

Investigating Speaking Difficulties of Senior High School Students: Linguistics and Psychological Problems

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the problems in communication experienced by senior high school students in Jambi City. Students in their final year of secondary education in Jambi City served as participants in this study. This study was carried out at SMAN 03, SMAN 08, and SMAN 11 Jambi City, all of which are recognized educational institutions. There were 130 students in the tenth grade that took part in this research. The research was a quantitative study that was designed in the form of a survey. The questionnaire was the instrument that was employed for this study. There are a total of 25 questions on the questionnaire, all of which pertain to the difficulty that students have expressing themselves verbally regarding linguistics and psychological issues. The findings of this study also suggested that the students attending the three authorized institutions had the perception that psychological issues had a greater influence on their difficulties in communicating verbally.

Keywords: Speaking Difficulties, Psychological Problems, Linguistics Problem

INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, there are forceful changes taking place everywhere around the world. These tremendous vicissitudes occur when people have a strong desire to reach something. People's desires will be fulfilled when they can express their ideas and opinion to others

clearly. Furthermore, people need to learn communication skills to achieve their ambitions, desires, and goals. Communication will be effective if the interlocutor gets to understand what the speaker is going to say. Now, how can people convey information to others without any ability to explain ideas through speaking? In other words, learners should have the speaking ability to make it easy to communicate with each other. So, Speaking is a vital role to make the effective communication. According to Srinivas (2019), "In the present global world, communication plays a vital role in getting success in all fields" (p.8). For that, everybody has to prosecute to have good communication in this modern era against the world.

Effective communication is not possible for every human without using language. It means that perfect communication needs language as the connector. In the modern days, English is one of the international languages which we know it is spoken by many people all around the world. According to Srinivas (2019), "in the present modern world, everything is linked with speaking skill" (p10). It is also used in the field of scientific research, education, business, technology, Media, and so on. So, English is very important to be mastered by all people because as we know that everything needs English speaking skills nowadays. For example, English speaking skill is needed to look for a job. Most companies, institutes, and others require people who master English speaking. So, people will be selected by job interview to prove their ability in speaking English well. Also, when students want to continue their study abroad by joining the scholarship, they must be mastered English speaking skills. It will be proven by debate, group discussion, or other oral communication to know their skill in speaking English. If their performance is good, they will pass the selection. Furthermore, English speaking skill is important to be mastered by all people, especially for students to get their success.

As a medium of communication, language offers many skills to be mastered by all people to produce effective communication. Like a human life, we can accept and give information through language to others. The ability to accept the information is called receptive skill and the ability to give the information is called productive skill. Receptive skill is divided into several skills. They are, listening and reading. Besides, Golkova & Hubackova (2014) said that productive skills which are called active skills are the transmission of information that a language user produces in either spoken or written form. Productive skill is divided into two skills. They are speaking and writing. These skills are important to learn to

improve language skills. According to Susini and Ndruru (2021), listening, reading, writing, and speaking are skills that determine people to be mastered a language or more languages. These skills cannot be separated from each other. In another word, all of the skills are needed to be learned to improve language skills. So, language learners have to learn these skills to make them speak English well.

Indonesia is one of a country whose students are less interested in learning English. As like as reported by media Indonesia (2019), EF Education First released a research report on the 9th edition of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2019 or a study that measures the level of English proficiency of adults from 100 countries and regions in the world. The report is compiled based on an analysis of data from English test results conducted by 2.3 million participants who participated in the online EF Standard English Test (EFSET). Indonesia was ranked 61st with a decreased score from 51.58 in 2018 to 50.06 in 2019. Indonesia is still below the Asian region's standard which is 53.00.

Many high school students hold the view that speaking English is very difficult. Several factors make students feel difficulty in speaking English. First, many students lack the motivation to practice speaking because they have a lot of speaking problems. Harmer (2007) found that "students are often reluctant to speak because they are shy and are not predisposed to expressing themselves in front of other people" (p. 345). Those can be the reasons why students rarely practice their speaking skills in daily communication. They are not familiar with English and finally feel shy to use it. It is also their habit to assume that English only needs to be used and learned only in the class or only when speaking class is held. Second, lack of vocabulary is one of the problems faced by students. Richards (2008) claimed there are some particular problems faced by speaking learners. Those problems are lack of vocabulary needed in speaking, lack of grammar, and lack of pronunciation. Several research studies had already examined the speaking difficulty faced by the students.

