A Study On Factors Affecting Students’ Speaking Ability
(The Case Of The Students Of SMP Katolik Pelita Bangsa Makale Tana Toraja, Academic Year 2011/2012)

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ABSTRACT

This research was a case study that aimed to know factors affecting the students’ ability to speak English. The case refers to the students of SMP Katolik Pelita Makale Tana Toraja, Academic Year 2011/2012. This research hoped to provide supporting material to handle students in speaking English both in the classroom as well as in their daily communication.

The population of this study was the students of SMP Katolik Pelita Makale Tana Toraja, Academic Year 2011/2012. The total number of population was 242 students, which scattered in seven classes. The data was collected using a snowball technique. Therefore in this research there was not sampling limitation. To obtain the factors that affecting students’ speaking ability, this study used observations and interview. Observation was intended to find a general overview of learning and teaching and the use of English in the school. While the interview was given to the students to find data of factors that affect their ability to speak English. In processing the findings data, the writer used description qualitative method.

The result of the research showed that there were factors that affecting the students of SMP Katolik Pelita Bangsa Makale Tana Toraja in speaking English. The finding factors were consisted of interest, self-motivation, confidence and hesitation, the performance of the teacher in English language learning, support and enhancement programs related with English in the school, the opportunity to memorize and practice the English language, and the supports of family and the society.

From the result of the research above, it can be concluded that the factors affecting students’ speaking ability classified into two factors. They are, internal factors: interest, self-motivation, confidence, and hesitation. External factors: the English teacher performance, support and enhancement programs of school related with English, and the family or community support.

Key words : Affecting, Snowball technique, Speaking Ability

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

It is an evitable fact that English language is the most widely used language around the world. In current situation, four big countries in the world use English language as their national language that are United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Australia. Besides, all commonwealth countries also speak English as their second language. English is also used as one of the formal languages in United Nation. From the facts, we can imagine how big the influence of English language in current global situation.

As a skill, speaking is the most used skill by people rather than the three other skills, reading, writing and listening. The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second or foreign language learners. According to Jack C. Richards (2008:19), “Learners consequently often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how well they feel they have improved in their spoken proficiency.” From the statement, writer can say that most language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. Besides, many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire, and they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

Thus most students are eager to converse in the new language and therefore practice is the
primary importance in their learning experience. However, the students sometimes do not have sufficient commands to engage in conversation. They simply are not prepared for many kinds of speaking activities, and if pushed into it, they will make so many errors that the experience will prove to be counterproductive.

Even though one of learning objectives of English language is directed to improve student speaking skill, but there are some facts of observation that can be mentioned. It can be seen from the writer’s experience when did teaching Practice at SMP Katolik Pelita Bangsa Makale. Only few students can speak English well, some of students cannot speak English well and even some others cannot speak English at all. There are many factors that make student speaking skill is low. It caused by internal factors and external factors. Motivation, interest, and intelligence are the examples of internal factors. Meanwhile, economic background, learning materials and teacher’s performance including their teaching methods are the example of external factors.

From that matter of facts, it is clearly seen that, it is a necessary to be considered the factors affecting students speaking ability in order to help the students to be able to engage in English communication. This possibility forms the writer’s motivation to conduct research under the title “A Study on Factors Affecting Students’ Speaking Ability, (The case of the Students of SMP Katolik Pelita Bangsa Makale, Academic Year 2011/2012) ”

Therefore, in this proposal, the writer has done research and analyzed the problems as in qualitative study to identify and discuss the factors affecting student’s speaking ability. It has provided useful information to apply suitable methods and approaches in developing student’s proficiency in English speaking.

The Objectives of the Study
The study of this research aimed to know factors affecting students speaking ability. The writer hoped this research became supporting material to handle students in speaking English in the classroom activities as well as in daily communication.

Research Method
1. Type of Research
In this research the writer used the qualitative research to know and to analyze, the case that comes up in factors affecting student’s speaking ability. Therefore the findings data from the research were described and discussed as in qualitative method.

2. Data Sources
The object of research to be investigated was the students of SMP Katolik Pelita Bangsa Makale, academic year 2011/2012, with the number of 242 students and scatter in seven classes.

3. Data Collection
The data collecting were consisted of primary data and secondary data.
   a. Primary data was collected by interviewing the students.
   b. The secondary data source was collected by making observation.

In collecting the data, the writer made note takings and recorded. In constructing the interview the writer used Indonesian language and it the findings were described in English. Snowball technique was applied in collecting the primer data.

4. Data Analysis
In analyzing the data, the writer described all information in one place or section, and organized the section of the case. Finally, the description data were analyzed to come up to the conclusion.

