
AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS IN SPEAKING ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY AT AN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

Iqbal Rosyid¹, Hikmah Pravitasari²

STKIP La Tansa Mashiro

Article Info

Keywords: *Internal Problems, External Problems, Speaking English*

Abstract

There were causes of students' problems in speaking English such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation problems. The current research tries to analyze the students' internal and external problems in speaking English in class and beyond the classroom context at a private Islamic Boarding School as well as the strategies that the students have to face those problems. This study is conducted qualitatively using a case study approach. The participants are grade 9th of a junior high school students. The data analysis was carried out using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018, p.74) that consists of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings show that students have cognitive and psychological internal problems while they learn English speaking. The cognitive-related internal problems are English grammatical mastery, pronunciation issues, as well as vocabulary limitation. The psychologically-related internal problems that occur are fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. The findings regarding English speaking external problems do not come only from classroom management-related issues but also school language policy. Students revealed that they mostly use memorization and cognitive strategy for direct learning strategies and socialization for indirect learning strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability becomes the competence for people interaction and communication. Speaking also the way of communication and it makes people who come from different countries to be comfortable in making interaction and communication. As showcased by Richards and Renandya, (2002, p.210) speaking is one of the central elements of communication. It means that speaking is very essential, and someone can express his or her feeling, emotion, and idea by speaking. In addition, Brown (2004, p.140) argues that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. When someone speaks, s/he should be able to make meaning depending on the context of the information, such as its context of situation and on the participants involved. From the definition above, it can be concluded that speaking is the process of expressing ideas to construct meaning.

Hadijah (2014) indicated in her study that the students' speaking ability should be increased by giving motivation and taught them with the suitable and interested English speaking materials. Azizah (2016) showcased causes of students' speaking challenges that included limited vocabulary, nervousness, fear of making mistake and grammar as well as fluency issues. Besides that, there were causes of students' problems in speaking English such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation problems. The current research tries to analyze the students' problems in speaking within the context of Islamic boarding school's policy to support students' English-speaking habit as a way to interact with other students and their teachers. The study focuses on the internal and external problems of the students when they learn to speak in the classroom and when they communicate with others in the boarding school area, as a part of the school's language policy.

From the description above, the study explores the problems students are facing in speaking English in class and beyond the classroom context at an Islamic Boarding School. Besides, the study aims to unveil what strategies students have to address their challenges in speaking English in class and beyond classroom context.

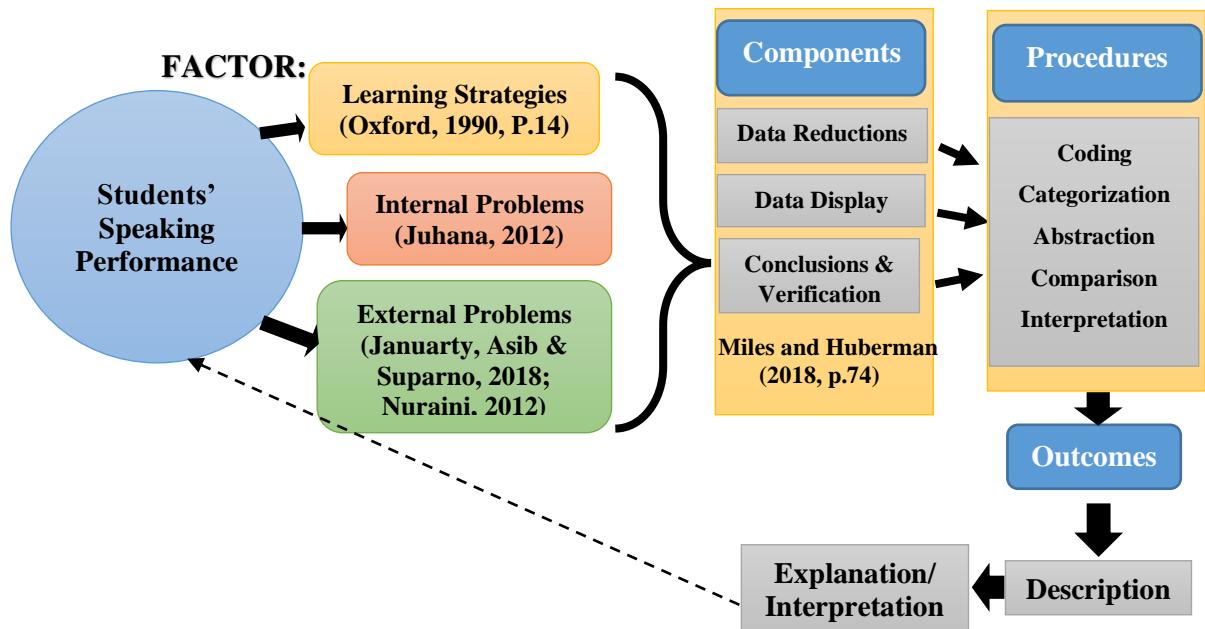


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of the study.

RESEARCH METHOD

Related to this research, the researcher conduct a qualitative method. According to Tavakoli (2012, p.23), qualitative research is a research methodology that attempts to control contextual factor, but rather seeking through a variety of method, to understand things from the informant's point of view, creating a rich and in-depth picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

In this context, case the study is conducted to investigate the internal and external problems faced by the students in speaking English in the ninth grade of a private Islamic Boarding School in Banten province. Besides this study also explore how the students overcome their internal and external problems in speaking English.

The research is conducted at a private Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia. The researcher will conduct the study in August 2022 by observing the situation and the classroom interaction, and also interviewing the English teacher and the students at the school. The participants of this research was the ninth grade students of a private Islamic Boarding School which consist of 25 male students with the age range of 14 to 15 years old. The researcher will recruit the most out spoken and active students to be interviewed. All participants' identity is kept confidential therefore the researcher uses alternative names (pseudonym).

