

## **An Analysis of Students' English Speaking Skills at Coastal Schools of Bengkulu City, Indonesia**

Ildi Kurniawan<sup>a\*</sup>, Syafrizal Sabaruddin<sup>a</sup>, Fernandita Gusweni J<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of English Education, Bengkulu University  
\*Email: ildikurniawan@unib.ac.id

### **Abstract**

This research was not only aimed at describing students' speaking skills in English especially in coastal areas of Bengkulu city, Indonesia, but also investigating the factors which influenced the skills. The mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) was used in this research. Meanwhile, the subjects of the research were 159 students (males and females) in total coming from three different schools. The data were obtained through recording by using camera, handycam and also by delivering a questionnaire. The collected data were then analyzed by using Interactive Model namely data reduction, data display, and drawing a conclusion. The findings show that the students' speaking skills in English were in moderate category in which grammar, vocabulary and fluency became main problems for them in studying English speaking skills. In addition, lack of practice and confidence were believed positively as a trigger for those problems.

**Keywords:** *Analysis; English Student, Speaking Skills, Coastal Schools*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English speaking skills are very important to master in this era because almost nations in the world use English as an effective device of international communication (Morozova, 2013). Hence, some people try to learn this skill to get its advantages especially in information, communication and technology. As consequence, for those who do not have any skills, including English, they may probably have difficulties to achieve their best dream in their life. Therefore, the students should have this skill including coastal students whose their schools located in the coastal areas of Bengkulu City.

Bengkulu City has the longest beach in Sumatra Island with the length of its beach reach out 10 kilometres away. Therefore, one of the local government programs is developing its potential areas as one of international destinations in tourism object. However, the biggest challenge faced by this city dealing with this program is lack of skillful human resources who work for it. As noted by BPS Bengkulu 2016, the index of human development in Bengkulu province is still low (68.06) and it is under national human development rate by 68.90 in the same year or one of the provinces who has the lowest index among other province in Indonesia. On the other hand,

to be successful as a tourism object, Bengkulu City should have full support from its coastal society, including students as young generation. They will actively participate if they have enough skill particularly in language communication. What language skills needed by those coastal students are interpersonal and transactional English speaking skills which are going to be used to guide tourists, to serve the guests, to promote tourism objects, and others dealing with tourism matters. Therefore, government through schools, for example, should provide the coastal students with knowledge and skill in tourism to support their program.

Unfortunately, the programs done government to coastal community lately just concerned on fisherman's welfare (Ticaolu,2013; Rahman dan Yusuf, 2015; Yuliarso,et.al, 2009; Indarti dan Wardana, 2013). In addition, research on students' speaking skill at coastal school has never done before while the coastal itself has been decided by this city as strategic policy of the local government.

Considering the logical reason above, this research was conducted to answer the research questions namely how do the coastal students's English speaking skill look like? and what factors can affect the the coastal students's English speaking skill?. Moreover, the expected result from this research was firstly to enrich knowledge especially in speaking skill and secondly, it could be a reference for stakeholders in deciding policy for coastal societies and schools.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1. Speaking Skill**

In this competition era, domestic and international companies demand skillful person for their workers. Therefore, to get the skillful workers, they give special requirements for English competence particularly in speaking and writing skill for applicants who wish to work in their companies. It is implied that the applicants who can fulfill all requirements have big chance to be accepted as their employees there. In advanced countries, like western countries, test performance such as speaking test has become important parts in recruiting their new workers or in selecting students who want to enter a university. They interview their candidate workers with English

to see their language competence. As a result, it is important for schoolsto prepare a curriculum which emphasizes on the importance of English in their medium of instruction.

Moreover, Khan (2013) and Morozova (2013) explained that English skill has been world's need which was not only on economy field but also on intellectual, social, and international relation matter. Thus, it is very significant skill for students to master. However, this skill is not easy to learn. It is proved from experiences of the researcher in teaching English in classroom which show that many students get stuck when speaking English. Besides, they have also other problems like lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, too much anxiety and unconfidence, and low motivation (Morozova, 2013; Trent, 2009; Gardner, 1959).

Those difficulties appear in almost student's life due to the English skill itself is complex which need extra effort especially for non-native English students (Sakale, 2012). Therefore, It needs attention from teacher and students as well concerning their role in tackling this issue.

