

# INVESTIGATING THE PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH SPEAKING OF THE STUDENTS OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL PROGRAM AT STAIN SAMARINDA

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## **Abstract:**

*This study investigated the students' ability, the problems and their reasons why they faced problems on English speaking. The triangulation of mixed methods was used in this study. The quantitative data gathered from the speaking test result by involving 130 students of Islamic Boarding School Program and the qualitative data gathered from the questionnaire and interview results from the selected students who meet the criteria. The findings showed that the students' ability was categorized low (62.93); the students have problems on grammar (42.20%), pronunciation (36.60%), vocabulary (35.20%), fluency (36%) and comprehension (34.40%); the students' reason in facing the problems on English speaking English were not only having limited knowledge on the components of speaking skills including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension but also they have own personal reasons, such as shy to perform speaking, lack of self confidence, lack of speaking practice, limited time given for preparation on English speaking test, the difficulties at using and understanding the speaking material found in the English textbook, the environment (dormitory) did not support them to acquire and use English as a medium daily interaction and they preferred to study the Islamic knowledge and Arabic than English. This study indicated that the students' ability should be increased by giving motivation and taught them with the suitable and interested English speaking materials.*

**Keywords:** speaking, speaking skill, students' problems

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

English speaking is the dominant language spoken by many people around the world in both of oral and written, because it is the lingua franca used for international communication to the all aspects of human life such as economic, culture, business, politic, administration, science and academia.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, English is considered to be taught in Indonesia as a foreign language both in religious and non-religious institution of education.

As the Islamic institution, STAIN Samarinda released the program of Islamic Boarding School in 2006. It is a program where students stay in the dormitory with Islamic teaching and scientific knowledge in order to master the science of Islamic religion and general knowledge such as mastery of foreign

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<sup>100</sup> Crystal, D., *English as a global language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

language.<sup>101</sup> One of the aims of this program in STAIN Samarinda is to train the new students' basic skill of English for a year.<sup>102</sup> As a result, the students can be able to speak English in their daily interaction. But in reality, most of the students in this program did not use it as their communication. They preferred to use *Bahasa Indonesia* and their local language than English as a medium of interaction. It is because of their speaking ability is unsatisfactory and they have problems on speaking English.

Based on the fact above, this study explored the students' ability, problems and reasons on English speaking. This study was hoped to give the contribution and reflection of English teaching especially speaking skill at Islamic Boarding School Program of Islamic Institution based on the students problems faced.

## B. REVIEW OF REALTED LITERATURE

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information.<sup>103</sup> The information can be shared using both verbal and non-verbal communication in a variety of contexts<sup>104</sup> in which it occurs based on the participants themselves, the collective experiences, the physical environment and the purpose for speaking.

In addition, speaking can be also defined as a productive skill.<sup>105</sup> It is the ability of participants to communicate and express their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and needs in order to make sense of them. In this case, the skills of speaking are needed namely accuracy, fluency and comprehensibility.<sup>106</sup> Further, he pointed out that the accuracy concerns on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation where participants can express and use the right words in the correct sequence of utterance and produce clear pronunciation. Then, the fluency deals with the ability of a person to speak fluently and accurately, meanwhile the comprehensibility is the ability to require and response the subject that is being spoken. As a result, the shared information can be shared and understood comprehensively.

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<sup>101</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Pembakuan sarana pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Direktorat jenderal kelembagaan Agama Islam DEPAG RI, 2005)

<sup>102</sup> Sari, I. M., *Structural error analysis on students writing ability in english of State Institute of Islamic Studies (STAIN) Samarinda in academic year 2007/2008 Undergraduate and unpublished Thesis*, (Samarinda: STAIN Samarinda, 2008)

<sup>103</sup> Florez, Marry A.C., *Improving adult English language learners' speaking skills*, (New York: National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 1999)

<sup>104</sup> Chaney, A.L. and Burke, T.L., *Teaching oral communication in grade K-8*, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1998)

<sup>105</sup> Brown, H.D., *Language assessment, principles and classroom practices*, (New York: Longman, 2004)

<sup>106</sup> Heaton, J.B., *Writing English language test*, (USA: Longman, 1989)

