AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' LINGUISTIC AND NON-LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS IN SPEAKING

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Abstract

This research was aimed to find out about the linguistic and non-linguistic problems in speaking. This research was descriptive research. It was conducted in Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator in 2021. The subject of this research was 32 second semester students of English for Business and Professional Communication. Based on the questionnaire result it was revealed that the students' speaking skill was affected by some linguistic problems such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. In addition, it was also affected by some non-linguistic problems such as feeling shy of the attention given by others, tendency of using mother tongue, and nervousness. The same result was found out from the observation where the students did not have sufficient vocabulary especially for specific topic and still made mistakes in term of correct structure while speaking. Moreover, during the discussion in small groups, they tended to use mother tongue in order to be more understandable and finished their task faster.

Keywords: *linguistic problem, non-linguistic problem, speaking problem*

1.1 Introduction

Language is important for communication as it is a tool to not only express thought but also to give and receive the information. Nowadays, English is used as a language to communicate globally. It is as stated by Harmer (2003) that even though English is not the language with the largest number of native or 'first' language speaker, it has become a lingua franca. Lingua franca is defined as a language widely adopted for communication between two speakers whose native languages are different for each other's and where or both speakers are using it as a second language. It can be said that English is an international language that has a great impact on the lives of people all over the world. The importance of this language is even increasing as it has important role in science, business, and industry on the global stage. As a result, in this technological globalization era, if one can master English language, he or she can gain access to the world.

In mastering English language, there are four basic language skills to be learnt namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Of all the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important as stated by Nunan (1991) that mastering speaking skill is the single most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and success is measured in term of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language (p.39). For the students of Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator, speaking skill is also important because it can improve the international competitiveness which cannot be achieve without the ability to communicate in foreign language.

Despite the importance of speaking skill for students, it is considered as the hardest skill to achieve compared to reading, listening and writing. This difficulty is happened because during speaking activity, one should pay attention

to many things such as the topic being spoken, the language used in order to be understood easily by the listener, and the interlocutors. According to Bailey (2003) cited in Nunan (2003), many people feel that speaking in a new language is harder than reading, writing, or listening because unlike reading or writing, speaking happens in real-time. Even Burnkart (1998) explains that there are three areas of knowledge involved within speaking that language learners need to have. First area is mechanics of language elements (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary) which emphasize on use of right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation. Second, the functions of the language that deals with speaking performance in the form of transaction and interaction (e.g. knowing how to change information and giving the clarity of essential message). Third, the sociocultural norms (such as turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants, understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason).

Based on the observation, the first-year students of Tonggak Equator Polytechnic had some problems when they had conversation with their friends or when they had to express their ideas. Their performance during speaking activity was low and was ineffective. In order to find out the speaking problems of the students and the best solution to solve them, this research was conducted. Focusing on the linguistic and non-linguistic problems in speaking skill, the researcher attempted to analyse under the title "Analysis of Students' linguistic and non-linguistic problems in Speaking." By conducting this research, it was expected that the information can give the information about the problem faced by the students in speaking performance.

2.1 Literature Review
Speaking Skill

Speaking is oral skill. There are many definitions of speaking in language learning proposed by the expert. Nunan (2003) defined speaking as the productive aural/oral skill that consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. One of the basic features of speaking is that it happens in real time which cannot be edited and revised by the speaker. Meanwhile according to Bygate in Al-Roud (2016) speaking skill is the ability in using oral language to explore ideas, intention, thoughts and feelings to other people as a way to make the message clearly delivered and well understood by the listener.

Speaking is one of the importance skills for communication. Speaking skill enable the foreign language learners to express their idea, feeling, and thought. According to Browns (2001) speaking is a communication tool to each other where the speaker can convey ideas, opinions, and feelings through verbal skills to listeners. Moreover, Chaney (1998) stated that speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts (p.3). Through this process, the learners are able to communicate for sharing the information.