In the context of Indonesian English learners, there have been several studies discussing the phenomenon in the past five years (Abrar et al., 2018; Haidara, 2016; Randu Farhani et al., 2020; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020; Widyasworo, 2019). However, the previous studies were mostly conducted based on meta-analyses, where the researchers tended to analyze the subjects of the research qualitatively. Besides, the setting of the research was mostly higher education.

Pertaining the results of the previous studies that gave evidence of the difficulties in speaking both linguistically and psychologically, this study would like to examine the issue in a wider population. The intention was to generalize the results of the study. The researchers would also consider the school accreditation in selecting the samples of the study. It was assumed that by having the same level of accreditation the schools' communities had the same characteristics in terms of facilities and teaching and learning activities. The researchers tried to find out speaking difficulties faced by the students of Senior high school in Jambi city in terms of Linguistics and psychological difficulties.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Difficulties in Learning Speaking

Aside from its importance, speaking is considered a challenging skill to be mastered. According to Li as cited in Zhang (2009), most English language learners remain that speaking is the highest difficult skill to master. When people have a conversation, they have no time to prepare or think about what they are going to say. They also have less opportunity to correct what they have said. That is why many language learners said that speaking is the hardest one. There are two main categories of difficulties in speaking that are faced by language learners. They are linguistics and psychological problems. The first is the linguistics problem. The linguistic problem refers to the performance aspects that belong to language skills. The results of several research studies reveal that a lack of vocabulary, a lack of grammar mastery, and a lack of correct pronunciation are some of the difficulties students when speaking English (Randu Farhani et al., 2020; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020; Widiasworo, 2019). The other aspect that might be put into consideration is fluency (Abrar et al., 2018). Besides, according to Jannah, & Fitriati (2016), the reason why language learners are having problems when they speak is caused linguistic problems as they are poor in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

The second is the Psychology problem. Psychology problem brings a great effect on English foreign language learners to master the skills of speaking. Human psychology plays a significant role in every learning situation or environment, whether formal or informal. The ability to communicate in English is a language skill that is heavily influenced by human psychology (Haidara, 2016) This problem will bring negative effects on language learners during the process of learning. Psychological problems include students' anxiety, low confidence, and

lack of practice. From his study, Haidara also argued that even though the majority of students believe they have a good command of English vocabulary and grammar, they are uncomfortable when speaking in English. The students had a lot of trouble with English because they were afraid of making mistakes. They also felt shy, hesitant, and didn't have enough confidence when they spoke. According to Jannah and Fitriati (2016), Psychology is knowledge or study that learns about processes and humans' behavior and also animals in their environment's interaction. The students' psychological problems such as anxiety, low confidence, and lack of practice may obstruct students' speaking ability to increase. Both of these categories of difficulties make language learners lazy to learn because of their mindset. They always think that it is hard to be mastered it because it is not used in daily communication as like is their first language. Consequently, many students especially in Indonesia still cannot speak fluently. According to Runtuwene and Lumettu (2018), most of the graduates still cannot speak English fluently even using a very simple expression after six years of study in junior also senior high school.

Linguistics Problem

The linguistic problem in speaking is the problem that makes language learners' ability in speaking bad. Richards (2008) claimed there are some particular problems faced by speaking learners. Those problems are lack of vocabulary needed in speaking, lack of grammar, and lack of pronunciation. The first is a lack of grammar. Grammar is one of the crucial aspects of English language learning. English language learners will never speak and join in conversation effectively if they do not know how to use grammar. Many students feel that learning grammar is so complicated. Even students who have been learning English for many years are still lacking in using grammar. Effendi (2017) said that study about grammar in college for many years does not ensure language learners have correct and good ability in using grammar in sentences. They still faced difficulty in using it. So it can be included that it needs a long time for a learner to be mastered grammar.

The next is a lack of vocabulary. Lacking vocabulary is a problem that many faces by language learners. It makes them confused when they are in the conversation process. They will stop the conversation while speaking out to think what the vocabulary must they choose. Khan, et al (2018) said that lacking vocabulary items will obstruct the second language learning process. Most language learners often forget what vocabulary they want to use, moreover the new one. As the research

conducted by Hosni (2014), the result says that the students struggle to find the appropriate vocabulary item when trying to speak in English. Many students have difficulties in choosing appropriate vocabulary in some cases. They often feel worried if the vocabulary they choose is not appropriate to be used in the situation and the context where they speak. English language learners also think and know what they are going to say, but it is difficult for them to switch the words from their mother tongue into English. This situation often faced by the language learners when they are lack vocabulary. The last is a lack of pronunciation. Pronunciation is the way to produce sounds. This aspect is one of the difficult aspects to be learned because every language has different phonemes as well even though not significant. There are only a few learners who have good pronunciation like a native speaker. They usually still bring their mother tongue way to pronounce English words. So, listening to a native speaker and practice to pronounce the words are some of the ways to have a clear pronunciation.

