

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKING SKILL AT SMKN 1 CINANGKA

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the students' perception on English as foreign language speaking skill. The main purpose of this research is to find out the possible reasons of students' perception, problem and participation on English as foreign language speaking skill. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The instruments used to collect the data are questionnaire, interview, observation and documentation. The participants of this research are 29 students of class XI SMKN 1 Cinangka. On this research which have been conducted revealed that all respondents perceive speaking important and they are willing to deal with the necessities to master it. Although they have interesting materials, empowering activities, and proper opportunity to practice speaking, they insist that they still need to have longer time to practice. In addition, some respondents tended to avoid speaking due to their fear of making mistakes and laughing of classmates. The paper concludes by suggesting the need to create a friendly and conducive environment in the classroom.

Keywords: Speaking skill, language, conversation, student

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in tourism. It facilitates communication among the employees to have more opportunities to work with others in tourism field and to share ideas (Al-Saadi, 2015). It can also give advantages such as creating abilities to improve customers' satisfaction, enhancing and maintaining skills of tourism staff, motivating international tourists, and increasing a better understanding on demand and culture (Thitthongkam & Walsh 2014). The importance of English is always being promoted, with educators' claims that communication skill is an important pre-requisite for a career in the Hotel Industry and English language, being the language of the world, is accepted as the formal medium of communication (Prabhu & Wani, 2015) and that English proficiency is required in all professional areas so that it becomes essential in the tourist industry because of its specific characteristics (Simion, 2012).

However, many students of hospitality have low English language skills, low communication skills and their confidence while communicating in English is low (Prabhu & Wani, 2015). Moreover, tourism employees face problems when communicating with foreigners who speak English. Consequently, the tourism employees face a major problem when they are in contact with foreign tourists. Their usual problems are using inappropriate words and expressions in speaking, being unable to understand foreign accents, having inadequate vocabulary in reading, and lacking grammar knowledge in writing (Prachanant, 2012). The problem of student underachievement in English can be described to be possible mismatch between students' needs, interests, and aims, and the content in current English language courses (Alfehaid, 2014).

Considering the importance of English language skills in hospitality sector, a further and in-depth research is needed. Because based on tourism students' perspective, it is revealed that they are devoted to gaining knowledge around their expectation in developing a career in tourism and hospitality (Akbaba, 2012; Richardson, 2009; Richardson & Thomas, 2012).

Many researches on the perceptions of students and employees in the tourism and hospitality industry have been conducted (Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011; Bury & Oka, 2017; Leslie & Russell, 2006; Apdohan et al, 2015; Bozinovic & Sindik, 2013). The majority of those researches are mainly investigating the implications, effects in particular teaching contexts and foreign language besides English, with relatively few focusing on students' and employees perceptions on the importance of English language skills. Because of this, many issues related to hospitality students' perceptions on the English speaking skill remain to be unexplored.

Based on the consideration above, the researcher tried to focus this research to investigate the students' perceptions of their ability to speak and communicate in English. By conducting this research, the researcher wanted to discover their perceptions and motivations when using English language speaking skill. The researcher also tried to determine the obstacles and other difficulties when developing necessary language skills which were not discussed on the previous researches.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The Definition of Perception

Goldstein (2009: 5) argued that perception does not just happen, but is the end result of complex "behind the scene" processes, many which are not available to your awareness. According to Robbins and Judge (2017: 209) Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment.

Furthermore, Barclay (2011: 12) explained that perception is our sensory experience of the world around us and involves both the recognition of environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli. Through the perceptual process, we gain information about properties and elements of the environment that are critical to our survival. (Borkowski, 2015: 59). Therefore, their perceptions are needed in order to find out what factors affect their speaking. Perception which comes from a person self is called self-perception. And the way in which people see themselves is called self-perception. Self-perception comes from your own experiences. According to Borkowski (2015: 59) the perception process follows four stages: stimulation, registration, organization, and interpretation. The researcher concludes that perception is a sense that is felt by people. People would have their own perception about the experience which they get from their environment, and they probably have different perception about anything based on their experience.

Definition of Speaking Skills

The researcher has found several resources that explain and clarify speaking. According to Scoot (2005:79) "Speaking is considered as the productive and oral skill. Speaking is a cognitive skill, is the idea that knowledge become increases automatically through successive practice." According to Nunan (2003:48) "Speaking is the productive oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning." Kayi (2006) adds that speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. It means that speaking is an interaction between speakers with listeners. Based on the previous definitions, the researcher concludes that speaking is the process of sharing with others, knowledge, interests, attitudes, opinions or ideas. The speaker's ideas become real to him and his listener. The researcher can compose an operational definition of speaking skill in this study as speaking is the ability to produce meaningful utterances/discourse orally to address other people and to be accurate in using grammar and vocabulary.