As speaking has connection to oral production, Harmer (2003) mentioned four language features related to speaking skill, namely connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar, and negotiation language. Connected speech consists of assimilation or sound modification, elision or omitted sounds, contractions, and stress patterning. On the other hand, expressive devices deal with the stress and pitch changes of particular parts of utterances, variety of volume and speed, and the use of non-verbal to show people's feeling. These devices can be used to improve the ability to convey intention. The other language feature is lexical phrases. The use of common lexical phrases marks the

spontaneous speech in the performance of certain language function such as expressing apology, expressing sympathy, etc. The last one is negotiation language. It is used to seek for clarification and to show the structure of what people are saying.

Truthfully, the knowing the feature of the language is not enough to speak fluently. It is in line with Harmer statement (2003) that the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only a knowledge of a language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot. It then emphasized that the learners of English have to not only able to focus to language features but also to process the information and language on the spot while speaking.

Factors of Speaking Problem

Problem is thing that difficult to deal and understand, problem occur because there is a gap between the expectation or something and reality. To solve the problem, we need to understand the problem and cause of the problem occur.

Brown (2007) stated that there are some idiosyncrasies that makes speaking difficult to acquire:
1. Clustering

Fluent speech is phrasal, not word by word. Learners can organize their output both intellectually and physically (in breath group) through such grouping.
2. Redundancy

The speaker has a chance to make meaning clearer through the redundancy of language. Language earners can capitalize on this feature of spoken language.
3. Reduced Forms

Contractions, elisions, reduced vowels, etc, all form special problems in teaching spoken English. Students who don't learn colloquial contraction can sometimes develop a stilted, bookish quality of speaking that in turn stigmatizes them.
4. Performance variables

One of the benefits of communicated in language is that the method involved in language is that the method involved with thinking as you talk permits you to show a specific number of stops, backtracking, and revisions. Students can really be encouraged how to stop and delay. For instance, in English our "thinking time" isn't quiet: we embed certain "fillers, for example, uh, um, indeed, you know, I mean, as, and so on One of the most remarkable contrasts among local and non-local speakers of a language is in their faltering peculiarities.
5. Colloquial Language

Make sure your students are reasonably well acquainted with the words, idiom, and phrases of colloquial language and that they get practice in producing these forms.
6. Rate of delivery

One more striking trait of familiarity is pace of conveyance. In teaching spoken English, learners need to be taught how to achieve an acceptable speed along with other attributes of fluency.
7. Stress, rhythm, and intonation

Stress, rhythm and intonation become the most important characteristics of English pronunciation. It is because the stress-timed rhythm of spoken English and its intonation patterns convey important messages.
8. Interaction

The richest component of speaking skill is the creativity of conversational negotiation. Learning to produce the waves of language without interlocutors will blot out this component.

According to Ur (1991, p.120), there are many factors that cause of problem in speaking, and they are as follows:
1. Inhibition

In contrast to reading, writing, and listening activities, speaking requires some level of real-time exposure to an audience. Learners are regularly restrained about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom; worried about committing errors, fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

2. Nothing to say.

Even if they are not inhibited, learners often whined that they cannot think of anything to say: they are no motives to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they ought to be talking.

3. Low or uneven participation.

Only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard; and in a large group this means that each one will have only very little talking time. This issue is compounded by the inclination of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not in any way.

4. Mother tongue use.

The learners tend to use mother tongue in a class where all or most of them share the same mother tongue. It is because it is easier to do. Besides, it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language, and because they feel less 'exposed' if they are speaking their mother tongue. If they are talking in small groups, it can be quite difficult to get some classes – particularly the less discipline or motivated ones – to keep to the target language.

3.1 Methodology

This research used qualitative data to gain knowledge and information about the speaking problems faced by second semester students. Considering the feature of qualitative research design, the data gathered was presented in descriptive analysis.

This research was conducted in Tonggak Equator Polytechnic. It was done in 2021. The second semester students of English Business for Professional Communication were chosen as the subject of the research because these students had basic knowledge about speaking skill in speaking 1. There were 6 classes in the second semester. In total there were 193 students. The subject of the research was from IIB class which consisted of 32 students as they agreed to take part in this research.

