EXPLORING THE ENGLISH SPEAKING DIFFICULTIES FACED BY CADETS AT BAROMBONG MARINE POLYTECHNIC

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Abstract

This paper reports the English speaking difficulties faced by cadets with the following research questions: 1) what are the English speaking difficulties and 2) what are the factors causing English speaking difficulties. The research was conducted at Barombong Marine Polytechnic. There were 3 cadets of the nautical department and 3 cadets of technical department in the second semester in the academic year 2020 as the subjects in this research. The researcher used class observation and interviews to collect the data. The result found there were two kinds of the English speaking difficulties, namely linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects. The linguistic aspects (lack of vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, and lack of grammatical knowledge). While, nonlinguistic aspects or psychology aspects (anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, fear of making mistake). They were categories as internal factors (anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, fear of making mistake) and external factors (environmental factors and ineffective teaching strategy).

Keyword: Exploring, English Speaking, Difficulties, Maritime English

INTRODUCTION

Barombong Marine Polytechnic is one of marine institution that create the cadets become great seafarer. They learn maritime English and general English to build-up their language skill. All materials they acquired especially the English language is so important to study before they join the vessel. They must have a qualified English skill. But, it could not be denied that the cadets still have difficulties in speaking English, moreover maritime English. In the other hand, the students or cadets of Barombong Marine Polytechnics are expected to have a better future in maritime sector. The requirement for proficient seafarers depends on their expertise in understanding and using ESP English. Almost all the maritime institutes know that role of communication skills is one of the most important ingredients which ensures the security at sea. In order to develop high quality navigators, maritime English trainers should concentrate in teaching the distinct terminology and communication skills that comprise listening, speaking, reading and writing as required by IMO (International Maritime

Organization) in the international shipping industry. Maritime English teachers should not only have English language skills but also specialized training for career purposes, especially maritime English teaching because the goal of maritime English for each college is to cultivate students or cadets to have a good English communication skills required on board ship. Based on this standard, teachers and cadets are expected to be familiar with the related maritime knowledge, so it is possible to encourage the cadets to use the English for their communication on board ship.

In contrast, a big issue among the students or cadet comes up. This happened to the seafarers working on the international vessel. Most of them reported that they had problem in communication. James, Schriever, Jahangiri and Girgin (2018) found that International sea trade creates a complex pattern of interactions between people from different cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Dirgayesa (2018) noted that the supply of the seafarers having qualified professional competencies and communicative competency (English) is a must. The English barriers or difficulties in speaking due to many factors, such as shyness, lack of confidence, lack of vocabulary, low motivation, learning method, diversity background, seniority among cadets, learning environment, learning materials, tools and infrastructure, lecturers' skill and knowledge and weakness of curriculum design. According to (Ziarati,Ziarati, Bigland & Acar.2010) ; *"English has been set as the language of the sea at an international level and it is used in all situations such as ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore and between maritime personnel"* . This is what this study agrees with; not only the English language but also the maritime English that should be used on board. In addition, "A careful study identified that 80% of maritime accidents are down to human factors (Verbek, 2011), of which failure of communication represents one third (Ziarati, 2006, Trenkner, 2007)". On the other hand, "The IMO has also underlined the importance of effective communication in an International Seminar as a crucial issue for Marine Safety (Winbow, 2002). This research agrees with teaching maritime English or speaking class like SMCP for seafarers to create effective maritime communication so as to reduce the number of maritime accidents caused by the human factor due to communication failures which have become a problem in the maritime industry. In addition, many studies have been conducted on cadets' poor performance in learning the English language such as communication on board, ship to ship, ship to shore. But those researches and studies have not cover directly to the core of speaking difficulties faced by cadets. Some cadets in fact, have difficulties when speaking English in the class. In line with the background above, the researcher will analyze what the English speaking difficulties

and the factors causing English speaking difficulties faced by the cadets at Barombong Marine Polytechnic.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research related to the exploring English speaking difficulties faced by cadets at Barombong Marine Polytechnic. In this research, the researcher used the descriptive qualitative with narrative analysis. Qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery. Qualitative research is also described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2012, p, 58). Qualitative research methodology is considered to be suitable when the researcher investigates to cadets English speaking difficulties. The data of the research was taken by using class observation and interviews. The data of this research was obtained from the selected subjects. In selecting the subjects, the research employed purposive sampling. The researcher took 6 subjects, they are 3 cadets of nautical department and as well 3 cadets of technical department on second semester in academic year 2020.