English as Foreign Language Speaking Skill

As it has already been established, English is the most widely spoken foreign language throughout the whole world. As a consequence, the reasons for learning English are becoming more tied to professional reasons (using language skills at work, working abroad, and personal satisfaction), and people may be highly motivated to learn it as it can produce more benefits than any other language. This is in line with Sharrocks (2009: 9) which showed his concern that Indonesia typically supplies labour at the unskilled end of the hotel sector such as in the Middle East where, in contrast, Filipinos are more often used in administrative or middle

management levels because of their better English language skills. This notion is also supported by Sharrocks (2009: 17) that there is a need for standardization and increased capacity in the education and training system in order to meet demand for skilled labour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher conducted a descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is the appropriate research method dominantly used for this research because the explanation of this research concerns the comprehensive elaboration of the nature of phenomenon, namely gender differences in using language. The data in this research will be in the form of descriptive qualitative data and use qualitative data procedure for the data analysis. For the primary source, the researcher collected questionnaire. As a secondary source the researcher used the result of interview. In qualitative research, the result of interview can be used as the strongest source to get the information. This research was conducted at classroom of Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negri 1 Cinangka where the students were having an English course. The researcher considered the place because it was ideal for students to have natural attitude toward the research. This research was held from April until July 2018 in which during the time of academic was in the second semester. The main participants of the research were 29 students who study Hospitality at eleventh grade of Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negri 1 Cinangka. The researcher asked the participants to participate for several reasons

In questionnaire process, all subjects seat at the same respectable room or place. All subjects were given advance notice that the questionnaire session would be taking place. After the questionnaire was filled it was collected by the researcher. The resulting of the questionnaire would then be transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. In interview process the researcher would conduct individual interview with two of the students from the chosen class. In observation and documentation process, all subjects sat around the same room or place. All subjects were given advance notice that the recording session will be taking place. After the conversation was recorded then it was transmitted to the researcher. The resulting digital copy of the conversation, which approximated the quality of the original recording, was then transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. In analyzing the data the researcher used three kinds of activities in qualitative data analysis: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The sixteen items included in the questionnaire can be divided into five sections. The first statement concentrates on students' belief in their speaking mastery level. The next two statements center on students' eagerness to develop their speaking. The five statements included in the third section deal with students' view on opportunities and time they had for practicing speaking. The three statements in the fourth section focus on students' perceptions on speaking classes' materials, activities and facilities.

The last section, which includes five statements, concentrates on students' view on classroom climate and psychological obstacles.

1. Students perceptions of their speaking and communication skills

Table 1. Respondents' Belief in their Speaking Mastery Level

No.	Statement	Yes	No
		f (%)	f (%)
1	Respondents' speaking mastery is high	3 (10.3)	26 (89.7)

The words are difficult. I've learnt it but still lacking in confidence and pronunciation. (Interviewee A) No not yet, I'm not confident. (Interviewee B) No not yet, my English is still basic. (Interviewee C)

The findings related to the respondents' perception on their belief in their speaking mastery level (as shown in table 1) revealed that 10.3% of them believed their speaking mastery is high, and the rest 89.7% denied this. The data obtained through interviews strengthen these findings, as indicated in the above excerpts.

Table 2. Respondents' Eagerness to Develop Speaking Skill

No.	Statements	Ye	No
		f (%)	f (%)
1	Eagerness to speak English well and fluently.	29 (100)	0 (0)
2	Willingness to be one of the speakers in the seminar, speech contests, debating, and other programs requiring speaking skill held by the school program.	18 (62)	11 (38)

Yes, I want to speak English well and fluently. Speaking English well is really important in hospitality service. It will be difficult to serve foreign guest if we cannot speak English. It will bring shame to us and to the hotel. The most important English skill is speaking. (Interviewee A) Yes it's important. In hotel we need to speak English to serve foreign guest. (Interviewee C)

The distribution of the respondents' eagerness to develop speaking skill (as shown in table 2) revealed that 100% of them wanted to speak English well and fluently. This finding was in line with the finding that more than a half of them (62%) were willing to be one of the speakers in the seminar or other programs requiring speaking skill held by the English Teaching Study Program. The data obtained through interviews strengthen these findings, as indicated in the above excerpts.