In this research, the researcher used questionnaire and observation note as the instruments of data collection.

Observation is one of the most common methods used in qualitative research. Observation was done by observing the students' activity and speaking performance. Because during this semester the students still had online learning, all the activities through video conference was recorded to get the valuable information.

Questionnaire was used to collect students' opinion and to supply the necessary information to complete the research. In this research, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 32 students by using google form. In total there were 20 statements that the students need to respond to. They are both in closed and open-ended questions form.

The result of the questionnaire and interview were analysed qualitatively. This method was conducted with data reduction, data display, data nalaysis, and data interpretation.

3.1 Finding and Discussion
Finding

The researcher collected data from questionnaire. Participants were asked to answer the questions about the linguistic and non-linguistic problems in speaking faced by them.

1. Linguistic Problems
a. *I don't have sufficient vocabulary knowledge to express my ideas.*

From the questionnaire given, half of the students (50%) in the class stated that they didn't have sufficient vocabulary knowledge to express their ideas. On the other hand, half of them felt the opposite that they have already had sufficient vocabulary in expressing their ideas. For this insufficient vocabulary, some students gave specific reasons for that. AA said that she always forgets vocabulary. JS had the same opinion that during speaking activity, it was difficult for her to remember the vocabulary she needed which then made

her to not be able to continue her speaking. When somebody told her the possible word she wanted to use, she then could remember it. Similar opinion was given by Julia. She said that she did not have much vocabulary knowledge and still had to study harder. When the lecture asked some questions, she was a little afraid to answer because of her lack of vocabulary.

b. *I find it is difficult to retrieve the suitable vocabulary rapidly when I speak.*

Surprisingly, even though until half of the students stated that their vocabulary knowledge was sufficient to express their ideas, almost all students (78%) stated that it was difficult for them to retrieve the suitable vocabulary rapidly. The students gave variety of reason for this problem. BR said that he did not used to speak rapidly and his vocabulary knowledge was not good enough yet. CY had the same though as she said that she found it was difficult to pick up appropriate vocabulary quickly when she spoke because she still did not have much knowledge of vocabulary, even when reading she still often encountered unfamiliar vocabulary. Some students related their difficulty to nervousness. DV said when she spoke spontaneously, she felt nervous which then made her forget the right vocabulary. On the same thought versa said she found it was difficult to pick up the right vocabulary quickly when she spoke, because she was afraid of being criticized for grammar or wrong words.

c. *I find it is difficult to speak in specific topic (eq. business trend, etc.) because I lack of related vocabulary.*

Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator is a vocational school that tend to focus to business. In this case, topics for speaking activities are around business. Almost all of the students stated that they lack of vocabulary knowledge especially for specific topic such as business. AC said that when it comes to the market, or business, it was very difficult for her to get

the right vocabulary to use, and even when the other person was talking about business, it was also difficult for her to understand what was being said because a lot of vocabulary was still unfamiliar to hear. CH also said similar thing as AC. He said that it was a bit difficult when trying to remember some vocabularies, especially on a topic that he did not really familiar with. It took some time to remember and applied them in a real conversation. Moreover, he said that he should have used the word repeatedly in a case for him to get used to it. On the other hand, VL connected her vocabulary problem with her disinterest. She said that Everyone had their own preferences and scope of knowledge, in which she believed it varied from one person to another, including her. If people were talking about a certain business topic, for example bitcoin, digital investment, and others, she found it was difficult to elaborate more because she was not familiar with it. The same case was applied to the other topics that she was simply not interested in.

d. *I get confused to arrange words and sentences relate to grammar while speaking*

