

**STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN RETELLING PAST
EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY AT ONE PRIVATE
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN PALEMBANG**



UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

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Abstract

The aims of this study were to find out the difficulties and the factors among students in retelling their past experience at one private junior high school in Palembang. Case study was used as research methodology in this study. I used two types of instruments including speaking test and interview. The participants of this study were one class in speaking test section, then five students in interview section. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data from speaking test and interview. I found that students have some difficulties in retelling past experience. The difficulties of the students were in fluency, accuracy, interaction, and coherence while speaking. The result showed that there were four factors those causing student difficulties in retelling their past experience. The factors were (1) lack of aptitude, (2) mother-tongue use, (3) shyness, (4) lack of motivation. In conclude, based on knowing the factors above. I hope that the next researcher could find the solution about it, not only the factors.

Keywords : students difficulties in speaking, retelling past experience

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents: (1) importance of English, (2) the concept of speaking, (3) problems in students' speaking, (4) factors that influence students' speaking difficulties, (5) retelling in recount text, and (6) previous related studies.

2.1 Importance of English

The English language has become an international language. The importance of the knowledge of English is becoming more and more important nowadays. English is important for higher education and specialized training. Most of the books on any subjects are written in English or quickly translated in English. As Rivers (1981) argues, speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in our communication. Developing speaking skills is of vital importance in EFL programs. In other hand, Nunan (1999) argues that success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the arget language. Therefore, English is widely use to extent communication across the globe that cannot be compared to other languages and it is used by people not only from various country but also from the same.

2.2 The Concept of Speaking

Among four language skills, speaking is the first skill acquired in the process of language acquisition. Qureshi (2007) argues why speaking is essential in

communication. Language is communication tool among people to share ideas. People use language at their work places. Researchers working either in a medical laboratory or in a language laboratory are supposed to speak correctly and effectively in-order to communicate well with one another. Problems in communication cause misunderstandings. Meanwhile, communication exist where there is speech. However, a language is only a mere script, without speech. The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community. Also, for a smooth running of any system, the speakers of a language need to be especially and purposefully trained in the skill of speaking. In order to become a well-rounded communicator, people have to be proficient in each of the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the ability to speak skillfully provides speakers with several distinct advantages. The capacity to express thoughts, opinions and feelings, in the form of words put together in a meaningful way provides the speaker with these advantages. An effective speaker can gain the attention of the audience and hold it till the completion of his message. Speaking skills are important for career success, but certainly not limited to one's professional aspirations. Speaking skills can also enhance one's personal life.

Speaking is more complex that it seems. It does not only involve the ability to pronounce words correctly, but also the ability to use grammatical structure and develop the topic. Kurum (2013) agrees that speaking is not only about saying grammatically correct sentences to be correctly pronounced, but it is also about diction and meaning. There are three areas of speaking content; mechanics which include grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, then function and pragmatic areas

(Kurum, 2013, p. 2). Another statement by Krashen (1987 in Kurum, 2013, p. 5) reveals that speaking indicates the level of comprehension because how good learners in speaking depends on the input from listening and reading. Harmer (2007) proposes three reasons why speaking is essential in English language teaching. The reasons are that speaking activity enables learners to practice, both teachers and students can have direct feedback and students can use various aspects of language in speaking such as grammatical use and pronunciation practice.

In English classes, speaking has been particularly treated as a crucial learning. Speaking activity can be conducted in several forms of activity such as discussion, role play, speech and etc. Furthermore, Harmer (2017) explains how speaking activity should be ordered. Before speaking time, it is better to give students time to think about what they will say or discuss either individually or in a group. After that, let them discuss their thoughts together, give every student the same opportunity to speak and finally students are given feedback both from their classmates and teachers. Meanwhile, Thornbury (2005) suggests three stages in teaching speaking. Firstly, a teacher needs to raise learners' attention. After that, learners notice what they are learning and the last is learners understand what they are learning.

In conclusion, speaking has played very crucial part in communication as people talk to share ideas in daily life. This has triggered speaking as verbal skill which needs to be taken seriously in English language teaching. Teaching speaking is not only about asking students to speak their mind but it also includes how to

create a set of speaking learning activities process. Teachers must be able to provide various speaking activity which is must be well-ordered and well-prepared.

2.3 Problems in Students' Speaking

Teaching speaking is never easy as there are various problems that English learners encounter. According to Chomsky (1965), language competence is the ideal language system that enables speakers to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences in their language, and to distinguish grammatical sentences and ungrammatical ones. It is used to describe both the production and comprehension of the language. Language factor in speaking performance refers to ability of speaker to master the aspects of language while communicating. Zhang (2009) argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. The students' difficulties in speaking include; accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence.

