

BECOMING GOOD SPEAKERS IN ENGLISH FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT: Being good English speakers is very needed, especially by the students, because now some companies in Indonesia require it as one of the job qualifications. Unfortunately, some students are still getting difficult on it. The most problems shown are they are demotivated, shy to say something, still lack of vocabulary, in trouble to show their idea, hard to insist on their arguments in a discussion, and not fluent in speaking English. From the problems mentioned, the researcher conducted a study to find some characteristics of good English speakers of engineering students. This study took two best students from different faculties of engineering as the subjects of the study. Both students were qualified through some tests, as listening, speaking, and paper-based TOEFL test. The data collection used some instruments; observation, interview and questionnaire. The data were analyzed descriptively from the instruments mentioned. The finding of the study showed some characteristics influencing the students to be good English speakers. Those characteristics were classified into motivation, learning style, learning habit, and belief.

Keywords: Characteristics, Speakers

1. Introduction

English is an important language to use in academic and non-academic fields. Nowadays, some companies built in Indonesia require the abilities of speaking English to the applicants. It shows how English is required. To answer this challenge, the government makes English as one subject taught in education levels, starting from elementary classess up to university level.

According to (Spratt, Pulverness, and William, 2005) as stated by (Latha and Ramesh, 2012), speaking is a productive skill like writing. It involves using speech to express meaning to other people. Speaking is needed much in transferring the knowledge and idea. It is in line with (Kayi, 2006) that “speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching”. From the opinions above, it can be concluded that speaking ability is an ability owned by someone to communicate, to give or share an idea, to say an agreement and disagreement with other people as the listeners. In speaking, there will be feedback from the listeners by using gesture, or another form (language). To be able to master speaking skill, the students need to master the aspects it has such as: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency.

There some factors influencing speaking ability; internal and external factors. In this study, the researcher focuses on several factors, such as: learning habit, learning style, and motivation. The learning habit is intended to the habit they learn English in their daily. Learning style focuses on the way they use in learning English. Motivation is about many things that encourage the students to learn English.

It is expected that the result of this study can help some people in different background, such as: *the president of the institute* to add some renewal to the University’s vision and mission for the next year based on the finding in this research; *english lecturer* to help him/ her in making a course outline based on students’ need and students’ way of learning because this study shows the students’ need as the adult learners. Furthermore, this study also gives a clear example that

can motivate the students in learning speaking English that can be done by English lecturer; and *the other researcher* as their reference for their own research. The finding of this study shows how the learning style of different good English speakers. It can be used as the reference for their research, although they use different object.

2. Literature Review

As a productive skill, speaking is believed as a hard skill to master. Speaking means communication. According to (Wright, 1987), the word communicate comes from Latin word "communicare". It means to give or to share. According to (Miller, 1998), speaking is the same as oral interaction which are conventional ways of speaking information, expressing our idea, and thought have in our mind. According to (Nunan, 2003), speaking is a productive aural/ oral skill and it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. In conclusion, speaking is the ability to produce verbal utterance systematically to convey meaning in order to give the information, express the idea, and thought in our mind.

Syakur (1987) said that speaking is a complex skill because at least it is concerned with components of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. As we know that grammar is needed for students to arrange a correct sentence in conversation. The utility of grammar is also to learn the correct way to gain expertise in a language in oral and written form. The second component is vocabulary. It means the appropriate diction which is used in communication. Without having a sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communication effectively or expresses their ideas in both oral and written form. Having limited vocabulary is also a barrier that precludes learners from learning a language. Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. And the third component is pronunciation. Pronunciation is the way for students to procedure clearer language when they speak. It deals with the phonological process that refers to the components of a grammar made up of the elements and principles that determine how sounds vary and pattern in a language. There are two features of pronunciation, phonemes and supra segmental features. A speaker who constantly mispronounces a range of phonemes can be extremely difficult for a speaker from another language community to understand (Gerrard, 2000). Further, pronunciation is very powerful to the forming of words' meaning. Finally, the last component of speaking is fluency. Fluency can be defined as the ability to speak fluently and accurately. Fluency in speaking is the aim of many language learners. From all components of speaking above (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency), it cannot be said that one component is better than the other because if the speaker wants to have a good achievement in English, they must master all the components mentioned