Psychological Problem

Psychology problems very affect English foreign language learners mastering speaking skills. This problem will bring negative effects on language learners during the process of learning. There are several problems in psychology. They are anxiety, low confidence, and lack of practice. Anxiety means the emotional reaction in the classroom to a foreign language. According to Suleimenova (2013) in language classes, students who feel anxiety may not be able to speak fast enough, because anxiety interferes with their ability to process information. Being anxious when speaking will affect language learners' performance. They may forget their idea about what they want to talk about. It is very annoying to feel anxiety in speaking. Luo (2013) said that researchers have found that foreign language anxiety features a big selection of potential negative effects on foreign learning. There are so many English language learners who feel anxiety, worry, and are afraid to make mistakes while they speak. According to Dalem (2017), fear of being laughed at by other language learners and also evaluated by teachers can be students' anxiety factors. It influences language learners to be good speakers when performing in front of the class and also in front of other people because they must be worried to make a mistake that makes them lose face.

The second is low confidence. In this case, many students think that their ability in English is not good enough and almost very bad which makes them feel they cannot speak English well. So, they may think that

their partner of speaking cannot understand what the speaker talked about. It causes language learners to feel not confident to speak up. Also, the factor that makes the students feel not confident is caused by the lack of encouragement from the teachers (Brown, 2001). From that statement, we know that many teachers do not pay attention enough to treat them in speaking English. Brown in Dalem (2017) said that learning demotivating is more found by language learners rather than motivating because the teachers do not convince the students that they can speak. Therefore, beginners in learning English need to be motivated by people around them, especially their teachers. So, they can put interest and confidence to express their thought in a language they learn.

The next is lack of practice. There are so many language learners have lack practice. Many students will only have English speaking practice in the classroom, or even only when the speaking class is held. This lack of speaking practice can also cause difficulty in speaking. According to Hetrakul in Nakhalah (2016), many language learners speak English more frequently only in the class and less frequently outside it. They only speak in English because the subject that they learn is English speaking class. Of course, it is not efficient because it must be less time to only practice it when speaking class is held. Language learners need to practice speaking continually to increase their skills in it. So, it takes a long time. It is impossible to be mastered speaking English without practicing it continually. As we often heard that practice makes perfect. It is very important to practice it every day. Furthermore, most of the students are also lazy to practice speaking English because they think it is easier for them to speak in their mother tongue. They do not have to pay attention to the rule like the structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation of English.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The populations of this research were the tenth-grade senior high school students in Jambi City. The researchers applied the purposive sampling method to get the samples. There was a total of 130 students from three different schools- SMAN 3, SMAN 8, and SMAN 11 Jambi-taken based on their school accreditation. The school was accredited in the same category, labeled as an A-accredited school. The instrument used was a questionnaire adapted from Khamprated (2012). This research was conducted by using the quantitative method and the design was a survey that used a questionnaire. By using quantitative research, the researcher could use a large sample and give more specific questions to all the

participants. This helped the researcher get a more accurate result. Creswell (2014) defines survey research as research conducted by studying population samples to describe population trends, attitudes, and opinions quantitatively.

Then, the researcher used a questionnaire as the tool for data collecting. Harris and Brown (2010) said that questionnaires are typically seen as a more objective research tool that can produce generatable outcomes due to enormous example sizes. Also, it's a great way to collect data in a logical and organized manner. The questionnaire included the adapted items that were intended to collect the data in this study. There were 25 statements in the questionnaire. All the statements were negative as it reflects the problems faced by the students. The researchers applied Likert scales to obtain the students' responses toward the indicators of speaking difficulties they faced. The scales indicated their agreement with the statement. The range, 5 (Strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (Neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree), indicates that the highest score the students obtained, the strongest agreement they had toward the statement presented in the questionnaire. The researchers then applied the scale level based on the criteria of Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995.

