

INVESTIGATING LINGUISTICS FACTORS AFFECTING ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENT'S ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate linguistics factors affecting students in speaking English at Khadimul Ummah Islamic Boarding School, Bintan, Kepri. A total of ten students comprising 4 female students and 6 male students of senior high school participated in this research. Open-ended interviews were used to collect the data. The data in the forms of utterances were recorded. They were further analyzed and classified according to linguistic factors. The errors detected were further elaborated. Based on the data analysis, it was found that the majority of students commit errors of vocabulary followed by omission, addition and pronunciation. Thus, the most dominant linguistic factor in this case is vocabulary. It is suggested that the tutors of the English speaking program should provide feedbacks on students' errors in order to get students used to good grammar usage, proper vocabulary and pronunciation. In addition, introducing collocations to students will help them speak naturally and fluently.

Keywords: Speaking Problems, Islamic Boarding School, Speaking Anxiety

Introduction

Speaking in English has always posed a challenge for EFL learners especially in Indonesia. Some factors including linguistic and non-linguistic factors might contribute to this issue. Zhang (2009) posits that speaking remains the most difficult skill for the majority of English learners to master, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. According to Gan (2012), the most common problems encountered by students when speaking include inadequate vocabularies, complicated structure, inappropriate intonation and pronunciation, a lack of exposure to speaking English, and a lack of language curriculum development. This highlights that speaking skill requires intensive training and discipline. In the same vein, Dash (2012) and Floriasti (2013) posited that there are some problems that contribute to poor speaking performance. These include students' knowledge, students' motivation, students' linguistic knowledge, students' personality, and speaking materials. In terms of speaking materials, it goes without saying that the English curriculum in Indonesian schools are not emphasizing speaking but more of a reading comprehension.

Heriansyah (2012) added that the problems that students face when speaking English are lack of confidence to speak and fear of making errors or inaccuracies while speaking, as well as a lack of vocabulary and poor pronunciation. In the same vein, Megawati and Mandarani (2016) put forth that many students struggle with introducing themselves because they are shy, have limited ideas, afraid, and have a limited vocabulary. This is true to some extent and can be found in some of boarding based school across Indonesia. At formal schools, notably an Islamic Boarding Schools where the students are required stay in dorms and where speaking Arabic and English regulations are enforced, speaking English has remained a pressing problem for both male and female students. The use of English as the second language in oral communication is complex activities to be considered when teaching the English language (Al Nakhlah 2016).

There have been a number of research conducted on Islamic Boarding School students' speaking performance. To strengthen these previous findings, this study attempts to gain more evidences of the problems faced by Islamic Boarding School students with a locus focus in Bintan Island, Indonesia.

Based on the above explanation, this study formulates the following research questions: What types of linguistic factors affect students' speaking performance at Khadimul Ummah Islamic Boarding School, Bintan?

Literature Review

1. Speaking

According to Perez, Carreiras, and Duabeitia (2017), "speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information." In addition, (Ting-Toomey and Dorjee 2018) states that "speaking is a process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in various contexts".

Speaking is most commonly evaluated in second language acquisition using measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (Lambert & Kormos, 2014). As supported by Mazouzi (2013), the achievement accuracy of students should be equivalence because both fluency and this element help students develop their communicative ability. whereas accuracy shows the speaker's ability to choose the correct pattern of sentence based on conversation conditions. EFL learners have to focus on appropriate and comprehensive language forms that include grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Mazouzi, 2013).

Speaking is typically imitative and reproductive, allowing students to practice language and communication patterns (Becker & Roos, 2016). Better spoken communication should take place concurrently to improve the communicative environment (Talley & Hui-ling, 2014). It is also important to consider the significant types of interactions that cover the source, input of speaking, and feedback.

In EFL speaking, students' engagement in EFL oral practice is vital to developing their EFL speaking competence. It has been established that highly motivated learners engage actively in the classroom speaking tasks and activities, thus improving their English-language speaking more than those who are less motivated. (Bademcioglu et al., 2017; Chou, 2018; Uztosun, 2020).

2. Linguistic Factors

Levelt, 1989; Taylor, 2020), linguistic knowledge deficiencies will manifest as speech dissiliency. In line with this, a number of studies have been conducted to investigate the linguistic factors on EFL students' speaking performance. A study conducted by Amiruddin (2019) discovered that puzzling vowel insertion was the most commonly committed error compared to shifts in tense, word order, subject verb agreement, and case of referent. These errors were identified to have been caused by interlanguage factors. Another study conducted by Ramasari (2017) discovered that students' pronunciation errors mostly appeared in speaking for general communication classes. The students' dominant error made was a presystematic error. The errors students made were caused by three sources of students' competence errors in learning English as a foreign language. They were interference errors, intra-lingual errors, and developmental errors.

