An Analysis of Non-English Department Students' Speaking Ability at Universitas Riau

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study aimed to describe and analyze the speaking ability of non-English department students at Universitas Riau in the academic year 2016/2017. The study was also aimed to describe the activities done by the English lecturer in the process of teaching and learning and the students' difficulties in speaking. The data were gathered through observation, an oral test in the form of an interview, and documentation. The participants of the study were 20 students majoring in Accounting at the Faculty of Economics. The findings indicated that the average score of speaking ability of non-English department was 2.36 categorized as *Fair*. From the class observation, it was also discovered that the English lecturer already applied the stages of teaching English through reading materials on certain topics but lacked oral activities in the first week of teaching but with more speaking in the second week activities after the researcher hold a lengthy discussion. In the case of the participants' difficulties in speaking, it was noticeable that they had difficulties in grammar vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency to some extent. Therefore, English lecturers when teaching need to provide students with more opportunities to practice speaking in order to improve their speaking ability.

Keywords: Analysis, non-English students, speaking ability.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is agreeable that knowing English involves not only producing the language correctly but also using it for particular purposes. Bygate (1997) states that when people use language, they characteristically do three things: they say something. For this reason, it is undeniable that in this era of globalization, speaking English ability has become a requirement to fulfill if one wants to gain great success in his/her education and career. This is why several countries in the world treated English as a foreign or a second language or put an emphasis on the importance of the ability to use English in their education systems. It is the fact that English has now been spoken by millions of people around the globe where it is learned as the first, a foreign or a second language.

It should also be acknowledged that the most demanding of the four language skills in a foreign or a second language is speaking (Baily and Savage 1994) partly because of its frequency of use and its benefits to people in many aspects of their lives. That is why students who want to be successful try to communicate effectively in their second or foreign language. Hadfield

and Hadfield (2001) view that speaking becomes a bridge to link learners from the classroom to the world outside. Despite its importance, it is true that English as foreign language is hard and challenging. As stated by Zhang (2009), English learners have the most trouble skill and imcompetent communication in English speaking. First, reduction contractions, elision and vowel have to be reduced in fluent speech so that learners have no enough practice it (Brown 1994). Besides, the use of slang and idioms in speech may also cause a problem for the learners to use the language orally. In this respect, students need to be introduced and taught pronunciation and have more practice in using stress, rhythm, and intonation of English.

Several studies have been arranged to discover the students' ability in speaking. Generally, those studies found that the students still had insufficient ability in speaking; in other words, their speaking ability was mostly in the category of bringing *fair* or *moderate* (Kartika, 2007; Wendi, 2010; Fernanda, 2015; Hia, Herdi, and Abbas, 2016;

Kurniawan and Sabarudin, 2018; and Ilham, Bafadal, and Muslimin, 2020). Furthermore, several

previous studies also concluded that the students were reluctant, hesitant, fearful of mistakes, or lack of vocabulary (Fauzan, 2014a); In fact, some English learners are unwiling and demotivated to use the language (Nunan, 1999), EFL learners problem faced *the students' won't talk* (Gebhard, 2000), and they were too shy, scare of fault done or laugh at them while speaking (Fauzan, 2014b).

Those findings show that speaking becomes difficult for students to master because they have insufficient knowledge about the aspects of speaking. This implies that speaking is a challenging skill that requires several aspects of it. Thornburry (2005) argues that the main learners or speakers' matter are skills and knowledge factors that deal with their confidence in using the language.

Lastly, the students have to have good grammar and many vocabularies good pronunciation in speaking English.

Considering the importance of speaking, frequently, the students have to fix their speaking skill by having as much practice as possible. Starting from junior high school (some are from elementary school), English has been studied by the students. At the university level, English becomes one of the compulsory subjects to be learned by students in all major. This means that English becomes crucial not only for students majoring in English but also for those majoring in non-English as it applies at Universitas Riau where English is studied by all students including the students of the Faculty of Economics. The purpose is to facilitate the students to use their English so that their English is improving and their knowledge of English is enhanced.

However, the fact found in the field did not seem to meet that expectation. Based on the preliminary research conducted on non-English students at the Faculty of Economics Universitas Riau, it was found that the low students' speaking skill since they still had speaking difficulties for various reasons. The students interview results, the long span of time they spent studying English from high schools to university did not appear to contribute significantly to their ability to speak English well. Moreover, the time allocated by the university to teach the students to learn English was not sufficient for them to develop their English speaking ability. The students got very limited opportunity to practice their English orally. In addition, it was also

found that the lecturers' hen teaching gave greater emphasis on teaching reading rather than speaking. It seems that there is a tendency that the importance of teaching productive skills is neglected at the university level. This is contradictory to the goal of teaching English at university that is to set up the graduates to have English proficiency communicatively so that they

can compete with other graduates in the job markets to better their careers.

