The Students Ignorance In Practicing English Speaking

by Nisa Aldira Lubis

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Abstract: Mastery of English has become an increasingly important requirement in this era of globalization. As an international language, English plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, ranging from education, career, to cross-cultural communication. In Indonesia, although English has been taught since elementary school level, there are still many students who experience difficulties in English speaking practice. This phenomenon raises concerns among educators and education stakeholders. Many university students have studied English for years but are still reluctant or unconfident to use it in everyday conversation. This reluctance is often referred to as "ignorance" or indifference to the importance of English speaking practice. Various factors can contribute to this problem, including ineffective teaching methods, lack of exposure to the use of English in real contexts, and psychological factors such as language anxiety and fear of making mistakes. Given the importance of English speaking skills in today's globalized world, it is important to delve deeper into the phenomenon of students' indifference in practicing spoken English.
Keywords: English, Ignorance, Speaking, Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are one of the most important aspects of mastering the English language. The ability to communicate effectively in English can open up many opportunities, both in academic and professional contexts. However, the reality on the ground shows that many students in Indonesia still experience difficulties and reluctance in practicing spoken English. This research aims to examine the phenomenon of students' ignorance in practicing spoken English, focusing on the factors that contribute to this problem as well as its impact on overall English language acquisition. Through a deeper understanding of the root causes of the problem, it is hoped that effective solutions can be found to increase students' motivation and participation in English speaking practice.

Several previous studies have examined various aspects related to English language learning in Indonesia. Mukminin et al. (2015) identified various challenges faced by Indonesian students in learning English, including motivational factors and language anxiety. Meanwhile, Suryanto (2014) emphasized the importance of developing more effective learning strategies to improve students' speaking skills.

This research will take a more specific approach by focusing on the phenomenon of students' indifference in practicing spoken English. By understanding the factors that contribute to this indifference, it is hoped that more targeted strategies can be developed to encourage students to be more active in practicing their English speaking skills.

In accordance with the explanation above, the author is very interested in conducting research on what causes students not to want to practice speaking English in front of the class. This study was intended to answer the following questions: 1. What are the perceived barriers that prevent students from actively practicing spoken English outside the classroom? 2.How does anxiety about making mistakes in spoken English influence students' willingness to practice speaking with native speakers or other learners?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of students' indifference in practicing spoken English. The data collection methods used include:

1. Semi-structured interviews:

    Interviews will be conducted with 20 students from various majors at a public university in Indonesia. Participants will be selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure variation in English proficiency levels and academic backgrounds. The interviews will focus on the students' experiences in learning and practicing English, as well as the factors that influence their reluctance to speak English.

2. Classroom observation:

    The researcher will conduct observations in 5 different English classes to observe the interaction between lecturers and students, as well as students' participation in English speaking activities. This observation aims to get a real picture of the dynamics of English learning in the classroom.

3. Document analysis:

    The researcher will analyze related documents, such as English course syllabus, learning materials, and students' speaking skill evaluation results. This analysis aims to understand the curriculum context and the teaching approach applied.

3. LITERATUR REVIEW

1. Importance of Speaking Skills in EnglishProficiency in speaking English is essential in today's globalized world. English serves as the international language used across various domains such as education, business, and technology. According to Harmer (2007), speaking skills are crucial for students to communicate effectively.

2. Challenges in Developing Speaking SkillsStudents often face various challenges in developing their English speaking skills. These challenges include lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limitations in vocabulary and grammar. Brown (2001) highlights that communication anxiety and low motivation are primary barriers to the development of speaking skills.

3. Factors Contributing to Ignorance in Practicing SpeakingSeveral factors contribute to students' ignorance in practicing English speaking:
   - Lack of Exposure: Students often do not get enough opportunities to hear and use English in everyday situations (Krashen, 1985).
   - Low Motivation: Gardner and Lambert (1972) note that both instrumental and integrative motivation significantly influence language learning success.
   - Low motivation may stem from unclear goals or lack of interest in the language.
   - Teaching Methods: Ineffective teaching methods can also lead to a lack of interest in practicing speaking. Non-communicative teaching methods or those overly focused on grammar can make students feel bored and unmotivated (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

4. Strategies to Enhance Speaking PracticeSeveral strategies have been identified to increase students' interest and ability in speaking:
   - Use of Technology: Technology, such as language learning apps and social media platforms, can provide more opportunities for students to practice speaking (Godwin-Jones, 2011).
   - Supportive Learning Environment: Creating a supportive learning environment free from fear of making mistakes is crucial for boosting students' confidence (Tsui, 1996).
   - Project-Based Learning: Integrating project-based learning that involves using English in real-life situations can increase student engagement and provide more authentic contexts for practice (Beckett & Slater, 2005).