## **2. English Speaking Functions**

According to Richards (1996), there are at least 3 main functions of speaking skill namely speaking as interaction, speaking as transaction and speaking as performance. Moreover, based on the criteria of speaking, speaking as interaction means that conversation is done as a form of social interaction with surrounding people, for example when meeting new people, people usually greet them. The characteristics of this conversation is more friendship, the situation can be formal and informal.

On the other hand, speaking as an transaction means that conversation which is conducted to deliver message as a focus. Therefore, this type of speaking needs special skills dealing with ability to ask question, give a clarification, give a confirmation, give a suggestion and other language function expressions. Finally, speaking as performance means that speaking for public situation such giving a speech, welcoming speech, giving announcement and others. Those three types of speaking are related to each other and it is valuable for teachers to teach their students with those speaking forms so that they will have skill to speak English appropriately based on the context.

### **3. Teacher and Student's Role in Speaking Class**

Teacher holds important roles towards students' askill in speaking skills including their motivaation to speak because they have control both on material contents which are needed by students and on learning process (Nation and Newton, 2009). Among the teachers'roles, facilitator function can be considered as the most significant function because they have to facillitate their students with instruction, guidance which support the student's learning activity in class. Another role is as counselor in which teacher as person who help their students' problem in learning through consultation and sharing activity. Then, teacher can be authoritative resource who become as a ssource of information for students (Voller, 1997)

In addition, in speaking class, the teacher has another role that is teaching learning strategy for English speaking when students are reluctant to speak or when they are not interested in speaking at all (Talley and Ling, 2014). One of the best learning strategy for speaking as proposed by Richard dan Amato (1996), they are firstly, thinking about what you are going to say, secondly thinking about what tense or grammar will be used while speaking but don't too much, thirdly don't be afraid of making mistakes since it is normal for language learners, and finally using repetition, gestur, synonym, definition if you do not understand with something you mean.

At the beginning, student's role is just follow what teacher's instruction (dependent learners). However, for now, they should be independent or autonomous learner or even interdependent learners which mean they have to work together with their pairs or teachers(Talley and Ling, 2014). More specifically, in speaking class, students' roles (Nunan, 1999) are listeners performers, dan interactors. As a listener, the student will listen the conversation at first and the she/he will give a respond in form of opinion so that that she/he will get involved in the conversation. Another role of student is negotiator between himself/herself and learning object/learning process. This negotiation is needed by students in speaking class as the way to understand each idea or expression coming up from the conversation.

### **4. Bengkulu City at Glance**

Bengkulu City is the capital of Bengkulu Province located on the west coast of Sumatra Island which is directly opposite to Indian Ocean and

geographically located between 3045 - 3059 South Latitude and 102 ° 14 ' - 102 ° 22' East Longitude with an area of 539.3 km<sup>2</sup> consisting of land area 151.7 km<sup>2</sup> and sea area 387,6 km<sup>2</sup>. While the number of fishermen of Bengkulu city is 3,735 people spread from the Pantai Bengkulu Bengkulu to Pulau Bai.

Tabel 1. Areas of Bengkulu City

<b>Nama</b>	<b>Wide (Km<sup>2</sup>)</b>
a. Mainland	151,7
b. Sea 12 Miles from Land	113,2736
c. Sea	
1) Territorial Sea	113,2736
2) Sea of Exclusive Economic Zone	5663,68
3) Laut Nusantara	5663,68

(Source: Marine and Fishery Service of Bengkulu City 2012)

As shown in table 1 on the area of Bengkulu City, it turns out that the ocean area is more than 2 times the land area. This means that the biggest resource of Bengkulu City is a coastal with all the natural wealth of the sea in it. However the vast natural resources will gradually run out and so will the management to be done would require skilled human resources in the field of technology, transportation, infrastructure and communication.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Research design**

This research was mixed qualitative-quantitative research. This mixed method was intended to understand the social situation in depth to find patterns, hypotheses and theories. Therefore the purpose of the research is to answer the question of how to mapping students 'English speaking skills in the coastal areas of Bengkulu City and what factors influence the students' speaking skills.

