Contributing Factors to Students’ English Speaking Performance at Universities Klabat

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Abstract: The study aims to know factors contributing to English speaking performance of the students at Universitas Klabat in the year of study of 2015/2016. Thirty-six variables were adapted from three different questionnaires that are converted into a new questionnaire. Using exploratory analysis with principal factor extraction, four factors are extracted with 26 remain variables. The four factors contribute to students’ English speaking performance are environmental factor, peer factor, teacher factor and technology used factor. The highest variance that explains the contributing factors to English speaking performance at Universitas Klabat is environmental factor while the least variance is technology used. No significant relation is found between contributing English speaking performance and gender and the length of study at university.

Keywords: English Speaking Performance, Environmental Factor, Peer Factor, Teacher Factor, Technology Usage Factor

Introduction

   English spoken language confidently is nowadays a need. And English speaking skill becomes the most important skill of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) because people who know a language are usually referred to as speakers of that language. The ability to speak skillfully provides the speaker with several distinct advantages. The major goal of all English language teaching should be to give learners the ability to use English effectively, accurately in communication (Davies & Pearse, 1998). However, many studies have been done showed that not all language learners after studying English for many years can communicate fluently and accurately.

   December 31, 2015 has been set for the economic integration of the association of 10 Southeast Nations which is called ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) makes the needs of speaking skill in English become greater. Some ASEAN countries have upped their English language skills at schools and education centres in anticipation of AEC (Stroupe and Kimura, 2015).

   In advancing the speaking skill, it is not an easy task or an overnight process for some of Southeast countries and even most of Asia countries where English is learnt as foreign language. Brown as cited in Murcia (2001) mentions a number of features that interact to make speaking as challenging a language skill as it is. To start, fluent speech contains reduced forms, such as contractions, vowel reduction, and elision; so that learners who are not exposed to or who do not get sufficient practice with reduced speech will retain their rather formal-sounding full forms. Sawir (2005) who conducted research on international students from Asia who study in Australia found that these international students face serious learning difficulties and lack confidence in speaking and taking a proactive role in classrooms because of misconceptions about language use and role in learning.

   Some of the Southeast Asia countries possess similar challenges or problem in advancing the speaking skill. Aside from the exposure to English language that is very limited, there are also some other factors that hinder the advancement of this skill. In Laos which used to be colonized by American and French for long period and where English has been taught as a second or foreign language in some school and tertiary institution, it found that the English proficiency level of Lao students is still far from satisfactory. They found out that this low proficiency level caused by several factors but the top three factors are lack of English background knowledge, the English teacher are not well trained so they cannot perform well and influenced the interest of the students, and the student’s lack of confidence
to use the language because they are afraid and shame when they make mistake, (Souriyavongsa et al. 2013).

Nguyen and Tran (2015) who conducted study in Vietnam found that the common problems affecting student’s speaking performance at University of Thu Dau Mot was that the students spoke very little or nothing in speaking class, they often used Vietnamese and they had no motivation in expressing themselves using English, and they are fearful of criticism or loosing face of making mistake.

Other Asia countries also are facing the similar problem in advancing the English speaking skill. A study conducted by Muhammad (2007) on the investigation that caused language anxiety for ESL/EFL learner in learning speaking skills and the influence on communication found out that Arab EFL learners showed that learner preferred use Arabic rather than English for communication in both outside and inside the classroom, the lack of the target language exposure as spoken by its native speakers, the shortage and weakness of the contribution in their language teaching context, and lack of their personal motivation.

Wahba (1998) summarizes the problems encountered by Egyptian learners, “Egyptian students face certain problems related to pronunciation. Some of these problems are related to stress, other are related to intonation. However, most of these problems can be attributed to the differences in pronunciation between English and Arabic.”

In Indonesia, although the status of English language is perceived as foreign language (FL), teaching English has started a long time ago. Varieties of teaching methodologies have been used in Indonesia to achieve English competency but the results are always far from being perfect. Speaking English is known as the most important and difficult skill for Indonesian students. Many learners express their inability and sometimes even acknowledge their failure in learning to speak a foreign language. These learners may be good at learning other skills, but when it comes to learning to speak another language, they claim to have a ‘mental block’ against it (Liauw, 2013).