5. Data Validity
In this research, the writer used the interview question that have consulted and validated by the advisors. The writer was also making record during the interview.
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Finding
The writer held this research by making observation and interview. Those activities have done to the students in the school. The writer got the data by taking notes during the observation and the interview. The writer also did audio record to the students during the interview held. The research held at 15th of January till 18th of January 2012. The observation was done before making interview to get the general overview and the result of the founding data can be described as follows:

Observation.
This observation was done to get the basic background of the school and the students’ activities in the school. Therefore in this section, the writer described the general descriptions that classified into several items. They were the school profile, the number of students and teachers, the school activities related with the use of English, and the English learning process where the students in charge.

a. The school profile
Name: SMP Katolik Pelita
Bangsa
Region: Tana Toraja
Province: South Sulawesi
School Principal: Sr. Ignasia Palantung, JMJ, S.Pd
Status: Private
Address: Jl. Mayor Ruka Andillolo
Phone Address: 0423 – 26391
Fax: 0423 – 26391
E-mail: spbyeemye@yahoo.co.id
Accreditation: A (Very Good)
Founded: 2004
Owner: The school belongs to the JMJ congregation and foundation.
Building location: 776 m2

b. The number of Students and Teachers
The school has 242 students which scattered in seven classes. Most of the students come from Makale and the outside villages nearby Makale town. Meanwhile at the moment there are fifteen teachers with only one English teacher at the school.

c. School activities.

Teaching learning activities usually lasts in the morning, at 07.00 a.m. till 12.45 p.m. In connection with developing English usage in the school, the school usually has “English morning news” program where all students listened and wrote the short paragraphs read by a student or a teacher. They also have English morning service together in the playground before teaching learning process begins. Those two activities followed by all students and teachers every day in the school. It seemed that English use was familiar to the students in the school compound.

d. English Learning Process.
The English learning process in the school divided into two parts, they were English lesson as compulsory subject and the local content where English was taught as the only chosen subject. English as compulsory subject was taught four hours per week per class. Meanwhile English as local content was taught two hours per week per class. The difference of the two was on the subject matter, where the compulsory subject following the national curriculum standard and the local content is following the need of the school. In handling the subject in the class, there are some items that can be mentioned here as the findings of class observation:
1. Discipline, the students and the teacher were committed in teaching and learning process.
2. Active and creative. In teaching learning process, there were plenty of time in exploring, mastering and practice a certain topic after the short presentation and explanation from the teacher.
3. Attractive. In teaching learning process the teacher explained the material in various ways, use text books, power point presentations, music, films.
4. Harmonious interaction between teacher and the students. There was a good atmosphere where teacher and the students feel free in asking and answer questions or giving any suggestions.
5. Student’s achievement target not topic achievement target. In the teaching learning process the teacher did not strictly follow the curriculum whether certain topics should be finished in certain time but it depended on the mastery of the students in certain topic.
Interview

In conducting the interview, the writer used snowball technique in collecting data. The instrument of the research was the question that had validated by the advisors. The interview was done in Bahasa Indonesia then the question and the founding data described in English. The interview was done as individual interviews. The instrument question given to the students was what are factors affecting your speaking ability in the school, in your family or home, and in the society?

During the interview, the writer was taking notes and making audio record. The findings of the interview were described in three items as follows:

a. At school

In this part, the writer described the finding data related with the factors affecting students’ speaking English at school. The respondents’ responds were mostly mentioned as the factors that can be classified from the very often to the very few factors were mentioned. Those factors were as follows:

1. English teacher performance. Most of the students had a good perception of English teacher in the school and mention the English teacher performance in teaching English as the mainly factor in affecting student’s speaking ability. The words derived from the interview related with the teacher’s performance were: “good, give motivation, friendly, creative, attractive, sympathy, and discipline.”

2. School programs. The most programs that the students expressed were reading, listening and writing morning news and morning service in English in the school. All the respondents mentioned these two programs as one of factors that support them to force themselves to be able to produce spoken English language.

3. There are many chances for memorizing and practicing English. The respondents were referring the class activities like, memorizing vocabulary, English storytelling, and pronouncing English word and sentences are chances for practicing and producing English skill. Some respondents mentioned those class activities as one of factors that can force and affecting their speaking ability. “There is a big proud and happiness when I can perform my English ability in memorizing and practicing vocabulary and performed English storytelling.” Said a female student.

4. Self motivation and interest. Most of the students said that there is self motivation and interest to be able in learning and practicing English through the activities of praying, reading, listening, writing English news, and the English storytelling in the school.

5. Support. Due to the supports from friends and teachers in practicing speaking English, the students has no fear in making mistake, and has a comfort feeling to practice their speaking ability.

6. Self confident. Less of respondents mentioned this factor as one of factors affecting student’s speaking ability because they experienced good atmosphere in using English in the school. Therefore, there were no afraid and no ashamed of making mistake in performing speaking skill.

b. At home:

Most of the respondents expressed the supports from family members and providing electronic tools and activities that related with English were very significant in affecting student’s speaking ability. The respondents expressed their responds as follows:

1. There are supports from parents or other families, like brothers, sisters, who are able to speak English and motivate them to learn and speak English. The supports are like let them following English course, provide English books, having short conversation with family members and they can easily ask for help from family members who can speak English.

2. Usually watching films and listening to the songs which are use English. The students who live in a boarding house mention the activities like, having English mass together, practicing singing English songs.

