

ENGLISH STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANT SPEAKING SKILL AT ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM OF MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF BENGKULU

By

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to investigate the English students' awareness of the important speaking skill at English Education Program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. The design of this research is descriptive. The population of this research is 145 students of the third and the fifth semester of English education program of UMB in academic year of 2018/2019. The sample of this research was taken randomly for 50%, they are 73 students. The result showed that the students' awareness of the important speaking in English Study Program of Muhammadiyah University is categorized into very high level. Both the third semester and the fifth semester achieved the percentage above 80%, namely 90.8% and 90.7%. Eventhough the results are different, they are not high. The high level of awareness occurred because most of the students answer *yes* for all questions in the questionnaire.

Keywords: *speaking skill, students' awareness.*

1. Introduction

Talking about the speaking skill is important, there are some importance of this skill for the learners. According to Qureshi (1992: 2), the importance of speaking skill are: 1) to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well; 2) for a smooth running of any system; 3) to become a well rounded communicator; and 4) important for career success. Because of speaking skill is important, it is needed to know about the students' awareness about this skill. According to Singh (2018), the word awareness is meaningful in only in the context of the word consciousness. *Consciousness is a divisive phenomenon. To be conscious of something is to be something and know the other thing.* Consciousness is always in duality. You always say, I am conscious of something. According to Tulasiewicz and Zajda in Kalra (2015), language awareness blends content about language, language skill, attitudinal education, and meta-cognitive opportunities.

Language awareness relates to the students' awareness. According to Bilash (2009), students can learn concepts in the SL through an examination of their own language's structure and use, either due to similarities or differences between them. For example, word order can be compared using visual cues so that students 'see' and 'hear' the differences. Word etymology (the roots of words) can also be used

to see patterns in word formation and related meanings. Building language awareness also involves helping students gain a positive attitude toward the TL by developing the confidence to make an attempt or take a risk. By becoming conscious of strategies that can be used to learn the SL, students may become more active in and more responsible for their own learning.

It can be seen that because of speaking is important skill, the students should develop their awareness about it. The students' awareness can be build by arising their confidence in order that they can be more active and responsible for their own learning, especially learning speaking. It is why the knowing the students' awareness in speaking is important because becoming aware of the nuances and meanings of a language is part of language learning. By increasing students' language awareness, the students are better able to understand, appreciate and use the language.

However, the students' awareness about the importance of speaking is not good enough because in daily activities of the students in campus environment, they seldom use English in their communication. It means that they do not aware of the speaking importance. If they aware about it, they will practice English speaking more. So it is why the researcher thinks that the students' awareness toward English speaking is still low.

The objective of this research is to investigate the English students' awareness of

the important speaking skill at English Education Program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu.

2. Methodology

The design of this research is descriptive. According to Ary (2004:46), descriptive research is the kind of research that describes systematically the situations and facts of a given population factually and accurately. The subjects of this research are 76 students of the fifth semester of English Study Program of UMB. Instrument of this research is questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 11 items taken, adapted, and modified from Qureshi (1992) and Kalra (2015) about the importance of speaking and the students' language awareness.

3. Results And Discussion

Results

The results of this research showed that the students' awareness of the important of speaking is presented in the description as follows.

- a. The Results of Students' Awareness of the important of speaking skills in the Third Semester.

The number of items in questionnaire is 11 items of questions. The samples in class 3A are 13 students. If all of students answer *yes*, so the total score is 143. Then, the samples in class 3B are 12 students, so the total score of *yes* should be 132. And the samples of class 3C are 12 students, so the total score of *yes* should be 132 too. If all students of three classes answer *yes*, so the total score should be 407.

The results are described in the table 1 follows.

Table 1. The Results of Students' Awareness of the important of speaking skills in the Third Semester.