One of the important aspects in speaking is grammar since it is key to speak fluently and confidently. Good grammar helps English learners to avoid errors that make their English sound strange to the listener especially for native speaker. Based on the result of the questionnaire, the students (71%) still had problem in grammar. Regarding this problem, LS said that sometimes she forgot the formulas that must be used to have a good grammar. Furthermore, she said that she often used feeling to match grammar. For VY, grammar was her only difficulty in English. She said that she felt like her brain suddenly goes blank when it came to grammar questions or having to speak the correct grammar. She also had to think hard when it came to grammar. Moreover, she said that there were some

grammars that she had mastered and there were some that were difficult for her to understand. Until now, she was still struggling and trying to achieve maximum results in understanding grammar so that her English could be perfect and sounded like a native speaker.

e. *I sometimes speak in Bahasa Indonesia structure.*

English has different form compared to Bahasa Indonesia. On the other hand, due to lack of grammar knowledge some of the students (65%) still used Bahasa Indonesia structure when they spoke. IG gave a reason for this. He said that he was a native speaker of Bahasa Indonesia, so when he spoke English, he sometimes still used Bahasa Indonesia structure unconsciously.

f. *I find it is difficult to use complex grammatical structure when I speak.*

Knowing that the students had difficulty in grammar, it was also found that they struggled in complex grammatical structure, too. They tended to use simple sentences. More than 87 % of the students agreed that it was difficult to use complex grammatical structure when they were speaking. HN said that she often forgot the correct grammatical structure when she was speaking. She got confused and she thought that all structures of the language were same. She even gave example of grammar part that was confusing to use. It was future perfect continuous tense. Other student, RC, also gave his thought about it. He said that he found it was difficult due to the fact that his brain could not process any words correctly in a short time. For example, when he was being told to explain some things that he did not master, he might have stuttered a lot and had a grammatical error.

g. *I have trouble in pronouncing some particular vowel and consonant.*

Even though the students of Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator had already learnt about pronunciation in first semester, they still had problem in pronouncing some particular vowel and consonant. About 59% of the students agreed that they had problem in pronunciation. VI said that pronunciation problem was caused by less practicing. On the other hand, SH said that she still used her instinct when she pronounced some words, so sometimes she got it wrong.

h. *I put the stress on the wrong syllable or on the wrong word in sentence.*

Almost all students (84%) stated that they could not put the right stress on the syllable or the word in sentence correctly, even though they also learnt about it in semester one. JS blamed her previous education where she did not get this kind of knowledge in elementary until senior high school. In addition, she said that the teacher in high school only taught her how to say the words without telling anything about the word stress. Other student, VI also said similar thing that stress was the second thing that was difficult to understand in English for her. She often put stress wrong and got confused where the stress lied in a word. She only studied stress since her first semester of college and never knew that stress really existed in English. Because of that, she said that she was not good in identifying a word stress.

i. *I find it is difficult to pronounce the word correctly during speaking.*

From the result of the questionnaire, more than 50% of the students admitted that they did not have any problem in pronouncing the word correctly during speaking. For the students who still had a problem in pronunciation they connected their mispronunciation to anxiousness. NK and SH said that sometimes they got blank and it ruined their pronunciation. Another student, SS, said that sometimes there were some words which had the same sounds which made pronunciation can be difficult.

j. *I don't know when to rise or to fall my intonation during speaking activity.*

Intonation was not a major problem for the students. It was shown by the result of the questionnaire where 21 students or 65% of students thought that they knew how to rise or fall their intonation while speaking. For the student such as VB who thought that intonation was her one of problems in speaking said that intonation was quite hard to do in speaking. On the other hand, Jocelyn said that it could be a problem because some of the sentences were confusing, with the emotion that she should use.

Based on the finding elaborated before, it was found out that the students had some linguistics problems in speaking namely: vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. In vocabulary, they had problem in retrieving the word fast while speaking and had difficulty in finding the right words for specific topics such as business. In grammar, they had problem in using complex grammatical structure during speaking activity. The last problem was pronunciation where they did not think they had problem in pronouncing the word sounds, but they had problem in stressing the correct syllables in word and words in sentences.

