

Students' Difficulties In Speaking English Of The Eighth Grade Students Of SMP Negeri 35 Samarinda

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Abstract

The current study aimed to analyze the levels of students' English speaking difficulties and to investigate the most frequent factor causing why students perceived the English speaking difficulties. It employed descriptive quantitative, in which the data obtained from 75 junior high school students of SMP Negeri 35 Samarinda, who responded a-five point Likert scale questionnaire through asynchronous online Google Form. The computer program of SPSS.22 was utilized in the data analysis. It showed that the level of English speaking difficulties perceived by the students was high categorized that proved with the mean score 3.28. Then, the most factor that caused on the English speaking difficulties faced by students was academic and conversational English skills (Mean=3.48), followed by linguistics obstacles (M=3.30), speech processing difficulties (M=3.29), negative effects (M=3.25), and finally access to speaking opportunities (M=2.99).

Keywords: Students Difficulties, Speaking Difficulties

1. Introduction

Speaking is the act of delivering language in any form that is used by the mouth. As its function to communicate, it helps the students to interact to one another. It can be also as a measurement to know student's abilities and weaknesses of speaking especially in English language. Nunan (2003) stated that speaking is a productive aural/oral skill that can be directly or indirectly observed. Student can be proven good at English if they can speak English well. To be able to speak well, it takes some mastery components to support, such as vocabulary mastery, fluency, pronunciation, grammar knowledge and etc. However, the students perceived the difficulties in speaking English, as it was perceived by the eighth grade of junior high school students of SMP Negeri 35 Samarinda.

It found that most of the students could not speak English even some students were failed to derive some vocabularies because they lack of knowledge in vocabulary mastery and it made them not able to speak English well. Many reasons happened behind these problems like the students had difficulties in pronunciation, grammar skill, and vocabulary. Some students spoke English with Indonesia language as the mother tongue and they still confused when their teacher asked them to practice through some dialogues. They used to Indonesia language because they never used English to communicate in school activities. In this case, Penny Ur (199) argued that there were many obstacles in speaking covering lack of words, participation, inhibition, nothing to say and mother tongue use. Therefore, it was important to conduct a study about the difficulties in speaking English to recognize the students' real problems as well as to prove the existence of the students' English speaking difficulties. In addition, this current study was conducted in order to profound the data finding of English

speaking difficulties especially perceived by the junior high school students in Indonesian context in Samarinda City. It aimed to know the levels of speaking English difficulties and to investigate the most factors that caused on the English speaking difficulties experienced by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 35 Samarinda in the academic year 2020/2021.

2. Literature Review

1. Concept of Speaking

Harmer (2007) stated that speaking is the ability to speak fluently and presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language. Brown (2001) mentioned five basics of speaking or oral production. They are imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive. Briefly, this author explained that in term of imitative; participants are expected to label or imitate pronunciation as native speakers pronounced. Further, in term of intensive, participants are expected to gain the meaning of conversation based on its context. Furthermore, in responsive, participants are expected to understand brief conversation, greetings, small talk, simple request and comments, etc. Further, in interactive term, participants are expected to interact to each other to change information in order to maintain social relationship. Lastly, in extensive, it covers on speech, oral presentation and storytelling.

2. Factors Causing of Speaking Difficulties

According to Bygate (2008) there are factors that affecting the difficulties in speaking as follows:

- a. **Linguistic Obstacles**
Linguistic problems are obstacles in certain language during speaking. They can be a grammar error, incorrect pronunciation or lack of vocabulary knowledge.
- b. **Speech Processing Difficulties**
Most of the students are still using their mother tongue in daily lives. They also find it difficult to use some words in English. Students don't communicate well when they have conversation with their teacher. They still need to focus on fluency when they speak English because there are many problems that they do not have any mastery in them.
- c. **Academic and Conversational Skills**
Many students find it difficult to lead discussion in English because they do not suit with the class situation. Most of them seem to do not want to participate themselves in English discussion because they are afraid to speak. One of this happens during presentation in front of the class.
- d. **Negative Affects**
The visible affects on students are when they feel nervous when they want to speak, positively have anxiety about grammar error they would have which will make the students awkwardly silent in the classroom, and have less confident to speak.
- e. **Access to speaking opportunities**
Individual learning is not only involves one individual but also include social groups. Most of the students need to speak English more outside the classroom since they do not participate more inside the classroom.

