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A Holistic Approach for Enhancing English Speaking Proficiency

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Abstract

Speaking English is one of the essential skills required by students nowadays due to its significant advantages and influences in every aspect of life, especially in education. Most of the countries worldwide have implemented English as one of the school subjects in their curriculum having the purpose to escalate their language proficiency and hence, steering them to compete in the global network. This article aims to explore students' speaking proficiency encompassing the nature of speaking, factors affecting students' speaking problems, factors for high speaking proficiency, and teachers' strategies in teaching English. The data are gathered from various sources such as research findings, articles, online books, and theses. The result showed that students' speaking problems are caused by several factors which are divided into two groups; Internal and External Factors. Internal factors consist of students' problems such as fear of making mistakes, hesitation, lack of motivation, and many others. External factors refer to students' environmental problems including friends and other surroundings. Besides, this article also found that teachers' strategies used in teaching English in the classroom and their efforts to become effective teachers assisted the students in improving their speaking skills. Overall, this article concludes that collaboration between teachers and students is a requirement to promote students' speaking proficiency.

Keywords: Holistic Approach, Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Problems, Speaking Proficiency, Teaching Strategies.

Introduction

Due to its fundamental benefits, there have been no other languages, like English, in human history that has such a broad scope as a lingua franca, evidenced by the dramatically altered composition of English users and the number of so-called Non-Native Speakers (NNS) who outnumber native speakers three to one (Dewi, 2012). Furthermore, the usage of English as a medium of communication has good consequences as it serves to convey the messages and link the gap between NNS all over the world (Vodopija-Krstanović and Marinac, 2019).

Therefore, plenty of people is eager to master English as it is one of the approaches to get involved and compete in this modern era.

Moreover, the usefulness of English has resulted in a significant factor in the success of students because it provides critical knowledge, abilities, and job opportunities, as well as serves as guidance in the creation and maintenance of international connections (Coleman, 2010). As can be seen, English is no longer merely a means for communication purposes rather it is also a part of the educational system which becomes one of the school subjects taught to students.

The Nature of Speaking

Speaking is considered the most important of the four primary language skills when learning a second or foreign language (Omidvar, 2014) since being excellent (in speaking) means optimizing the talents and inquiry of individuals (students) for their self-attainment (Rahimah et al., 2017). Similarly, according to Dewi et al (2017), speaking is one of the core language skills that English learners must learn to support the ability to communicate due to its importance and use on the international scale. Thus, speaking unavoidably requires its users to be good at it (Derakhshan et al., 2016). For students, being able to speak English fluently and accurately is the target in learning English which in turn becomes their primary attention (Karimy & Pishkar, 2017). As a consequence, speaking English is deemed to become the measurement of to what extent students' English competence. Furthermore, looking at the daily use of speaking as a tool of communication, Leonard and Shea (2017) highlighted two forms of interactions in which language is used: Interactions that are based on meaning and interactions that are based on form. On the one hand, meaning-based interaction refers more to the main language purpose which is as a medium of communication and does not primarily concern with the forms of language grammars or other structures. On the other hand, form-based interaction denotes a language focusing more on the rules and grammar structures rather than the meaning.

Furthermore, having satisfying speaking proficiency is essentially required by the students to achieve their academic and non-academic purposes. In a non-academic aspect, a plethora of schools and universities presently invite students to certain language competitions, from English debating to speech contests and from secondary to university students as well. Take an illustration, in the University of Mataram, Indonesia, there is an annual English debating competition well-known as National University Debating Championship (NUDC). The main purpose of the competition, as stated by the rector of Mataram University, is to hone the analytical judgment of students from one point of view to other various perspectives. Moreover, students are encouraged to be proficient in speaking skills aiming at bolstering the maximum result of their presentation during the classroom learning process in particular. Besides, proficient speakers are commonly more confident as they possess the skill for delivering their ideas particularly when they are having a discussion.

Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Problems

Despite its benefits, Rahayu (2015) discovered several issues influencing students' speaking skills in her research, like incorrect pronunciation, poor grammatical understanding, limited vocabulary mastery, limited speaking opportunities, students' interest, mother tongue use, infrequent practice, and lack of discipline. Other studies revealed that the students' speaking issues were caused by psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of confidence, and motivation (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Rahayu, 2015). In addition, time

constraining to practice outside of the classroom could also create an issue for students' speaking skills (Navidinia et al., 2019).