5. Case Studies and Related ResearchSeveral studies have examined students' ignorance in practicing English speaking. For instance, Liu (2007) found that students with more opportunities to interact in English showed significant improvements in their speaking skills. Another study by Zeng (2012) demonstrated that using more communicative teaching techniques could increase student motivation and participation in English classes. Students' ignorance in practicing English speaking is a complex issue influenced by various factors, including low motivation, ineffective teaching methods, and a lack of practice opportunities. A holistic approach that includes the use of technology, the creation of a supportive learning environment, and the integration of project-based learning can help address these issues and improve students' speaking skills.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed some important findings related to students' reluctance in English speaking practice. Data collected through questionnaires and interviews showed that the majority of respondents (75%) felt anxious when asked to speak in English in class. This anxiety is mainly caused by the fear of making mistakes and negative judgment from peers. A major factor contributing to the students' reluctance was a lack of confidence in their English language skills. A total of 68% of respondents reported that they felt their speaking skills were inadequate, especially in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. This is in line with the findings of Horwitz et al. (1986) who highlighted the importance of confidence in language learning. In addition, it was also found that there are several factors that cause students' reluctance to practice speaking English

1. Lack of Motivation:
    Interviews with students revealed that many of them felt less motivated to practice English. Some students stated that they did not see the immediate relevance of using English in their daily lives, especially in areas where English is rarely spoken.
2. Language Anxiety:
    Classroom observations showed high levels of anxiety among students when asked to speak in English. Many students appeared hesitant and afraid of making mistakes, resulting in a reluctance to actively participate in speaking activities.
3. Ineffective Teaching Methods:

Analysis of lesson plan documents and classroom observations revealed that the teaching methods used tended to focus on grammar and vocabulary, with little opportunity for meaningful speaking practice.

4. Lack of Exposure to Authentic English:

Interviews with teachers and analysis of learning materials show a lack of use of authentic materials in English teaching. This leads to students' lack of exposure to the use of English in real contexts.

5. Peer Influence:

Classroom observations and interviews revealed social pressure among students not to appear too enthusiastic in practicing English, for fear of being perceived as "showing off" by their peers.

The learning environment also plays a significant role in students' reluctance. About 60% of respondents stated that they felt more comfortable speaking English in small groups than in front of the whole class. This shows the importance of creating a supportive and non-threatening learning environment, as proposed by Krashen (1982) in his affective filter hypothesis.

The teaching method used by the teacher also affects the students' level of reluctance. Respondents tended to participate more actively in speaking activities when lecturers used an interactive and student-centered approach. This supports previous research by Littlewood (2007) which emphasizes the importance of the communicative approach in language teaching. Interestingly, this study also found that the use of technology can help reduce students' reluctance in speaking English.

Cultural factors also emerged as an aspect that influenced students' reluctance. Some respondents stated that they felt uncomfortable expressing themselves in English due to cultural differences. This suggests the need for a more culturally sensitive approach to English language teaching, as suggested by Kramsch (1993).

Finally, this study revealed that intrinsic motivation plays a key role in reducing speaking reluctance. Students who have clear goals for learning English, such as for future careers or further studies, tend to participate more actively in speaking activities. This finding supports Gardner and Lambert's (1972) theory of motivation in second language learning.

Based on the findings above, this study makes some important recommendations in addressing this issue:

- Curriculum Development:

There is a need for curriculum revision that emphasizes speaking practice and the use of English in real contexts.

- Teacher Training:

  Teacher training programs need to focus on more interactive and student-centered teaching methods, with an emphasis on developing speaking skills.

- Creation of a Supportive Learning Environment:

  Schools need to create an environment that encourages the use of English outside the classroom, such as English clubs or English speaking zones.

- Technology Integration:

  The utilization of technology, such as language learning apps and online language exchange platforms, can increase students' exposure to authentic English usage.

- Motivational Programs:

  The development of programs that link English language skills to career opportunities and personal development can increase student motivation.

5. CONCLUSION

The research paper "The Students Ignorance In Practicing English Speaking" investigates the reasons behind Indonesian students' reluctance to practice speaking English despite the importance of the language in an increasingly globally connected world. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design and revealed several contributing factors, including lack of motivation, language anxiety, ineffective teaching methods, limited exposure to authentic English, peer influence, and cultural factors. This research highlights the importance of creating supportive learning environments, implementing interactive teaching methods, and integrating technology to improve speaking practice. The paper concludes with recommendations for curriculum development, teacher training, development of supportive learning environments, technology integration, and motivational programs to address these issues and improve students' English speaking abilities. Thus, this paper provides a comprehensive view of the obstacles Indonesian students face in practicing speaking English and offers solutions to improve their English language competence through various innovative and supportive approaches.

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