### C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used the triangulation of mixed methods design. It is the collection of quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously at understanding of a research problem.<sup>107</sup> The data were gained from the results of speaking test, questionnaire, and interview. The speaking test was used to obtain the quantitative data and to know the students' speaking ability. Meanwhile, the questionnaire and the interview were also used to get the qualitative data. The questionnaire was administrated and piloted to the 10 students who were not included in this study in order to get the feedback whether the instructions and the wording questions can be understood by the research participants. Their questions covered on the students' problems and their reasons in English speaking. Then, the speaking rubric presented by Haris that consists of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension were used to analyze the data of speaking test result.<sup>108</sup> While, the results of questionnaire and interview transcript were analyzed by using content analysis in which its procedures used the flow model data analysis of Miles and Huberman.<sup>109</sup>

The data were collected at the end of the even semester of academic year 2013/2014. The research participants were 130 students randomly selected from the students of Islamic Boarding School Program of STAIN Samarinda. They were asked to perform the speaking test based on the free and determined topics given. Then, the 15 students who were research participants and meet the criteria were selected to fulfill the questionnaire and to follow the interview in order to explore their problems and reasons on English speaking.

### D. FINDINGS

The findings of this study present some issues about the students' speaking, such as: students' speaking ability, students' speaking problems, and facing the speaking problems. The data presents below.

#### 1. The Students' Speaking Ability

To know the students' speaking ability, they were asked to perform the speaking test orally. Their performance was evaluated based on the five criteria namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Further, to get the trustworthiness the students' score, the three scorers were involved. Then, the scores were merged to get the average score of each student.

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<sup>107</sup> Creswell, J.W., *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluation quantitative and qualitative research*, (New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall, 2008)

<sup>108</sup> Harris, D.P., *Testing English as a second language*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), h. 84

<sup>109</sup> Miles, M.B and Huberman, A.M. , *Qualitative Data Analysis*, (London: Sage Publication, 1994)

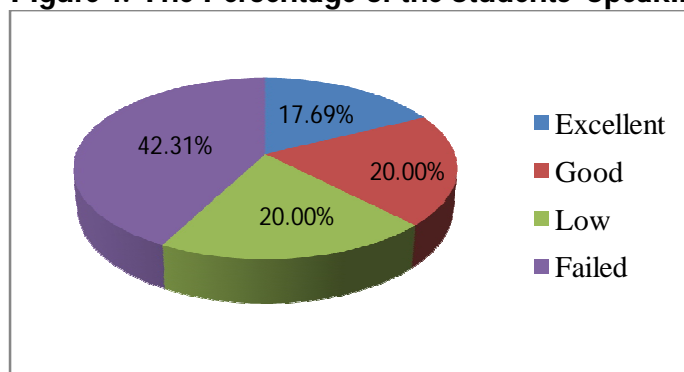
From the calculation result, the total of the students' score was 81.33 and the number of students was 130 students. So, the mean score of the students' speaking ability was 62.93. Furthermore, the description of the students' speaking score can be seen the following table:

**Table 1: The Frequency of the Students' Speaking Score**

Interval	Qualification	The number of the students
		Frequency
80 - 100	Excellent	23
70 - 79	Good	26
60 - 69	Low	26
0 - 59	Failed	55

Based on the table above, the percentage of the students' speaking ability can be seen below:

**Figure 1: The Percentage of the Students' Speaking Score**



Based on the table 1 and the figure 1, the students' speaking ability showed that 23 (17.69%) were excellent categorized, 26 (20%) were good and low categorized and 55 (42.31) were failed categorized.

In addition, the mean score of the students' ability based on each component of speaking skills as follow:

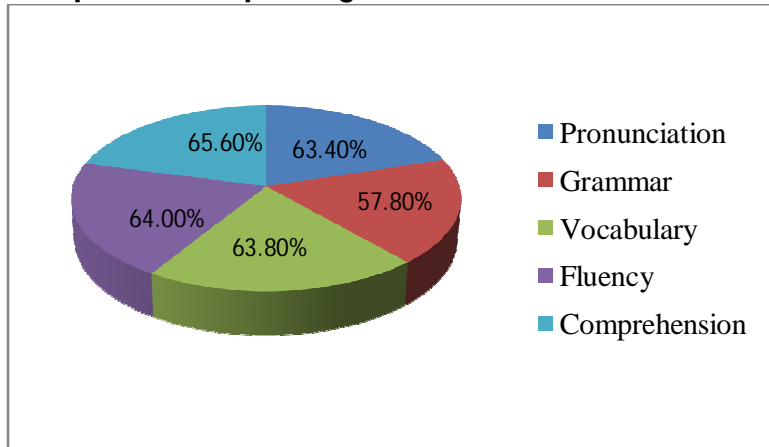
**Table 2: The Students' Speaking Ability**