On the basis of the phenomena above, the researcher was encouraged and prompted to carry out from non-English major students' speaking skill at Universitas Riau especially at the Faculty of Economics.

2. METHOD

This research was descriptive qualitative which involved to have current issues in gathering data. Gay and Airisian (2000) descriptive research is to find out the study status of the research. The purpose was to describe and analyze the speaking ability of department of non-English students at Universitas Riau, to describe the activities done by the English lecturer when teaching and to describe the difficulties the students had while they were speaking. This type of research is appropriate to the objectives of this research since descriptive research attempts to describe, explain and interpret the condition of the present phenomenon that occurs at a specific time and place. The research was undertaken at the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Riau. This faculty has three departments; Accounting, Economics, and Management. Two sources data used in this research; that is, primary and secondary. The primary was collected from an oral test (interview) conducted with the students of the non-English department Universitas Riau in the Accounting department. In addition, the secondary data were in the form of classroom observations held the classroom process and documentation.

The total number of participants taking part in this study was 20 students of the non-English department within the Faculty of Economics. These participants were not given a speaking course before having an oral test and an interview. This means that not all the individuals took part in the study, but the participants represented a sub-sample of the population (Lodico, 2006).

The researcher was the key instrument of the research, data collection through documentation, interview, and observation. The following are the instruments used when collecting the data: Observation is an important technique for data collection in qualitative research that is used to discover complex interactions in a natural setting. A purposeful, systematic, and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or a phenomenon as it occurs (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Anderson (1998) viewed that there are three ways the researcher observes within the research setting. Burgess (1998) argued that in social investigation, the main isntrument is researcher especially research involving the use of participant observation.

In this research, an observation sheet was utilized in order to obtain data about speaking activities done by the lecturer in teaching English for Department of non-English students.

It is widely known that interviewing is form of generating source in qualitative research for it can provide the opportunity to explore the issue in much greater depth where there is two-way communication between the interviewer and the interviewees. Given the nature of qualitative research, an oral test in this context was a semi-structured interview. It was aimed to generate additional information of interviewees. This type of interview was selected because it is flexible compared to both structured and unstructured interviews and it gives the interviewees the opportunity to express what they have in mind about their world using their own words (Opie, *et al,* 1994; Johnson, 1994). The interview was conducted with all the participants after appointments were made. Before the interview was held, the researcher had prepared an interview guide along with questions about their daily routines, family members, and educational backgrounds. The interview was conducted according to time and place arrangements with those to be interviewed because it was essential to have the consents they needed to answer the questions asked by the interviewer.

To measure students' speaking ability, the researcher used speaking scoring rubrics adopted from Hughes. The scores achieved by participants could determine the level achieved by the participants. Besides, the level achieved could describe the students' speaking ability. Finally, the scores obtained by the participants in the form of a range in answering the questions are shown below:

Score	Description
1 – 1.5	Poor
1.6 – 2.5	Fair
2.6 – 3.5	Good
3.6 – 4.5	Very good
4.6 – 5	Excellent

There were some steps to follow when collecting the data starting from validating the instruments to analyzing and interpreting the data as in the following:

Validating the instruments; the researcher discussed and formulated the questions for the participants with the advisors. The researcher also asked the English speaking lecturer to validate the instruments before collecting the data.

Giving an oral test, it prepared questions list for the participants to answer during the interview. The questions were related to personal information, daily routines, family, educational background, and profession. All of the questions were designed in such a way so that the participants could freely express what

they had in mind. The interview was conducted in a comfortable atmosphere to reduce the anxiety of the participants. The interview was aimed to get information from the participants where the emphasis was put on the assessment of their accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, fluency. The researcher had an open-ended interview session with the participants one by one. The researcher gave stimulated questions and asked them to answer honestly. Besides, audio-taping was attached simultaneously for the

interview with the consent of the participants. Crasswell (2007) mentions the advantage of taking audio taping while the interview is going on. In this research tape recording allowed the researcher to deepen and analyze the respondent's responses anytime and ensures the originality of data as the whole as the data were recorded.

Transcribing; In this step, the researcher wrote down the full text of the recording.

Analyzing and interpreting; the researcher made an analysis based on the oral test interview transcription for student and responses were analyzed. The data were analyzed numerically based on the participants' scores in speaking which were checked by the two raters. The researcher read the raw data and then the individual and group scores were also counted in percentages so that they could be easily described to show the speaking skill of participant covering accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, fluency. To answer the first research question, the data were formulated by this one:

$$Percentage = \frac{Frequency}{Number\ of\ respondents} \times 100\%$$

(1)

In the process of analyzing the interview results as qualitative data, the researcher followed several steps (Moleong, 2006) as follows: Unitizing; it finished collecting interview data, next the it converted the audio into written form and displayed into the column, and gave the code.