2. Non-Linguistic Problem

a. *I feel shy for the attention given to me when I speak.*

Majority of the students feel shy because of the attention given to them while they are speaking. It was shown by the percentage of the questionnaire where 72% of the students stated that they felt shy. This shyness was also affected by the fear of to be laughed by other students due to mistakes made during speaking. AA claimed that sometimes when she spoke in English, she always felt that people would laugh at her because of the mistakes in the words and pronunciation that she did when she was speaking, which then made her lose confidence when speaking in English. Same opinion was given by CY

as she stated that she was not the type of person who was full of confidence. Moreover, she said that she also still had doubts about her English even though the words she said were correct. She felt embarrassed if she was wrong and afraid to be the subject of ridicule or laughing. For JS, the feeling of inferiority affected the feeling to be shy. She said that she was afraid if she said something wrong because there were people who were more superior than her. It then led her to feel shy for the attention given while speaking. For VL, it was because of her personality that she was a shy person. She did not like to become the centre of attention. It was easier for her to convey her ideas in writing form rather than speaking.

b. *It frightens me if what I say is wrong.*

Fear to say something wrongly had great connection with the feeling of shyness during speaking. Twenty-three students stated that they were afraid if what they said was wrong. The fear to say something wrong was because they offended other people. As mentioned by LO that someone might feel offended if he said something wrong. On the other side, LS and DV did not want to be misunderstood by others if they said something wrong as they think that English could have many meanings.

c. *I feel embarrassed if my lecturer corrects my mistakes in speaking.*

Only few students (13%) felt embarrassed if the lecturer corrects their mistakes in speaking. Otherwise, they felt happy as they could know their mistakes so that they would not repeat the same mistake in the future. For these students who felt embarrassed, they thought that they were not good enough whenever they made mistakes. As said by LO that if the lecturer corrected what he said, it told him that he was still not good enough to speak to someone else.

d.   *I feel nervous when I speak in English.*

There were 22 students agreed that they felt nervous to speak. When they felt nervous, they forgot what they were going to say easily. DV gave statement that she would forget the word she was going to say and repeated the same sentence over and over whenever she felt nervous. Other student, NS stated similar opinion. He said that he felt nervous when talking in English, because he was not very good at English. And, when he was nervous it became difficult for him to speak and it made it hard for him to think about what words to use.

e.   *I cannot think of anything to say during speaking activity.*

During speaking activity, majority of the students did not think that they could not speak of anything. Only some students (41%) still could not think of anything if they were nervous. It was known from the students' explanation. Luisa and Niki said that they could not think of anything when she felt nervous.

f.   *I don't have motivation to speak English.*

Almost all students (94%) mentioned that lack of motivation was not one of their problems in speaking. They had high motivation to be able to speak.

g.   *There are too many students in speaking class so my talking time is very little.*

More than half of the students (69%) in the class did not think that their talking time was little because of many students in the class. They even felt that the large number of students could help them in learning other things. On the other hand, about 10 students felt that their talking time was very little. It was expressed by CH who liked to speak in large group even though it could affect his speaking time. He said speaking activity in a large group affected his speaking skill. By doing so, sometimes it triggered his critical thinking and to express his idea. But because there were too many students, he felt his talking time was little, but even so, he also learned to speak out of the class.

h.   *There are some students in speaking class who dominate the talking time so I can only speak very little.*

Many of the students (59%) did not think that there was domination in speaking time from some students which affected their speaking time.

i.   *I tend to speak in my mother tongue during discussion in small group.*

There were 21 students (66%) stated that they tended to speak in mother tongue during discussion in small group. JM and NS thought that it is easier to use his mother tongue while the rest thought that it was more comfortable especially during discussion.

j.   *I don't feel comfortable to speak English.*

From the students' respond (66%), it was known that they did not feel comfortable to speak English. As a result, it could be concluded that being uncomfortable was not their problem in English.

Based on the explanation before, it was found out that the students had several non-linguistic problems such as inhibition, and mother tongue used. Inhibition problem consisted of shyness, fear of being laughed, and anxiety.

