

Investigating The Problems Faced by Nursing Students in Second Language Communicative Skill for Indonesian Vocational Higher Education Mobile Learning

Baharuddin K

Kordjabaharuddin@gmail.com

Nursing Department of Health Polytechnic of Makassar

Muh. Basri

muhammad.basri00@gmail.com

Nursing Department of Health Polytechnic of Makassar

Rahmatia

rahmatiahakp@gmail.com

Nursing Department of Health Polytechnic of Makassar

Abstract

The study focuses on the problems faced by the sixth-semester students of Nursing Study Program at Health Polytechnic of Makassar in Speaking English. It uses a descriptive method to describe the students' spoken problems which lie in language elements, psychological factors, and learning situation. The subject of the study is taken using cluster random sampling technique. This study uses two kinds of instrument, namely questionnaire and interview. Both are used to identify and to find out the problems faced by the students in speaking English. The findings of the study show the students' obstacles in speaking English, namely: the lack of grammar understanding (68%) the lack of confidence (62%), the infrequent practice (58%), the lack of vocabulary (50%), the low motivation (46%), the anxiety (44%), the influence of classroom interaction (44%), the low listening skill (40%), the lack of knowledge and interest (32%), the influence of mother tongue or local language (28%), the impact of formal events (28%), the lack of pronunciation (24%) and the inappropriate topic talk(16%). Thus, it is implied that the problems faced by the students in speaking English need serious attention for the teachers of English to conduct an effective teaching method to help encourage the students to speak English.

Keywords: *Speaking problems, language elements, psychological factors, learning situation*

INTRODUCTION

English has been taught from elementary up to university levels as a compulsory subject. In an informal situation, English is also taught and studied in a conversation club,

English course, English TV program, etc. Hence, many people are attempting to master the art of speaking as the single most important aspect of learning English. However, in 2009 and 2010, 76.80% and 78.34 % respectively showed the incompetent students who cannot perform English well particularly in speaking.

This problem is obviously a general issue not only for the sixth-semester students of Nursery Study Program at Health Polytechnic of Makassar but also for all students at the university level. In fact, mastering the speaking skill is one of the difficulties in learning English. Many researchers have figured out this phenomenon and most of them concluded that the results of English teaching in Indonesia are still far from satisfactory in the sense that most of the students do not seem to possess the ability to use the language as a means of communication (Poedjiastutie, 2017; Askar, 2013; Sujana, et al, 2016; Arham & Hudriati, 2018). Even for those who have been learning English for years at Junior and Senior High Schools are hardly able to converse in a very simple English.

Based on the evidence above, this study investigates the sixth-semester students of Nursing Study Program at Health Polytechnic of Makassar as the subject because of the following reasons:

1. They are expected to use English accurately and productively after long periods of basic and intermediate English understanding.
2. Their possibly incompetent use of English in speaking will indicate the fact that there is something wrong with the teaching of English speaking teaching at the Nursing Department and thus, this will lead teachers to do an evaluation.

To further investigate the issue, this study will answer the following question: “What problems do the sixth-semester students of Nursing Study Program at Health Polytechnic of Makassar have in speaking English?”

This study aims at finding out the problems faced by the students in speaking English. It is expected that the results of this study will contribute to the concept of teaching language in applied linguistics theoretically and to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language practically.

What is speaking?

In Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000), speaking is to say words, to talk or to say something, to know, and to be able to use a language. In Chambers English Dictionary, speaking is to talk, to discourse, to make a speech, to pronounce, to utter, to express, to declare, and to mention.

In fact, speaking is one way to communicate with other people. It becomes an interactive process in constructing meaning and formation which involves producing, receiving, and processing. The act of speaking involves not only the production of sound but also the use of gesture, the movement muscles of the face, and indeed the whole body.

There are three main language elements that should be paid attention by the students in order that they can improve their speaking ability. Those elements are vocabulary, structure, and pronunciation.

- 1) Vocabulary is the most important aspect to be mastered for those who want to be skillful in speaking. Whatever a learner thinks, says or listens, writes or reads many sentences, he/she produces various words or vocabulary. In learning English,

vocabulary should be paid attention to both students and teachers. In fact, it is the first language element.