### **2. Place and Subject of the Research**

This research was conducted in the schools which were located in the coastal area of Bengkulu city consisting of SMAN 8 Kota Bengkulu, SMAN 6 Kota Bengkulu, SMAN 1 Kota Bengkulu and SMAN 7 Plus Bengkulu City. The subject of this research was the students of grade 1 and 2 in the schools and the subject was selected by purposive sample technique and snowball sampling technique

### **3. Research Instruments**

The instrument of this research is an English speaking test where students were given the opportunity to speak in English with a duration of 1-5 minutes. The test materials were self-introduction and introduce someone. As long as the students appear to speak English, they were judged by two raters. Assessment criteria are categorized into several components of the assessment with a score of 1-3 for each component (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, understanding and fluency). Score 1 is the lowest score and 3 is the highest score.

### **4. Data collection technique**

The data collection technique used in this research was done by using participatory observation and structured interview. In a participatory observation process, the observed subjects were the students who were learning English in the classroom and the goal was to see data about their speaking skills in the classroom. Meanwhile structured interview was used to get in-depth data related to speaking skills as well as the factors that influence the speaking skills. This interview was not only aimed at the students but also the teachers of their English. The observation sheets and interview guides related to the data collection was made in accordance with Brown's English language proficiency assessment guidelines (2004) which included grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, understanding and fluency components.

### **5. Data analysis technique**

In this research, data analysis techniques to be used are data analysis using Interactive Model (Miles and Huberman, 1984), which include ; a) data reduction; at this stage the researcher reduced the data that summarized the data obtained, chose the main things about the data, focused on the important data, searched for themes and patterns of data obtained. In the process, researchers also discussed with experts to discuss the findings. b) display data; after the data was reduced, the researcher displayed the data in the form of brief description, chart, table and relationship between categories so it is easy to understand. c) conclusion drawing / verification: the last step was the researchers draw the conclusions and verification that was a new finding that described the results of research.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

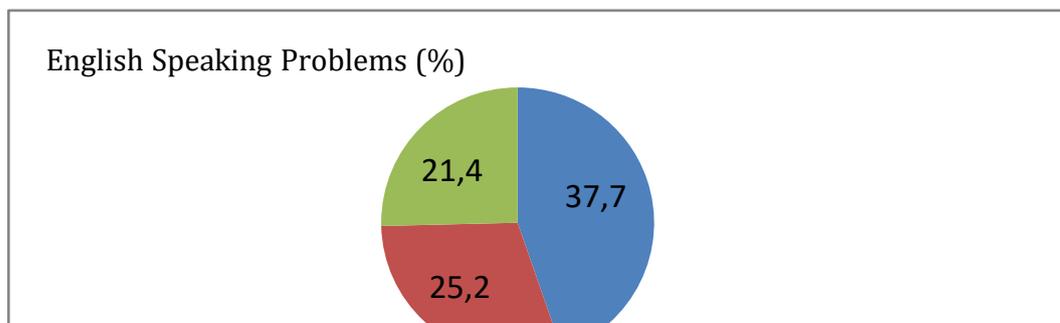
a. The number of XI students in this study were 159 people with the following details.

Nama Sekolah	Jumlah siswa per jurusan		Jumlah total
	XI IPA	XI IPS	
SMAN 1 Kota Bengkulu	26	22	48
SMAN 6 Kota Bengkulu	24	31	55
SMAN 7 Plus Kota Bengkulu	27	29	56
Jumlah	77	82	<b>159</b>

b. Distribution of English speaking skills in general based on assessment indicators

Speaking Indicators	Assessment Category		
	Poor	Moderate	Good
Grammar	60	90	9
Vocabulary	34	115	10
Pronunciation	19	131	9
Understanding	23	126	10
Fluency	40	101	18

c. Percentages of difficulties faced by students in speaking English



d. Distribution of English speaking ability according to School by the number of students.

### 1. SMAN 7 Kota Bengkulu

#### A. XI IPS (Social Science)

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Understanding	Fluency
Poor (1)	12	6	7	4	8
Moderate (2)	17	23	22	25	21
Good (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29	29	29	29	29

B. XI IPA (Natural Science)

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Understanding	Fluency
Poor (1)	7	2	4	0	1
Moderate (2)	16	20	18	26	16
Good (3)	4	5	5	1	10
Total	27	27	27	27	27

**2. SMAN 6 Kota Bengkulu**

A. XI IPS (Social Science)

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Understanding	Fluency
Poor (1)	2	6	0	8	9
Moderate (2)	20	17	22	14	13
Good (3)	2	1	2	2	2
Total	24	24	24	24	24

