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Research Article

The Effects of Pronunciation Mastery on Students' Speaking Skills (Study of English Conversation Class at Bina Sarana Informatika University)

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KEYWORDS

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A B S T R A C T

Nowadays, speaking is not only subjects at school or college, but also one of the requirements that needed in applying for a job. Mastering speaking skills will give us many benefits in study, work, and doing the daily activities. This research is a kind of survey and aims to find out and analyze empirically and practically the effects of pronunciation mastery towards students' speaking skills. The observed population of this research is the college students of English conversation class at Bina Sarana Informatika University in 2023/2024 academic year. The sample was gained through sample random sampling, which means that the researchers mixed the subjects in the population so that they will be considerably same. The research is focused on two variables: pronunciation mastery and speaking skills. The collection of data is done by giving the questionnaire, objective test and oral test for both variables. The gained data was then analyzed by using correlation techniques and multiple regression. The result of this research is there are significant effects of pronunciation mastery towards students' speaking skills as $t = 4,470$ and $\text{Sig.} = 0,000 < 0,05$. It means to upgrade students speaking skills teachers have to endorse students' pronunciation mastery on their own.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking skill is one of the very important skills that every student must gain. By mastering the speaking skill, students will be able to express their feeling and opinion appropriately related to the context and the situation. This speaking skill will also create a creative generation in the future that can bear a good, a perfect, and a communicative utterance that easily understood (Burns & Joyce, 1997). On the other side, this speaking skill will also create a generation with a good character and it will appear in a public conversation. Everyone will use good and wise

words in communicating each other. The choice of good and proper words will bear a warm situation and it will make people more civilized. Many teachers have admitted that learning to talk in the foreign language is often considered being one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for them to help their students with (Hedge, 2000; Johnson, 2014) Helping the students develop the speaking skill is not merely so that the students can pass the exam; but also for more general use when they want to use English in the outside world after they are graduated from school. Mastering speaking skills needs a lot of practices and braveries to talk (Brown & Yule, 1983;

Burkart, 1998). Most students have lack of confidence when they try to talk in English. There are many factors which influences it, yet, the inside factors are the strongest.

On the other hand, one of the most difficult problems facing non-native speakers of English is pronunciation. Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of individual sounds, such as intonation, phasing, stress, rhythm, how the voice is objected (voice quality); and in the broadest definition is an attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related with the way we speak. Many students in Indonesia learning English often do not pay much attention to their pronunciation. Even worse, they often underestimate it. They think that pronunciation is less important than grammar and vocabulary. However, students should realize that the way they speak immediately conveys something about themselves to the people around them. Students with good pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas students whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect.

It is usually the largest obstacle to overcome when trying to achieve fluency. Many non-native speakers have studied grammar for many years but are unable to speak like native speakers due to their inability to pronounce the sounds of words properly. Pronunciation is the first and most important thing native speakers notice during a conversation (Gimson, 1975). Knowing grammar and vocabulary are important but useless if we are unable to pronounce those structures or words correctly. Also, native speakers are more likely to understand us, even if we make grammatical mistakes rather than if we make mistakes in pronunciation. Even the simplest words misspoken will keep us from effectively communicating with native English speakers. Achieving good pronunciation should be one of the main goal in speaking skill.

Moreover, much of the communication is made through speaking. In short, learning a language remains incomplete if one does not achieve competence in speaking. Speaking can be realized as the most common way to convey the message to others and the ability to communicate effectively is a basic requirement which needs to be taken seriously in English education (Bygate, 1997; Kayi, 2006). Speaking is one of four basic skills in learning foreign language besides listening, reading and writing. Normally, learners in an EFL context do not use the language in authentic situations (Larsen-Freeman, 1993; Lewis & Hill, 2006). They possess inability in communicating appropriately and correctly. This leads to learners' lack of self-confidence and avoidance when communicating with native English speakers.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that speaking skill is very important for the students to communicate with others and to express what they feel about. There are some factors affecting speaking skill. Thus, the problem here is limited to pronunciation mastery since the variable concurrently has a great relation each other. The writer believes that pronunciation mastery is relevant to explain about how far the factor gives some effects for the students' speaking skills, especially in conversation class. Speaking represents a real challenge to most language learners. Speaking is a skill, and as such needs to be developed and practiced independently of the grammar curriculum. We noted that speaking skills consist of at least four stages: conceptualization, formulation, articulation during which speaker is also engaged in, and self-monitoring (Beech, et al., 1993). Those stages are needed to make a good conversation.

Pronunciation is probably one of the hardest skills in English to learn. It takes a lot of time and effort to improve our pronunciation. Some non-native speakers live for a long time in an English-speaking country but still have poor pronunciation. Other speakers seem to pick up English pronunciation with little effort. And some may do so without visiting and an English-speaking country at all. Pronunciation instruction is a prominent factor in foreign language teaching (Gimson, 1975). Since sounds play an important role in communication, foreign language teachers must attribute proper importance to teaching pronunciation in their classes. It is evident that communication is a mutual relationship between the speaker and the hearer. This means that one must comprehend what he/she hears in the target language and must produce the sounds of the language he/she is trying to learn accurately (Chaney & Burk, 1998). Unless he has sufficient knowledge of the sound patterns of the target language, he can neither encode a message to anybody nor decode the message sent by another person by learning the sounds of the target language within his mother tongue.