- 2) The second element of spoken language is structure. One is able to speak English well if he knows much about structure and how to apply it. However, it is the main handicap of the learner in speaking English. He/she is afraid of making errors in structural sentences in their speaking. The structure also plays an important role in improving learner's speaking quality. In developing communicative competence, Gautam in Samad(1989) stated that accuracy and fluency should be combined to develop students' communicative competence. The quality of students' speaking ability will be better if they have a good structure.
- 3) Pronunciation is the way in which a particular language is pronounced (Quirk in Samad, 1989). It becomes a big problem for students who are not able to pronounce English sounds perfect. One reason is the influence of mother tongue hinders the learners' English pronunciation.

The difficulties in speaking

Chastain Fitriani(2007) stated that learning to speak obviously is more difficult than learning to understand the spoken language. However, it can be achieved by doing much practice in a real situation. Most of the experts said that anxiety is a big problem in speaking. Anxiety is defined as a state of uneasiness apprehension of fear caused by the anticipation of something threatening (Scopel in Fitriani (2007). Krashen in Fitriani (2007) stated that anxiety contributed to an effective filter which prevents students from receiving input and then language acquisition fails to progress (Horwitz et al, 1991). Calie (1991) stated that the conditions of the students' anxiety are various as follows:

- 1) Symptoms of anxiety: (1) voice quivers, too fast or too slow, monotonous or non-emphatic, (2) verbal fluency: stammering, halting, awkward pauses, (3) mouth and throat: swallow repeatedly, clear throat repeatedly and breathe heavily, (4) facial expression: no eye contact, tense face muscles, grimaces, twitches, (5) arms and hands: rigid or tense, fidgets, wave hands about motionless, and stiff, (6) the growth of body movement: sways, paces, shuffles feet.
- 2) Causes of anxiety: (1) fear of physical unattractiveness: he or she feels not handsome, pretty, or improperly dress, (2) fear of social inadequacy; he or she feels his or her behavior will be perceived as inappropriate or crude. This implies social inferiority, (3) fear of criticism; be oversensitive to negative comment from the audience, (4) fear of failure: the speaker fears of social error or worries the meeting will not come to success, (5) fear of the unknown; the experienced speaker has not yet met with the situation and does not know what to expect,
- 3) Fear of speech anxiety: (1) the speaker is afraid of being afraid. Anxiety comes soon from this fear.
- 4) Conflicting emotions; the speaker faces the simultaneous fear of failure and desire to succeed. This causes chaos that adds distress.
- 5) The excitement from anticipation; the speaker is under the influence of excitement about an event.

Several studies have been done and reported by many language teachers and researchers who have a purpose to find out the problem faced by the students, especially in speaking English. Some of the findings are bravely put forward as follows:

- 1) Byrne (1986) found that poor understanding or poor listening skill often results in nervousness which will in turn further inhibit the ability to speak. Thus, the students do not have a good model to imitate, therefore they need an adequate mastery of grammar and vocabulary.
- 2) Samad (1989) reported that some factors influencing students speaking ability are as follows:
 - 1) Vocabulary
Students stated that vocabulary is the most important thing to be mastered for those who want to be skillful in speaking. However, the students always lose their interest and motivation to speak English because of their poor mastery of vocabulary. They really want to speak much; however, they cannot develop their ideas.
 - 2) Pronunciation
The main problem in speaking English is pronouncing English sounds. The students' inhibition not to be able to pronounce the English sound perfectly is because of the infrequent practice and the influence of mother tongue in their accent.
 - 3) Frequency of practice
Language is a habit. All languages users need exercise or practice. The difficulty of the students is they do not know how to express their ideas in English. They prefer to speak English only when they attend English class or when they have a speaking assignment. This indicates that the students' lack of practice because they only speak English on limited occasions.
 - 4) Functional grammar
One factor influencing the student's ability is functional grammar. The frequency of the students' exercise in reading functional grammar books can help add their knowledge. Sometimes the students want to speak with other people but they are lack of information and feel afraid of making grammatical mistakes.
 - 5) Appropriate topics
In the learning and teaching process, the teachers should give the students the same opportunity to speak in front of the class or they should have many interesting aids that could motivate the students to speak enthusiastically. However, the main factor influencing the students' speaking ability is inappropriate topics given which do not meet the students' level.
 - 6) Motivation
All activities in the world need motivation as studying English but sometimes the students do not have the motivation to practice speaking.
 - 7) Self-confidence

One of the important aspects of influencing speaking ability is braveness. Speaking is oral communication. However, there are many students who have no confidence to communicate well.

8) Situation

The informal situation can encourage the students to speak freely but in a formal situation such as meeting, group discussion, and seminar. The students are difficult to express their ideas. This is one factor that influences students speaking ability.