2.1 Some Factors Avoiding Good Speaking Ability

There are some factors that can make people get stuck and not improve their speaking ability. Some of the most common reasons as published on February 29th, 2012 at phrasemix.com are: the learners do not spend enough time on it, too passive, do not review their speaking, rely on their native language too much, focus on mistakes, do not put things in context, do not really need English, and too advance. Speaking English is not an easy matter for the learners in Indonesia because, however, English is a foreign language. This condition makes them difficult to find a partner to speak English every day. And it causes them not spend much time to learn it. It is always be the highest reason that comes from some students lately. As a result of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, it is then been taught in education. But at the fact, the students are too passive when they have to learn and speak much in the class. Next, the learners also do not review their speaking. This is a big factor. A lot of learners do not review enough. When they review something before they forget it, it sends a signal to their brains to memorize the

important thing. So, when they have choice to learn something new, it is better to have review on it. It causes some correction or even strengthens while they are learning something new. Besides, the learners rely on their native language too much. Explanations of English written in their native language can be fun to read. They allow them to easily understanding that would be too complicated to have explained for them in English. But a translation in their native language only gives them knowledge about English. It does not give them a practice. Unless they practice speaking English directly, it seems so impossible for them to be able on it. The next factor is they focus on mistakes. A lot of English learners want to know when they have made a mistake. The thinking goes that if they can fix all of the mistakes, so what left will be perfect. But there are some reasons that the learners cannot be focused on the mistakes only, such as: there are a lot more wrong ways to say something wrong than right ones; focus on mistakes only can make the learners shy, so they will talk less; and some points that the learners think as a mistakes are not always mistakes. Moreover, the learners do not put things in context. When the learners learn new words, the first thing they should find out is not “what does it mean” but rather “when can I use it”. It means that context is very important. It is also can make some words fix each other as well as what they mean. The next situation is the learners do not really need English. Sometimes some learners want to learn English but they do not really need it. The fact is the learners are good in speaking English when they really need it to be used. That is why learning something that the learners do not need with is very tough. Finally, the last is they are too advance. When the learners start learning English, firstly, they maybe improve quickly. That is because it is easy to learn the most common English word and grammatical structures. In fact, seventy five percent of spoken English is made up of less than 400 words. The problem appears when the learners are mastering the vocabulary much enough and do not get additional time by time. So, it can be concluded that some factors that make the learners not have a good English speaking are their habit of being passive speakers, not to review the mistake, rely on the native language, focus on the mistake, not put the things in a context, need less of English, and lazy in learning

2.2 Relevant Previous Studies

Talking about speaking skill, there are some previous studies preceding this research. According to (Latha and Ramesh, 2012), the factor that can affect learning English is when both learner and teacher are involved in the process and derive fun out of it. In this study, the researchers try to know the power of motivation and also its function to English performance through student-teacher intimate. Liao (2009) says that the English speaking skill can be improved if it is correlated with the other three major English skills, those are: reading, listening, and writing. Another study from (Egan, 1999), he explains that media called CALL can be a media to build up students’ speaking confidence and their pronunciation improvement. This research shows that the language learners can learn from the media. The next previous study is from (Rahman and Deviayanti, 2012), the results finding says that motivation as a psychological factor has a positive correlation with English speaking ability. And the last is the research from (Mustofa, 2012), the finding shows that when the teachers want to be professional, they must develop themselves professionally. This finding gives the reference about the data taking qualitatively. Based on previous of the studies, it shows that speaking ability is correlated with another skills; reading, listening, and writing. Speaking has many factors affected, some of which are motivation and media. Further, speaking ability can also be measured by the education background of the learners.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This research used qualitative research design because the researcher wanted to describe the way the students can be a good speaker of English. According to (Denzin, Lincoln, 1994), qualitative researcher studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. This is in line with what the researcher does in this study. She tried to get as much as data from the subject of the study by using some instruments and make it into data interpretation. In this research, the researcher was the main instrument of the data collection. She took the whole data, starting from the test taking for the subject of the study choosing and applying all data instruments, analyzing data, until making the report.

