PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR AFFECTING ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE FOR THE ENGLISH LEARNERS IN INDONESIA

Youssouf Haidara.
Unilingual English. University of Bamako. FLASH.
Bamako. Mali
haidarayoussouf@rocketmail.com

Abstract

In every learning situation or environment, human psychology plays a significant role. English speaking is a language skill that is highly affected by human psychology. The aim of this study was to find out the psychological factor that affects most of the Indonesians' English speaking performance in order to propose some solutions to overcome the problem. This study used a descriptive qualitative research methodology to collect the data. The Indonesians who learnt English for their undergraduate program had been the population of this study. The researcher also purposefully selected some Applied Linguistics master program students in English education at YSU to act as research samples. So, after having analyzed the collected data from those participants by using some observations tools to find out the barriers students face in English speaking performance, it was clear that most of those students's desire is to speak English as well as they speak their first language. Unfortunately, most of them showed increased levels of anxieties. Although most of the students think that they have a good level of vocabulary or grammar, they also keep on feeling insecure while speaking. Most of the barriers were: being worried of making mistakes, feeling shy, and feeling frustrated while performing in English speaking. Finally, the researcher has proposed some solutions that are expected to be significant remedies to overcome the problems mentioned above.

Keywords: *English as Foreign Language in Indonesia, English Speaking difficulties, and Psychological Factor*.

Introduction

In this era of globalization, knowledge of a foreign language serves students well in the interconnected world, it opens the door to job opportunities in the global economy and makes more media accessible, enriching public discussion of current issues. At present, the language that dominates internationally is certainly English. Kachru and Smith (2008: 201) agreed that: "In the era of globalization and rapid diffusion of knowledge, all the nations are aware

of the need to prepare their citizens to perform in ways that would ensure their prosperity and eminence in the world. In order to be competitive, they have to be able to function well in multinational industrial entreprises, international trade, diplomacy, and scientific technological areas of expertise. They have to be innovative and contribute to the knowledge-based of the world. In order to achieve these goals, they need to be able to utilize the most widely used medium, English."

The most influential model of the spread of English is Braj Kachru's model of World Englishes. In this model, the diffusion of English is captured in terms of three Concentric Circles of the language: The Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle represents countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, where English is widely used as a first language; the Outer Circle represents countries such as India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Singapura, Malaysia, where English is institutionalized; and the Expanding Circle represents countries where English plays no historical or governmental role, but where it is nevertheless widely used as a medium of international communication. This includes much of the rest of the world's population, most of European, Asian or African countries such as Mali, Egypt, China, Russia, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia.

In Indonesia, English is considered as the primary foreign language which is considered more important than other foreign languages. This point is well clarified by Lauder (2008: 9-20), he explains that: "The expanding or extending circle refers to nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, but which were not colonized by the countries of inner circle, and which have not given English any special official status. In these countries, English is taught as a foreign language. Indonesia belongs to this group." According to Junaidi Mistar by Braine (2005: 71), to equip Indonesians with an ability to communicate at the international level, English is the first foreign language officially taught to students from junior secondary school. So,

English language cannot be separated from Indonesian educational system and Indonesian students daily life.

Many students in Indonesia learn English for various purposes such to become tourist guides, to be able to speak in international level, to get better jobs, and so on. So, English has become part of students' everyday activities in Indonesia; most of them feel very proud once they are able to speak the language well. Unfortunately, most of those students always show increased levels of anxieties when it comes to use the target language for the oral communicative purposes. Those levels can appear due to the factors as being called by the teacher to present something in front of the class or to respond orally to some questions.

One of the productive skills of English teaching and learning is speaking. Speaking is so intertwined with daily interactions that it is not easy to give a unique and concise definition to it. Therefore, different experts have defined speaking in a various way, among which the researcher is going to cite as follows:

According to McKay (2008: 179):

In language use situations, when people speak, it is not the case that they simply open their mouths and speak the words and sentences. When people speak, they are doing so in a cultural context, they are speaking to another person or persons (perhaps friends, a teacher or a tester) who bring with them a relative degree of status and power and they are doing so in order to meet the purpose required of the interaction, which may be a conversation, or a task that needs completing.

Learning a foreign language is not as the same as acquiring a first language, especially while we have to use for communicative purposes. To some EFL students, speaking English fluently, accurately, and appropriately is just like eating food with the nose, just not to say it is impossible to do so. What makes English speaking practices so difficult among those EFL students who had learned English for many years? Many studies have shown that many factors such as

sociological, linguistic, psychological, economical factors may negatively influence students speaking practices and make English speaking performance difficult. Nevertheless, this study just focused to investigate the psychological factor that greatly affects English speaking performance of Expanding circle students.