According to Riyaz and Mullick (2016), there are at least two factors impeding students speaking proficiency. Firstly, lack of time to practice speaking in which has been evidenced by a plethora of researchers justifying that if given more time to speak, the students can speak more fluently and confidently. Moreover, due to the commonly teacher-centered classroom learning process, students found it difficult to express their ideas and points of view since more time was spent with teachers' explanations and materials (Hosni, 2015). He added that teachers were also unable to give opportunities to everyone to speak to the overwhelmed students in a classroom. Secondly, the inadequacy of vocabulary among the students could also inhibit speaking proficiency. Having adequate words in mind is essentially required by English learners. Since plenty of students is deficient in the lexicons which are beneficial to convey their idea, the information they delivered is oftentimes missed (Nakhalah, 2016).

Additionally, there were other various factors hindering students' speaking proficiency such as the lack of opportunity given to the students during the learning process, and classroom activities that were predominantly conducted in non-verbal communication exposures (Soltani, 2012). Being afraid of making mistakes (inhibition) was also one type of problem faced by students when speaking particularly in the aspects of pronunciation, grammar, etc. (Riadil, 2020). A study conducted by Abda (2017) found that making introductions, asking and answering questions, as well as communicating ideas and opinions in English were sorts of simple dialogues scarcely practiced by the students which in turn, brought about speaking barriers. Therefore, the teachers should overcome all these obstacles mentioned so that students could be able to speak proficiently.

Factors Fostering Students' Qualified English Speaking Proficiency

Speaking English, in comparison to the other skills, seems to be the most imperative to learn (Ur, 1999). It has also been becoming the measurement for students' success in learning a language. Despite being an essential part of communication, and though challenging and demanding, to communicate effectively in English, students are required to master the major elements of the language, such as comprehension, diction, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency (John et al., 2020). Since speaking represents what someone is thinking of, it, therefore, becomes essential for everyone to have good communication in English particularly. The following are the factors affecting students' English speaking proficiency expounded by (Alberta, 2009):

Language Aptitude

This ability is a form of learning talent that consists of a set of verbal and memory abilities that differ from person to person. Children and adults with a high level of linguistic intelligence are more likely to learn English quickly. Since it cannot be raised or lessened, language aptitude is frequently thought to be an innate trait.

Age of Acquisition

Children should begin learning English at a young age, preferably before they reach the age of six or eight. Children's word growth and storytelling skills would be faster at this age. In addition, there is no age in infancy when learning a second language is too early or too late.

Socio-economic Status

Parents from high-income homes, according to Bayat et al. (2014), socialize their children in a way that increases their performance on IQ tests, which also affects how they learn in the academic sphere. It is owing to their parent's knowledge about the importance of education and their ability to fund the school to provide a better education. When compared to parents with lower education and literacy, parents with higher income and education were more likely to have a faster acquisition of English. It was expected that they would be able to pay the costs until their children have completed their studies.

Quality and Quantity of English Exposure

It was recognized that diverse students will have varied learning experiences inside and outside the classroom. Small group discussions, for example, in the classroom had the advantage of allowing students to practice their English in a low-risk environment, allowing them to become less dependent on the instructor and more reliant on the group for their learning, as well as increasing their self-confidence in using English for effective communication (Gan, 2012). Consequently, more students involved in communication lead to more fluent and sociable they will be. It was also be largely determined by how students arranged themselves with their surroundings beyond the classroom. Rahimah et al. (2015b) explained social enhancement as one of the methods that could establish the potentiality, capability, intelligence, and skills of people, in this case, students, which not only benefit themselves but also others. Thus, English exposure should be given to the students both inside and outside the classroom.

Theory of Speaking Proficiency

Following speaking ability, there was a slew of theories. The current article, on the other hand, uses (Jong et al., 2012)'s global ratings of speaking performance which becomes an unbiased assessment of lexicons, grammar, and fluency for speaking proficiency. Thus, someone has arguably speaking competence if they master the three components or otherwise, they are not considered proficient in speaking. The following are some explanations regarding the elements:

Lexicons

The lexicons, also known as vocabularies, are one of the most important components for foreign language learners since having an adequate number of words can make communication easier (Susanto, 2017). When English learners need to elucidate meaning or concept, they should have conceptual storage of words as a basic tool to deliver their thoughts or goals. In this regard, the teachers tried to explain and elaborate the use of unknown terms to provide learners with a better knowledge of how to analyze and practice their application over time (Ismail et al., 2017).