The components of speaking skills	The scores of the students' speaking		
	Total	Mean	(%) The students' ability
Pronunciation (5)	412.00	3.17	63.40
Grammar (5)	375.67	2.89	57.80
Vocabulary (5)	415.00	3.19	63.80
Fluency (5)	416.00	3.20	64.00
Comprehension (5)	426.67	3.28	65.60

## Investigating the Problems of English Speaking of the Students

Further clear description, the percentage of the students' speaking ability for each component of speaking skills can be seen the following diagram:

**Figure 2: The Percentage of the Students' Speaking Ability Based on the Components of Speaking Skills**



From the table 2 and the figure 2, it can be stated that the students' ability for each component of speaking skill was almost similar about 60% (pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). It means that these components were low categorized. Meanwhile, the component of grammar was 57.80% or failed categorized.

### 2. The Students' Problems on Speaking Skills

To analyze the students' problems on speaking skills, the analysis focused on the five components of speaking skills. They were pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. The following was the table of the students' problems on speaking skills as follows:

**Table 3: The Students' Problems on Speaking Skills**

The elements of speaking	The students' ability (%)	The students' problem (%)
Pronunciation	63.40	36.60
Grammar	57.80	42.20
Vocabulary	63.80	36.20
Fluency	64.00	36.00
Comprehension	65.60	34.40

Seeing the table 3 above, it showed that the biggest problem of speaking skills faced by the students was grammar with 42.20%. Then, it followed by pronunciation with 36.60% which almost similar with vocabulary, 35.20%, fluency with 36.00% and comprehension with 34.40%. The finding above was crosschecked and triangulated with the results of questionnaire and interview. And the finding was relevant in which the students faced the problems on speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

### **3. The Students' Reasons in Facing the Problems on Speaking Skills**

To know the students' reasons in facing the problems of speaking skills, the data were gained from two sources such as questionnaire and interview transcript results. There were some reasons why the students faced the problems on speaking skills. They were limited knowledge on the components of speaking skills (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension), shy to perform speaking, dislike studying English since they preferred to study Islamic knowledge and Arabic, lack of self confidence, lack of speaking practice, limited time given for preparation when speaking test took place, the difficulties at using and understanding the speaking material found in the English textbook, and the environment (dormitory) did not support them to acquire and speak English.

## **E. DISCUSSION**

Based on the data analysis, it showed that the mean score of the students' speaking ability was 62.93. It indicated that their ability was categorized low. This finding was mostly same with their ability for each of speaking skills components such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension with the average percentage of 60% above although in grammar was only 50% above. Therefore, the students needed to increase their speaking ability.

Moreover, the students faced the problems in English speaking. The biggest problem was grammar with 42.20%. Then, it was followed by pronunciation with 36.60%, vocabulary with 36.20%, fluency with 36.00% and comprehension with 34.40%.

There were some reasons why the students faced the above problems. They were difficult to pronounce the English words correctly, arranging the words in good sentence grammatically, limited vocabulary to express their ideas; as a result, their speaking performance was not fluently and comprehensively. Additionally, they also have personal reasons, such as feeling ashamed at performing English speaking, interested at studying Islamic knowledge and Arabic rather than English, lack of self confidence, lack of speaking practice, limited time given for preparation when speaking test took place, the difficulties at using and understanding the speaking material found in the English

## Investigating the Problems of English Speaking of the Students

textbook, and the environment (dormitory) did not support them to acquire and speak English.

### **F. CONCLUSION**

The students' English speaking ability should be improved by motivating the students on how the important of English for global communication and interaction. Indeed, the students would interest and try to overcome their problems faced on English speaking skill.

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Sitti Hadijah

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