Table 1
Level of Interpretation

No.	Mean Range	Interpretation
1.	3.5-5.0	High
2.	2.5-3.4	Medium
3.	1.0-2.4	Low

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

There were 25 statements in the questionnaire that had been given to the participants to answer. The statements in that questionnaire are related to the speaking difficulties faced by students that are divided into two problems, they are linguistic and psychological. Each item discussed those difficulties. Item numbers 1 to 12 examined linguistic problems while item number 13 to 25 examined psychological problems faced by the students. The results of the students' speaking difficulties based on linguistics problems are presented in table 1.

Table 1
The Students' Speaking Difficulties based on Linguistics Problems

No	Problems	M	SD	Level of Problems
1.	It is difficult for me to remember new vocabulary	3.48	0.685	Medium
2.	I find it difficult to speak English because of my limited vocabulary mastery	3.40	1.061	Medium
3.	I have lack vocabulary in certain fields	3.48	0.847	Medium
4.	Sometimes I insert Indonesian words when speaking English	3.30	1.159	Medium
5.	It is difficult for me to arrange word by word into a sentence when speaking English	3.38	0.999	Medium
6.	It is difficult for me to speak in complete sentences with correct grammar	3.66	0.920	High
7.	I do not focus on grammar when speaking	3.08	0.836	Medium
8.	I have limited time to think of correct grammar while I am speaking	3.27	0.922	Medium
9.	I always forget to pronounce the final sound of each word example students, he's and walked	3.45	0.706	Medium
10.	It is difficult for me to pronounce unfamiliar words	3.40	1.061	Medium
11.	I find it difficult to pronounce some words correctly for example ʃ (<u>sh</u> ip), tʃ (<u>Lunch</u>), and θ (<u>the</u>)	3.72	2.804	High
12.	I want to have good pronunciation as good as a native speaker but I find it difficult	3.30	1.159	Medium

The results show that among the 12 statements that represent linguistics problems, two aspects were considered to bring a high level of difficulty to the students. The highest problem was pronunciation. The mean score of the students' responses to the statement 'I find it difficult to pronounce some words correctly for example ʃ (ship), tʃ (Lunch), and θ (the)' represents one aspect of pronunciation, was in high level (M=3.72). The other aspect was grammar. The results showed that lack of grammar influenced the high difficulty of the students' speaking ability. Students responded with 'It is difficult for me to speak in complete sentences with correct grammar' showing a high level of interpretation (M=3.66). The results of the study also implied that lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar mastery, and also pronunciation problems did influence in medium level to the students' difficulty in producing fluent speaking.

In terms of vocabulary, statements 1 to 4 represent the students' problems. The students found it difficult for them to remember new vocabulary (M=3.48). Because of their limited vocabulary mastery (M=3.40) and their lack of vocabulary in certain fields (M=3.45), they found it difficult to speak English as they sometimes used Indonesian words when they speak in English (M=3.30). Several studies also bring the same evidence that having not enough vocabulary resulted in difficulties in speaking (Abrar et al., 2018; Huwari, 2019; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020). Indeed, lacking vocabulary items will obstruct the second language learning process (Khan et al., 2018).

In terms of grammar, items number 5 to 8 represent the students' problems. The students found it difficult to arrange word by word into a sentence (M=3.38) which made them hard to speak in a complete sentence. It was also hard for them to speak in complete sentences with correct grammar (M=3.66). The students did not focus on grammar while they were speaking as they had limited time to think of correct grammar (M=3.27). The result of this study lines with the study conducted by Effendi (2017) that study about grammar in the college for many years does not ensure language learners have correct and good ability in using grammar in sentences. In Indonesia, English is one of the foreign languages taught in junior high school. Yet, it was not enough to make the students speak English with correct grammar. There were many sentences the students had to learn students that made them confused about choosing appropriate grammar to be applied at the time they spoke. Consequently, the students mostly used the same tenses to represent the time in English.

Moreover, the students showed the difficulty caused by the lack of pronunciation represented in items 9 to 12. The students always forgot to pronounce the final sound of each word example students, he's and walked (M=3.45). They also thought that it was hard for them to pronounce unfamiliar words (M=3.40) and even some words correctly for example ʃ (ship), tʃ (Lunch), and θ (the) (M=3.72). Some students even wanted to have good pronunciation as good as native speakers, but they found it difficult. As the results indicated the high level of problems, previous studies also showed similar ideas. The results of the study from Wahyuningsih & Afandi (2020) showed because they struggled to pronounce certain vowels and consonants, many students admitted that their intonation and accentedness were not as accurate as of that of a native speaker. Besides The majority of students claimed that their pronunciation, which includes things like word stress and intonation, prevents them from speaking English in class. This is critical to understanding because it reveals a person's intentions (Huwari, 2019). Besides, pronunciation is one of the components of English that is most difficult to master (Komariah, 2018). The system of language sound in English and Indonesia is different. Indonesia has many local languages that have different linguistic repertoires such as Javanese, Banjarese, and many others. It made the students hard to pronounce English like a native because of the influence of their mother tongue. On the other hand, in English, the word that would be pronounced is different when it showed in the text. In contrast, there is no difference between how to write and how to pronounce the Indonesian language. The way the word is written is the same way the word is pronounced. Many students felt difficulty to pronounce English words correctly.