Items No	Scores			Total Score/item
	3A	3B	3C	
1	13	12	12	37
2	12	11	12	35
3	6	12	8	26
4	12	12	7	31
5	13	12	12	37

6	12	11	12	35
7	13	12	11	36
8	12	12	11	35
9	6	12	11	29
10	11	11	12	34
11	9	12	12	33
Students' score	119	129	121	369
Total score	143	132	132	407
%	83%	97.7%	91.7%	90.8%

From the table 1 above, it can be seen that of three classes of the third semester of English Study program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu, the highest awareness of the important speaking skills is in the class 3B with 97.7%. it is followed by class 3C with 91.7%. The last is class 3A with 83%. The total percentage of all students' awareness of the important speaking skill is 90.8% that means that their awareness is in the category or level of *very high* (80% – 100%).

- b. The Results of Students' Awareness of the important of speaking skills in the Fifth Semester.

The number of items in questionnaire is 11 items of questions. The samples in class 5A are 13 students. If all of students answer *yes*, so the total score is 143. Then, the samples in class 5B are 14 students, so the total score of *yes* should be 154. And the samples of class 5C are 12 students, so the total score of *yes* should be 132 too. If all students of three classes answer *yes*, so the total score should be 429.

The results are described in the table 2 as follows.

Table 2. The Results of Students' Awareness of the important of speaking skills in the Fifth Semester.

Items No	Scores			Total Score/item
	3A	3B	3C	
1	13	14	12	39
2	6	14	11	31
3	11	14	12	37
4	13	14	11	38
5	12	14	11	37
6	9	14	10	33
7	9	14	9	32

8	13	14	11	38
9	8	14	11	33
10	11	14	12	37
11	9	14	11	34
Students' score	114	154	121	389
Total score	143	154	132	429
%	79.7 %	100 %	91.7 %	90.7%

From the table 2 above, it can be seen that of three classes of the fifth semester of English Study program of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu, the highest awareness of the important speaking skills is in the class 5B with 100%. It is followed by class 5C with 91.7%. The last is class 5A with 79.7%. The total percentage of all students' awareness of the important speaking skill is 90.7% that means that their awareness is in the category or level of *very high* (80% – 100%).

About the reasons of students' answers, they will be described as follows. For item no 1, there are some reasons of why they answer *yes*, they are: developing a good knowledge can make students learn easier; have much vocabulary can develop speaking; and good language is important for speaking. For item no 2, the students' reasons to choose *yes*, because: if they want to be able to speak English, they must force to speak; in order that brain not spoiled; if it is not forced, the speaking cannot develop; and they can speak fluently.

For item no 3, the students' reasons to chose *yes* because: practice to speak can show the mastery of materials; with speaking can get more knowledge; it can help them to pronounce the words; practice English can make the students understand the materials; it is very important. Item no 4, the students answer *yes* because: practice can develop confidence in speaking; mastering many English words can make confident; make confident in public speaking. Item no 5, the students answer *yes* because: practice more can make them master the English language.

For item no 6, the students answer *yes* because they think that it is very important to speak correctly and effectively for communicating to other people. For item no 7, the students answer *yes* because they think that training can increase their speaking; training can help them to speak; training with other people

can help them to communicate. For item no 8, the students think that speaking English is important in all condition. For item no 9, the students realize that skillful in speaking English is important and can make the advantages such as get job. For item no 10, the students think that speaking English is important in career success such as in interview for job. And the last item, no 11, the students think that speaking English well can make students feel amazing; speaking English can be their lifestyle.

Discussion

In the results above, it can be seen that the students' awareness of the important speaking skills in the third and the fifth semester students are categorized into *very high* level because both of them are in the range of 80% - 100%. The third semester students had 90.8%, and the fifth semester students had 90.7% of awareness level.

About the reasons of students' answers, they will be described as follows. For item no 1, there are some reasons of why they answer *yes*, they are: developing a good knowledge can make students learn easier; have much vocabulary can develop speaking; and good language is important for speaking. For item no 2, the students' reasons to choose *yes*, because: if they want to be able to speak English, they must force to speak; in order that brain not spoiled; if it is not forced, the speaking cannot develop; and they can speak fluently.

