

INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Keywords:
*speaking,
performance
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Speaking skill is considered the most challenging skill in language learning, especially in an academic speaking context. It is uncommon for the students to find the problems and need more effort to have a good speaking performance. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the factors affecting students' problems in speaking performance. This research investigates performance conditions and affective factors as mentioned by Tuan & Mai (2015). This research was attended by 20 students in the 4th semester in the English Education Department of Wiralodra University. The instrument of this research used a questionnaire and interview. Twenty students participated in the questionnaire, and six out of twenty students participated in the interview. The data was analyzed by using dichotomous questions analysis. The results revealed that performance conditions and affective factors affect the students' problems in speaking performance. The results indicate that planning was the major frequency in performance conditions, followed by the amount of support, the standard of performance, and time pressure. At the same time, self-confidence and anxiety became the major categories of affective factors, followed by the motivation category. The research suggests further investigation into factors affecting students' problems in speaking performance with different focuses in terms of participants' scale, students' level, and kind of speaking performance.

Kata Kunci:
*kemampuan
berbicara,
kondisi performa,
faktor afektif*

Abstrak

Keterampilan berbicara dianggap sebagai keterampilan yang paling sulit dalam pembelajaran bahasa, terutama dalam konteks berbicara akademik. Jarang siswa menemukan masalah dan membutuhkan lebih banyak usaha untuk memiliki kemampuan berbicara yang baik. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi masalah siswa dalam berbicara. Penelitian ini menyelidiki kondisi siswa ketika tampil berbicara dan faktor afektif seperti yang disebutkan oleh Tuan & Mai (2015). Penelitian ini diikuti oleh 20 mahasiswa semester 4 Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Wiralodra. Instrumen penelitian ini

menggunakan angket dan wawancara. Dua puluh siswa berpartisipasi dalam kuesioner, dan enam dari dua puluh siswa berpartisipasi dalam wawancara. Analisis data menggunakan analisis pertanyaan dikotomis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kondisi siswa ketika tampil berbicara dan faktor afektif mempengaruhi masalah siswa dalam penampilan berbicara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan ada dalam hasil paling besar pada kondisi siswa saat tampil berbicara diikuti dengan intensitas dukungan, standar performa dan tekanan waktu. Sedangkan kepercayaan diri dan kecemasan menjadi kategori utama dari faktor afektif dan diikuti oleh kategori motivasi. Penelitian ini menyarankan penelitian lebih lanjut untuk menyelidiki faktor lain yang mempengaruhi masalah siswa dalam kinerja berbicara dengan fokus yang berbeda dalam hal skala peserta, tingkat siswa, dan jenis kinerja berbicara.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking in the EFL context has great attention among the lecturers, the writer, and faculty members in language learning. English proficiency especially speaking skills, is important to the students' academic success, particularly for English students. Speaking is an important skill that should be mastered at the higher education level. The students should perform their speaking skills such as presentation, speech, conversation, storytelling, and others. Nevertheless, speaking English is still considered difficult for most students at higher education levels. Brown & Yule (1983) stated that spoken language production is often considered one of the most challenging aspects of language learning. One of the problems came from undergraduate students whose problems with speaking.

Generally, higher-level speaking skill problems are related to linguistic and non-linguistic problems (Heriansyah, 2012). In linguistic problems, the students faced vocabulary like difficulty recalling the words, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and grammar comprehension (Heriansyah, 2012; Sayuri, 2016; Hadijah, 2016; Wahidah, 2016; Manurung & Izar, 2019; Erdiana et al., 2020). While non-linguistic problems the students face in speaking performance are inhibition, nothing to say, such as difficulty in responding to others, low or uneven participants, mother tongue use, and anxiety (Ur, 1996, Erdiana et al., 2020). In addition, Leong & Ahmadi (2017) stated that many language learners

find it difficulties to express themselves in spoken language. They generally face problems using a foreign language to express their thoughts effectively. The problem mentioned above is based on various factors.

Several previous pieces of research related to the factors affecting students' problems in speaking performance have been carried out. The first previous study came from Tuan & Mai (2015). The result revealed that factors affecting students' problems in speaking performance are topical knowledge, listening ability, speaking motivation, the teachers' feedback during speaking activities, confidence, pressure to perform well, and time for preparation. The second previous research came from Younes and Albalawi (2016), which added that there are the factors of mother tongue, low participation, and time allowed to speak. Then, the previous research completed the factors from the previous one by adding anxiety, shyness, and fear of making mistakes (Younes & Albalawi, 2016; Nakhalah, 2016; Ariyanti, 2016; Nijat et al., 2019). Besides that, Ariyanti (2016) added that self-esteem affects students' speaking performance.