3. Using the electronic tools in English like mobile phone to text friends in English, using personal computer and engage in social networking in English, game tools and playing games which are use English.
c. In the society:

In answering the factors affecting student’s speaking ability in the society, the respondents did not find many factors that cause their activities of speaking in the society. But few students mentioned factors as follows:

1. Usually greet friends in English whenever and where ever they meet.
2. Have study tour program to the tourist objects in Toraja and they feel happy where they meet friends or tourists and be able to explain about the object in English.
3. There is a big hesitation to converse with people in the society because English is not used as communication language.

Analysis

The description of the data collected through observation and individual interview in the previous section shown there were some factors affecting students speaking ability. Those factors can be classified and analyzed as follows:

1. **Self motivation and interest.**
   
   Every human activity derived from self motivation and interest. Therefore, although teacher has tried to motivate students to speak or practicing, but if the students did not have any motivation or interest it is impossible to succeed in learning. In this case, the students’ motivation and interest seems depend on the factors outside themselves. It can be seen by their statements where they put the teachers’ motivation or the school enhancement programs in learning English mostly as the first factor interest them to learn or to speak English. So, Grasping students’ full attention and motivation to learn can be conducted by introducing the value and importance of the subject, allow students to work and share their own opinions, and practice what they have studied in the class into the real world.

2. **Self confident.**
   
   Self confident or braveness is needed in our speaking with other people. In communication there are many students sometimes experienced less confident in speaking with others. In this study, the students’ confidence to speak English is quite good, because of the chance of practicing and the good atmosphere in the school. The students also used to compete in performing their ability in English and caused self proud. During the observation, the students feel confident in practicing activities like storytelling.

3. **Hesitation.**
   
   Hesitation is a psychological factor that hamper student’s speaking, that is the students are embarrassed and afraid of making mistakes and being considered conceited by their friends. In the case of the research, the students experienced this because of the use of the English language itself in the society where there are not many people use English. That’s why they afraid of people’s responses.

4. **English teacher performance.**
   
   The students usually experienced their teacher as role model. Therefore English teacher performance is very significant in affecting student’s speaking ability. During the study found that the item mentioned as the main factor caused the students speaking. The students have good perceptions on their English teacher performance like good, giving motivation, creative, discipline, etc. Therefore, teacher’s performance can cause student’s interest, motivation, and confident in performing their speaking ability.

5. **School support and enhancement programs in improving student’s speaking skill.**
   
   It is very important for the schools to provide the programs as opportunities for the students to practice their speaking in the class room or outside the class room. During the study, the students looked very motivated and interested in the programs of “morning service and morning news” and English storytelling where they can perform and improve their English.

6. **Many chances for memorizing and practicing English.**
   
   All languages need practice or exercises. The class activities like memorizing and practicing vocabulary or storytelling is important for those who want to be skillful in speaking. During the interview, the students mentioned those activities and seemed interested and enjoy those activities. There was a statement that there was big proud when I can perform well in front of the class.
7. **Supports from family and the society.**

Good atmosphere of English use and the support from family and the society is one of necessary factors in affecting student’s speaking ability. During the study, the students realized the support of family can motivate them to speak English. They mentioned the activities like converse with their family, providing books or electronic tools which related with English are very helpful in improving their English. On the other hand they also feel afraid and hesitate in speaking English in the society, because most of people do not use English as communication language.

This chapter have discussed various items of factors affecting students’ speaking ability found in this observation and interview. Based on the study, it can be conclude that factors affecting students’ speaking ability originated from within the learners and outside of environment where students engage with the use of English. In the two sections above, the finding factors have been described and analyzed. Thus, the result items of factors can be classified into two parts, they are the internal factors and the external factors. The internal factors were:
1. Self motivation and interest
2. Self confidence
3. Hesitation

And the external factors were:
1. English teacher performance in teaching process
2. School supports and enhancements programs in improving students’ speaking skill
3. Many chances for memorizing and practicing English
4. The support from family and the society.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### Conclusion

Based on the findings and the analysis of the study described in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there were two factors were found as factors affecting students of SMP Katolik Pelita Bangsa in speaking English. The Factors are the internal factors and the external factors.

The internal factors were:
1. Self motivation and interest.
2. Self confident.
3. Hesitation.

The external factors were:
2. School programs in improving student’s speaking kill
3. Many chances for memorizing and practicing English.
4. Supports from family and the society.

#### Suggestion

Based on the result of the data analysis and the conclusion, the writer would like to propose some suggestions as follows:

1. **To the school and the English Teacher**
   a. The school and the English teacher should provide more creatively activities like English competitions in the school that enable students in performing their speaking ability.
   b. The teacher should look for more relevant topics based on the environment in improving student’s speaking activities.
   c. For further research, the researcher should pay attention on why does the external factors most affecting student’s speaking ability.

2. **To the students**
   a. The students should improve their self motivation as well as the supports from outside in improving their speaking ability.
   b. The student’s should explore their own ideas, opinions in English speaking with relevant topics.

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