2. Interactional opportunities the teacher provide in the classroom

Table 3. Opportunity and Time for Practicing Speaking

No.	Statements	Yes	No
		f (%)	f (%)
1	Appropriate opportunity for improving speaking in speaking classes.	18 (62)	11 (38)
2	The time provided for practicing speaking in speaking class is too limited.	19 (65.5)	10 (34.5)
3	The time provided for practicing speaking in speaking classes should be lengthened.	19 (65.5)	10 (34.5)
4	Proper opportunity to develop speaking skills provided by teachers in non-speaking classes.	0 (0)	29 (100)
5	Necessity for having more intensive use of English in non-speaking classes.	20 (69)	9 (31)

It's lacking, it must be extended so we can practice speaking English with longer duration. (Interviewee A) Yes it's proper, not too short even more than enough because English lesson is 4 hours long. (Interviewee B) It's too short, because the time given is only once a week. (Interviewee C)

Table 3 reveals that 18 (62%) respondents said that they got appropriate opportunity for improving speaking in speaking classes, whereas 11 (38%) respondents denied in this connection. Despite the appropriate opportunity for speaking improvement, 65.5% of them, however, responded that the time provided for practicing speaking in speaking classes is too limited. This is supported by the finding that 65.5% of them suggested that the time for practicing speaking in speaking classes should be lengthened.

When asked whether the opportunity to enhance speaking skills provided by lectures in non-speaking classes was proper, 0% respondents replied that it was so, while 100% were of the opinion that such was not the case. This is in line with the finding that 69% of the respondents agreed with the idea of providing more intensive use of English in non-speaking classes.

3. Students' problems when learning English language speaking skill

Table 4. Speaking Materials, Activities, and Facilities

No.	Statements	Y	N
		f (%)	f (%)
1	The materials in speaking classes are exciting for developing your speaking skills.	21 (72.4)	8 (27.6)
2	The activities in speaking classes empowered you to speak English.	22 (75.9)	7 (24.1)
3	The learning facilities in speaking classes are appropriate.	7 (24.1)	22 (75.9)

The facilities are not appropriate because we still need to go to the library to learn. (Interviewee B) There was an English course so we can have extended study. But now there is no course again because the students' quota is not enough. (Interviewee C)

Observation session 2. Activity 1: (Telephone conversation) Teacher asked students to work in pairs; they had to make a dialogue by themselves about telephone conversation of ticket booking.

Students remained quiet while listening to the instruction, some weren't paying attention. Some of the Students were not interested in the topic. In some presentations, Students

were more engaged and performed well in the role play. Some presenters felt nervous when doing their role play. Most of them didn't feel confident since they made too many mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, and accuracy. Some students forgot their dialogue and they started reading them.

Table 3 reveals that (72.4%) respondents stated that the materials in speaking classes were exciting for developing your speaking skills, and a greater number of them (75.9%) agreed that the activities in speaking classes empowered them to speak English. However, only 24.1% agreed that the learning facilities in speaking classes were appropriate. They were strengthened by the data obtained through interviews, as indicated in above excerpts.

4. Factors which influence students' participation in oral activities inside the classroom

Table 5. Classroom Climate and Students' Psychological Barriers

No.	Statements	Ye	No
		f (%)	f (%)
1	You always use English in all interactions with class mates in all class interactions.	5 (17.2)	24 (82.8)
2	You always communicate in English with teachers in all speaking and non-speaking classes.	4 (13.8)	25 (86.2)
3	Shy to speak English due to laughing of classmates.	23 (79.3)	6 (20.7)
4	Teachers scold when you speak incorrectly.	10 (34.5)	19 (65.5)
5	Do not speak because of feeling afraid of teacher.	11 (38)	18 (62)

Because I'm shy and afraid to do wrong, my fellow classmates will laugh at me. So that's why I'm not really confident. (Interviewee B) I speak English if I am ordered by the teacher in front of the class. (Interviewee A)

The distribution of the respondents' views concerning with the use of English in classroom interactions revealed that only 17.2% of them always communicated in English with class fellows and 13.8% with teachers. The respondents' views on the psychological barriers

to speaking mastery revealed that most of them (79.3%) were shy to speak English because of their classmates laughing and more than one-third (38%) did not speak in English because they were afraid of their lectures. This fear was possibly due to lecturers scolding when they spoke incorrectly, as stated by 38% of respondents (see table 5).

CONCLUSION

According to the data, only 10.3% of the respondents thought their speaking mastery high. The other 89.7% did not think so. However, since all respondents stated that they wanted to speak English well and fluently, it can be safely concluded that for them speaking is very important to master. In relation to this, more than a half of them were willing to deal with necessary activities, including presenting papers at seminars, joining speech contests and debate competitions, in order to master it. A majority of the respondents agreed that the opportunity they got for improving speaking in speaking classes was appropriate. Most of them also stated that materials in speaking classes are exciting and the activities were varied and interesting. However, they thought that the time provided was too limited and the learning facilities need to be improved. These findings indicated that the students should be given motivation, encouragement, some psychological training, reassurance and counseling for removing their shyness due to laughing of their class fellows and scolding by their teachers. The teachers also need to find more friendly ways to correct the students' error. In short, providing a friendly and conducive environment in the classroom should be made a priority.

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