EXPLORING STUDENTS' CHALLENGES IN PRACTICING SPEAKING AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education

By:

ADINDA VALENTINA

2520010

ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI

K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN

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2024

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Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya, disampaikan terimakasih.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise to be Allah SWT, who has bestowed mercy and grace, to the writer finally able to complete this thesis. The writer realizes that without the help and encouragement of all parties, the completion of this thesis would not be possible. Therefore with sincerity and humility, the writer would like to express his highest gratitude and appreciation to:

1. First and foremost, my beloved parents, I would like gratitude to my parents, Mr. Suprapto and Mrs. Feri Astuti, for your support, prayers and unconditional love until I finish this thesis. To my little sister Silvi, even though sometimes you are annoying, I am always thankful to have you.
2. Second, I would like to say my gratitude to my supervisor, Mrs. Dewi Puspitasari, M.Pd. Thank you for your supervising my thesis and letting me experience this incredible journey in our department.
3. Third, I am very grateful for the guidance and advice from junior high school teachers. Especially to Mr. Nurrohmat, S.Pd. who has provided support to quickly complete this thesis.
4. Fourth, Special and beloved, Naeful Bahri as a good man who always accompanies me, helps me, listens to my complaints, encourages me in his own extraordinary way and supports me to quickly complete this thesis. Thank you for always being patient with me, motivating me so that I can finish this thesis well.
5. Fifth, do not forget to mention my gratitude to my bestie in English Education'20 especially Nia Aprilia. Thank you for your unwavering support, memories and experience. I am very happy to be one of you.
6. Sixth, I would like to say many thanks to the "Annyeong" group who have given me encouragement to be able to complete this thesis. It is members are Nia, Josphira, Elvia, Aliya and Nala.
7. Last but not least, I want to say a big thank you to me. Thank you for working hard and not giving up until this thesis is finished. Keep working hard for another challenge. I am proud of myself.

MOTTO

"You can speak well if your tongue can deliver the message of your heart"

(Henry Ford)

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dihadapi siswa sekolah menengah pertama dalam kegiatan berbicara di dalam kelas melalui observasi. Observasi digunakan sebagai teknik dalam pengumpulan data dan digunakan untuk memperoleh informasi yang akurat mengenai waktu, objek dan kegiatan yang dilakukan saat aktivitas berbicara Bahasa inggris dilakukan. Partisipan penelitian diambil dari beberapa siswa kelas delapan. Data akan dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam sebagai metode penelitian untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori Krashen, hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang menghadapi tantangan saat berlatih berbicara Bahasa inggris. penelitian ini mengeksplorasi tantangan yang dialami siswa ketika berlatih berbicara Bahasa inggris dan memberikan wawasan mengenai strategi potensial untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa.

Kata kunci: siswa SMP, aktivitas berbicara, tantangan kelas, keterampilan berbicara.

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the challenges faced by junior high school students in speaking activities in the classroom through observations during learning. Observation is used as a technique for collecting data and is used to obtain accurate information regarding the time, objects and activities carried out when English speaking activities are carried out. Research participants were taken from several eighth students. Data was collected through in-depth interviews as a research method to answer research questions. Data analysis was carried out using Krashen's Theory with the results of this research expected to provide a better understanding of facing challenges when practicing speaking English. This research explores the challenges students experience when practicing speaking English and provides insight into potential strategies for upgrade students' speaking skills.

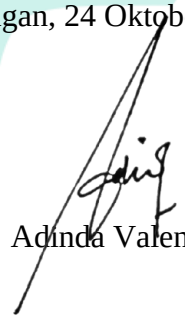
Keyword: Junior high school students, Speaking activities, classroom challenges, speaking skills.