DISCUSSION

The researcher describes the result of data analysis and discusses it based on the result of class observation and interviews. This finding answered the research questions in this research.

2.1 The English speaking difficulties faced by cadets at Barombong Marine Polythecnic

The data collected on this issue revealed that there are two kinds of English speaking difficulties faced by cadets, namely: linguistic and nonlinguistic.

2.1.1   Linguistic aspects

There are several linguistic aspects faced by cadet, namely: lack of vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, and lack of grammatical knowledge. These are can be explained below:

2.1.1.1 Lack of vocabulary

Based on the observation and the depth interview the cadets were difficult to speak by using English even in producing the basic sentence. There were some problems found during the observation. When the researcher tried to make a conversation in English with some cadets, they looked so difficult to answer questions by questions. When the researcher tried to ask them about their problem, they responded that they did not know how to say a word in English that actually they wanted to say.

2.1.1.2 Incorrect pronunciation

In the interview sessions, some cadets mentioned that they had problems in pronouncing some English words. Sometimes they made mistakes of it, even when they had to repeat what the teacher uttered before, they were still in wrong pronunciation. It also happened when they tried to read a text in English. They faced difficulties when they did not know how to pronounce the words. Even if they knew how to pronounce it, sometimes they were unsure about it. The Explanation above is also supported by the cadet's statement below:

"The problem is different of its languages and its writings and its pronunciation ... so those are what descends our motivation"

"Honestly, I have problem in speaking English when the writing is different from the pronunciation"

Most of them were afraid if they made a mistake in term of pronouncing the words and were lack of confidence to pronounce the word in English because according to the cadets' explanation before, when they made some mistakes in pronouncing the English words, automatically their classmates would laugh at them.

2.1.1.3 Lack of grammatical knowledge

Grammar or structure is important aspect in speaking ability. Most of cadets felt that the difficult in grammar. They did not have understanding in 12 tenses, and when their instructor explained about it, they faced confuse which the tenses involved. As seen the interview below:

"The hardest part is not understanding grammar"

"*Yes I do, my problems are understanding grammar and pronunciation, actually, from the past, from high school and junior high school, learning English was lacking so for me it was rather difficult"*

2.1.2 Nonlinguistic or psychology problem

While the speaking difficulties factors which are related to the non-linguistic problems and this called psychological problem can be explained as follows: 1) anxiety, 2) lack of confidence, 3) lack of motivation, 4) fear make of mistake.

2.1.2.1 Anxiety

According to interview with almost of the respondents, most of them felt shy, nervous and fear of making mistakes when they tried to speak English. It also could be seen when the researcher conducted the class observation and the speaking test before. They were afraid if the teacher would be angry if they made some mistakes when they spoke English. Researcher also found that when one cadet tried to speak and she or he made a mistake, automatically another student would be laughing at her or him. That situation of course psychologically gave the negative effect for the cadets who tried to show themselves up in front of their friends. Those cadets may never try to speak in front of another people again. It was like a traumatic for some cadets, because everyone knew that the characteristic of every cadets were so different. So the instructor has to doctrine the cadets that making mistakes was the very natural process of learning. In addition, a mistake was not a joke that must be laughed. The researcher thinks it was very simple but important thing that sometimes both cadets and even instructor forgot it. Another problem they faced during the English speaking process was about nervousness. Most of the respondents that the researcher interviewed explained that when they were at the front and had to speak at front of their friends and also their instructor, they were so nervous.

