

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract: In addition to limited vocabulary and pronunciation, ESL students may also struggle with listening and speaking skills. Without strong listening and speaking skills, your students may have difficulty participating in class discussions, understanding lectures, and expressing themselves in English.

Keywords: English language, Challenges, Education system, Students, Skills.

Introduction. Now days English is an international language used by almost half of the world's populations. English is used in oral and written communication in various formal and non-formal activities. For that purpose, a person needs to master skills of English including listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. These skills are obtained through the learning process. Learning English is conducted according to learning needs and goals including the ability to communicate with native speakers, the ability to use English in written communication, passing exams, and English as a prerequisite to continue to higher education. Learning English in Indonesian context experiences development in line with the discovery of various media and learning support facilities. Students can use these facilities and media to develop English language skills. In a formal context at school or university, learning English can be facilitated by teachers or other people who are considered to have English language knowledge and ability. In addition, independent learning needs to be pursued so that learners can determine their own goals, planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Language learning and teaching is a trend of a global education and its goal is to master the target language being learnt. Many linguists have tried to do the research dealing with methodologies and approaches of language teaching which is used in the classroom. In the line with this, teachers as well have tried to implement various approaches that meet the learners need and problems. They are applied to help the instructors and learners have the same vision dealing with the target language to be mastered.

In the field of foreign language learning, interaction has long been considered important in making the activities meaningful leading the learners to a successful situation. It requires, in the process of foreign language learning, the presence of two or more learners who collaborate in practicing dialogues, doing information gap activities, and achieving communication. Interaction is a way of learning in general and developing the language skills in particular. Classroom interaction then emphasizes on the effectiveness of the students to go to participate actively in the dialogue, understanding the subject matter and improving language competency.

Literature review: The learning activity is done for certain reasons; fulfilling the curriculum demand, moving to the target language community, fulfilling the requirement of specific purpose, and perceiving great of being able to speak the language. Whatever reasons, the purpose learners have for learning will have an effect upon what it is they want and need to learn, and its result will influence what are taught (Harmer, 2007:11).

Different experts proposed different ways of language learning theory. According to behaviorism, language learning is essentially the formation of habit through repeated reinforcement. It proposed three stages of learning which were known as presentation, practice and production (Thornbury, 2005:38). This process is aimed at developing automatic habits, structuring the language skills including speaking through classroom practice and interaction, modeling, and repetition. On the other hand, cognitivist views learning as a complex skill. The application of behaviorism is considered as the first stage to reach the autonomy. The cognitivist model prioritizes mental function over the social one. Learning is mediated through social and cultural activity, and to achieve autonomy in a skill, the learners first need to experience “other regulation”, that is, parent, peer or teacher ((Thornbury, *ibid*).

Learning a language is aimed at being able to speak the target language, and the strategies mentioned help learners facilitate learning achievement. However, speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interaction. In the process of learning to speak, Richard and Renandya (2002:205) stated some factors affecting learners’ oral communication ability; (1) age or maturational constraints. Age is one of the determinant factors of success or failure in learning English. There is a great differences of retrieving language proficiency between a child and an adult. It is affirmed by Krashen, et.al (1982) in Richard and Renandy (*ibid*), those who begin learning a second and a foreign language in early childhood through natural exposure gain better proficiency than those begin learning at adult phase. Many adults fail to achieve language proficiency.

Main part.

Having lack of interest in learning English

Students possess lack of interest in learning to speak English. This factor makes them reluctant to learn. It as well disturbs the students learning focus. When it appears the they tend to change their attention to other subjects which are more attractive according their concepts. The emergence of being interested in learning certain subjects is determined by who are in charge for teaching and how she or he teaches. The study revealed that the students carry out certain concept of learning to speak English. According their view, English is difficult to learn. This view then influences their learning style which is supposed to help them facilitate learning success, and they are not interested in learning to speak English for this reason.

Lack of learning motivation

The study presents a data that a majority of students are less motivated to practice speaking in English out of the class. One of the basic reasons is that the students have less time to learn English, and it happens because they spend more time learning other subjects given by other lecturers. Khan (2016:158) through his study foud the absence of many required needs for learning makes students look not to be motivated. It emphasizes upon the need of creating motivation among students. Students need a lot of things in learning. It is important to know what they need and how to fulfill their needs. Getting students to do various kinds of homework, such as written exercise or composition is one of the best way to encourage students’ autonomy. However, it will reduce the students’ motivation if it is given at the same time when they have to complete other tasks.

Having lack of basic knowledge and vocabulary mastery

Having lack of basic knowledge and vocabulary mastery reduces the students learning motivation and interest. Since they tend to focus on achieving main competency, they seem to be careless to learn English. The intensity of learning changed hinders the mastery of vocabulary that should be learned and understood by the students. This factor causes further problem is that students find difficulties to understand English materials learnt. It deals with the complexity of English language either its semantic aspect, pronunciation or its sentence structure.

Having lack of self confident to speak

Students have lack of self confident to speak English. They seem to be under pressure and feeling nervous when they try to practice speaking. It causes losing of time to practice and being fear to speak. Leo (2013:206) says students lose their self confident and will never try again if they feel embarrassed, unappreciated, disappointed, frustrated, or being looked down by others or even teachers. It will be worse if negative comments are given. Students then are losing opportunities to try even though they have a good intention to possess English speaking ability.

There are some activities to promote speaking skill. The activities can be done either by the learners themselves or by the instructors. When it depends on the learners, it needs self negotiation and responsibility to lead them to successful communicator. Moreover, it requires self awareness. This concept then leads the learners to always learn and experience learning situations that make them speak. When there is an instructor, he/she can apply many activities to support the learners' intention to speak. The ones commonly practiced are information gap activity, cooperative activity, storytelling, role play, discussion and debate.

Conclusion. In summary, although students have applied various leaning strategies and teachers have strived to conduct effective and interesting teaching method to achieve speaking capability, they keep facing obstacles in learning to speak English. It seems that the obstacles are mostly intrinsically. The problems are coming from the students themselves. Having lack of learning motivation and interest, lack of basic knowledge and vocabulary mastery, and lack of self-confident to speak. Having lack of learning interest and motivation is caused by the unavailability of good facilities, supporting learning circumstances, interesting materials that fit learners need, beside putting forward negative concept of learning to speak English. Having lack of basic knowledge and vocabulary mastery makes the students find difficulties to understand the materials studied, meanwhile having lack of self-confident to speak makes the students fear to involve in practice with their interlocutors

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