PREFACE

Praises and gratefulness are sent to Allah SWT who has poured His grace and His gift and bestowed me guidance, health, and patience so that the writing process of my research entitled **"EXPLORING STUDENTS' CHALLENGES IN PRACTICING SPEAKING AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS"**. It was submitted to UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan's English Education Department to fulfill one of the perquisites for a Bachelor's Degree in English Education. On this occasion, I would want to convey my heartfelt appreciation to:

1. The Head of English Education Department and Teachers' Training Faculty of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Mr. Ahmad Burhanuddin, M.A.
2. Mrs. Dewi Puspitasari, M. Pd. as my supervisor who has given me suggestion, guidance and time in writing this final project.
3. All lectures of English Education Department, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
4. My beloved parents who have given me endless support, prayer, advice and encouragement in writing this research thesis.
5. My dearest friends who have fought through the journey together since the very beginning.
6. Everyone who had met and created any moment with me, you have given me a lot of lessons.

Pekalongan, 24 Oktober 2024



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Learning to speak is important if someone wants to communicate with others internationally. Speaking is a medium for using spoken language to convey ideas, intentions, thoughts, and feelings to other people (Hughes & Reed, 2017). From this definition, speaking ability could relate to a person's ability to convey ideas orally to others. Regarding the purpose of speaking skills, it states that spoken language has two different purposes, namely interpersonal and transactional purposes (Brown & Yule, 2013). In addition, speaking is a combination of cognitive, linguistic, and motor skills that enabled students to give and receive information and communicate spontaneously (Marzuqi, 2019). As stated by Badriyah (2021), it is one of the abilities that a person has to master to communicate and express what is on their mind. It has an important role that should be natural and meaningful.

Speaking is a crucial skill for effective communication, especially in an international context. It serves as a medium to express ideas, intentions, thoughts, and feelings orally (Gani et al., 2015). From this definition, it is evident that speaking involves the oral communication of ideas between individuals. According to Brown and Yule (2013), speaking has two main purposes: interpersonal and transactional. Mastering speaking skills is essential for students as it enables them to express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and creativity intelligently and appropriately in different contexts (Mousavi, 2020).

As Badriyah (2021) notes, speaking is a fundamental ability that individuals must master to communicate and express their thoughts effectively, playing a significant role in making communication natural and meaningful.

The ability to communicate in a second language was a critical component of a well-rounded education, particularly in an increasingly globalized world. Speaking, as one of the fundamental language skills, poses unique challenges for learners, especially in the context of a formal educational setting (Maier et al., 2017). This narrative study aimed to explore the specific challenges that junior high school students faced in practicing speaking, delving into the variety of factors that hinder their progress and proficiency.

Junior high school students are at a crucial point in their educational development, where they build on and refine the language skills established in their earlier years (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). However, speaking, unlike reading or writing, requires real-time cognitive processing and interaction, making it a complex skill to master. In many educational systems, students often exhibit reluctance and anxiety when it comes to speaking in a foreign language.

The difficulties these students face come from various sources when practicing speaking, but are not limited to psychological barriers, lack of practice opportunities, limited exposure to native language use, and lack of self-confidence. According to Tati et al (2016), learners generally experience nervousness when speaking English. They are hesitant, afraid of speaking in front of others, worried about speaking properly, and lack self-confidence

when speaking English. This is because the English language is not their second or primary language. They all share anxiety, including a lack of knowledge of English, a fear that they will misunderstand English, an inability to understand English, a fear of making wrong sentences in English, a fear that their peers will laugh, and a fear that they will make grammar mistakes while speaking English. In essence, students show low English skills, which may contribute to their anxiety. In addition, they express reactions during class sessions when making mistakes. Based on the narrative inquiry approach by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the study delves into students' experiences to gain better insights. The findings aim to help educators and policymakers create better strategies to support students. Ultimately, the goal is to improve language learning and communication skills in junior high schools. The insights gained not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the issues at hand but also inform educators and policymakers in developing more effective strategies and supportive environments for language learning.