3. Methods

This study used descriptive quantitative design. It collected and analyzed numerical data to describe, explain, predict, or control phenomena of interest (Gay, Miils, & Airasian, 2012). There were 75 samples from 182 eighth grade junior high school students of SMP Negeri 35 Samarinda in the academic year 2020/2021, who responded questionnaire as the research instrument via asynchronous online Google Form. The questionnaire was adopted from the study of Bygate (2008). It was a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 (*never*), 2 (*seldom*), 3 (*sometime*), 4 (*often*) and 5 (*always*). The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS program version 22 of descriptive statistics covering mean score, standard deviation, frequency and percentage. Its results were interpreted by using the study of Rajab, Zakaria, Rahman, Hosni, & Hassani (2012) to identify the levels of students' speaking English difficulties. The levels were categorized into two; 1.00 – 3.00 was low level and 3.01 – 5.00 was high level of English speaking difficulties.

4. Results

The findings covered on the levels of students' speaking English difficulties and the most factors causing of their English speaking difficulties.

a. Levels of Students' English Speaking Difficulties

The finding obtained from 75 junior high school students who answered a-five Likert scale questionnaire. The data analysis used the descriptive statistics of SPSS program version 22 As seen in Table 1, it showed the individual students' speaking English difficulties.

Table 1: levels of individual student's speaking English difficulties

No.	Ranging of Mean Scores	Levels of English Speaking Difficulties	No. of Students	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	1.00 to 3.00	Low Level	26	35%
2	3.01 to 5.00	High Level	49	65%

N=75

From Table 1 above, it stated that there were 75 students who responded the questionnaire of speaking English difficulties. 26 students (35%) were categorized low level and 49 students (65%) were indicated high level. It could be summarized that most of the students perceived high level of speaking English difficulties.

Further, it also provided the following table, indicating the levels of English speaking difficulties for all students, as it shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: levels of all students' speaking English difficulties

Level of students' English speaking difficulties	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Categorization
	75	3.28	0.59	High level

Based on Table 2, it could be seen that the mean score was 3.28 and the standard deviation was 0.59. Seeing the mean score and ranging mean score were in the level 3.01 to 5.00; it could be summarized that the level of English speaking difficulties perceived by the eighth grade students of SMPN 35 Samarinda in the academic year 2020/2021 was high categorized.

b. Most Frequent Factor Causing of Students' Speaking English Difficulties

It classified the factors causing of students' English speaking difficulties into five categories, including linguistics obstacles, speech processing difficulties, academic and conversational English skill, negative effects, and finally access to speaking opportunities. Table 3 indicated the factors causing of students' English difficulties.

Table 3: factors causing of students' speaking English difficulties

No.	Factors Causing of Speaking English Difficulties	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Linguistics obstacles	3.30	0.16
2	Speech processing difficulties	3.29	0.17
3	Academic and conversational English skills	3.48	0.24
4	Negative effects	3.25	0.32
5	Access to speaking opportunities	2.99	0.39

In relation to the Table 3 above, it could be seen that the most factor causing of students' English speaking difficulties was academic and conversational English skill (M=3.48), followed by linguistics obstacles (M=3.30), speech processing difficulties (M=3.29), negative effects (M=3.25), and finally access to speaking opportunities (M=2.99). Furthermore details related with the description of factors causing of speaking English difficulties experienced by the students, it could be seen in the further sections.

c. Linguistics Obstacles

It referred to the students' speaking English difficulties at producing correct grammar, complex structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. It means that mostly students did errors of using grammar, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and producing pronunciation. Table 3 summarized the students' response:

Table 4: linguistics obstacles

Statements	f /%	Never	Seldom	Sometime	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item-1: I make grammatical errors when speaking English.	f %	4 5%	10 13%	35 47%	22 29%	4 5%	3.16	0.92
Item-6: I am not good at using complex	f %	3 4%	6 8%	30 40%	22 29%	14 19%	3.51	1.02

structures when speaking English.