Despite being the smallest unit of a language, vocabularies are likely to be one of the most difficult tasks for students to acquire (Alizadeh, 2016). Previously, many studies explored ways how to promote students' vocabulary mastery, one of which was the use of picture games when teaching the students (Rizki et al., 2013).

Grammar

Grammar is a set of principles for analyzing and constructing sentences (Kamlasi, 2017). Grammar competency is therefore one of the communicative qualities involving the ability

to speak the language's grammar and vocabulary for communicative purposes as well as to practice it effectively in a social situation (Zhang, 2009). He also stated that several studies have been conducted on the value of grammar instruction in improving students' accuracy. Meanwhile, Corzo (2013) distinguished between two forms of grammar teaching: intensive and extensive grammar instructions. The opportunity for pupils to apply the rules to their English skills becomes the most distinguishing feature of an intensive grammar lesson. As a result, exercises and assignment chances to practice the target structures are used to exemplify this type of instruction. On the other hand, extensive grammar teaching is embedded in learning systems that focus on either the forms of meaning or the forms of communication.

Furthermore, there is another term for grammar training known as Pedagogical Grammar (PG). It is defined as grammatical representations, resources, and activities that are supplied to aid in the learning of a foreign language, including grammar and methodology descriptions (Newby, 2015). PG is viewed as a set of tools, such as a pedagogical book, a foreign coursebook, grammar drills, and so on, as well as a learning facilitation process involving compatible procedures associating both teachers and students. Therefore, the role of grammar is critical in producing suitable sentences when speaking.

Fluency

In general, fluency in speaking a language is employed to assess second language proficiency (Thomson, 2017). Consequently, those who are motivated to learn the target language and are willing to put up the effort to do so could expect to become fluent (Ho, 2018). According to Shahamirian (2017), children who were exposed to studying English at a young age were more likely to be fluent since it has a similar formula to learning a mother tongue. Additionally, a teacher's role in enhancing students' speaking fluency is critical, and measures for dealing with students' disfluency must be implemented. One of the teachers' strategies implemented in the classroom is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which has been shown to reinforce students to advance their speaking fluency (Ho, 2018). The other approach employed by teachers was known as a trivia-based activity aiming to improve students' speaking skills by allowing them to use ready-made dialogue expressions in a conversation (Abi Andaya Iswara, Abdul Azib, n.d.). Hence, fluency development is more likely to direct learners' attention to the transmitted messages rather than language forms (Notion, 1989).

Teachers' Strategies in Teaching English

Teaching a foreign language is a simultaneous process that includes participation from both the instructor and the students. The basic role of teachers in teaching is to ensure that the learning materials given to the students are coherent and meaningful. While the students have to improve their intelligence and connect the experiences with their learning styles (Rahimah et al., 2015a). Based on several studies on cooperative classroom engagement, the results underlined the importance of teamwork and involvement in the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Namaziandost et al., 2018). According to Anjaniputra (2013), teachers should employ language teaching strategies that are customized to their students' qualities and levels of skill, as well as resources that encourage students to participate actively by using a variety of accessible media. Furthermore, understanding that teachers become one of the most important aspects in the success of English learning, three points should be

considered according to Handayani (2017); being reflective teachers, escalating teachers' competence, and being literate in ICT. The three aspects are explained below in detail.

Being Reflective English Teachers

To become reflective, instructors must be constantly conscious that they are required to create innovations aiming at improving classroom teaching and student accomplishment. Besides, Handayani (2017) advocates that reflecting on teachers teaching methods in the classroom is a good idea that could escalate their pedagogical competence. Meanwhile, Bhat (2020) promotes discussion as one of the ways to be reflective teachers, he expounded that, a classroom discussion consists of students' responses separated by frequent probes and clarifications by the teacher, which facilitates group participation and thinking development, as well as individual performance.

Furthermore, by reflecting learning materials to students, teachers are likely to improve the quality of their instruction and become more effective. As a consequence of having greater exposure and demonstration time, a more effective learning process will result in a better learning outcome. According to Uygun (2013), effective teachers are interested in getting their students to study and demonstrate the comprehensiveness of meanings rather than simply remembering facts or events, and they emphasize the importance of reading as it influences success in other content areas and improves learning achievement, especially when the instruction is centered on a meaningful conceptualization of teaching.

