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An Analysis of University Muhammadiyah Maumere Students' English Speaking Skill

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the English-speaking needs of students in the English Department at the University of Muhammadiyah Maumere. Collecting and analyzing data on needs helps the lecturer identify gaps between what has been done and what remains to be done. A needs analysis can help establish and implement language policy with significant implications. In this case, the analysis includes students' speaking levels and investigates students' wants and needs in speaking English. The participants of this research were students majoring in English Education and Literature Study Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Maumere. This research used a qualitative research design. To find a comprehensive perception of each student, focus group discussion (FGD) is used. The results showed that the existing shortcomings found that student's level of English speaking skills was very low, and students often were afraid to speak because they were worried about making mistakes. Students need presents that students must learn to be brave to speak English at the level of daily communication. In addition, students' desire found that students will use English speaking skills for job demands, they prefer pair or group projects in a teaching-learning process, and students prefer lecturers as facilitators and guides to improve speaking skills because they believe that poor speaking skills will have a negative impact on academic performance.

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Introduction

Teaching and learning the four language abilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are inextricably linked to English. Speaking is generally the most crucial of the four English language abilities for all-day communication. Being able to communicate in English is crucial since it's one of the requirements for getting a job. Speaking skills are said to be a skill desired by managing partners, managers, supervisors, and senior auditors in recruitment [1]. Apart from that, Sari [2] believes that If students' English language skills are not honed well, there is a fear that they will not be able to compete in the world of work, which will lead to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and will be left behind due to their lack of good English language skills, and smoothly. Therefore, speaking skills are very important for the needs of students in the future because English speaking skills are the main skills most needed by employers [3].

The issue of pupils' limited English proficiency is influenced by both internal and external causes. During the fourth semester, the author interviewed a student named (AD), who stated that the content covered in speaking class was similar to what she had learned in high school. The teaching and learning process can be better if teachers know students' needs and the problems they face in speaking. Analyzing student needs can help lecturers find appropriate course material Ria & Malik [4]. Based on research results obtained by Warschauer [5], analysis of student targets and needs shows that students need the ability to speak and communicate fluently to prepare themselves to meet the demands of their profession in the future. Any English learning material must follow future skill needs [6]. By conducting a needs analysis, we can set learning objectives, guide the selection of teaching content, and modify the syllabus and learning approaches Haque [7]. Ampa et al. [8] and Andi & Arafah [9] claim that needs analysis reflects a lecture to determine students' lacks, wants, and input related to types of speaking activities, media, speaking exercises and tasks, classroom settings, assessment, etc.

Teaching English in the Guidance and Counseling Department at Masoem University, from the results of initial observations before conducting a needs analysis, it was found that students majoring in counseling had not met a curriculum that was in line with students' English language needs. This is based on preliminary research conducted by Uyun & Sinta [10]. English is more likely to be taught in public schools. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a needs analysis to successfully improve English language learning in the counseling department at Masoem University. Achieving maximum goals in a learning process is certainly not easy because good desires certainly require maximum effort, this depends on the individual as a

student who carries out the learning process in carrying out the educational process, the hope is that it will produce quality human resources [11].

From the description above, the author is interested in investigating the English-speaking skill needs of the English Education and Literature Study Program at Muhammadiyah University, Maumere. The research program was:

- What are students' target needs in speaking class?
- What are students' learning needs in speaking class?

The results of this research will be useful as a teaching reference for speaking classes. Therefore, teaching materials are expected to meet students' needs in their future careers.

Material and Methods

Qualitative research is research that emphasizes understanding social life problems based on realistic conditions in a holistic, complex, and detailed manner. The author uses qualitative research methods because the data the author takes is a detailed description of students' perspectives regarding the need for English speaking skills. In collecting data, the author needed approximately 1 month from 22 April 2024 – 13 May 2024. This study involves 30 students of the English Education and Literature Study Program as participants. In collecting data, the author carried out a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). According to Susanto et al. [12], Focus Group Discussion (FGD) stimulates students to explore ideas, develop new understandings and techniques for solving problems, develop thinking, and communicate effectively. FGD is a process of systematically collecting data and information regarding a very specific problem through discussion. In this research, there are several stages carried out by the author in collecting focus group discussion data, namely opening by the moderator; distribution of research instruments to each student; students filling out the research instruments that have been distributed; collection of research instruments; and discussions related to students' speaking skill needs. Data analysis techniques used in this research are based on the Miles and Huberman Model, which has three stages: data reduction, namely by analyzing data collection and making reflective notes related to the data obtained; data presentation is done by presenting data informatively; and drawing conclusions and verification, namely by interpreting data which can be in the form of descriptions or descriptions of research results.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the author will break down the results of the FGD into two aspects. First, a description of the students' target needs in English-speaking classes. In this aspect, there are

needs, lacks, and wants. Second, the description of students' learning needs in speaking skills class. In this aspect, there are inputs, procedures, settings, and learner roles [13]. A detailed description of each is presented below.

A. Students' Target Needs in Speaking Class

Based on the results of the focus group discussions, the students' target needs are divided into three types: necessities, lacks, and wants.

1. Necessities

According to the data gathered from the focus group discussions, students believe that having proficiency in English will help them succeed in their future careers. It is stated by one of the participants:

> Extremely crucial, as my goal is to use my ability to speak English to to get a job (EH).