3) Burns and Joyce (2002) concluded that vocabulary or content words are the first recognizable element of spoken language to develop.

Cornbleed and Carter (2001) stated that trying to protect a positive face is one of the problems in speaking English. Most of the students do not want to feel embarrassed; they want to be liked not hated.

METHOD

The study is a descriptive method which describes the problems faced by the students in speaking English. The problems of speaking English are any difficulties experienced by the students in using language elements, in performing their psychological state, and in applying certain learning situation or environment. The subjects are the students of Nursing Study Program at Health Polytechnic of Makassar, who consist of 50 students in each class. Due to the big number of students in one class, the subjects are represented by the sixth-semester students who are taken using cluster random sampling from two classes, A and B, with 50 students.

This study uses two kinds of instruments, namely: oral interview and questionnaire. The oral interview is used to identify the students' speaking problems. The theme of the interview question is 'the cigarette'. On the other hand, the questionnaire is used to find out the problems faced by the students speaking English. The students are asked to give the answers to the items in the questionnaire.

Data collected through questionnaire are tabulated and analyzed using the following formula:

$$\% = \frac{n}{N}$$

Where :

% = percentage

n = problem in speaking

N = number of respondents

(Gay et al, 1981)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show the results of the data from the interview and the questionnaire. It is found that there are three areas of the students' problems in speaking English as follows:

a. Language elements:

1) Lack of vocabulary

- 2) Low listening skill
- 3) Lack of grammar understanding
- 4) Lack of pronunciation
- b. Psychological factors:
 - 1) Lack of confidence
 - 2) Low motivation
 - 3) Anxiety
- c. Learning situation or environment:
 - 1) Infrequent practice
 - 2) Lack of knowledge
 - 3) The inappropriate topic talk
 - 4) The influence of mother tongue
 - 5) The influence of classroom interaction
 - 6) The impact of formal events
 - 7) Lack of facility
 - 8) The rarity of English contest

On the other hand, the responses and the percentages of the students' problems in speaking English are shown in the following tables.

Table 1. The problems faced by the students in speaking English

No	The problems in speaking English	Responses	%
1.	Language Elements:	25	50
	a. Lack of vocabulary	20	40
	b. Low listening	34	68
	c. Lack of grammar understanding		
	d. Lack of pronunciation	12	24
2	Psychological Factors:	31	62
	a. Lack of confidence	23	46
	b. Low motivation	22	44
	c. Anxiety		
3.	Learning Situation or Environment:		
	a. Infrequent practice	29	58
	b. Lack of knowledge or interest	16	32
	c. Inappropriate topic talk	8	16
	d. The influence of the mother tongue or local language	14	28
	e. The influence of classroom interaction	22	44
	f. The impact of formal events	14	28

Table 2. The highest and the lowest responses of the students' problems in speaking English

No.	The problems in speaking English	Responses	%
-----	----------------------------------	-----------	---

1.	Lack of grammar understanding	34	68
2.	Lack of confidence	31	62
3.	Infrequent practice	29	58
4.	Lack of vocabulary	25	50
5.	Low motivation	23	46
6.	Anxiety	22	44
7.	The influence of classroom	22	44
8.	interaction	20	40
9.	Low listening skill	16	32
10.	Lack of knowledge or interest	14	28
11.	The influence of the mother tongue	14	28
	or local language		
12.	The impact of formal events	12	24
13.	Lack of pronunciation	8	16
	The inappropriate topic talk		

Data in table 2 show that of the 50 students who have problems in speaking English, 34 (68 %) students are lack of grammar understanding, 31(62 %) students lack of confidence, 29 (58 %) students have infrequent practice to speak English, 25 (50%) students are lack of vocabulary, 23 (46 %) students have low motivation to speak English, 22 (44 %) students are anxious to speak English, 22 (44%) students get the influence of classroom interaction not to participate in speaking English, 20 (40%) students have low listening skill, 16 (32%) students are lack of knowledge or interest in speaking English, 14 (28%) students have the influence of mother tongue/local language and the impact of formal events, 12 (24%) students are lack of pronunciation, and 8 (16%) students feel inappropriate with the topic to talk to practice their English speaking.

Discussion

The discussion deals with the interpretation of the findings. In the findings, there are three major problems of the students' English speaking, namely: problems in language elements, problems in psychology, and problems in a learning situation.

Problems in language elements cover the lack of grammar understanding, the lack of vocabulary, the low listening skill, and the lack of pronunciation.