METHOD

In this term of quantitative data, the writer used primary data that she got from the survey research. The source of data is from the respondents answer the questionnaires test (pronunciation test and speaking ability) and form document (emotional quotients score). The writer used statistical analysis (inferential/inductive) to calculate the numeral data that will be gathered and to analyze them by the use of correlation and regression analysis. The correlation coefficient is the interpretation to find out the effects of students' emotional intelligence and pronunciation mastery towards students speaking skills.

Techniques of Data Collection

The data collecting technique is a method which can be used by the researcher in collecting the data. They are the variables method and will be studied on this research. There are two kinds of data; that is the data about students' pronunciation mastery (X) by filling the questionnaire. The last is students' speaking skills (Y), as a bound variable. In the form of speaking score which will be given and done in an oral test at the school by the teacher him/herself.

The Blue Print of Pronunciation Test

The pronunciation test is consisted of determining the spelling, stress and rhythm, and intonation. Students are required to pronounce some words correctly due to some elements of pronunciation.

Table 1. The Blue Print of Pronunciation Test

Type	Total
Spelling	10

Table 2. Instrument of Speaking Skills

No	Speaking Aspects	Type of Text	Total Items	Indicators	Item Numbers
1.	Grammar	Responsive Speaking	3	The Grammar of Speech	1, 2, 6
2.	Comprehension	Responsive Speaking	3	Understanding the Instruction	3, 5, 6
3.	Vocabulary	Picture-Cued Responsive	3	The Words Used by the Speakers	3, 4, 6
4.	Fluency	Responsive Speaking	3	The capacity to Speak Fluently	4, 5, 6
5.	Pronunciation	Responsive Speaking	3	The Sounds of Speech, Stress, and Intonation	1, 2, 6

Techniques

1. Giving students practice with both fluency and accuracy.

Accuracy is the extent to which students' speeches match what people actually say when they use the target language. Fluency is the extent to which speakers use the language quickly and confidently, with few hesitations or unnatural pauses, false start, word searches, etc.

2. Providing Opportunities for students to talk by using group work or pair work, and limited teacher talk.

Teacher should be careful about the participation of the student in the class. He or she should encourage the student to speak in the class and provide opportunities for them so that they may feel free to speak ignoring limitations. Pair work and group work activities can be used to increase the amount of time that learners get to speak in the target language during lessons. One further interesting point is that when the teacher is removed from the conversation, the learners take on diverse speaking roles that are normally filled by the teacher such as posing questions offering classification.

Stress and Rhythm	10
Intonation	10
Total	30

The Validity Test

The test was in the form of multiple choices that consisted of five alternative answers. The test consisted of thirty items. The scores of the items were from 0 to 5 based on the appropriate pronunciation that they say. The test was also tried out to thirty students.

Instrument of Speaking Skills

The instrument used to measure the speaking skill is in the form of objectives test. Students are required to answer some questions orally. The specification for the question can be seen on following table:

3. Designing class activities that involve guidance and practice in both transactional and intersectional speaking.

When we talk with someone outside the classroom, we usually do so for interactional or transactional purposes. Interactional speech is communicating with someone for social purposes (Brown, 1994, 2004). It includes both establishing and maintaining social relationships. Transactional speech involves communicating to get something done, including the exchange of goods and /or services. Conversations are relatively unpredictable and can range over many topics, with the participants taking turns and commenting freely. Interactional speech is much more fluid and unpredictable than transactional speech. Speaking inside the classroom need to embody both interactional and transactional purposes, since language learners will have to speak the target language in both transactional and intersectional settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Providing students with a variety of situations and frequent speaking tasks plays a significant role in the improvement

of students' fluency when speaking. The 1-6 Group discussion is one of the best methods of learning speaking in foreign language. It helps the students to improve their speaking skill. In group, the students will have opportunity to use English among themselves and practice each other with their friends. Practicing speaking with their friends will increase their confidence in saying some words without any worry whether they say some words incorrect or not. Besides that, learning in group will improve their vocabularies mastery.

There are some efforts must be engaged by English language teachers while teaching oral language, first, provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and tasks, and shared knowledge. Second, try to involve each student in every speaking activity; for this aim, practice different ways of student participation. Third, reduce teacher speaking time in class while increasing student speaking time. Step back and observe students. Fourth, indicate positive signs when commenting on a student's response. Fifth, ask eliciting questions such as "What do you mean? How did you reach that conclusion?" in order to prompt students to speak more. Sixth, provide written feedback like "Your presentation was really great. It was a good job. I really appreciated your efforts in preparing the materials and efficient use of your voice..." and seventh do not correct students' pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking. Correction should not distract student from his or her speech. Next, involve speaking activities not only in class but also out of class; contact parents and other people who can help. Furthermore, circulate around classroom to ensure that students are on the right track and see whether they need your help while they work in groups or pairs. In addition, provide the vocabulary beforehand that students need in speaking activities. Lastly, diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the target language and provide more opportunities to practice the spoken language.

CONCLUSION

Teaching speaking is a very important part of foreign language learning. The ability to communicate in a foreign language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that foreign language teachers' pay great attention to teaching speaking by providing students with adequate exposure with the language and with adequate motivation to communicate through it. Rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where

meaningful communication takes place is desired. Speaking is the key to communication. By considering what good speakers do, what speaking tasks can be used in class, and what specific needs learners report, teachers can help learners to improve their speaking and overall oral competency.

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