Item-11: I get stuck with grammar and vocabulary when speaking English to my teachers.	f	5	12	31	18	9		
	%	7%	16%	41%	24%	12%	3.19	1.06

Item-16: I encounter pronunciation problem when speaking English.	f	4	10	29	20	12		
	%	5%	13%	39%	27%	16%	3.35	1.07

N=75

Table 4 indicated that the Item-6 stated, “*I am not good at using complex structures when speaking English*” (M=3.51) was the most difficult faced by the students in English speaking, followed by Item-16, “*I encounter pronunciation problem when speaking English*” (M=3.35), then Item-11, “*I get stuck with grammar and vocabulary when speaking English to my teachers*” (M=3.19), and finally Item-1, “*I make grammatical errors when speaking English*” (M=3.16).

Based on the data description above, it could be stated that the students perceived the linguistics problems in English speaking, including difficult to produce complete structure, error pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and error grammar. Further, to see the overall mean of all items was in the ranging scale mean (M=3.01 - 5.00), it indicated that the difficulties of linguistics factors were high categorized.

d. Speech Processing Difficulties

The speech processing referred to the students’ difficulties to find the ways in English speaking, such as thinking with their mother tongue, avoiding difficult word, creating effective communication, and producing fluency and accuracy of speaking. Table 4 indicated the students’ speech processing difficulties.

Table 5: speech processing difficulties

Statements	f /%	Never	Seldom	Sometime	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item-2: I think in my mother tongue when speaking English.	f	9	9	21	27	9		
	%	12%	12%	28%	36%	12%	3.24	1.18
Item-7: I avoid using difficult word and structures when speaking English.	f	7	6	25	22	15		
	%	9%	8%	33%	29%	20%	3.43	1.18

Item-12: I struggle to communicate effectively in English with my teachers.	f	9	16	22	16	12			
	%	12%	21%	29%	21%	16%	3.07	1.23	
Item-17: I feel difficulty attending to both fluency and accuracy when speaking English.	f	1	8	30	30	6			
	%	1%	11%	40%	40%	8%	3.43	0.84	

N=75

Table 5 referred to the data related with the students' English speaking difficulties in term of speech processing. The Item-7 stated, "*I avoid using difficult word and structures when speaking English*" (M=3.43) and Item-17 stated, "*I feel difficulty attending to both fluency and accuracy when speaking English*" (M=3.43) were frequently difficulties perceived by the students, followed by Item-2, "*I think in my mother tongue when speaking English*" (M=3.24) and finally Item-12, "*I struggle to communicate effectively in English with my teachers*" (M=3.07).

Based on the data description above, it could be said that the students were difficult to process their English speaking. Mostly, they avoided difficult word when speaking, were not fluent and accuracy in speaking, thought using their mother tongue, and struggled to create effective communication. Furthermore, to see the overall mean of all items was in the ranging scale mean (M=3.01 - 5.00), it indicated that the difficulties of speech processing factors were high categorized.

e. Academic and Conversational English Skills

It dealt with the problems of academic English conversation in which students were difficult and afraid to lead English discussion, speech and presentation in the classroom atmosphere. Table 5 was the summary of the students' response related with this difficulty factor as follows:

Table 6: academic and conversational English skills

Statements	f / %	Never	Seldom	Sometime	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item-3: I feel difficulty leading class discussion in English.	f	4	8	24	24	15		
	%	5%	11%	32%	32%	20%	3.51	1.10
Item-8: I feel difficulty giving	f	5	10	15	24	21		
	%	7%	13%	20%	32%	28%	3.61	1.22

speeches in English in front of the whole class.

Item-13: I feel difficulty participating in whole-class English.	f	5	11	23	21	15		
	%	7%	15%	31%	28%	20%	3.40	1.16
Item-18: I feel difficulty participating in small – group English discussion during class.	f	6	15	24	24	6		
	%	8%	20%	32%	32%	8%	3.12	1.08
Item-20: I am not good at joking and chatting in English.	f	3	5	22	22	23		
	%	4%	7%	29%	29%	31%	3.76	1.09

N=75

Table 6 dealt with the data related with students' English speaking difficulties in term of academic and presentation skills. The Item-20 stated, "*I am not good at joking and chatting in English*" (M=3.76) was dominant problem faced by the students, followed by Item-8 stated, "*I feel difficulty giving speeches in English in front of the whole class*" (M=3.61), Item-3 stated, "*I feel difficulty leading class discussion in English*" (M=3.51), Item-13 stated, "*I feel difficulty participating in whole-class English*" (M=3.40), and finally Item-18 stated, "*I feel difficulty participating in small – group English discussion during class*" (M=3.12).