Escalating Teachers' Competence

It takes more than merely teaching to become a teacher. Taking personal responsibility for upgrading students' competencies has an impact on students' learning results as well. Selvi (2010) spelled out that competence is the set of knowledge, abilities, and experience required for the future and manifested in activities. The teachers' capacity to understand students' learning needs is critical to their teaching abilities, such as the ability to recognize the uniqueness of students, to choose the best approach feasible for each student, and to provide incentives for students (Liakopoulou, 2011). Furthermore, as stated by Paolini (2015), the teaching process will be effective if the teachers own optimistically confident communication with their students both during and outside of class time, give directly effective advice, and support team-working students (2015). As mediators of knowledge transfer, teachers must possess not only cognitive skills but also other competencies. Ilanlou & Zand (2011) explained that there are three competencies that teachers should possess: cognitive competency, which includes self-cognition, learners' cognition, pedagogical cognition, and emotional competency, which includes self-cognition, learners' cognition. According to the findings of the teacher's competencies study, Selvi (2010) stated that there are four competencies necessitated to the teachers to teach professionally, one of which implies that curriculum competencies are the most important for them to acquire. Curricular competency is related to both theoretical and practical competencies and is aligned with goals for the educational and learning process. Consequently, how teachers understand their pedagogical expertise will have a substantial impact on students' learning outcomes.

Being Literate in ICT

In this era, digital literacy has unavoidably become a necessity in the classroom. Particularly for the teachers, it could inspire and assist them in promoting students' learning outcomes. Moreover, digital literacy in this century is a reasonably stable set of basic competencies that

are necessarily learned dealing with the everyday appearance of new digital platforms (Handayani, 2017). As classroom facilitators, teachers should be able to employ, identify, integrate, manage, and access digital resources effectively to become ICT literate. Accordingly, these skills can facilitate students in finding material on the internet, creating PowerPoint Presentations (PPP), and learning online with their teachers. Finally, Jo Shan Fu and Fu (2013) discovered that incorporating technology into the teaching-learning process is advantageous to achieve better learning attainment.

Promoting Teaching and Learning Assessment

Classroom assessment should be exploited to increase learning and, more importantly, students' achievement. Thus, students are demanded compulsorily to be familiar with assessments in terms of the topics, why they are required, and how they are measured in learning (Jones, 2005). Amua-sekyi (2016) defined assessment as all routines undertaken by teachers and students to obtain information that can be administered to reorganize teaching and learning, which includes teachers' observation and analysis of students in the form of homework, tests, essays, reports, practical procedures, and classroom discussion of issues. Moreover, foreign language teaching and learning assessments were performed for at least two reasons. Firstly, it determines how many students have met their learning objectives, whether they have encountered any hurdles to learning, and which strategies are effective in foreign language training. Secondly, the teachers may be responsible for maintaining the continuity of foreign language education programs. As a result, teachers' assessments combined with continual feedback for students can maximize the acquisition of the learning process.

There are two types of assessments: formative and summative assessments (Bhat, 2020). The goals of formative assessment are to examine the instructional process, to determine whether or not learning is taking place, to enhance and develop the teaching-learning process and ensure consistent implementation in the school system. This assessment could also inspire teachers and students to raise their performance by allowing them to see to what extent they have progressed. Last but not least, this type of evaluation is typically conducted at the end of each class. The summative technique, on the other hand, is implemented at the end of a period, such as yearly, internal, or external examinations aimed to assess students' progress particularly in deciding the eligibility of the students to go on to the next class or remain at the same.

According to Bhat (2020), there are two assessment techniques, which are outlined in the table below:

Conservative teaching assessment	New teaching evaluation
Language-based-focus	Concentrated on Communication
Isolated abilities	Integrated expertise
Teachers as the learning center	Learner-centered
The emphasis is on output.	The emphasis on the procedure
Only test	Educative test

Furthermore, the assessment could determine which activities and approaches are beneficial, as well as the extent to which teachers and students' knowledge, skills, and challenges in learning a language, all of which are available for both teachers and students in the evaluation testing. Thus, testing is a method of evaluating students' routines and can be used as a clear criterion for evaluating learning (Tosuncuoglu, 2018). It is also thought that one part of teachers' competence is how to evaluate students' capability or assess literacy (Mellati & Khademi, 2018). Moreover, teachers' decisions in assessments are particularly based on their experience, their understanding of learning, the growth of language and linguistic competency, as well as the appropriateness and prominent interests of what they believe to teach, merely as they did before doing the evaluations (Rea-Dickins, 2004). Assessment entails providing students with feedback and selecting the next step in teaching and learning. Its purpose is to accelerate learning progress rather than to validate learning (Sardareh, Rashid, and Mohd, 2020). Additionally, the implementation of complete and thorough evaluation aids students in discovering learning problems at an early age, such as specific deficits, which leads to a change in teaching style (Sulaiman et al., 2019).

