someone to actively do something". Learning motivation is one of the factors that also determine effectiveness in learning. A student will learn well if there is a driving factor, namely Learning Motivation. Students will study seriously if they have high Learning Motivation. According to Bakar (2014) "motivation is a complex part of human psychology and behavior that influences how individuals choose to invest their time". They feel they tend to be lazy in online learning activities because they are only glued to laptops, iPads and

cellphones so they are not motivated to learn English, especially to improve their speaking skills. And they feel bored if they study at home every day. They think when every day studying at home, they feel bored or monotonous for them. Some students shared that in the online learning activities they feel bored because it was lack of challenges rather than in face-to-face meeting. Another thing, they can't interact directly with the teacher or other students to express their pronunciation in English or practice their speaking skills directly. Therefore, to improve speaking skills, the students do activities and learn with fun, such as watching movies, listening to songs, reading books/novels/comics, or playing games so that they are motivated to improve their speaking skills.

CONCLUSIONS

The first conclusion is how students perceive learning speaking skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. In learning speaking skills they find it difficult to understand the material, then make students bored when the material is monotonous and cannot interact directly with the teacher or other students. They also don't know how to speak clearly when they learn to use a laptop or cellphone with google meet or zoom.

The final conclusion is about the perception of learning speaking skills based on the aspect of perception. First, the perception of attractiveness is that the 5 highest-achieving students have an interest in learning speaking skills because they are used to listening to and interacting in English. Then the lowest 5 students felt less interested because they found it difficult to interact, so they could not express their speaking skills. The second perception on the aspect of effectiveness is that the speaking skills learning process has not been effective enough, especially in improving speaking, skills due to time constraints, internet connection constraints, and teachers' lack of understanding of the use of online media, which makes learning ineffective. The third perception of the relevance aspect that they have felt in the use of online media has been enough to facilitate the learning process so far. However, there are advantages and disadvantages, namely, the advantage that they can learn by accessing online media that is connected to an internet connection and can be done anywhere. Then the drawback is that there are often problems with internet network connection, which are sometimes bad or unstable, making the learning process not conducive and a waste of time. The fourth perception on the motivation aspect is that they are less motivated to learn speaking skills because they do not have direct interaction with teachers or other students to interact or communicate. They are only glued to laptops, cell phones and iPads, which make

them bored and tend to be lazy to learn speaking skills so that they do not improve their speaking skills.

The suggestion for English Teacher, The teacher is the most important person in the teaching-learning process. To achieve the goal of online teaching, the teacher should be well-versed in the process of online learning, particularly in online learning. Based on the research, students are bored with online learning. The facilities should be provided by the teacher. Because this study was conducted in such a short period of time, it has several limitations. If the teacher teaches online, especially when speaking, the time must be well spent.

For future reseacrhers, can conduct research on other levels of education with a similar problem. In addition, the researcher can use other methods, such as correlation, mixed-method, and so on, to collect data on the students' perceptions of online learning speaking during Covid-19.

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Advisor I,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alfian Zuhairi', written over a series of horizontal lines.

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