2.3.1 Accuracy

The first one is accuracy. Accuracy refers to how correct learners' use the language system is. It is including their use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. It is often compared to fluency when talking about a learner's level of speaking. For example, a learner might be fluent of making their meaning clear, but not accurate and make a lot of mistakes.

Speaking accuracy demonstrates “the extent to which the language produced conforms to language norms” (Yuan and Ellis, 2003, p.2) under which appropriate use of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar are subsumed. Following the most dominant view, which is also used in most standardized tests, for example by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001), the level of oral competence is primarily assessed in terms of grammatical, lexical and phonological proficiency.

2.3.2 Fluency

The second one is fluency. Fluency refers to the ability to talk without pauses, without repeating things and without getting stuck and confused. Speaking fluency pertains to the ability to produce the spoken language without undue pausing or hesitation (Skehan, 1996, p.2). For examples, the fluency mistakes while speaking English. Common mistakes in fluency mostly the students faced, they are make mistakes in mispronouncing words or not being able to find the right words or even not being able to say the thought clearly. Learners have problems to pronounce words fluently with native like pronunciation because of prosodic features such as intonation, stress, and other phonological nuances (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Learners must be familiar with the knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of well-organized interpersonal exchange, in which many factors interact. Thus, it is difficult

for EFL learners, especially adults, to speak the target language fluently and appropriately.

2.3.3 Interaction

The next one difficult in speaking is interaction. Interaction is an occasion when two or more people or things communicate with or react to each other. Interaction in the classroom is very important especially in speaking class. It is important to examine because, there is a correlation between classroom interaction and enhance students' speaking skill. Language classroom can be seen as sociolinguistic environments (Cazden, 1988) and discourse communities (Hall and Verplaetse, 2000) in which interaction is believed to contribute to learners' language development. Kramsch (1986) argued that to achieve students' communicative competence, students must be given opportunities to interact with both the teacher and fellow students through turn-taking, to receive feedback, to ask for clarification, and to initiate communication. By giving students opportunity to speak up in the classroom, it makes students enhance their speaking skill.

2.3.4 Coherence

The last but not least is coherence. The definition of coherence is something logical or consistent and something that makes sense as a whole.

Coherence is also the logical arrangement in speaking or how every part of answer is connected with another sentence. It is also important because the students could find their own mistakes by coherence. If the speaker not speaking with coherence, it will be difficult to understand and follow the speaker speech, then the listener would get confused sometimes. Coherence refers to the organization of ideas. If something has coherence, its parts are well connected and all heading in the same direction. Without coherence, a discussion may not make sense or may be difficult for the audience to follow. It's an extremely important quality of speaking.

2.4 Factors that causing Students' Speaking Difficulties

Speaking has several difficulties factors that affect students in learning process. Especially for speaking in foreign language, that might be more difficult factors which makes students hard to speaking foreign language well. There are some factors that causing students' speaking difficulties based on Ur (1991); inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother-tongue use. Those four factors might be the most problems in students speaking experience.

2.4.1. Lack of Aptitude

Aptitude is natural ability carried since born. Some students are better in learning languages than others. It is caused by students have different aptitude in learning process. Ellis (1985) said that aptitude is special ability involved in language learning. Aptitude used to measure in

term proficiency scores achieved by learners in learning process. Some of researchers mentioned that aptitude is major factor determining the level of success of classroom language learning.

2.4.2. Shyness

Shyness is an emotional thing that many students suffer from at sometime when they are required to speak in class. This indicates that shyness could be a source of problem in students learning activities in the classroom especially in the class of speaking. Based on Gebhard (2000) paying attention to these aspects is also quite important in order to help students do their best in the speaking performance in the classroom. Another researcher argued that some shy learners are caused by their nature that they are very quite (Borwen, 2005). In this case, the students are not really confident and tend to be shy because most of them find it very intimidating when speaking English in front of their friends and teacher. In addition, the most of English students feel shy when they speak the language because they think they will make mistakes when they talk. They are also afraid of being laughed by their peers. This fact that also found in the data of this study that students' shyness is their perception on their own ability. In this sense, they are afraid of being laughed by their friends due to their low ability in speaking English.