Although the previous research investigates undergraduate students' speaking performance in the EFL context, there is little empirical evidence exploring how the factors affect their speaking performance in particular affective and performance conditions in higher students. To fill this gap, this present study focused on performance conditions (planning, time pressure, standard of performance & amount of support) and affective factors (motivation, self-confidence & anxiety). The writer only chose two of five factors that support the analysis of this research. Besides, performance conditions represent the external factor, and affective factors represent the internal factor within students. Therefore, both factors become a complete unit to support this research. In addition, no one has specifically researched it in students of higher education levels. Thus, it was an important performance condition and affective factor in speaking performance, as mentioned by Tuan and Mai (2015). This research limits undergraduate students' academic speaking. The speaking function in this research is limited to talk as performance in extensive (monologue) presentation.

Therefore, this research formulated the research problem into what factors affect the students speaking problems in speaking performance especially in higher education students.

METHOD

This research employed qualitative research with case study as a research design, Craswell (2009) mentioned that research design is the plans and procedures of research to detail the method of data collection and analysis. Craswell (2009) added that a case study is a qualitative research that brings the writer to explore a program, activity, process, event, or someone or more individuals bounded by time and activity. Following that, descriptive research is implemented to analyze data in this research. The research participants were fourth-semester students of the English Education Department Wiralodra University. Out of 20 students in this class, followed and willing to fill out the questionnaire.

The researchers used a questionnaire and interview as research instruments to collect the data. The questionnaire was adopted from Tuan and Mai (2015). There were 15 statements on a questionnaire that covered the factors affecting students' problems in speaking performance. It focused on two factors. The first was performance conditions that consisted of four categories; time pressure, planning, the standard of performance, and amount of support. The second factor was affective factors; motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. After the participants fill the questionnaire, there were given an interview. The interview question was adapted from the questionnaire. The participants were asked ten questions in the interview to confirm their answers to the questionnaire.

The data analysis was conducted after all the data; from the questionnaire and interview were collected. The researchers used the percentages formula for the questionnaire to classify the participants' answers. For the interview, the researchers proceed with the data qualitatively by managing it, reading and

memoing it, making the transcript, describing, classifying, interpreting, and representing and visualizing it. Those data, both from the questionnaire and interview than were analyzed descriptively.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

1. Performance conditions

The results of the questionnaire related to the categories of performance conditions are presented in the table as follows:

Table 1. Performance Conditions

Categories	No.	Statements	Percentage (%)	
			Yes	No
a. Planning	1.	I have a low understanding of the topic when I don't learn and have preparation first.	100%	0%
	2.	I feel uneasy when I don't have a practice first before speaking.	100%	0%
b. Time pressure	3.	I get a little time to perform a speaking task.	55%	45%
c. Standard of performance	4.	I get the pressure to perform speaking well.	70%	30%
	5.	I feel difficult when the lecturer sets a high standard for speaking performance.	80%	20%
d. Amount of support	6.	I need the support, understanding, attention, and empathy of the listeners when I perform speaking.	95%	5%

a. Planning

The results presented in Table 1 indicated that planning affected students' speaking performance. The first statement of the planning category was supported by the participants in the interview section who stated that:

P1: If I have no planning, it becomes a problem. There is no topic to discuss

P1 re-confirm: If I have no planning, I don't have an idea to speak and am confused about what I want to say

P2: It must be chaos and blank. I do not know anything to speak when I do not realize the topic

Then, the high percentage of the second statement was supported by the participants in the interview section who stated that:

P5: I think it will be messed. I am afraid that I cannot explain the material well. Since the audience will not understand when I don't have enough preparation and good pronunciation

Based on those statements, it indicates that planning is important thing to achieve the goal and success in speaking performance. The participants of the interview supposed that planning was necessary because:

P2: It is very important because planning affects the way we want to say. If we don't have planning, we don't have the goals and points. The points are the main of what we want to show.