"I have not having enough basic in speaking English, and sometime felt nervous and not confidence. So it's difficult to understand if learning maritime English"

"……. When I talk with someone who can speak more fluent than me. I feel nervous"

2.1.2.2 Lack of Confidence

The important key in speaking a language is self-confidence. When someone tries to speak English, they should be confident because it can help her/ him at least to still stand up and trying to continue their speaking as good as she/ he can. No matter how bad their speaking, but when they have a high confidence it would be helped them. But the problem was most of the students had no confidence to speak English. It is commonly understood that students' lack of confidence usually occurs when students realize that their conversation partners have not understood them or when they do not understand other

speakers. In this situation, they would rather keep silent while others do talking showing that the students are lack of confidence. It can be seen in the interview below:

"Yes I do, sometimes I want to study by myself but I often feel not confidence with my speaking, because there are too many activities and I also scared of my senior.

Some problems that have explain had before gave the big contribution could create their new problems in learning English speaking. Because they felt that their ability in speaking was not good, so they have no believes that they actually can speak English clearly if they were in high confidence. It was the obligation of the English instructor especially to increase their confidence to speak English in front of the other people.

2.1.2.3 Lack of motivation

After the interviewing the cadets, it was found that there were some different reasons why they were not motivated to learn English speaking. They also said that the class made them bored and sleepy, because of that they had low motivation to learn English especially in speaking class. It can be seen in the interview below:

"My experience about Maritime English is excited to learn it, something new for me. Sometime I felt bored and sleepy, when I felt sleepy almost don't have motivation to study in learning English"

2.1.2.4 Fear of making mistake

Cadets explained that their fear of making mistakes in front of their classmates was the reason for not speaking in the class. It was noticed during the class observations and interview session that cadets' participation was very low. They always most quite when their friends speak English in discussion because they did know what they want to say. The Explanation above is also supported by the cadet's statement below:

"I like speaking English but I cannot write down the words that I said. Sometime fear make a mistake when I speak English because my friend will laugh me in front of them"

2.2 The factors causing English speaking difficulties

In the finding section, it shown that the cadets at Barombong Marine Polytechnic had some causing factors the speaking difficulties in learning English, especially Maritime English. There were some essential factors that contribute to the existence of these speaking difficulties and they as revealed by the class observation and interviews, these are internal factors, and external factors. Internal factors such as 1) anxiety, 2) lack of confidence, 3) lack of motivation, 4) fear make mistake, while external factors 5) environmental factor, and 6) Ineffective teaching strategy. The environmental factors can be divided into several aspect, there were, economic factor, social factor, instructor's factor, education system and facility factor. These are the explanation of each factors:

2.2.1   Internal factors

4.2.1.1 Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of tension, apprehension and nervousness with the situation of learning a foreign language, Horwitz et all (2001) in Juhana (2012:102). This statement appropriate with some cadets felt or faced, that the cadets nervous when speaking in front of the class and outside.

4.2.1.2 Lack of confidence

Burns and Joyce in Nunan (1999); Schwartz (2005); and Thornbury (2005) argue that psychological factors such as anxiety or shyness, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of mistakes are the factors commonly that hinder students from speaking. As like as the cadets command, that other problem is lack of confidence, they said that confidence is one of important factor when they speaking with other.

4.2.1.3 Lack of motivation

Cadets also said that the class make them bored and sleepy, because of that they had low motivation to learn English especially in speaking class.

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condition, Cadets also said that the class make them bored and sleepy, because of that they had too many physical activities in their cabin or barak.

4.2.1.4 Fear of making mistake

According Hieu (2011) and Zang (2006) cited in He and Chen (2010) explain that students feel afraid of the idea of making mistakes as they are worried that their friends will laugh at them and receive negative evaluations from their peers if they make mistake in speaking English. Students' fear of making mistakes in speaking English has been a common issue especially in an EFL context like in Indonesia. That statement also appropriate with the cadets felt, that the cadets said that the speaking difficulties are when they fear make mistake when using English. They are also felt fear with their senior when speaking English, which is when they make failure they will gave punishment.

4.2.2 External factors

These are the external factors causing the English speaking difficulties faced by cadets at Barombong Marine Polytechnic.