Another relevant study conducted by Phan et al. (2021) revealed that the English-majoring freshmen had some common errors and difficulties with vocabulary, pronunciation, and psychology in English speaking class. Supeno et al. (2021) who conducted research at an Islamic boarding school for students, Daarul Mughni Bogor, discovered that the linguistic factors influencing speaking difficulties encountered by students of an Islamic boarding school in Bogor are lack of vocabulary, grammar as a stumbling block, imperfectly learned pronunciation, lack of syntax knowledge, and lack of semantic understanding. Non-linguistic factors include a lack of motivation, a lack of confidence, anxiety or shyness, a fear of making mistakes, and a preference for using Arabic rather than English in daily conversation.

This study attempts to lay focus on the linguistic problems faced by Khadimul Ummah Islamic Boarding School students. So, based on what we know from past research, we can say that grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, addition, omission, word order, etc. are all linguistic factors that affect how well students speak.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate linguistics factors that contribute to influencing students' speaking fluency, so this study employed a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is used when little is known about a topic or phenomenon, and is utilized to comprehend people's experiences and express their point of view (Johnson & Christensen, 2005). This study employed qualitative research with an error analysis (EA) as the analysis

method. The samples for this study were ten students, comprising six male and four female students at grade twelfth of Khadimul Ummah Islamic Boarding School. Cresswell (2012) argued that research participants are the subjects who have the skills to convey the information that researchers need to answer the research question. One class decided to observe students' activities during the learning process based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the research. Participants were purposively selected. This is because of the purpose of the research, especially to investigate linguistics factors that affect students' English speaking performance.

The steps in doing an error analysis include: collecting samples of learner language; identifying the errors; describing the errors; explaining the errors; and evaluating and correcting the errors. Interviews were conducted with students who usually participated actively when classes were observed. The data interview was very important to find factors that affect students' speaking fluency. The answers of the students' interviews and their opinions were recorded with an audio recorder. The results from the interview were transcribed after the researcher listened to the recorded audio. Ten students were invited to have an interview. They were the students who did well in the speaking lesson. Each student got the same questions that had been prepared by the researcher. The process of the interview was recorded in order to help the interviewee relax during the answers. Data gained through interviews was carried out after the class observation. It also supported the results of research to provide more information. On the other hand, the interview finished and played an important role in validating the class observation data.

The data collected through various sources and instruments was analyzed in two parts. The first part was observation. Data from class observations was analyzed qualitatively by using descriptive analysis in detail, including every activity that happened in the class. It was analyzed based on the students' speaking activities when the process of observation occurs.

To analyze the qualitative data gained from the interview, the researcher would listen to the interview recording and transcribe all the words that were said by the interviewee. After all of the data was transcribed, the interview data was organized based on the research objectives. Relevant themes were selected and coded.

Results

Below are the descriptions of the students' errors made during the speaking session.

1. Sample Error on Word Choice

Lack of vocabulary, or the present research is coined as word choice, was regarded as a main obstacle for spoken communication by Indonesian English students. In the current study, lack of vocabulary was also encountered by some students in Khadimul Ummah Boarding School, Kepri. Below are some excerpts of students' sentences that are found erroneous and do not collocate with the words preceding and following them.

Table 4.1
Sample Error on Word Choice

Participant	Utterance Error	Suggested Utterance
S2	Mom teacher in,,	My Mom is a teacher at,,
S4	Motivation, I want happy my	My motivation is that I want to

	mom and my dad.	make my mom and my dad happy
S7	My Mom is a Customer	My Mom is a Cashier
S9	The lesson is delicious	The lesson is interesting
	He test the academic of Army	He goes to the Army Academy
S5	“Do you love living in a boarding school?” “Yes I love ”.	“Do you love living in a boarding school?” He replied “Yes, I do ”.
S1	“Can you tell me about your roommates?” “My friend is very happy ”	Can you tell me about your roommates? “My friends are kind ”
S3	“I want up my the derajat family”	“I want to <i>raise my family standard</i> of living”
S4	My mom is job in market.	My mom works at a market.
S6	My father dead.	My father has passed away.
S3	I speak English with little friends.	I speak English with my juniors.
S3	I have much friend	I have a lot of friends.
S7	one time in three months	Once time in three months
S8	Do you have younger brother? “Nothing”	Do you have younger brother? “ nobody ”.
S9	“Two weeks again” ...	“another two weeks”
S10	At Kijang.	in Kijang

Errors in word choice or vocabulary seem to be the most prevalent errors made by Islamic Boarding School students. This might be interfered with by their habit of memorizing a single piece of vocabulary instead of using a phrase. It can be seen from an example uttered by a student who said, "I speak English with little friends." The student might have intended to express that "he practices speaking English with his junior school mates." Another inappropriate vocabulary is when a student says, "The lesson is delicious." This is the most inappropriate vocabulary since the student might have translated the Indonesian word "enak" into "delicious". The intention that she had was "The lesson is interesting." It seems that this student fails to use and choose appropriate vocabulary based upon context.