Therefore, planning has positive effects when the speakers prepare well. To create success in speaking performance, the students need preparations before speaking performance as mentioned by the students in the interview section:

P2: I practice in front of the mirror, have rehearsal a few hours, and eat the chewing gum before perform

P4: I usually make notes because I often forget without the text. Sometimes I record myself and listen to the result to remember what I should say as I listen to the music

b. Time Pressure

The result from the questionnaire supported by interview data:

P2: If I have a short time to perform, it affects my speaking performance because I cannot create the words as well as possible

P4: Basically, I am not good enough in speaking. So, when I get time pressure, it makes me not flexible in speaking.

P5: Emm . . . it becomes hurry exactly, then I'm not focused with the material that I want to deliver and make my pronunciation bad

c. Standard of Performance

Regarding the result from the questionnaire, the interview results revealed that the students considered that standard of speaking pressured their speaking performance. Students stated that:

P4: One of the factors is my weakness in speaking. The lecturer has the target, which means we as the students should reach it. However, different conditions occur, and it affects

the score. In other words, the lecturer who has high expectations makes me have a heavy thought

d. Amount of Support

The result of the interview supported the high percentage of this category, the students argue that:

P2: They give the attention during my presentation and are not busy with their world like playing gadgets, chatting with the other friends, and daydream

P4: Honestly, it is beneficial when my friends give me clues or codes to continue my performance. So I am not stuck at the moment during the presentation.

Those statements indicate that the amount of support is important because it affects producing good speaking performance. The interview from participants supported these:

P2: It is important because their support will affect my performance in presentation, I would like to think that they want to me be better and I can do it

P2 re-confirm: I need the verbal motivation and encouragement from the audience to increase my spirit in speaking performance

P6: Suggestion and motivation are really helpful to increase my speaking ability

2. *Affective factors*

The questionnaire results of affective factors are presented as the following table percentage:

Table 2. Affective Factors

Categories	No.	Statements	Yes	No
a. Motivation	7.	I feel motivated to speak English in class.	80%	20%
	8.	I like speaking English in class.	55%	45%
	9.	I consider that speaking skills is necessary for my future career.	90%	10%
b. Self-confidence	10.	I feel confident to perform speak English in class.	35%	65%
	11.	I am a good speaker.	15%	85%
	12.	I feel nervous about speaking English in front of the class.	90%	10%
c. Anxiety	13.	I feel anxious when I speak English in class.	65%	35%
	14.	I'm afraid of criticism, judgment, and losing face.	70%	30%
	15.	I worry about making mistakes.	75%	25%

a. Motivation

Regarding the results questionnaire that belongs to this category, the results of the interview found that:

P1: I really like speaking English, but I do not like it much when I explain using English. If only speak English, I like it because there is motivation to increase my speaking quality

Then, related to statement number nine, it indicates that the students realized that speaking skill is necessary for their future career because it is needed for anything. It supported by students

P2: I like speaking English because I want to go abroad.... to study

b. Self-confidence

The results of the questionnaire indicated that the students lack of confidence. It is caused by things as mentioned by the students in the interview section:

P1: Good preparation makes me confident. Then, if the preparation is not enough, I will not be confident

P5: I often feel fear of mistakes in pronunciation and grammar. So, I am afraid for being overly criticized because it can make me feel down

Then, the large percentage of statement number eleven of this category due to the students have various reasons as found in the interview section:

P3: I have a problem in my speaking related to unstructured utterances. There are so many mistakes that make my speaking bad

P4: I am not a good speaker since I lack ability in speaking, such as vocabulary and pronunciation. I realize it will guide the different meanings when I produce false pronunciation. Then the incorrect vocabulary also produces the different meaning

In addition, the last category result dealt with the findings in the interview section, and students stated that:

P3: I get nervous when people look at me. I mean I become the center of attention. I can't deal with that.

c. Anxiety

The results from the questionnaire indicated that most of the students feel anxious about speaking performance. The students' anxiety is caused by various things, as stated by the students in the interview:

P1: The anxiety happens when my preparation does not complete the expectation. For example, I feel that my preparation is good enough initially, but I forget the topic when I am in the presentation. So, I feel disappointed and it will be disturb

P3: I feel shame and nervous at the same time. My friends speak fluently, but the different condition occurs to me.

P4: I get my anxiety due to my instinct. It is like perception regarding to the fierce lecturer. Thus, I must produce the best performance, which becomes the anxiety at the end. However, the real condition tells the different one. Then again, I tell myself that I must be perfect since there is a perfectionist lecturer.