As cited in Stoupe and Kimura (2015) stated that in comparison with the ASEAN giants Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, Indonesians still lack English speaking skill. These problems seem to occur in almost all different levels of formal education al system in Indonesia. And Universtias Klabat (Unklab) is not exempted. In East Indonesian, Unklab has been known well as bilingual campus and Unklab as musch as possible has tried to promote among the community of the English spoken language. Based on the aforementioned thoughts, through this study the researcher is interested to find out what are the major factors for the students at Unklab that contribute to the students’ English speaking performance. Specifically to answer the following questions: What are the factors contribute to the students’ English speaking performance? How strong are those factors contribute to the students’ English speaking performance? And, are those factors related to students’ gender and length of study in Unklab?

**Methods**

This research uses quantitative approach. Factor analysis design was used to group variables into factors to reduce a large number of related variables to a more manageable number (Pallant, 2007). There were twenty-five items adapted from instrument developed by Kovacs (2011) for items under environment, peers and teachers factors and eleven items for technology were adapted from Isamil, Almekhlafi and Al-Mekhlafi (2010). These 36 items were converted into a questionnaire. The reliability and construct validity of this questionnaire was tested. Seventy-six questionnaires were distributed for the pilot study. Using Cronbach’s Alpha test of reliability the coefficient of reliability was .86 percent. Ten items were removed due to the low Item-Reminder Coefficient that was lower than .30.

The questionnaires were distributed to 107 of English major students specifically to students who are taking Speaking and Listening Class in the second semester of 2015/2016 in Universities Klabat. Convenience sampling method was employed for this research. After analyzing for the 107 questionnaires, researcher found out the all questionnaire is valid for further analysis. To answer the first and second research questions, exploratory factor analysis
was used while to answer the third research question, Independent-Sample t-test and one-way Anova were used.

**Results**

What are the factors contribute to the students’ English speaking performance? How strong are those factors contribute to the students’s English speaking performance? Exploratory factor analysis with principal factor extraction and varimax rotation method was performed on 26 variables that were converted into a questionnaire for a sample of 107 respondents. Kaiser-Mayer-Olikin’s (KMO) overall measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) is .807 and that the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity value is significant which .000, means acceptable since greater than .50 and the Barlett’s test is significant smaller than.05. Two items were removed due to low MSA that is less than .50 that remain 24 items for further analysis.

Four factors were extracted. The four factors explained 60.76 percent of the variance that contribute the students’ English speaking performance of the major English students at university. As shown in table 1 factor that accounts the highest variance is factor 1 which is environmental factors (27.27%) and factor 4 which technology accounts the least (8.36%).

| Table 1: Percentage of Variance after Varimax Rotation |
| Factors | Factors | Factors |
| Factor 1 | 27.27 | 27.27 |
| Factor 2 | 15.81 | 43.08 |
| Factor 3 | 9.32 | 52.40 |
| Factor 4 | 8.36 | 60.76 |

Loading variables on factors are show in Table 2. Variables are ordered and grouped by size and loading to the facilities interpretation. Since substantial loading is above .45 (Kountur, 2013) any factor loading less than .45 will be removed. Two variables were removed due to lower factor loading than .45 which remain 22 items. As shown in Table 2, my environment gladly to see the development of my English language (r=.836), my environment gladly supports my development of my English (r=.778) and my environment likes to promote English (r=.777) are three highest loading for factor 1. These three variables indicate that support and influence from environment are needed.

I mingle with my friends who speak English (r=.744) is the highest loading for factor 2. Practicing the English language with their friends is another contributing for the English speaking performance. I improve my speaking from my teacher who used English as medium of instruction in my classes (r=.854) is the highest loading from factor 3. This means the more proficiency a teacher use the English language in his/her teaching the more impact she/he imparts upon the students. Technology usage assists me in making English language learning more interesting and enjoyable (r=8.28) is the highest loading from factor 4.

| Table 2: Factor Pattern after Varimax Rotation |
| My environment is glad to see the development of my English language |
| Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
| .836 | .307 | .089 | .078 |

