An Analysis of Students' Difficulties In English Conversation Practice

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ABSTRACT

Speaking skill is the most important language skills to support communication, especially in English speaking skills are needed for two-way communication that can be understood by one another. However, there are still many students who are not maximal in carrying out English conversations practice to improving their English speaking skills. Therefore, this study aims to analyze students' problems and difficulties in practicing English conversation in order to improve speaking skills. The method used in this research is qualitative by using a descriptive approach. Data were obtained through direct observation and interviews related to the conditions experienced by students in improving their English speaking skills. After the data has been obtained, the data is analyzed through three stages, namely data reduction, data display and data conclusion. The results showed that students had difficulty practicing English conversations due to a lack of confidence, lack of courage, fear of being wrong, not having enough English vocabulary and not having a supportive environment to practice English conversations. Therefore, it is necessary to have a good learning strategy to encourage students to be able to practice speaking in English.

Keywords: *Students' difficulties; English conversation; Speaking Skill*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, learning English is something that must be mastered because English is the most widely spoken international language in the world. This requires that anyone must be able to use or at least understand English basic to communicate. Apart from that, sometimes we often find sentences or words in English in everyday life, for example in advertisements, roadside, social media or even in the technology that we use every day. This shows that English has become something that we always find in our daily live. Then, apart from being used as the language of international communication, anyone must be good at understanding the meaning in English to understand an instruction, direction or explanation in making something. So it is clear that although in Indonesia English is used as a foreign language, its existence exists in our daily lives. This seems to require everyone to at least understand the usage and sentences or words in English so that they are not fooled or experience miscommunication with the other person who uses English as his language.

In the learning implementation at schools, English has been taught starting from elementary schools, where the introduction of English vocabulary has also been taught in kindergarten. But in fact, the use and proficiency of English is still in the low category. Arnanda & Harpain (2017) stated that there were many difficulties faced by students in learning English which made it difficult for them to improve their English language skills. This is the biggest task for English teachers to be able to find reasons why the teaching being carried out has not produced individuals who are good at communicating in English. The teacher as a facilitator and has the most important role in controlling and managing the class should be responsible in finding ways so that students can use and understand English well. In overcoming this problem the teacher must know what is the background of problems that make the increase in English mastery at school is still low. Teachers can see, analyze and observe related to these conditions. In this way the teacher can formulate and conclude the reasons students experience these conditions.

Learning English at school is a scary thing for most students. Many students feel that learning English is not easy and causes them to lack knowledge and willingness to learn English. The teacher has the biggest role in convincing students that learning a foreign language, especially English, is a very enjoyable thing. Learning English is not only because of the demands of school lessons, but more than that where students will be faced with the wide real world by using the most widely used international language, namely English. Often we find English not only at school but in everyday life, on social media, television, advertisements, on the roadside and in city corners there is even English, so we should learn English to help and make it easier for us to understand the meaning and communicate globally. Mastering English can also make us open to a wider world because every time we speak and access books and the internet, it will be easier for us to understand because we have the ability to translate it. In conclusion, students should be able to maximize their English skills so that they can be used as 21st century skills that are connected throughout the world and take advantage of opportunities to communicate in English.

In learning English in Indonesia where it is used as a foreign language, it is necessary to practice conversational practice in English so that students are accustomed to and can improve the use of English in everyday life. English teachers can provide activities or teaching methods that emphasize the practice of using English so that students want to practice more in using English as a communication tool. The teacher could have given students speaking practice exercises in class. This method will train students to get used to using English when carrying out a conversation in English. Through conversational practice it will also encourage students so they want to try speaking in English even if only with classmates. But sometimes, even though various teaching strategies and interesting learning media have been given, there are still many students who have not used English optimally in communicating, including in English classes. Therefore, this study will examine the difficulties and challenges faced by EFL students regarding English conversational practice. Find out what makes and the background of these students not being able to use English well.