To collect the data, the researcher will use two techniques, they are observation and interview:

- Observation

The first instrument is observation. Sugiyono (2018) argues that observation is a complex process, a process composed a various biological and psychological processes. Two of which are the most important are the process of observation and memory. In other hand, observation is the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at the research site.

Interview

- The second instrument is interview. Moleong (2002, p.98) offered a nation of interview as a conversation with certain purposes which is done by two parties, the interviewer and the interviewees. The interview contained some questions related to the internal and external problems faced by the students in speaking English at ninth grade students of a private Islamic Boarding School and how students overcome their internal and external problems in speaking English. The researcher conducted the interview with the students and the English teacher after class. The interviews will record by using handphone.

Data analysis method is conducted using the framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018, p.74). Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018, p. 74) highlight that the activities in qualitative data analysis were carried out interactively and continued continuously to completion. And there are three concurrent flows of activity in qualitative analysis, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Students' internal problem can be divided into two categories. The first is cognitively related issues, such as grammatical limitation and vocabulary and pronunciation issues. The other category involves psychological problem, such as lack of confident, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and shyness Juhana (2012, p.12).

Based on findings there are seven internal problems faced by student there are Fear of mistake, Shyness, Anxiety, Lack of confidence, Lack of motivation, Lack of pronunciation, Lack of vocabulary. In the classroom context, the learning focuses on students' performance triggered by the prompt given by teacher in the form of visual and questions to be answered. However, some students were afraid to speak as shown by their almost inaudible tones. At the time of the

lesson, the teacher asked the students several questions but the students were all silent. When the teacher asked students to come forward, there were students who seemed want to volunteer but did not do it. One or two students who were appointed did not want to because they felt they could not speak English. In the classroom and at the time of study, when the teacher was about to ask a question, some students looked panicked. Judging from the situation in the classroom, almost all students felt uncomfortable in learning English. It did not always indicate that they did not have the willingness to engage in the classroom interaction, they just felt uncomfortable in speaking in English because they needed to organize the thought and produce the spoken text carefully hance it could be understandable and also correct grammatically. The pressure to speak the situation in the classroom shown that students did not have the right amount of confidence to speak English. Some students shown lazy attitude. When learning English, some students demonstrated an annoyed expression with the English lesson. From the observation in the classroom during teaching and learning activities, students' facial expression and their lack of engagement in the learning discussion shown their lack of understanding of the materials. In terms of vocabulary problems during in-class learning, some students were eager to speak but found it difficult to express their thoughts verbally.

Student demonstrated several direct learning strategies to solve their problems, such as asking peers and the teachers for their vague understanding on the materials Oxford (1990). Some other reflected their learning challenges and make a better learning plan so that their future learning can be better. Students who had limited vocabulary also use Indonesian vocabulary to maintain speaking fluency. This use of local languages can be considered as a sign of strength instead of a hindrance in acquiring English skills. Teaching and learning English speaking in multilingual context can be more dynamic, as students' use of their mother tongue during speaking indicate that they have diverse language vocabulary in their mind that need to be expressed to support their English speaking.

Considering the external problems that occur, this study also reports that language regulation also plays a pivotal role in impeding students' English-speaking motivation. The data from the interview conducted with students and language program staff shown that the regulation that obliges students to communicate verbally in English prevent them from developing their speaking skills for fear of being constantly punished by the language staff if they violate the rule. Besides, the language program staff found some difficulties to encourage students to speak in English with the existence of this punishment. Instead of supporting students with the required environment to practice real English verbal communication, this flaw in the regulation makes them discouraged to interact at all. The student-spies who made a report whenever they found students communicating not in English also intensified students' discomfort in communicating using English.

This study confirms the result reported by Akbari (2015), Hadijah (2014), January (2018), Jaelani and Zabidi (2020), and Sari (2022), that students face similar internal problems of fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and limited grammatical knowledge and also pronunciation and vocabulary issues. In addition, this study also offers insight on how language policy needs to be implemented in the context of Islamic boarding school that punishment is not appropriate to ensure the implementation of English speaking practices in the context of Islamic boarding schools.

The findings regarding students' strategies to address the internal and external problems of English speaking are actually varied. Some of them use Oxford's (1990) learning strategies such as memory, cognitive and compensation. Based on the findings, the strategy students apply to address their speaking problems are memory and cognitive strategies in learning to speak. In terms of students' indirect learning strategies, they mostly ask more capable others to help them

with their English speaking learning, hence they use social as their indirect learning strategy to address their learning problems. This is done since the more capable others are easy to reach whenever they are in need of academic assistance.

CONCLUSION

The discussion of English speaking internal problems in a private Islamic junior high school demonstrated that students still find it difficult to arrange their ideas in a verbal English communication. Some of the problems include students' cognitive problems such as lack of English grammatical mastery, pronunciation issues, as well as vocabulary limitation. The problems also include students' psychological conditions that hinder their English speaking performance such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation.

The observation regarding students' external problems is based on Nuraini (2016, p.13) which focuses on the issues around classroom management, i.e. limited time and large class. However, the researcher's observation concluded that the external problems also came from the language policy that was applied in the school. For example, the policy that obliges students to speak English during daily verbal communication instead of motivating, actually makes students more depressed. It shows that the classroom management issue was not the only factor that hindered students' speaking engagement, another external factor, such as language regulation also shaped students' attitude towards English speaking beyond the classroom context.

Learning strategies that students mostly use are memorization and cognitive for direct learning strategies and social for indirect learning strategies. These strategies that they choose are helpful for them in addressing their English speaking learning issues.

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