Based on the data description above, it showed that the students experienced the difficulties of academic and conversational English skills, such as enable joking and chatting, difficult at giving speech, difficult to lead classroom discussion and small group. In addition, related with the overall mean of all item was in the ranging scale mean (M=3.01 – 5.01), it indicated that the difficulties of academic and conversational English skills were in the high level.

f. Negative Effects

In this domain factor, it concerned on the students' difficulties of English speaking that covered on feeling nervous, anxiety, and unconfident, which make students to be silent. Table 6 provided the data as shown in the following table:

Table 7: negative effects

Statements	f	Never	Seldom	Sometime	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Deviation
	/%							
Item-4: I am	f	6	8	22	18	21	3.53	1.23

nervous when speaking English.	%	8%	11%	29%	24%	28%		
Item-9: I worry about grammar when speaking English.	f	3	7	23	32	10		
	%	4%	9%	31%	43%	13%	3.52	0.98
Item-14: I keep silent in class because of lack of confidence in speaking English.	f	15	19	23	14	13		
	%	20%	13%	31%	19%	17%	3.00	1.36
Item-19: I resist opportunities to speak English in class or outside class.	f	13	11	28	13	10		
	%	17%	15%	37%	17%	13%	2.95	1.25

N=75

Table 7 concerned on the data related with students' English speaking difficulties in term of negative effects. The Item-4 stated, "*I am nervous when speaking English*" (M=3.53) was always experienced by the students, followed by Item-9 stated, "*I worry about grammar when speaking English*" (M=3.52), Item-14 stated, "*I keep silent in class because of lack of confidence in speaking English*" (M=3.00), and finally Item-19 stated, "*I resist opportunities to speak English in class or outside class*" (M=2.95).

Based on the data description above, it could be concluded that the students perceived the negative effects of English speaking, including nervous, worry, unconfident, anxiety, silence, and avoid the opportunities to speak English both inside and outside classroom. In general, it could be stated that the negative effects of English speaking was in the high level, although the students were some time to accept and reject to chance to speak English.

g. Access to Speaking Opportunities

It was related with the students' English speaking difficulties because of lack opportunities to speak English at inside and outside classroom and lack anything to say during English speaking both at inside and outside classroom. The data could be seen below:

Table 8: access to speaking opportunities

Statements	f / %	Never	Seldom	Sometime	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item-5: I feel lack of opportunities to speak English outside class.	f	20	9	18	16	12		
	%	27%	12%	24%	21%	16%	2.94	1.40
Item-10: I feel lack of	f	20	18	20	7	10		
	%	27%	24%	27%	9%	13%	2.63	1.34

opportunities to speak English in class.	%							
Item-15: I feel lack of things to say when speaking English in class or outside class	f	2	15	19	29	10		
	%	3%	20%	25%	39%	13%	3.40	1.03

From the table 8 above, it could be seen that the Item-15 stated, “I feel lack of things to say when speaking English in class or outside class” (M=3.40) was highly perceived as the difficult speaking by the students, followed by Item-5 stated, “*I feel lack of opportunities to speak English outside class*” (M=2.94), and finally, Item-10 stated, “*I feel lack of opportunities to speak English in class*” (M=2.63).

Based on the data description above, it could be concluded that the students perceived the difficulties to access to speaking opportunities. The students were limited topic to say anything that was caused by the limited opportunities to speak both inside and outside classroom.

5. Discussion

Basically, this current study was conducted in the primary school level by involving the eighth grade students at SMPN 35 Samarinda in the academic year 2020/2021, focusing on analyzing the students’ English speaking difficulties level as well as their factors that caused the difficulties. Indeed, the researcher discussed the research findings that have been presented at the previous section.