| My environment gladly supports my development of my English skills. |
| Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
| .778 | .292 | .143 | .155 |
My environment likes to promote learning English.  .777  -.110  .110  - .058
My environment likes those colleagues who develop their English skills.  .693  -.061  1.444  .129
My environment is glad to see my efforts to develop my English language skills.  .628  .486  .059  .077
I mingle with my friends who speak English.  .112  .744  .149  - .034
I am inspired by my friends who watch movies in English to develop their English language skills.  .105  .567  -.064  .008
It improves my English language when my friends talk to me in English.  .184  .545  .032  .163
It encourages me knowing that my friends find English language skills advantageous in life.  .363  .527  .035  .033
I improve my speaking from my teacher who used English as medium of instruction in the classes  .058  .351  .854  .158
My teachers speaks/spoke English well.  .173  .005  .766  .124
My English teacher enjoys/enjoyed the fact that using the English language is becoming a part of my life.  -.023  .081  .717  .263
My English teacher emphasizes/emphasized the importance of English language skills in the job market today  -.030  .286  .705  .222
My English teacher emphasizes/emphasized the importance of English language skills in my line of work.  .056  .128  .603  .072
My English teacher likes/liked it when I use English more and more on a daily basis  .099  .028  .581  .083
Technology assists me in making English language learning interesting and enjoyable  .091  .073  .106  .828
My English language proficiency level improves as a result of using technology.  .079  .041  .082  .784
Technology assists in abandoning the traditional approaches and developing more interactive ways in acquiring English language.  .098  .309  .241  .725
Technology helps me in integrating different English language skill.  .120  -.011  .102  .676

Factor 1 = environment; Factor 2 = peers; Factor 3 = teachers; Factor 4 = technology
Are those factors related to students’ gender and length of study at Universitas Klabat? An independent-samples t-test was calculated comparing means score of factors contributing to students’ English speaking performance at Universitas Klabat between male and female and found no significant different as shown in Table 3, (t(106)=1.638, p=.201).
The mean of female students ($M = 4.101, SD = .675$) was higher than the mean of male students ($M = 3.845, SD = .809$) but not significant different.

### Table 3: Group statistics and independent sample Test

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<th>Independent Samples Test</th>
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One-way anova was calculated examining between the four factors and the length of study at university. It was found out that only factor one which significant related to English speaking performance ($F(3,104) = 2.948, p = .036$). Post hoc comparison using the Duncan test indicate that only in factor 1 that there is difference between groups where the first and the second year students ($M = 3.460$ and $M = 4.171$) related to the length of study at university. While the three other factor showed that there was no relation to the speaking performance and the length of study at university and there was no differences between groups.

### Discussion

My environment gladly to see the development of my English language, my environment gladly supports my development of my English, and my environment likes to
promote English are three highest loading for factor of environment or the biggest contributing factor to students’ English speaking performance. This indicate that social support from environment plays big roles in students’ English speaking performance. This consistent with the study of Mahripah (2014) stated that environmental and family background plays a vital role in EFL learning process and specifically on how the EFL learners perform their oral speaking.

Another important factor that contribute to students’ speaking performance is peer factor. This consistent with (Wentzel, 1994) stated that peer support should be considered essential to language learners because students spend considerable time together learning the language and encounter similar language learning challenges. Learners may receive support from their classmates not only in the form of friendship but also in ways that facilitate learning. Peer support has greater reciprocity because peers share equal status. In line with the aforementioned idea, Fetsco and McClure (2005) state that friends provide cognitive resources to help each other acquire knowledge and problem-solving skills and develop communication skills, cooperation behaviors, and methods for accessing and entering groups.

Teacher also is another factor that contribute to students’ English speaking performance. The English teacher is a figure in the language course they are the ones who set the tone for learning activities (Quist, 2000). As Nguyen and Tran (2015) found out that the teacher’s feedback during speaking activities was reported to affect students’ speaking performance.

The results of the study showed that the effectiveness of the use of technology in education and how it assists in the development of English communication skills and knowledge of students contribute to students’ English speaking performance. This in line with the findings of Wernet, Ollige and Delicath (2000) who found that technology use in education is becoming an increasingly important part of higher and professional education. This is supported by Lam and Lawrence (2002) saying that technology not only gives learners the opportunity to control their own learning process, but also provides them with ready access to a vast amount of information over which teacher has no power or control. Crystal (2001) also mentioned that technology offers all students opportunities to learn in ways not previously possible.

The four factors that contribute to students’s English speaking performance seem not relate to gender and the length of study at university. This study was limited to students as respondents that take speaking and listening subject for the first semester of 2016/2017 at Universities Klabat.

**Recommendation**

There are many factors that contribute to students’ English speaking performance. Identifying those factors is tremendous important so that the learner as well as the teacher can take any appropriate way to improve the ability for the speaking performance. This study only contribute 60.76 percent of the variance, which mean there are still lot of variance need to be seek for the improvement of the speaking performance. The same study can be done and explore more on the other variables with a bigger sample and new other method.
References