4.2.2.1 Environmental factor

The influence of family environment toward students' achievement in speaking ability has a strong relation between family attention and cadets' achievement. The researcher found the influence of family toward cadets speaking ability. Like economic factor, social factors are also extremely crucial to be influenced and met accordingly Salameh (2012, p.11) the social interaction of middle class children at home help them develop extensive vocabulary, while working class children, who are deprived of this opportunity for learning, have learning difficulty in formal situation. Next, the instructors also give a big impact in causing the cadets speaking English difficulties. Based on the cadet explanation in interview section, the instructors' factor refer to teaching style of the instructor. Actually, the teaching style that is used by the instructor influences the productivity of the cadets in class activity. Mostly the instructor still used old version or traditional method when teaching in the class, that it cannot stimulate the cadets to be active to participate in thee teaching and learning in speaking class. Moreover, the old version focus on grammatical aspect of English rather than speaking. Then, Education system and facilities factors are consisted of the usage of the IMO model course 3.17, any other

supporting facilities in teaching Maritime English that are provided at school, such as school building, classroom, libraries, laboratories, and recreational equipment among other. On the other hand, the school facilities are not considered by the instructors as a bid deal that caused students' speaking English problem. The ability and mastery of the cadets are not depending on the school facilities. Their ability and mastery is depended on their willingness to learn and speak, not just in school facilities.

4.2.2.2 Ineffective teaching strategy.

Data collected through class observation and interviews showed that instructors focus on teaching grammar points and vocabulary items rather than teaching speaking. Even when there was an opportunity to involve cadets in speaking, instructors just gave assignment without explanation and move on doing other tasks like reading and writing. Instructors attributed this to the shortage of time and their willingness to finish the lesson steps that do not include speaking as they claimed. The cadets also felt bored and not interest with the teaching style in the class, they felt so sleepy and not have motive to study in teaching and learning process. This statement appropriate with the Rababa'h (2005) pointed out that there are many factors that cause difficulties in speaking English among EFL learners. Some of these factors are related to the learners themselves, the teaching strategies, the curriculum, and the environment.

CONCLUSION

This research revealed that the English speaking difficulties faced by cadets at Barombong Marine Polytechnic, there are linguistic and nonlinguistic problems. These are several difficulties related to linguistic problems namely: lack of vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, lack of grammatical knowledge. In the other hand, there were nonlinguistic aspects, namely: anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistake.

Based on the findings and discussion above can be concluded , there are two main factors have been identified to have contributed to the cadets in English speaking difficulties, namely the internal and external factors. Internal factors are factors which come from the inside of the cadets. The internal factors found in this research included anxiety, self-confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes. External factors are the factors which come from the outside of cadets. The external factors involved Environmental factors and ineffective

teaching strategy. The environmental factors such as family background, economy factor, social factor, instructor factor, education system and facilities factors. The environmental factor also gained by the surrounding of the cadets such as pressure from senior, so many physical activities (drill, and ceremonial activity), beside that they rarely had partner for practicing their English speaking skill. The speaking difficulties can be solved by applying the solution that are gained from this research. The appropriate implementation of the solution can be divided into several parties. The parties are, the cadets, instructors and also the school. The solution can be applied by the cadets and can help the instructor to improve their speaking skills in order to be a good facilitator for the cadets learning activity especially in speaking class and remind for the school to providence the educational system and facilities in order to improving and support the training and learning in Maritime sector.

Based on that finding, the researcher gives some suggestions to the school, to the teacher, to the students and also to the next researcher. Some suggestions are, *first*, planning the new programs exactly the new English program as a solution of the difficulties especially in speaking English is a good alternative way to solve the cadets' speaking English problems. *Second,* giving motivation and stimulating cadets' opinions are very important to increase cadets' attention in leaching learning English especially speaking. *Third*, choosing the most interesting method that is suitable with the condition of class and the material given. So that, the cadets will not feel bored to accept the material from the teacher. *Fourth*, teachers need to be trained on how to integrate speaking to other skills and how to teach it communicatively. Their awareness of how language is acquired and learned should be raised. Moreover, teachers need to be enlightened on the different teaching strategies that may reduce their use of first language in their classes. *Fifth*, cadets should study hard and do more practice in speaking because it is the key to be able to communicate in English. Cadets should not be shy to express their ideas. Cadets should not be afraid of making mistakes. *Sixth*, as good researchers, they must be creative to make something new in the way of teaching learning process in order when they do the research to the students and teachers can take positive effect.

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