Categorizing; after the researcher gave the code for all the data obtained from the interview.

Interpreting: the researcher displayed and interpreted the researcher's interview. In this step, the researcher described and interpreted what was found in the interview.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first point is the speaking ability of non-English Department students at Universitas Riau. The second one is the speaking activities performed by the English lecturer in teaching English. And the last point is the

students' matter deal with speaking skill. The findings of this research are respectively discussed below:

Table 3. Speaking Ability of Non-English Department Students at Universitas Riau

No.	Speaking Score	Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	4.6 – 5	Excellent	0	0%
2.	3.6 – 4.5	Very Good	0	0%
3.	2.6 – 3.5	Good	8	40%
4.	1.6 – 2.5	Fair	12	60%
5.	1 – 1.5	Poor	0	0%
Total			**20**	**100%**
Average Score		**2.36**		

The table shows that the speaking skill of Department of non-English students lies in the category of being *Good* to *Fair*. It is noticeable that the average score is 2.36, which is categorized as *Fair*. In addition, for no 12 of 20 got scores ranging between 1.6 and 2.5 which are in the category of being *Fair*. Meanwhile, 40% of the students (8 students) are in the category of being *Good*. From Table 4.4, no one student achieve above 3.5 which means that none of them are categorized as *Very Good* and *Excellent*. Finally, it is also clearly seen that no student obtains the score in the category of being *Poor*. This implies that no students have good speaking skill. In short, it sum up that the speaking ability of non-English Department students was in the category of *Fair*. In other words, they were not yet able to speak English well.

Related to the first finding where the speaking ability in Department of non-English students at Universitas Riau was categorized as *Fair*, there must be some factors which influenced this result. Therefore, it was important to see what makes speaking was difficult for the students. After analyzing the data, any students' matter in speaking skill. The difficulties were related to accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, fluency.

Table4. Students' Difficulties in Speaking

No.	Difficulties Aspects	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Pronunciation	17	15%
2.	Grammar	42	38%
3.	Vocabulary	24	22%
4.	Fluency	24	22%
5.	Comprehension	3	3%
Total		**110**	**100**

Table 4.5 displays that there are 110 difficulties found in the students' utterances which represent the speaking difficulties. The table also shows that the great difficulty frequently occured in speaking is grammar which is 38%. Then, the second difficulty is related to

vocabulary and fluency both 22%. Meanwhile, the difficulty in pronunciation reaches 15% of the total frequency. The difficulties in comprehension are only 3%. Difficulty in comprehending questions in the interview should not be a big matter as the participants were familiar enough with the very simple topics; that is about self-introduction, daily routines, family, and plans.

The Speaking Ability of Non-English Department Students at Universitas Riau

In the first question, based on the findings that the students had a low speaking ability which fell into *the fair* category. The result showed that the students did not have a complete understanding of how to express their ideas or thoughts in a spoken language.

The result of this study is supported by the results of several studies that have been conducted related to students' ability in speaking. Those studies found that students still had low ability in speaking (Ahmed, 2004; Kartika, 2007; Wendi, 2010). These studies found that most of the students had problems in grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation. Similarly, the findings expressed that the students' speaking ability in the category of being *fair* covering the difficulties in fluency, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. The findings of this research and other researches imply that speaking is not an easy skill, especially for non-English department students. Although they have learned about speaking from high school, their have matters in speaking especially when explore the opinion.

Furthermore, the findings in speaking support the statement from Baily and Savage (1994) who assert that it is true that foreign languageof english speaking is hard and challenging for some reason. Besides, the use of slang and idioms in speech may also cause a problem for the learners to use the language orally. Rao (2018) adds foreign language and second language situations are two contexts learned in speaking.

In conclusion, the findings of this research reveal that students still had low ability in speaking because of several aspects that came from the students themselves. However, it cannot be judged that this low ability occurred only because of the faults in the learning process; experts state that it is the nature of speaking as a difficult and challenging skill.

3.2. *Speaking Activities are done by the English Lecturer in Teaching Non-English Department Students at Universitas Riau*

Speaking ability is related to speaking activities the lecturer does in the classroom since those activities facilitate the students to practice their speaking skills.

Referring to the findings of this research, speaking activities done by the lecturer in teaching English were role plays, group discussions, and presentations. The lecturer requested the students to practice a conversation and requested them to create their conversations based on the situation. Then, the lecturer also assigned the students to discuss a topic in a group and to present it later. However, the results of students' speaking ability were not satisfactory yet since the lecturer did not drill the students' pronunciation and did not provide students with various examples of using the words to make sentences.