3.2 Subject of the Study

The researcher took the two best students after conducting some tests; the first was from S1 Geodetic Engineering (male) and the other one is from informatics engineering (female). The subjects were only two because their final scores were much higher than others.

3.3 Data Source

In this research, the researcher took some data sources because she wanted to take detail information about the subject of the study. The data sources are as following:

3.3.1 Students

The students chosen were from different departments, one student from S1 Geodetic Engineering, and one student from S1 Informatics engineering. The students were chosen because they got the highest scores from some tests; listening, speaking, and TOEFL tests. The first subject got 560 in TOEFL test, 90 in listening test, and 90 in speaking test. The second subject got 540 in TOEFL test, 100 in listening test, and 80 in speaking test. In this study, the researcher took some data from them through interview, observation, and questionnaire.

3.3.2 Parents of Subject of the Study

As the data sources, the subjects' parent were being asked because the researcher thought that they were the closest people to them every day. The parent was assumed to know every activity and habitual that the subjects do in daily life. The data were from their mother or father. In this study, the first subject had his father as the data source, while the second subject had her mother. The data were taken through questionnaire.

3.3.3 Friends of Subject of the Study

The subjects of the study had some friends whom they deal with almost every day. Those friends could give correct information about some data of the subjects of the study. In this study, the first subject had one girl friend as the data sources, and the second subject had her one girl friend as the data source. The data were taken through questionnaire

3.4 Instruments of the Study

In this study, the researcher used four instruments as follows:

3.4.1. A Set of Test

The test was taken because the researcher wanted to decide the best two students from all the population following the English program. To know the students' ability; the researcher conducted 2 types of test. The first test was speaking and listening test, and the second test was TOEFL test. The speaking test used "retelling" of the audio they once heard. Here, each student gets 5 minutes to retell the story. Following the criteria of speaking by Syakur to score the students, the researcher used 3 points as consideration: pronunciation, fluency, and understanding of the whole story. The range of each scoring point was: 80-100 for A, 71-79 for B+, 65-70 for B, 61-64 for C+, 56-60 for C, and 45-55 for D. Whereas the listening test was using "question and answer" book as the source (the questions are enclosed). There were ten questions given. From those ten questions, the correct numbers time to 10. The highest score was 100, the lowest number was 0.

The second test used was paper-based TOEFL test because it is standardize test. The test was divided into listening, structure, and reading section. From this test, the researcher knew the students' reliability in listening, structure, and also reading.

3.4.2. Interview Guide

The researcher used interview as the second instrument. The purpose of using interview guide was because the researcher wanted to take the data from the subjects of the study as real as possible and as clear as possible. Adopted from the article published by Nadia Santiago on September 24 2009, Interview is divided into 3, those are: structured, semi- structured, and also unstructured interview. Of those 3 types of interview, the researcher chose semi-structure interview because she thought that this type is the most appropriate in the qualitative research in order to make the researcher more focus and interview running better but still not deleting a close and relax situation between her and her subject of the study. The interview contents were clustered into some points, such as: the subjects of study's personal data, educational background, speaking English development, standardized test, motivation, learning habit, environment, family, and view of English generally. Those questions are used in order to know about how interested they are in English and also how they can be good speaker in English.

3.4.3. Observation Checklist

Observation was conducted by the researcher when the subjects of the study were in the class. The purpose of observation was to know the subjects' activity in the class. The aspects to be observed were the students' activeness in the class, understanding of the instructions given, understanding of the problem given, opinion/ idea/ respond to the topic given, respond to the other students' opinion/ respond, cooperation in group during the discussion, diction during the conversation, pronunciation during the discussion, fluency during the discussion, and understanding during the discussion.

3.4.4. Questionnaire Sheet

There are two types of questionnaire, those are: open and close questionnaire. In open questionnaire, the researcher gives the question without any optional answer. While in closed questionnaire, the researcher gives the optional, and the subjects of the study/ the respondents just choose based on them. Both types have different benefit and weakness. In this research, the researcher uses open questionnaire because she wants the subject can answer it freely.