The assertion is consistent with research by Safitri & Baehaqi [14], who found that 50% of students think success in their future profession will be important.

2. Lacks

From the results of the analysis conducted, the most significant lack of the students was vocabulary, so organizing thoughts to convey ideas in English made students afraid of being wrong and being laughed at, in addition to students' very minimal grammar, lack of consistent speaking practice, and the need to think quickly and respond quickly, especially in demanding situations. It is stated by the participants:

> My vocabulary is still quite limited, which makes it difficult for me to communicate effectively in English. I feel awkward when friends make fun of me when I talk in class or outside of it (H).
>
> I occasionally forget vocabulary when I'm speaking, pronouncing words correctly in English can be challenging because writing and pronunciation differ, and language rules are the worst barrier for me because I worry about mispronouncing words (NP).
>
> I feel nervous when I talk because of the complicated English grammar (NH).

The research by Safitri & Baehaqi [14], which shows that practically all students lack vocabulary and frequently worry that they will make mistakes when speaking English, supports this. Due to their limited vocabulary, students often struggle with English grammar and pronunciation. For this reason, lecturers play a crucial role in ensuring that students receive the proper instruction to meet the learning objectives of speaking classes.

3. Wants

Students' expectations of speaking classes show that students want cooperation to help communicate and collaborate with other students to improve the teaching and learning process in speaking classes and provide new experiences and knowledge related to

vocabulary that can help students improve their speaking skills and be able to achieve the demands of professional work in the future. As presented by one of the participants:

> In a speaking class, I prefer it when the instructor separates us into groups and assigns material for each group to discuss and then deliver in English (H).

In addition, the efficient use of technology provides knowledge and skills to create products or processes that are useful to society or industry. As presented by one of the participants:

> I am more active when I learn with technology since it is engaging (R).

The way we live, work and communicate is changing significantly as a result of the adoption of technology-based learning. According to Capraro & Slough [15], project-based learning is a learning paradigm that can make learners the subject or center of learning. To solve difficulties, a kid who participates in project-based learning is encouraged to use his curiosity and his experiences to expand his knowledge. Favorable employment prospects, tertiary education, travel, and the belief that inadequate speech abilities will inevitably result in subpar work and personal growth.

B. Students' Learning Needs in Speaking Class

Based on the results of the focus group discussions, students' needs were divided into four types: inputs, procedures, settings, and learner roles.

1. Input

The students highlighted photos, music, and video as the most important inputs. They believed that these multimedia resources could encourage dialogue and discussion in the classroom. Students can further enhance their speaking class learning experience by visualizing the talk's context. As presented by one of the participants:

> I find the combination of audio and video in speaking sessions for teaching and learning to be very intriguing because it offers a fresh perspective on the material and is simple to comprehend (F).

This statement is supported by Khotimah [16], video is an effective medium to improve pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, writing, independent learning, self-confidence, and insight into student creativity.

2. Procedure

Speaking practice, in which students should be given the chance to speak English as frequently as possible in role-playing, group debates, and presentations, is one of the methods that students seek in speaking lessons. As presented by one of the participants:

> If there are no classes, my classmates and I like to role-play and have debates. We are free to choose who gets to speak English; for instance, I might be the people's representative council, and my friend might be a student (I).

According to Ma & Oxford [17], teaching English speaking using a group discussion learning style encourages students to participate more actively in class discussions and communicate their thoughts. This addition to role acting fosters an engaging and innovative learning environment in the group [18]. Since good games can encourage quick thinking in speaking English, they are one of the students' favorite speaking exercises. They believe the professor should serve as a facilitator and guide for them when it comes to receiving specific, constructive criticism on their speaking abilities, which should include grammatical and pronunciation corrections.

3. Settings

The ideal speaking classroom environment for a student may consist of the following factors. Situation-based practice, in which the lecturer presents speaking scenarios or conditions in English, like arguing and presenting a certain topic. Students are encouraged to work together on collaborative English projects so they can practice speaking and listening in a safe environment. As presented by one of the participants:

> The settings that we have implemented in class require every student to talk in English. However, it is short-lived because every kid's vocabulary is still quite limited (SH).

Collaborative projects provide an opportunity for students to practice speaking well in real-world situations. Furthermore, in a collaborative learning environment, students pick up knowledge from one another as well as the teacher [19].

4. Students Role

Most students want to actively participate in all speaking sessions' discussions, presentations, group projects, role-playing, and feedback-giving activities so that they can benefit from helpful criticism and remarks from teachers and other students, which will inspire and motivate them to improve their English-speaking skills. As presented by one of the participants:

> If the subject is presented engagingly and the teaching strategies are effective, I will play a very active role in speaking lessons (AD).

These results imply that every speaking lesson involves willing and capable students who can contribute fully to the learning process. Since language learners will probably encounter this in their future professional pursuits, researchers and educators need to come up with new and effective ways to assist students in realizing their speaking potential [20].

Conclusion

The findings highlight the need to enhance students' speaking abilities for future development, emphasizing vocabulary and grammar as key challenges. Speaking courses play a vital role in improving fluency and preparing students for future employment. Engaging teaching methods, such as videos, audio, role-playing, and group projects, keep students motivated. The research underscores the importance of designing instructional materials tailored to students' future workplace demands, helping lecturers create effective speaking courses that meet students' needs.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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