1. The lack of grammar understanding

The students have less understanding of the items of grammar in constructing English sentences. Some errors they produce are as follows:

a. The misuse of *that* to substitute the subject.

Example:

Incorrect form: ...*that* is mean many m,m, have a disadvantage.

Correct form: it means have disadvantages.

b. The omission of *doing* as the indicator of Simple Present Tense:

Example:

Incorrect form: I do not use this cigarette because I think I know the effect of the smoking

Correct form: I *do* not smoke because I think I know the effect of the cigarette.

- c. The omission of the subject:
Example:
Incorrect form: *Me*, like e,e,e, nurse studying very understand cigarette
Correct form: *I myself* as a nursery student understand about cigarette....
- d. The misuse of the verb with the third person singular as a subject:
Example:
Incorrect form: Cigarette e,e,e, *contain* nicotine
Correct form: Cigarette *contains* nicotine
- e. The inappropriate use of word choice
Example:
Incorrect form: so there is *very-very* take money to buy the cigarette
Correct form: take *a lot of* money to buy cigarette.
2. The lack of vocabulary
Problems of the number of words produced in the students' speech, the students' way of pause, and the use of too much repetition and ellipsis embody the students' lack of vocabulary.
- a. The number of words produced in the students' speech
Example: E,eis a is a..... E,e, e,e.....
- b. The students' way of pause
Example: Someone e,e,e, cigarette can someone e,e,e...
- c. The use of too much repetition
Example: Many people e,e,e, many people on working in Pabrik cigarette.
- d. The use of ellipsis
Example: E,e, Ok.... e,e like
3. The low listening skill
The students' problem in listening skill is when they cannot comprehend their answers in the interview questions. They need more repetition to explain the content of the questions. Hornby (1994) stated that listening skill is the mental act or the power of understanding what other people said. Likewise, Byrne (1986) stated that poor listening is often the result of the students do not have good grammar and vocabulary. He also added that low listening skill often results in nervousness which will further inhibit the ability to speak.
4. The lack of pronunciation
The problem with the pronunciation lies in the way the students pronounce English words and the way they use stresses, accent, and intonation in English sentences. Samad (1989) found that some factors influencing students' speaking ability, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, frequency of practice, and the use of functional grammar. The pronunciation problems are as follows:
For Examples:
- a. Incorrect form : Think /tiŋk/
Correct form : Think /θiŋk/
- b. Incorrect form : Closed /klosit/
Correct form : Closed /kləuzt/

- c. Incorrect form : Tobacco /tobako/
Correct form : Tobacco /tə'bækæ/
- d. Incorrect form : Crisis /krisis/
Correct form : Crisis /kraisis/
- e. Incorrect form : Advantage /adventij/
Correct form : Advantage /əd'vantidz/
- f. Incorrect form : Increased /inkrisit/
Correct form : Increased /in'krist/
- g. Incorrect form : Person /person/
Correct form : Person /pɜ:sn/
- h. Incorrect form : Breath /bret/
Correct form : Breath /bri:ð/
- i. Incorrect form : Mind /mind/
Correct form : Mind /maind/

In psychological factor, the problems which hinder the students' speaking skill are the lack of confidence, the low motivation, and the students' anxiety.

1. The lack of confidence
The students' lack of confidence is shown with the nervousness, sweating, and stuttering when they speak.
2. The low motivation
The students' low motivation to study English as well as to speak English because of the unattractive teaching process and the uncondusive learning environment. Their attendance to come to English meeting an English class is due to their obligation as a student in the institution to take English as one of the compulsory subjects.
3. The students' anxiety
The students' anxiety in speaking English is shown with their hesitation to make mistakes in using grammar and pronunciation in their speaking. They pause too frequently and they feel nervous in the way they speak. They also take too much time to think before they begin to speak.

Cornbleed and Carter (2001) pointed out that trying to protect a positive face is one of the problems in speaking English. Suryani (2002) in her study found that one negative influence in learning a language, especially in speaking is the learner's anxiety.

In learning situation or environment, the problems lie in the infrequent practice, the students' lack of knowledge, the influence of mother tongue and classroom interaction, the impact of formal events, and the inappropriate topic talk.

1. The infrequent practice
The impacts of the students' infrequent practice in speaking English are they feel speechless, uncomfortable and are not brave to speak. They have less experience in public speaking performance. When speaking, they could not use proper gesture and expression. This condition causes the unattractiveness of the audience attention.
2. The influence of classroom interaction

The students' different ability, especially in speaking, make some students feel under pressure and do not feel good enough to involve in a group or interact with other students. This condition absolutely causes uncondusive classroom interaction. Thus, only some students with good speaking skill talk dominantly over the others.