In addition, related to the second statement of this category, the findings of the interview support that:

P2: I feel anxious when the lecturer suddenly interrupts and directly criticizes. Then, when the audience does not pay attention it makes become blank

P5: I am afraid of being judged and criticized. Moreover, when I get so many random questions.

P6: I prefer to the score or assessment. In this case, I feel anxious when my friends have better performance than me.

Meanwhile, the last category result questionnaire was supported by the participants in the interview section who stated that:

P5: I am afraid that I will make mistakes in pronunciation

Discussion

This research was conducted to answer the research problem "what are the factors affecting students' problems in speaking performance". This research's findings indicate that students' speaking performance problems involve pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and comprehension. It is supported by several previous studies which found students' problems related to vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and grammar comprehension (Heriansyah, 2012; Sayuri, 2016; Hadijah, 2016; Wahidah, 2016; Manurung & Izar, 2019). Besides, this research revealed that students have problems in non-linguistic such as having nothing to say and inhibition (fear of criticism, feeling shy to speak & fear of mistakes). It is supported by Ur (1996), who mentioned that students' problems in speaking are inhibition, noting to say, low or uneven

participants, and mother-tongue use. Those problems are affected by performance conditions and affective factors, as mentioned by Tuan & Mai (2015).

The first factor that affected students' speaking performance problems in this research was performance conditions. According to Nation & Newton (2009), four categories of performance conditions can affect students' speaking performance: planning, time pressure, the standard of performance, and amount of support. In performance conditions factor, it dominates by planning category. The finding revealed that preparation affected their understanding of the topic. They became blank and chaotic since they did not understand the topic. They cannot set the goals and points when they do not have planning before speaking. In this case, preparation determines success and speaking fluency. Nation & Newton (2009) mentioned that planning is usually measured by examining the effects on fluency, grammatical complexity, and grammatical accuracy. It means that the students should have preparations to achieve the goals in speaking performance. The findings revealed that students need to practice, make notes, prepare the PPT, record, and prepare the pronunciation. Nation & Newton (2009) support that planning involves preparing for a task before the task is performed. It deals with having time to think about the topic, preparing what to say, and taking a brief note about what to say.

Second, the amount of support affects the students' speaking performance problems. The findings revealed that almost all students need support, understanding, attention, and empathy from the listeners when they perform speaking. Nation & Newton (2009) mentioned that an important design feature in such tasks was patience, understanding, sympathetic, and supportive listening. The findings report that the students need the audience's support by paying attention without creating the condition that disturbs their concentration. They need motivation and attention to help them by giving the codes when they are stuck in the moment to say. Nation & Newton (2009) stated that supplying needed phrases and vocabulary if the speaker struggles are the way to support listeners.

Then, performance conditions affect students' speaking problems. The findings revealed that the students were pressured to perform well in speaking performance. Most of the students felt it difficult when the lecturer set a high standard of speaking performance. These conditions make the students burdened. Their abilities did not meet the lecturer's expectations, making them always think aloud about the lecturer's expectations. Then, the weakness of speaking made students worry about assessment. According to (Nation & Newton, 2009), pressure on students to perform well was increased if they had to speak in public and if they were aware that some judgment was going to be made on their performance.

The little frequency of this factor that affected students' speaking performance problems was time pressure. The finding revealed that half more students get little time for speaking performance. The students considered that time pressure made their performance rushed and unfocused in delivering material, even making wrong pronunciation. Besides, time pressure made the students inflexible or lack improvisation in explaining the material, and they could not create the words as well as possible. Therefore, giving plenty of time for the students to perform speaking should be considered. Nation & Newton (2009) asserted that giving the students plenty of time to perform a speaking task allows them to access both their implicit and explicit grammatical knowledge and thus increase their spoken output.

Besides, the writer found that affective factors also affect students' problems in speaking performance. The findings revealed that the students have good enough motivation to speak English. In this case, one of a kind students' motivation is like speaking English. However, the finding revealed a high percentage of students' motivation, but only half of the participants like English. Based on the finding, students who like to speak English are motivated to increase their speaking quality. Then, the result reports that the students dislike speaking English because they lack motivation. It makes them tend to be passive. Babu (2010) supported that lack of motivation in learning can hinder students from

speaking English in the classroom. Nevertheless, the finding revealed that speaking skills are necessary to get a higher education level and a better career on a more extensive social scale. Regardless of their interest in speaking English, the students are aware of the necessity of English for the future.