Nowadays, one of the big problems that affect EFL students' English speaking practices is without any doubt psychological barrier. Why does the researcher focus on psychology? Because he believes that psychology is the number one key to success for most EFL students in their English speaking performance. Most of the EFL students who learned English for many years, most of them have difficulties to use the language to speak, whereas when we analyze, we come to know that most of them have good level in vocabulary or in grammar. Therefore, it is not only the lack of grammar or vocabulary, but it is also a question of psychology, your believe, your confidence, your strong feelings in yourself. Most of those EFL students have weak motivation; they never develop confidence in themselves. They are always afraid of making mistakes, some are shy, some hesitate just because they feel insecure while using the target language to communicate. To overcome those fears, those anxieties, they need to stop thinking lot about mistakes; they need to stop underestimating themselves.

Methods

The purpose of this section is to describe in detail the research process undertaken by the researcher in order to address the objectives of the study. It includes a description of the methods used for gathering and analyzing data and attempts to justify why these particular methods were chosen and the benefits of doing so.

a. Participants

According to Creswell (2012: 206), in qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an indepth exploration of a central

phenomenon. Thus, to best understand this phenomenon, the qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals and sites."

Based on Creswell's point above, the researcher purposefully selected 20 Master degree Applied Linguistics students of English Education at Yogyakarta State University to act as his research samples. They are from different regions of Indonesia and they have learned English for their undergraduate program at different Universities of their respective region. They have been observed during their presentations, their discussions, and their interactions with other people outside the classroom while using English to communicate. 10 of those students have been interviewed about the psychological barriers related to their English speaking performance.

b.   Instruments

According to McNiff (1988: 76), there are various traditional methods in data collection procedure like personal field notes, audio tape recording, diaries, interviews and discussion, videotaped recording, questionnaires, documentary evidence, slide/ tape photography.

In order to gather large data from those participants, the researcher first observed them at any time they used English to present about something, to discuss about some topics, and to interact with other people outside the classroom. Creswell (2012: 213) defines observation as the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site. Then, a great number of data have been gathered by taking notes from the observation. The second instrument that enabled the researcher to collect other amount of data has been the interview. The observation alone seems to be not sufficient to valídate the data, that is why it has also been the duty of the researcher to interview some of his participants in order to compare or to cross-check the different sources. So, 10 students have been interviewed. The interviews were unstructured interviews, and all started by asking them if they enjoyed learning

English and by asking them what according to them were the difficulties mostly faced while learning English related to English speaking performance.

c. **Data Analysis**

The interactive analysis technique developed by Miles and Huberman as cited by Keith (2009: 174) has been implemented to analyze the data. The interactive analysis consists of three interrelated components namely reduction of data, display of data, and conclusion. Data reduction has been done by selecting, determining the focus, simplifying, summarizing and modifying the form of raw data from the field notes or transcriptions. This is the steps that the researcher dealt with sharpening, separating, and finally to limit data to those that were related to the psychological barriers in English speaking performance. After having reduced the data, the researcher has also arranged and organized them, this is called data displays. The reasons for reducing and displaying data are to assist in drawing conclusions. Finally some conclusions have been drawn that can be presented in the next section or results.

Finding and Discussion

The observations showed that students' main psychological barrier was lack of confidence, and students being interviewed confirmed it themselves to be one of the main barriers they face. Since they don´t feel able to speak English in a natural way, and since they are always thinking about how to pronounce correctly a word or how to use the correct grammar structures, they said that it is difficult to feel confident. The second, and somehow connected, is making mistakes, because most of them think that people may laugh at them if they mispronunce some words as in Indonesia is referred to "Takut salah"; then they prefer not to interact in English until they know for sure that they are not making any mistake, whereas even if practice cannot make perfect, at least it can make you speak fluently.

Another conception is that students think that language is complicated and difficult, so they already put a barrier since they don't make any effort and they

tell themselves that they do not have the ability to learn that language. All that formerly mentioned are widely observable on English learners in Indonesia, and teachers should encourage students to overcome this barrier, since they understand that in any learning process making mistakes is unavoidable, and people always learn from their mistakes. In addition, some students' perception of the language can be negative and appears as a barrier too, for example many students expressed that speaking English outside the classroom is a style of people who just like to "show-off", since using English makes students feel uncomfortable while speaking or interacting with each other. To sum up, most of those English learners always complain about problems such as: being anxious, being nervous, being worried of making mistakes, feeling shy, and feeling frustrated while performing in English speaking.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The researcher has concluded this study as follow:

1) After having analyzed the data gathered from observations and interviews, the results first showed that those students who had learned English for many years are still confronting some barriers in their English speaking performance, that came to prove the researcher's assumption in the first place.

2) The results showed that one of the main barriers they face is the psychological barrier. Most of the problems they were complaining were: being anxious, being nervous, being worried of making mistakes, feeling shy, and feeling frustrated while performing in English speaking. The researcher then believed that those problems mentioned above indicate nothing but the psychological factor.

Finally, we suggested that in order to be confident, those students should stop thinking about the language as difficult to learn, they should stop thinking much about what others think about their performance in English speaking, they should practice the language as much as they can, without thinking about

mistakes. No one is perfect, perfection is impossible and they should think that mistake is not bad or negative thing. In fact, as we have already mentioned above, people learn from their mistakes. That is why we ended this section with a point cited by Sousa (2001: 59). He said: "People learn from their mistakes, so they should think of them as useful and positive."

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