The findings of this research may not match with what is stated by the experts. They assert that speaking activities mean repetition. In speaking activities, students have to repeat what learned and said to make them know all about what they learn. (Richards, 2002; and Baker & Heather, 2003). They emphasize that speaking activities require talks as performances.

Furthermore, Ur (1999) views that good speaking activity should encourage students to talk a lot; this can be started by having practice saying the words.

However, the findings of this research also revealed that there were still some weaknesses found in the speaking activities conducted in the classroom. The most obvious one was that students did not get an equal chance to participate in the classroom. This means that not all students got the opportunity to speak in one meeting due to the difficulties faced by the students and the time limitation. It was still found that some students did not want to speak and were less motivated. Some students used their mother tongue during the discussion and some of them were even just silent during the discussion.

Wallwork (2001) argues that successful speaking activities should facilitate students to talk a lot. The teacher's voice was loud enough and could be heard very clearly by all students. This is very important as audibility and variety of voice is essential in teaching (Harmer, 1998) so that students are motivated in learning. Besides, physical presence also needs to be considered such as physical movement, being close to the students to create a friendly atmosphere and avoid standing only in one point (ibid). To the researcher's observation, the teachers practiced all of these in his teaching; he did not stand in one point but he varied his physical movement but he did not give the students time to practice their English, perhaps, because of the limited time as the time was dominated by the three stages of teaching reading.

3.3. Non-English Students' Difficulties in Speaking at Universitas Riau

The findings expressed that the matters were found almost in all aspects of speaking. This research found that all of the students had problems speaking. The result of the data analysis shows that it was not easy for students to express what they had in their minds easily. This finding is similar with the finding of the studies conducted by Heriansyah (2012), Al Hosni (2014), and Al Nakhalah (2016). They found that most students had matters in fluency grammar, vocabulary in speaking. For example, in a study conducted by Heriansyah (2012), he found that the difficulties faced by the students in speaking included lack of knowledge of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. He found that the students seldom recalled vocabulary so they were confused about how to use appropriate words. This is because English words have more than one meaning. Moreover, the students also did not get enough practice in grammar and pronunciation.

In addition, Al Hosni (2014) also found that the problems the Arabic students had in speaking included grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. Related to these findings, Zhang (2009) contends that talking remains the most troublesome ability to dominate for most of English students, and they are as yet awkward in imparting orally in English. As indicated by Ur (1996), there are numerous variables that cause trouble in talking, for example, restraint, in which understudies are stressed over committing errors, dreadful of analysis, or essentially timid, nothing to state implying that understudies have no intention to communicate.

As per Harmer (1991), there are a few reasons why students use native language in their talking classes.

Besides, Coffin (2003) adds that understudies whose first language isn't English regularly have critical challenges with certain parts of English sentence structure that are unmistakable from the issues local English speakers have. This idea is supported by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) who state that such a phenomenon happens because there is a confusion between the target language and mother tongue structurally. It is because the features of the two languages are different.

As expressed by Sayuri (2016), limitation of jargon is extremely upsetting students in communicating in English. Rao (2018) states that the basic component of language in effective communication both vocabulary and grammar need to be mastered.

Referring to the above opinion, this research also found that students had difficulties in fluency. It was found that hesitation was frequently found in the students' utterances. This fact is supported by Sayuri (2016) who contends that delays in talking can't be dodged; it is truly hard for unknown dialect students, particularly for amateurs. In light of the clarification above, it tends to be inferred that non-English division understudies at Universitas Riau had low speaking ability due to several factors. The students' speaking

ability was unsatisfactory not only because they had difficulties in the aspects of speaking, but also because of the speaking activities conducted by the lecturer in class. The lecturer did not provide the students with more opportunities to speak. As a whole, the students' difficulties in speaking in this study covered pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In view of the consequences of information investigation and the exploration discoveries, a few ends can be drawn. To begin with, the talking capacity of the non-English division understudies at the Faculty of Economics Universitas Riau fell into *the Fair category* after all speaking components in the rubrics was combined. It means that the students did not yet succeed in having a good speaking ability. Second, the speaking activities performed by the lecturer in teaching English were role-played, group discussion, and presentation that could to some extent, improve the students' speaking ability. These activities facilitated students to speak in the classroom but it seemed that those activities could not be said successful since the lecturer did not frequently ask the students to pronounce words and did not provide examples about the use of the words. Third, the students' difficulties in speaking were more on grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. The most frequent difficulties found in this research were difficulties in grammar and vocabulary. The students expressed their ideas when answering questions using incorrect grammar and vocabulary which affected their fluency as they felt inhibited and did not speak with ease.

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