In addition, self-confidence affects the students' speaking problems. The findings showed that most students do not feel confident performing English speaking skills in the class. They lack preparation, fear of criticism and judgment makes the students feel down. Then, the students were unusual to speak in front of many people. They feel afraid of getting the audience's attention, making them unconfident. Nadiyah et al., (2019) stated that the students who are not self-confident in speaking performance in the class because they feel afraid to speak in front of friends for some courses.

The students admitted that they were not good speakers in this case. The finding revealed that most students consider that they are not good speakers. Because they are still weak in speaking ability, they cannot improve speaking performance because they lack vocabulary. The students are weak in producing the pronunciation even if their speaking is unstructured. It makes the students prefer nothing because they feel unconfident. Sayuri (2016) found that the cause of students' lack of self-confidence is due to lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar usage, and mental. In addition, the finding revealed that the feeling of nervousness appeared chiefly when the students performed speaking in the classroom.

In the current research, anxiety also affects students' problems in speaking performance. Most students felt anxious when speaking English in the class, especially in speaking performance. A student felt anxious when the audience did not pay attention to the speaker. Their worry can be ignored, and it makes them unmotivated to perform. Then, the lack of preparations made the students anxious because they worried they could not perform as well as expected. They worry they cannot master the topic and trigger problems in speaking performance. According

to Liu (2017), lack of preparation also caused many students to become anxious when speaking English. Besides, the writer found that nervousness and shyness are anxiety sources. They feel shame if compared with classmates who have better speaking performance than themselves. Bowen (2005) supported that the students' feeling of shyness directly blocks and hinders the students' ability to speak English. In addition, the writer found that instinct or perception makes them anxious. According to Tseng (2012), factors causing speaking anxiety are self-perception, social environment, cultural differences, social status, gender, and classroom environment. In this case, the students consider that the lecturer of speaking subject is fierce and will give many criticized, which means terrible instincts cause the students to feel anxious.

Then, the finding revealed that students were afraid of criticism, judgment, and losing face when they got too many unexpected questions and could not answer them. Tsipakladis (2009) asserted that the students' anxiety is due to the negative judgments given by their classmates. The students feel anxious when the lecturer suddenly interrupts, cuts off their speaking performance, and gives criticism. The students are afraid if the lecturer gives negative criticism of their performance and makes them feel blank. According to Zhou et al. 1 (2004) and Liu (2007), fears of being evaluated by the lecturer were another factor affecting students' anxiety. Then, the students were anxious due to the speaking performance assessment. They worry if their performance is terrible and influences their speaking score. In addition, most of the students were anxious in worried about making mistakes. They feel anxious about making wrong pronunciations and negatively evaluating and correcting them by the audience. According to Aftat (2008), students' fear of mistakes is linked to correction and negative evaluation. Therefore, Harmer (2007) suggested that to reduce anxiety, the lecturer must pay attention to each student's strengths and weaknesses to create a learning method that accommodates all students in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on the research findings, this research provides evidence that performance conditions and affective factors affected the students' problems in speaking performance. This research concludes that in terms of performance condition factors, planning was the most dominant factor in performance conditions. Lack of preparation made the students get a low understanding of the topics. The second factor was the amount of support. The finding reported that the audiences' support, such as attention, motivation, and suggestion, can be beneficial and needed by the students in speaking performance. The third factor was the standard of performance. The students felt burdened with the lecturer's standard, and it caused problems for them. The last factor was time pressure. The time given to them to perform the speaking made them pressured. It led to an inability to speak words and pronunciation errors due to feeling in a rush and unfocused at the time.

The second factor is the affective factor. This research concludes that self-confidence and anxiety were the most frequent categories of affective factors that affected students' problems in speaking performance. The students felt unconfident, making them nervous when speaking in front of the class, which became the center of attention in the class. The students felt anxious if the audience do not give them attention. They are also anxious about the assessment, instinct, evaluation, being criticized and judged, getting many unexpected questions from the audience, and even feeling shy. Then, motivation also affects students' problems in speaking performance. The finding showed that not many students like speaking English, indicating they are unmotivated to speak.

This research implies that lecturers should pay attention to students' performance conditions and affective factors in academic speaking. The research enables the further investigation in different focuses, in terms of students' level, participants scale, speaking performance, and other factors that affect students' problems in speaking performance, such as listening ability, topical knowledge, and feedback during speaking.

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