The four skills of language acquisition have a set of four abilities that enable learners to perceive and generate spoken language in order to communicate properly and effectively with others (Kasinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021). They are all intertwined to the point where a lack of competence in one has a direct impact on the others. Speaking appears to be the most crucial, due to the fact that speakers of a language are typically those who possess that language. Numerous studies address speaking challenges, such as low self-esteem, anxiety about making mistakes, and a lack of opportunities to practice

speaking in social situations. In addition, speaking is also considered the most critical skill among the four essential language skills in learning a second language (Khamkhien, 2010). This is because all other relevant skills of understanding the language are also included in speaking activities. For students, speaking can be a medium where a new language structure, expressions, and vocabulary are encountered, understood, and practiced (Al Hosni, 2014).

According to Suban (2021), communicating is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts." In learning English, the focus is more on speaking if a teacher in the class conveys the material well. In this case, to ensure that English learning focuses on speaking, it must be supported by activities that motivate students to be involved. Numerous studies have shown that many students in higher education struggle to improve their English-speaking abilities (Suhadi, 2023). If we observe carefully in everyday life, many people speak, but not everyone possesses good speaking skills. However, many junior high school students find speaking English difficult.

The problems faced by students are that when they are asked to practice speaking English they appear afraid of making mistakes, lack of motivation from parents and teachers and low levels of self-confidence. That's why the researcher is interested in explore what challenges they face and how to solve them.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the students' difficulties in practicing English speaking, the problems can be formulated as follows:

1. What were students' challenges in practicing speaking among junior high school students?
2. What strategies did they have to handle the challenge?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid problems speaking the terms in this research, so the researcher provides some definitions related to the study as follows:

1. Speaking: is generally thought to be the most important of the four skills in English: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Indeed, one frustration that commonly arises by learners is that they have spent years studying English, but still they cannot speak it (Singh, 2016) .
2. Speaking skills: are often assessed based on fluency (the ability to speak smoothly and at a natural pace) and accuracy (the correctness of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) Thornbury (2016) highlights the importance of balancing fluency and accuracy to develop proficient speaking abilities.
3. Challenges: defined as hurdles or obstacles demanding effort and skill to overcome, have been widely studied across various disciplines in the past decade. In the educational realm, challenges are recognized as integral components of student learning and development (Schunk & Greene, 2018).
4. Strategies: good strategy as a coherent set of analyses, policies, and actions

designed to address a significant challenge. A good strategy includes a diagnosis of the challenge, a guiding policy for addressing it, and coherent actions to carry out the policy (Rumelt, 2017).

1.4 Aim of the study

1. This study aimed to explore the challenges made by junior high school students.
2. This study aimed to give information to reader how to handle the challenges in speaking.

1.5 Significance of The Research

1. Theoretical use: This research is expected to provide information related to the theory from Krashen (1982) that related to the students' challenges in practicing speaking.
2. Empirical use: This study provides the empirical insight into problems when learning English speaking.
3. Practical use: This study provides information to readers about what are the students' challenges in practicing speaking and strategies do they have to handle the challenge.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the Findings

Based on the results conducted at one of the junior high schools in Pemalang, the results of the research and discussion can be concluded as follows:

1. Based on data from eleventh grade junior high school students which have been analyzed by researcher, there are several students who experience challenges when practicing speaking English. These challenges in speaking are classified into three types according to Krashen's theory (1982), namely motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. The most dominant mistake made by students is anxiety.
2. Strategi to handle these challenges: Based on the data results, students have a positive response when the teacher uses small sizes group discussions to develop students' speaking skills. this is a simple way and helps their speaking skills. Let students express their ideas and responses. The use of small groups in the classroom may also increase student self-confidence and students think critically to criticize arguments (Crisianita & Mandasari, 2022). Strategies for developing students' speaking skills through small groups discussions and made into pairs so that each person has a partner to make it easier for students to practice speaking English.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the conclusions stated above, the researcher would like to provide several suggestions for English teachers so that they know the challenges students face when practicing speaking in English and teachers also practice more ways to make students diligent and brave enough to practice speaking English frequently. The family environment, which is one of the factors that can influence the occurrence of psychosocial development disorders in children, is the first and most important aspect that influences a child's growth and development. Therefore, it is important for teachers to convince their students that making mistakes is not a wrong or bad thing because students can learn from their mistakes.

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