The research finding of this current study showed that the 75 junior high school students experienced the difficulties to speak English that was in the high level classification (M=3.28). This finding supported the previous studies by Mahmud (2018), Candraloka & Rosdiana (2019), Tasmia (2019), Clarita & Nurhidayat (2020), Jaelani & Zabidi (2020) and Saputra (2020) reporting that generally Indonesian junior high school students had problems when they spoke English. These English speaking difficulties were categorized into a strong level (Fitri, 2019).

Further the English speaking difficulties in Indonesian context, they were not only faced by the junior high school students, but also they were perceived by the students of secondary school and university levels. It was reported that the secondary level of senior, vocational, and boarding school students got problems in English speaking (Rahayu, 2015; Ayu, 2018); and Daely et al, 2020). Similarly, the university students also encountered the English speaking problems (Hadijah, 2014 and Sayuri, 2016). There were some factors why Indonesian students among junior, senior, and university levels encountered the English speaking difficulties.

According to the current research finding, it reported that the main cause of the difficulties was academic and conversational English skill of the junior high school students (M=3.48). Then, it was followed by linguistics obstacles (M=3.30), speech processing difficulties (M=3.29), negative effects (M=3.25), and finally access to speaking opportunities

(M=2.99). For more details, in term of academic and conversational English skills; they were difficult and afraid to have discussion, speech and presentation in English in their classroom. Further, in term of linguistics obstacles; they were difficult to use grammar, complex sentence, vocabulary and pronunciation. Furthermore, in the aspect of negative effects; they sometime used their mother tongue to think, got ineffective communication and difficult to get fluency and accuracy in their English speaking. Moreover, in the aspect of negative effects; they experienced nervous, anxious, unconfident and silence during the speaking English. Finally, to the aspect of accessing to speaking opportunities; the students responded that they were lack anything to say and lack opportunities to speak English in the classroom and in the outside classroom.

To respond the research findings above related with the factors causing the students' English speaking difficulties; Fitri (2019) also reported that academic and conversational English skills were the most dominant difficulty faced by the junior high students. It was because of nothing to say, lack classroom participation and they preferred to use their first language in the classroom (Saputra, 2020). Consequently, they were hard to mastering speaking skills.

Based on the some research findings reported by the previous study, it could be stated that the sources of the students' English difficulties came from the internal factors covering linguistics problems such as lacks of understanding related with grammatical patterns, limited vocabulary mastery, incorrect pronunciation, accuracy, fluently; and psychological problems including lack motivation, unconfident, shyness, anxiety, confusion, and fear of making mistakes; and lastly the external factors, such as the environment of English speaking learning context and practice (Rahayu, 2015; Chandraloka & Rosdiana, 2019; Erlina, 2019; Shen & Chiu, 2019; Widyasworo, 2019; and Jaelani & Zabidi, 2020).

To see the findings both of the current study and the previous studies of English speaking difficulties as well as their causing factors that had been identified; the problems or difficulties of English speaking faced by students in all education levels in Indonesia, especially for junior high school students should be solved by mastering the English speaking skills of linguistics features (such vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, accuracy), as well as improving psychological awareness (such as; motivation and self confidence) and practicing to speak English both at inside and outside classroom. As a result, their English speaking skill ability improved.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous section, the conclusions were drawn. Firstly, the students' speaking English difficulty was classified in high level. Secondly, the factors causing of speaking English difficulties were identified. The most factors was academic and conversational English skills, followed by linguistics obstacles, speech processing difficulties, negative effects and finally access to speaking opportunities.

7. Suggestions

Regarding to the conclusions above, it is suggested for the related parties. First, it is suggested for students to find out how to minimize the English speaking difficulties level based on the main sources of difficulties. It can be solved by reducing negative effects of speaking anxiety and improving self-confidence as well as speaking skills and practices not

only at inside the classroom but also at their social environment. Further for English teachers, it is suggested to solve students' speaking English difficulties by selecting appropriate teaching speaking methods, approaches, and/or techniques that concern on English speaking practices. As a result, the students' speaking difficulties can be solved. Finally, for further researchers to organize the experimental study or classroom action research to solve high level of the junior high students' English speaking difficulties by selecting suitable teaching speaking methods, approaches, and/or techniques that concern on English speaking practices. Furthermore, classroom observation and interview to junior high school students can be conducted in order to get comprehensive speaking English difficulties as well as their solutions and skills development.

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