In order to master appropriate word usage, it is suggested that EFL students memorize collocations instead of single words in a sentence. By that, it will enable students to use it in real life. The proper use of collocations is crucial to sounding like a native speaker (Ellis, 1996), yet this is not so easy for non-native speakers of a target language (Vasiljevic, 2008).

In order to enhance the fluency of phonological skills, the production of vocabulary and phonological skills are essential (Scarpino et al., 2019).

2. Sample Error on Pronunciation

Table 4.2
Sample Error on Pronunciation

Participant	Utterance Error	Suggested Utterance
S6	Six (SIKS)	Sick (SIK)
S7	PBI (Pi Bi Ai)	PBA (Pi Bi Ei)

Pronunciation is one of the key factors contributing to speaking fluency. Pronunciation can be considered a meaningful domain in creating meaning (Müller & Schmenk, 2017). In the present study, it was discovered that the most distinct errors in terms of pronunciation made by the students included the pronunciation of "six" instead of "sick". This was captured when the student was asked where one of their friends was. One student replied by saying, "He is six." This might seem trivial, yet crucial as the students are not fully aware of the pronunciation.

3. Sample Error on Addition

This error is indicated by an item that does not necessarily appear in a sentence.

Table 4.3
Sample Error on Addition

Participant	Utterance Error	Suggested Utterance
S3	I go to here, studied about	I go there, , study about
S7	I can to speak Arabic so English language	I can speak Arabic and English
S2	I cant to speak	I cannot speak

This particular error might be affected by students' inability to master auxiliary and infinitive in a sentence. One example from the recording reveals that a student said "I can speak Arabic" instead of "I can speak Arabic". Another unimportant word was also added when he said "English Language," where it is considered redundant as "English" has the meaning of "*Bahasa Inggris*" in Indonesian.

4. Sample Error on Omission

Omission errors are indicated by missing an item that should appear in a speech. In short, an omission is the lack of form or grammar that is supposed to be in the sentence. Still, the students leave it out. For example, they leave out the article, verb, helping verb, preposition, punctuation, possessive case, object, and subject (Helmanda et al., 2018).

Table 4
Sample Error on Omission

Participant	Utterance Error	Suggested Utterance
S3	Be fisherman'	a fisherman
S2	My Mom uh there is little shop	My Mom runs a little shop
S9	My name is Ismail, I from class 5	My name is Ismail, I am at grade 5
S10	In morning.	In the morning.
S2	My friend just a good attitude, so smart,	My friend has good attitude and are smart

This type of error can be seen from the conversation between the student and the researcher where the researcher asked what the student's parents' occupation was. The student replied by saying "be a fisherman" instead of "a fisherman". The student should have added an article "a" in this sentence. Another example can be observed when the student says, "My Mom, there is a little shop." This sentence lacks a verb. "A little shop" should be capitalized with the verb "run".

It has been shown that the students at Khadimul Ummah Kepri seem hesitant when it comes to speaking English. This might be caused by a lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of practice and use of real-life English speaking utterances. These problems can be solved by giving some alternative solutions, such as giving different words in different contexts and settings, giving collocations instead of single words in speaking practice. In addition to that, it is important to note that an alternative question should also be taught to students. For example, the majority of male students didn't seem to understand the question "what do your parents do?" They would understand if the question was simplified into "What are the jobs of your parents?"

Some students are motivated, while others are not. One of the reasons is that students claim that English pronunciation is more difficult than Arabic. Thus, a few of them claim to prefer Arabic to English. This finding is in line with the finding that, gender wise, it was interestingly discovered that female students are more confident when replying to the interviewer's questions. They seem to make fewer mistakes in comparison with their male counterparts. This might be triggered by the fact that female students have better study habits than males. Some male students seem to hesitate before speaking. They tend to stop in the middle of conversation to think of the appropriate vocabulary. It was also found that male students are poor at listening skills.

Aftat (2008) suggests that to encourage the students' motivation, teachers should provide constant encouragement and support, as well as ask questions that reveal the basis of the students' problems. Doing this becomes very important as it encourages a feeling of security and welcome in their learning.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that all students frequently do English speaking practice, it was found that the majority of students make mistakes in terms of word choice, pronunciation, addition, and omission. It is suggested that teachers give students a variety of colloquial expressions and teach collocations instead of teaching one single vocabulary and making more than one example sentence in different contexts. It is known that a word in English has multiple meanings. Therefore, giving them a greater variety of collocation expressions would get them accustomed to using more natural expressions in daily conversations.

This research was conducted on a limited number of students at one particular Islamic boarding school. It is suggested that further research be conducted on a wider sample of students from different schools so that more diverse results can be gathered.

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