Attending Some Educational Training and Workshops

Teaching is a profession that requires specific knowledge to be acquired via training and experience. As a result, teacher education is an important part of producing trained instructors who can influence the quality of classroom instruction (Thapa, 2012). Furthermore, teacher professional development is regarded as one of the most important factors in improving student learning. Many developed and developing countries dedicate large resources to upgrading teacher education procedures in light of this. They make deliberate efforts in establishing and maintaining excellent teacher education institutes to produce qualified instructors (Ali & Parven, 2013).

Furthermore, explaining evaluation criteria was a part of teacher training that appears to have assisted instructors in gaining the recognition and realization of standards associated with a particular pedagogic activity. This was accomplished by emphasizing to teachers the distinctiveness of scholarly learning contexts and the basic ideas that drive their characteristics, as well as parts of their classroom performance that moved them closer to the pedagogic qualities to be adopted (Piske et al., 2017).

Teacher training usually comprises scheduling seminars for instructors to get curricular instruction over some time. Professional development and teacher training definitions in the field places a strong emphasis on qualities of success and improvement in teachers' understanding, perceptions, actions, and practices (Boudersa, 2016). As a result, if instructors at all levels are to change their teaching concepts, attitudes, and daily living habits in the classrooms, they must be trained regularly in their specific disciplines and topics. Such programs will aid teachers in sharpening their teaching skills as well as broadening and expanding their knowledge of the subjects they teach, hence improving student academic education. Accordingly, it appears that starting the session, presenting the subject matter, connecting topics to students' previous learning experiences, treating students with love and respect, asking questions, conducting assessments during class, and using clear and non-threatening language are all appropriate (Thapa, 2012). Moreover, personal characteristics, school environment, interpersonal relationships, relationships with students' parents, and community relationships all have an impact on professional development.

The progress of instructors' learning of the distinctive coding orientation that would lead to the execution of the suggested pedagogic practice was influenced by the initial and in-service

training they had already received (Morais et al., 2005). Finally, pre-service teachers must be informed in the areas of values education to effectively teach values to their students. Teachers who are already in the field need to be exposed to values training programs as well (Mergler, 2002).

Conclusion

The primary significance of English has encouraged people around the world to learn and enhance their English speaking proficiency. This is due to its fundamental role in various spheres in life. In education, for instance, students are required to master English as part of curriculum demands. Nevertheless, of many students, there are predominantly students who find it difficult even to say a single word in English. Interestingly, students who are good at speaking English tend to have higher motivation and self-confidence. The result of the findings revealed that the problems faced by the students when speaking were because of several factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of motivation, and many others grouped as internal problems. While the problems caused by the teachers, friends, and surroundings were included in external factors. Moreover, as the main mentor in teaching English, teachers also play important role in escalating students' speaking skills by employing some teaching strategies which is hopefully beneficial in reducing the students' speaking problems. In conclusion, the student's awareness about the importance of English and teachers' strategies in improving students' speaking proficiency are fundamentally required for the success of English teaching and learning competency.

Contribution of This Research

This paper will, ideally, contribute to both the theoretical and contextual parts of students' speaking abilities. Scholars could perhaps use the results of this article as an extra source of information. Furthermore, any researcher would profit from mentioning this publication as the theoretical underpinning for their research. Finally, English teachers will unavoidably want this scholarly work to aid in the teaching and learning of English, particularly as a guide to better learning outcomes. While in the contextual domain, the author wishes to inform the readers about both the elements that promote students' English speaking skills and the difficulties they encounter when speaking. It is critical to understand such components to help pupils improve their speaking abilities and deal with typical challenges. Furthermore, teachers will be introduced to innovative English teaching practices, which will have a positive impact on their pedagogical skills.

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