Tulasiewicz and Zajda in Kalra (2015), language awareness issues include exploring the benefits that can be derived from developing a good knowledge about language, a conscious understanding of how languages work, of how people learn them and use them. It interests also include learning more about what sorts of ideas about language people normally operate with, and what effects these have on how they conduct their everyday affairs. Building language awareness involves helping students gain a positive attitude toward the English language by developing the confidence to make an attempt or take a risk.

For item no 3, the students' reasons to chose *yes* because: practice to speak can show the mastery of materials; with speaking can get more knowledge; it can help them to pronounce the words; practice English can make the students understand the materials; it is very

important. Item no 4, the students answer yes because: practice can develop confidence in speaking; mastering many English words can make confident; make confident in public speaking. Item no 5, the students answer yes because: practice more can make them master the English language. It is supported with the explanation that learning more about language in general may help the student develop an appreciation for the target language (English). Another aspect of building language awareness involves integrating what has been learned in other classes to English class, or borrowing what was learned in the English classroom and applying it to other courses (Tulasiewicz and Zajda in Kalra, 2015).

For item no 6, the students answer yes because they think that it is very important to speak correctly and effectively for communicating to other people. For item no 7, the students answer yes because they think that training can increase their speaking; training can help them to speak; training with other people can help them to communicate. According to Qureshi (1992), for a smooth running of any system, the speakers of a language need to be especially and purposefully trained in the skill of speaking.

For item no 8, the students think that speaking English is important in all condition. For item no 9, the students realize that skillful in speaking English is important and can make the advantages such as get job. According to Qureshi (1992), in-order to become a well rounded communicator one needs to be proficient in each of the four language skills viz., listening , speaking, reading and writing, but the ability to speak skillfully, provides the speaker with several distinct advantages. The capacity to express one's thoughts, opinions and feelings, in the form of words put together in a meaningful way, provides the speaker with these advantages.

For item no 10, the students think that speaking English is important in career success such as in interview for job. And the last item, no 11, the students think that speaking English well can make students feel amazing; speaking English can be their lifestyle. Based on Qureshi (1992), an effective speaker can gain the attention of the audience and hold it till the completion of his message. Speaking skills are important for career success, but certainly not limited to one's professional aspirations.

Speaking skills can also enhance one's personal life.

About the comparison to the previous studies, the results were quite different. Galti (2016) found that the students are experiencing high level of anxiety and are not using the affective strategy. In addition, the most serious form of anxiety is reported to be the fear of negative evaluation. Therefore, learners need to be motivated and set free from fear of threat to speak in class; for that learners need to be encouraged to use affective strategy like taking deep breathing, self-motivating, positive self-talk as opined by. Equally teachers should avoid giving negative feedback to the students.

Kalra (2015) showed that showed that most of the participants are not aware about the significance of English language. It is recommended to build language awareness among students to help them to gain a positive attitude toward the English language by developing the confidence in them to make an attempt to learn this global language.

Kadir and Noor (2015) suggest that students have a medium level of awareness of the importance of English for job employment. In addition, the use of the national language during classes leads some students to take advantage in certain situations. Liu (2016), based on the results achieved through a questionnaire survey, textbooks analyses and teaching analyses, suggestions are put forward for the building of students' awareness of functions in the teaching of speaking.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

From the results that had been found, it can be concluded that the students' awareness of the important speaking in English Study Program of Muhammadiyah University is categorized into very high level. Both the third semester and the fifth semester achieved the percentage above 80%, namely 90.8% and 90.7%. Eventhough the results are different, they are not high. The high level of awareness occurred because most of the students answer *yes* for all questions in the questionnaire.

Suggestion

Because of there are still many students who do not realize the important of speaking skills, the researcher would like to suggest that they should increase their awareness about the important speaking skills, specifically in the term of forcing to speak English; and they are supposed to speak correctly and effectively in communication.

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