3. The lack of knowledge
The topic talks were given (Cigarette) is a very common thing to talk about. However, the students could not give more information to elaborate on the topic of the talk. They only repeat the same words about the same ideas.
4. The influence of the mother tongue or local language
The students stumble to speak English because they are still influenced by the use of their mother tongue or their local language. This interference influences the students' English vocabulary, English pronunciation, and their English accent.
5. The impact of formal events
The infrequent attendance of formal events is one of the students' problems in speaking in front of the public. Formal events, such as competition, meeting club, and even gathering in teaching process in the class are not the occasions which put the students to be more confident to speak English.
6. The inappropriate topic talk
The students feel that the topic talk is boring and too formal or high level. They do not have their right to choose and determine their own topic talk. Thus, they feel de-motivated to speak English.

Samad in Baharuddin (2007) stated that the frequency of practice, the appropriate topics, and the situation influence the students in speaking English. Hutchinson and Water in Baharuddin(2007) pointed out that in the form of learning cycle: a learner wants to learn and applies cognitive powers to acquire knowledge, to develop his/her competence, to learn more easily, and finally to see learning as an enjoyable and satisfying experience.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the problems faced by the sixth-semester students of Nursing Study Program at Health Polytechnic of Makassar in speaking English are divided into three major areas, namely: problems on language elements, on psychological factors, and on learning situation or environment. Each problem covers the following minor problems:

1. The problems on language elements cover the lack of grammar understanding, the lack of vocabulary, the low listening skill, and the lack of pronunciation.
2. The problems on psychological factors cover the lack of confidence, the low motivation, and anxiety.
3. The problems on learning situation or environment cover the infrequent practice, the influence of classroom interaction and of mother tongue or local language use, the lack of knowledge or interest, the impact of formal events, and the inappropriate topic talk.

Therefore, it is suggested that the teachers of English, especially in Nursing Study Program, Health Polytechnic of Makassar to be more creative to design communicative teaching activities and to engage the culture of group work and class presentation to

encourage the students to speak English, and the students to join English meetings to practice their use of English, especially in speaking skill. For further research, it is suggested to conduct research about applying a suitably good teaching method to overcome the problems in speaking English as analyzed in the study.

REFERENCES

- Arham, M., & Akrab, A. H. (2018). Delving into Delving into Content Lecturers' Teaching Capability in Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) at an Indonesian University. *Asian ESP Journal*, 14(7.2).
- Askar, K. (2013). Reformulating English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Indonesia: Current issues and future prospects. *Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang*, 1, 36-48.
- Baharuddin, K. 1994. *English Reading Comprehension of the State Nurse School Students at Ujungpandang*. Unpublished Thesis. Ujungpandang: FBS IKIP Ujungpandang.
- Baharuddin K, H.2007. *Developing Content Based Syllabus for Nursing Students at Health Polytechnic of Makassar*. Unpublished Thesis. Makassar: Graduate Program of UNM Makassar.
- Byrne, Donn, 1986. *Teaching Oral English*. Longman: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Carlile, Clark S, and Arlie V. Daniel. 1991. *Project Text for Public Speaking*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.
- Cornbleet, Sandra and Carter, Ronald. 2001. *The Language of Speech and writing*, London and NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Gay, L.R. 1996. *Educational Research (The fifth Edition)*. Ohio: Bel and Havel Company.
- Goitom, Helen. 1995. *Now is the Time to Change Our Teaching Methodology*.
- Harmer, Jeremy. 1995. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. New York: Longman Singapore Publishers Ptc.Ltd.
- Hornby, A.S. 1974. *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Horwitz, E.K.M.B. Horwitz, and J.A. Cope. 1991. *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*: Englewood Claffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Poedjiastutie, D. (2017). The Pedagogical Challenges of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Teaching at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 12(6), 338-349.
- Samad, Muhammad Yasin. 1989. *The Speaking Ability of the Third Semester Students of the English Departement*. Unpublished Thesis. Ujungpandang: FBS IKIP Ujungpandang.
- Sujana, I., Fitriana, E., & Syahrial, E. (2016). Conflicts among Aspects of Needs in Designing the Teaching of English using an ESP Approach at Higher Education in Indonesia.
- Suryanti S. *Using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach to Encourage Students to Cope with Speech Anxiety*. Unpublished Thesis. Makassar: FBS UNM Makassar.