2.4.3. Mother-tongue use

The use of mother tongue is one of the most factors that influence students' speaking performance. It caused by the used of mother-tongue language are more easy and more confident in daily conversation. So, if teacher ask the students to speak in foreign language they feels unnatural or even not confident enough. Minghe and Yuan (2013) states that “another eternal factor that affects students” oral English learning is the lacking of good language learning environment. English is a language used in communications, so a good language environment can effectively promote learning. But for most of the Indonesian students, English is a foreign language they learn at school, and mostly, students communicate in their native language and too lazy to practice their English outside the class or teaching learning process. A study conducted by Al-Roud (2016) found that learners' poor speaking performance is affected by several factors; the environment where they live in a non-English speaking region, teachers who still speak their native language instead of English and the students' language knowledge such grammar, vocabulary etc. which is not sufficient enough.

2.4.4. Lack of motivation

Motivation is what causes people to act. According to Littlewood (1981) the development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have the motivation and opportunity to express their own particular personality the general population around them. It is mentioned that

motivation is the key to students' learning success. With regard to the issue of motivation in learning Nunnan (1999) stresses that motivation is important to notice. It can affect students' reluctance to speak in English. In this sense, motivation is considered as an important factor to successful communication. It has been proved in many studies that students with a strong motivation to success can persist in learning and gain better scores than those who have weaker motivation of success, showing that building students' motivation to learn is urgent for every teacher.

In conclude, there are several factors that cause of students' speaking difficulties. Based on explanation above, lack of motivation is one of the basic factors that can affect student's speaking performance. Then the lack of aptitude is major factor determining the level of success of classroom language learning. The shyness factors also affect students speaking ability, because the student felt uncomfortable when they are shy to speak in public place. The last but not least is mother-tongue use, this factors can affect students from English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The students need to prepare their material to reduce their difficulties while speaking English performance.

2.5 Retelling in Recount Text

Some literature includes retelling in reading comprehension activity as the way to check learners' comprehension about a text. However, this strategy also deals with speaking as to retell the text learners are often asked to speak it up. This

strategy has been used for years and some studies found its positive effect for learners.

Teachers can improve their learners' speaking ability through retelling activity (Miller & Pennycuff, 2008). Retelling can also help learners to deliver their thought in a sequence and promote learners' creative thinking (Kayi, 2006 as cited in Nizzu, 2016, p.22). During the process of creating the story, learners' creativity is stimulated as psychologically they are encouraged to perform their best effort. Moreover, Heninger (2005) also agrees that this strategy also encourage learners to use their language knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, language functions, etc.

Retelling strategy has brought the good impact for the students. Fitzgibbon and Wilhelm (1998, p. 24) outlines the positive effect of retelling strategy: attract learner, provide well-prepared and natural learning experience. Morrow found that through retelling activity learners can promote their comprehension of narration and practice their speaking (as cited in Praneetponkrang, 2014, p. 141). In addition, Gambrel, Pfeiffer, and Wilson (1985) states that retelling can encourage learners to actively participate and engage their language learning. In general, studies show that not all retellings contain the same amount of information; for example, retellings to attentive listeners are longer than stories retold to inattentive listeners.

In applying retelling strategy, teachers usually ask learners to talk about their past experience. Dailey (2014) argues that when people are assigned to tell

what happened in the past, they are able to organize the ideas and give some detail explanation to their story.

2.6 Previous Related Studies

Retelling has been explored in numerous researches for years. The first research is conducted by Nizzu (2016) entitled Explore How Effective Pictures and Retelling Story are for Improving Students' Speaking Ability. The participants were thirty six second year students of a state senior high school in Lampung. She found that retelling strategy can improve learners' speaking skill. More specifically, retelling can improve learners' vocabulary, grammar, fluency, pronunciation and comprehension.

The second research is done by Novia (2017) with title The Effectiveness of Retelling Story in Increasing English Learners' Speaking Skill. This experimental study proved the retelling story is highly effective to improve learners' speaking. The population of this research is the tenth grade students of SMA Santun Untan Pontianak, while the sample is class X B that consists of 24 students. Retelling is found encouraging for students to speak in the class, but it can be not fun for those who are interested in the strategy.

The third research is from Mahmud (2015) which figured out the students' difficulties in retelling past experience. This study found that learners have problem in terms of topic development and grammatical use. These difficulties are affected by learners' low understanding of grammar, lack of vocabulary and practice. This

study assessed the participants' speaking using the generic structure of recount text by Emilia (2011 as cited in Mahmud, 2015, p. 36), linguistic features using Transitivity of Functional Grammar by Halliday (1994 as cited in Mahmud, 2015, p. 36) and grammatical structure assessment by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's surface strategy taxonomy. Based on the finding of the analysis, it showed that the students generally have developed their story based on the generic structure. It was revealed that the obligatory parts appeared in all students' story. In other words, the students were able to explain information needed in the beginning of their stories and were able to apply particular features to link each event. However, based on this previous research, low achiever students still faced difficulties in developing their stories.