METHOD

This research used a type of qualitative research using a descriptive approach. Qualitative research can be used to examine the reasons, opinions and opinions of the object under study to find out a condition that is being faced. According to Patton & Cochran (2007) states that qualitative research is research that is characterized by its purpose, which relates to understanding some aspects of social life, and the nature of the method that produces words, not numbers, as data for analysis. Qualitative research is an understanding of social phenomena based on the participant's point of view. While the descriptive approach is an approach where the data obtained will be explained in detail based on the conditions and circumstances that are obtained in real terms in the field. According to Sugiyono (2014) explained that qualitative descriptive method can be used to see the situation or condition of the object being studied naturally without data manipulation and also in qualitative descriptive research, the researcher has a key role in conducting research.

Qualitative methods are used to see the condition of the object being studied naturally where the researcher holds the main key in a study. Then, the descriptive approach aims to find out the opinions or reasons behind a problem. The participants in this study were 25 students of class X at SMKN 03 Lebong who were taking English subjects. Participants were selected based on purposive sampling where the level of ability to speak English from all grade levels found that class X had the lowest ability to speak English. Therefore, the sample in this study were students who had low English speaking skills as many as 25 students in class X. Furthermore, data were obtained through direct observation to find out the real conditions experienced by students while learning English and interviews to find out in depth about difficulties faced by students in practicing speaking English. After the data is obtained, the data will be analyzed through the stages offered by Miles & Huberman (2001) including data reduction, data display and data conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The ability to speak English is something that must be mastered in this era, where mastery and understanding in communication is needed for good interglobal interaction in English. However, in the practice of implementing English learning, there are still students who have not maximized the use of English in communication. The results of research on the difficulties experienced by students in practicing speaking English are presented as follows:

A. Lack of self-confidence

Speaking in English is sometimes a challenge for most students. Many students feel that they lack confidence when practicing conversations in English. Students feel that they do not have a high level of confidence when practicing speaking English, especially if they practice it in front of the class. Inayah & Lisdawati (2017) stated that students' low self-confidence forms them into students who have no motivation in learning English. Therefore, it is necessary to change attitudes so that someone who has courage and good self-confidence will certainly shape the character of students who are able to speak

English. In cases like this the teacher must be able to determine how students can be willing to grow confident in practicing speaking English. Teachers can encourage students by utilizing various strategies and media which can certainly increase students' self-confidence. Students' difficulties in increasing self-confidence must be overcome immediately because in language classes students must be able to master and understand the use of English, especially if they are able to produce pronunciation in English.

B. Do not dare to speak in English

In addition to the lack of confidence when speaking English, most students also feel that they do not dare to speak English. This is because there is no habit of speaking in English so that students do not have good preparation and experience in speaking in English. The lack of students' sense of courage in using English greatly affects how they can improve their English language skills, even though sometimes the teacher forces them to speak, most students still don't dare to try to speak English. To overcome this problem the teacher should be able to determine what kind of learning style so that students have the courage to communicate in English. Teachers can use a variety of interesting learning strategies, approaches or media to train students to have the courage to speak English. One of them is by using videos, this is in line with the results of research submitted by Prayudha (2021) that teachers can use video-based learning to train students to improve their English skills. In this case the teacher must train and emphasize students to have the courage to speak using videos so they can foster their enthusiasm in communicating in English or the teacher can also use social media platforms (Prayudha, 2022) to develop students' courage in speaking English.

Courage in using English is really needed as a foreign language that is learned in school. There are still many students who are afraid to use English in learning even though it is during English class hours. This fear arises because of a lack of practice and they don't usually practice pronunciation or practice speaking English in everyday life. This fear that arises must be overcome by students by asking the teacher's help to continue training and doing speaking exercises in English. The teacher's role is very important here to help students who are afraid to use English in learning. Teachers can help students by changing the learning environment that supports learning English to be more fun and certainly familiarizes students with the courage to speak English.