In this study, the questionnaire was taken not only to get the data from the subjects of the study, but also from their parents and close friends. There were 12 questions (enclosed) in the questionnaire given to the parents, and 7 questions (enclosed) given to friend. The aspects that were asked to the parents were covering to their knowledge about the subjects of the study' capability in English and their support on their English skill. The aspects that were asked to the subjects' friends were covering their knowledge to the subjects of the study' English ability and

their part of it. All the questions in the questionnaire asked about the subjects' ability in English, the motivation in learning English, and also the learning habit.

3.5 The Criteria of Good English Speakers

In this study, the good English speakers' criteria were classified into: motivation, listening comprehension, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, appropriateness of answers, organization of ideas, fluency, and self-confidence.

3.6 Procedures of Data Analysis

There were three instruments used on this study, such as: interview, observation, and questionnaire.

In the interview, the two subjects were asked about some questions about their education background, the standardized test taken before, English development in college, motivation, the media used to learn speaking English, learning habit, learning style, partner/ environment, family, and view of English. The interview form used was semi-structured interview, so they could give their idea freely based on the questions. During the interview, the researcher used the recorder from the hand phone to record all the interview process. After getting the data needed, the researcher described the result from the recorder in a form of paragraphs.

Beside the interview, the researcher used observation as the data instrument. The observation was taking during 8 meetings of speaking class. During the meeting, the researcher observed the subjects of the study and filled the observation list been made with some points before. From the data of observation list, the researcher compared between the first and the second subject's result. After that, she described it into some paragraphs about the activity and the ability of the subjects during the 8 meetings.

The last instrument used in the research was questionnaire. From the data of questionnaire, the researcher mixed it with the data from interview and observation because the data of questionnaire were more complete. The data were conducted from the subjects' self-assessment, parents, and friends. The data was described descriptively in a form of paragraphs

4. Finding and Discussion

According to (Latha and Ramesh, 2012), the factor that can affect learning English is when both learner and teacher are involved in the process and derive fun out of it." After conducting the study, the researcher agrees with the statement above because one of factors that can motivate the learners in learning English is the performance of the teacher. When the teacher is good enough in creating a good atmosphere in speaking class, the learners will be stimulated to speak. There, they can practice, ask, and give the idea a lot. There, the speaking ability can be very improved. Liao (2009) says that the English speaking skill can be improved if it is correlated with the other three major English skills, those are: reading, listening, and writing. This study supports that idea. One of the subjects of the study is like reading a lot. She said that reading a lot can help her to be a good speaker because she can get many knowledge and sources in speaking. Egan (1999) explains that media called CALL can be a media to build up students' speaking confidence and their pronunciation improvement. The research shows that the language learners can learn from the media. The finding of this study showed the same result that the media can help the learners to be a good speaker in English. The media used here was movie and music. The next previous study is from (Rahman and Deviyanti, 2012), the results finding says that motivation as a psychological factor has a positive correlation with English speaking ability. That statement was supported by the finding of this research. The finding said

that motivation, whether internal or external, could be a great booster for the learner to have a good achievement in speaking English.

5. Conclusion

From the finding in this study, it can be concluded that some characteristics of good english speaker can be seen from the types of students' learning strategy. The first and second subject belongs to different type. The first subject belongs to sensing thinking (ST) and intuitive feeling (NF), whereas the second subject belongs to intuitive feeling. Second, the learners can be good speakers because they tend to actively listen to others in order to complete their opinion/ idea. And then, they also like to use their imagination in discussion in order to make their speaking better. Further, they also like to consistently strive to improve their ability in speaking English because practice always makes them better. Both of the subject like to friend with the technology because it helps them much in increasing the knowledge that can improve their skill. They use the technology appropriately and take the risk of it. Besides, they like to respect other people in conversation because it can help them strengthening their idea. It can help them in speaking because they can show their agreement or disagreement in one case. The third is about motivation. The motivation is very crucial in getting good achievement in speaking English. This form can be internal and external motivation. The internal motivation comes out from the learners themselves, while the external motivations come out from the environment, such as: parents, friends, or teacher in the classroom. The forth is the using of media. The media is very effective in enhancing learners' ability in speaking. The media that can be used are movie or music. Usually the movie is more helping because it is audio visual media. The fifth is the students' environment. Environments including parents, teachers, and friends are very helpful in learners' ability in speaking.

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