The observation was done during speaking class. Their speech and activity were recorded. This observation was very limited to linguistic problem in speaking since it could be easily seen and observed. From the questionnaire given to the students, there was tendency that the students thought that they had good pronunciation. On the other hand, the result of the observation was different. They had problem in pronunciation. During the observation, the students had to have

conversation with their partner. They were given conversation cards about they have to talk about. After that, they had to speak for about 5 minutes. During 5 minutes talk, each student at least had one word mispronounced. Here is the table of mispronunciation made by the students. The examples of mispronunciation were: result /rɪˈzʌlt/, suggestion /səˈdʒes.tʃən/, satellite /ˈsæt̬.əl.aɪt/ , discount /ˈdɪs.kaʊnt/ , technology /tekˈnɑː.lə.dʒi/, guarantee /ˌger.ənˈtiː/, success /səkˈses/, customer /ˈkʌs.tə.mɚ/, service /ˈsɝː.vɪs/ , trial /traɪəl/, result /rɪˈzʌlt/, company /ˈkʌm.pə.ni/, etc. They made mistake in either word sound or word stress.

4.1 Discussion

There were two types of problem faced by the second semester students of Polytechnic Tonggak Equator, namely Linguistic Problem and Non-Linguistic Problem. Linguistic problem came from the language itself and it caused difficulties for the language learners. In linguistic problem, the students had problem in vocabulary and grammar. It was difficult for many students to respond when the lecturer asked them to say something in a foreign language because they might have little ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to use, or how to use the grammar correctly (Baker & Westrup, 2003). The students admitted that they lack of vocabulary especially if it was in specific topic such as business. On the other hand, since they took English for business and professional communication, that vocabulary knowledge related to business was a must to have. Moreover, based on the observation, the students made many mistakes in grammar even though they have already used simple sentences.

Non-Linguistic problem is the problem that derives from the outside of the language. According to Penny Ur (1996), the student's speaking difficulty are: inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. Based on questionnaire and observation, the students had problems in

speaking such as inhibition, and mother tongue. In inhibition the students worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing face. They were shy of the attention that their speech attracts. It was in line with Ur statement (1996) about inhibition that the students shy to attract attention from their speech. It also matched the students' condition where the students were shy to be the centre of attention and they were afraid to be laughed at by their peers. This finding also similar with Harmer's (2003) that according to him the problem that faced by the students is reluctant when trying to speak a foreign language. It is because they are shy and not predisposed to expressing themselves in front of other people, especially when they are being asked to give personal information or opinion.

Besides inhibition, mother tongue uses also became the students' problem in speaking. The students felt that mother tongue was easier than the second language. The students often included mother tongue use when they were speaking in second language. This problem would make the students feel comfortable to do it. Harmer (2003) suggested some reasons why students use mother tongue in class. Firstly, when the students are asked to have a discussion about a topic that they are incapable of, if they want to say anything about the topic, they will use their own language. Another reason is that the use of mother- tongue is a natural thing to do. In addition, using the first language to explain something to another if there is no encouragement from the teachers. Finally, if teachers frequently use the students' language, the students will feel comfortable to do it.

Motivation was not a problem for the students as they had high motivation. Besides, the topic chosen by the lecturer was suitable for them. Rivers (1968) believes that the learners have nothing to express maybe because the teacher had chosen a topic which is not suitable for him or about which he knows very little. So,

since the topic given was suitable for the students, they did not lack of motivation. Not only motivation, but participation was also not a problem for the students to speak. According to Ur (1996) there is a tendency of some learners to dominate while others speak very little or not at all. But this case did not happen in the class because even though there were 32 students, each students had equal participation during speaking activity.

5.1 Conclusion

This research showed that in linguistic problem, the students have problem in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. On the other hand, in non-linguistic problem the students have problem in inhibition and mother tongue. The most problem faced by the students in linguistic aspect is vocabulary in specific topic. They are used to use general vocabulary which is used in daily life. Thus, when they are introduced to specific situation, they are not able to use appropriate vocabulary. Moreover, the most problems faced by the students in non-linguistic aspect is feeling of shyness and fear to be laughed at.

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