C. Afraid of being wrong

Some students when they try to start a conversation in English class feel that they lack the courage to say sentences in English. Students feel that speaking in English will make it seem as if they are making mistakes so they are afraid to speak and practice in English. The fear that often attacks student psychology greatly affects their courage in communicating and increasing

knowledge and skills in English, whereas learning a language must have the courage to do and practice it, the problem of right or wrong is not something that is raised. In English learning classes one must have the courage to start a conversation so that self-confidence can arise even if someone has low ability or has a poor understanding of vocabulary. Here the teacher needs to provide good encouragement by providing input, rewarding students who dare to appear and make learning classes more enjoyable and must accustom students to dare to speak even with low English mastery.

In line with the results of research conducted by Fatimah, Wahyuni & Qamariah (2021) which stated that many students were afraid to start a conversation in English due to difficulty pronouncing English words due to differences in the pronunciation of the alphabet or words between Indonesian and Indonesian. English so that they are afraid to speak English.

D. Do not have enough vocabulary

The most common thing students experience when starting a conversation in English is a lack of understanding and knowledge of vocabulary in English. Most students have limited vocabulary in English so they find it very difficult to organize and convey ideas and opinions in English. In addition, the limited vocabulary in English makes students feel unmotivated to speak, especially if they are asked to speak in front of the class. The problem of having a low understanding of English vocabulary is actually a classic problem that often occurs for language learners. Therefore, if someone wants to master a language, the first thing that must be understood is the availability of sufficient vocabulary understanding (Mahardhiella, Nisa & Jannah, A. N, 2022) so that they can construct a sentence in the language they are learning. Here, the role of the language teacher is very concrete to realize students who are able to master a new language. Providing training and understanding of foreign languages is the most basic thing for students to make them understand using foreign languages. How is it possible to learn a new language without having sufficient vocabulary understanding, therefore it is the teacher who is able to encourage students to be able to have a good vocabulary in learning English.

To overcome the problem of lack of vocabulary in English the teacher must create a teaching that emphasizes understanding vocabulary in English. The teacher must determine the right media or method so that students are able to understand and understand the new vocabulary they encounter, the teacher can just use a method that suits the characteristics of the students or a teaching method that is more acceptable according to the conditions of the students. Prayudha (2021) states that teachers can apply teaching methods using songs to encourage students to learn English. The use of this method is also very useful as a memory exercise for students of the vocabulary they encounter when listening to songs. Thus, learning about the lack of vocabulary can be overcome

by the teacher through learning that is more fun and emphasizes the process of remembering students' English vocabularies.

E. The environment that does not support the learning process

The next factor that makes students feel unable to maximize the use of English in speaking is because there is no environment that supports the formation of English conversations. A good learning environment greatly influences students' habits in practicing the use of English (Prayudha, 2021), but in reality in Indonesia a learning environment that supports English practicum-based learning is lacking or sometimes even non-existent. In fact, they only learn English only at school during English class hours so that it is not possible to improve English skills outside of school. In accordance with research conducted by Sormin (2018) which states that there are some difficulties experienced by students who learn English, including the lack of environmental support that provides a place to practice speaking English, causing little opportunity to practice speaking English. This is the main reason why students cannot maximize the use of English due to environmental factors that do not exist to support the practice of learning to speak English. Therefore, a language teacher must be able to form a good and stable environment to provide a place for students to practice English conversations at school or the teacher also form English study groups or extracurricular organizations as a place to improve English speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

English is one of the languages that is massively used in international interactions. This results in mastery of English having to be taught more intensely in order to produce students who are proficient in using English as a global language of communication. However, in practice at school there are still many students who have not maximized their mastery of English and this results in discrepancies in achieving learning objectives. The teacher as the key in the learning class must be able to find out the reasons behind why students are still not able to maximize the use of English in conversation class. In the study the difficulties experienced by students in practicing speaking English included a lack of confidence experienced by students, students did not dare to speak in English, students were afraid of making mistakes when speaking in English, students did not have sufficient understanding of vocabulary in English. and the unavailability of a learning environment that supports the process of learning English activities.

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