This study also revealed the students' problems regarding psychological aspects. Table 2 presents the results of the students' speaking difficulties based on linguistics problems.

Table 2
The Students' Speaking Difficulties based on Psychological Problems

No.	Problems	M	SD	Level of Problems
13.	I get nervous and worried when I speak to others	3.70	0.868	High
14.	I feel worried that I will keep repeating my words from the beginning while I am	3.46	0.933	Medium

	speaking			
15.	I am afraid of being the center of attention when I speak in front of the class	3.52	1.006	High
16.	I am afraid of making mistakes while I am speaking	3.77	0.936	High
17.	I am lazy to practice speaking English because there is no reason for me to speak	2.04	0.918	Low
18.	I do not practice much because I have fewer opportunities to speak	2.60	0.985	Medium
19.	I have no partner to practice speaking with	3.72	0.881	High
20.	I feel more confused when practicing speaking with friends who have lower English proficiency	3.12	0.898	Medium
21.	I do not practice speaking English a lot because I have no partner to practice with	2.89	1.129	Medium
22.	I feel less confident speaking in English than in Indonesian.	3.89	0.909	High
23.	I lose my self-confidence when someone asks me to repeat my words	3.13	0.968	Medium
24.	I do not feel confident starting speaking by myself if someone does not ask me	3.14	0.978	Medium
25.	I lose my confidence when I speak with friends who have higher English proficiency	3.27	1.112	Medium

Among the 13 statements, 12 statements represent the students' level of problems from medium to a high level. 5 problems were

considered gave an impact on the students' difficulty in speaking English. The highest level of the problem belongs to the aspect of confidence. Compare to speaking in the Indonesian language, students felt less confident speaking in English (M=3.89). The students also indicated that the problems that brought a high level of impact to their speaking belong to the aspect of anxiety. The students stated that they got nervous and worried when they speak to others (M=3.70) since they were afraid of being the center of attention when they were talking (M=3.52). They also stated that they were afraid of making mistakes while they are speaking (M=3.77). The other problem that gives a high level of impact was in terms of practice. The students that having no partner to practice speaking with (M=3.72) brought great difficulty to them. The students kept practicing, but the fact that they had no partner to practice with made it possible to cause problems.

Overall, the study implied that the whole aspects, Anxiety, lack of practice, and confidence brought an impact on the students' difficulty in speaking. A student's ability to process information may be hindered if they are suffering from high levels of anxiety. This was a common issue for students who were learning a new language. Afraid of making a mistake in front of their classmates, and fear of negative evaluation, students were reluctant to speak up (Abrar M, 2017; Damayanti et al., 2020; Haidara, 2016; Randu Farhani et al., 2020; Suleimenova, 2013). Haidara also argued regarding students' confidence in speaking, their lack of confidence occurs when they spoke with someone whose command of the English language was superior to theirs. This is true in the case of the participants of this study. Lack of confidence was reported as one of the problems the students faced as they responded to the statements 22 to 25. Firstly, they agreed they felt more confident when they spoke in Indonesian. Then, they felt less confident when someone asked them to repeat their words (M=3.13) and even reluctant to start speaking if someone did not ask them (M=3.14). They agreed that they lost their confidence when they talked to others who had higher English proficiency (M=3.27).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, both linguistics and psychological problems impacted negatively the students' speaking. In terms of linguistics problems, lack of grammar mastery and pronunciation brings a high level of difficulties to the students to speak in English. Psychologically, students' difficulty in speaking was influenced by the students' anxiety,

lack of practice, and lack of confidence. The results of this study also indicated that the students from the three accredited schools felt that psychological problems gave more impact on their speaking difficulties. Finally, due to the limitation of this study, it is suggested for future research to conduct the study with larger samples with more comprehensive instruments.

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