B. XI IPA (Natural Science)

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Understanding	Fluency
Poor (1)	9	4	0	4	0
Moderate (2)	19	23	29	20	25
Good (3)	3	4	2	7	6
Total	31	31	31	31	31

**3. SMAN 1 Kota Bengkulu**

A. XI IPS (Social Science)

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Understanding	Fluency
Poor (1)	14	11	6	6	13
Moderate (2)	8	11	16	16	9
Good (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	22	22	22	22	22

B. XI IPA (Natural Science)

	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Understanding	Fluency
Poor (1)	16	5	2	1	9
Moderate (2)	10	21	24	25	17
Good (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	26	26	26	26	26

## Discussion

From the results of the data analysis above, it can be concluded that firstly general ability of students in coastal areas in speaking English is categorized into moderate. This is due to their low ability to use proper grammar in speaking English. Although some experts explain that in the ability to speak, students are not required to use good grammar and correctness. They further explained that what is important in the English conversation is that the other person understands the message conveyed by the English speaker. So essentially, the meaning of the message is far more important than the grammar. However, there are also some experts who essentially conclude that grammar is important because it will affect the meaning of what is delivered.

The listener or the other person will better understand the meaning of the message when the tenses are correct and in accordance with the context in question. For example, when someone talks about his past, it is desirable that the speaker uses the past tense as his tenses. The awareness of how the rules of grammar leads students to the correct use of English grammatically and syntactically so that the language spoken by the speaker is appropriate (Hemerka, 2009).

The point is that speaking English well and correctly is important, regardless of whether students should use grammatical context or not. However, if they follow a speech test, then the assessment of the importance of grammar skills is inevitable as almost all English speaking tests make this skill a determinant of whether or not a person is graduating in speaking English.

Furthermore, the second problem commonly faced by students is the problem of fluency (Smoothness), of the total students, only about 11.3% are categorized as having fluency in speaking English. This can be caused by several factors such as poor vocabulary mastery. The amount of vocabulary that a student possesses affects his fluency in speaking English. Surely with a little vocabulary, he will stammer when speaking English. In addition, the influence of mother tongue also determine the fluency of students in speaking a foreign language. The English position itself in the school curriculum is a foreign language and certainly not as their first language so it also affects the use of English itself in their lives. Lack of exercise due to

environmental factors that do not support cause the student is difficult to fluent in speaking English.

In addition, psychological factors when speaking English in front of the class or recorded while speaking also determine the fluency of speaking students in English. Feelings of anxiety, fear, or lack of self-confidence cause students do not focus on what they say when speaking English. The inability to control the psychological condition causes the student to forget the idea or words, the language rules to be spoken. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to train the students so that they are accustomed to perform in front so that the feelings of anxiety, fear or lack of confidence can be overcome through activities that support created conditions in which students have the opportunity to appear in public.

English vocabulary is very important because without vocabulary then the students will be difficult to convey ideas or thoughts that exist in their brains. Therefore, the lack of vocabulary exposure will result in their incompleteness when told to speak. This lack of vocabulary can be caused by several causes. First, the English word pronunciation itself is difficult and different from the pronunciation according to their mother tongue version. This pronunciation difference causes the students to be lazy to learn the English vocabulary so that the amount of vocabulary was not increased. Second, one English word has many meanings and its use sometimes must be contextual, and this also causes students to be confused when they should use the word.

While the basic skills they must possess in English speaking skills are pronunciation and understanding of the opponent speaker. Apparently English pronunciation is not a big problem for high school students in the coastal city of Bengkulu. This may be influenced by the current technological developments in which each student has a wide opportunity to be actively involved in the Internet world. It cannot be denied that students generally like to listen to music either online or offline through their internet, mobile phone, tablet, or laptop network. Technological advances in the field of music and film have influenced indirectly exposure of students in learning English, especially in terms of pronunciation and understanding in English.

The abundance of free internet sites allows students to listen to English songs indefinitely with lyrics at the same time. The habits of listening to English songs or movies affect their English speaking style and this will also help them understand what the singer has to say in the song they hear. So it is no wonder students now tend to understand when someone speaks in English but they will have difficulty in answering or responding in English because what they often do so far is a passive English activity only.

### **Implication**

In general, the problems often faced by foreign language learners in speaking classes are simple wording, difficulty expressing ideas or thoughts, speaking slowly, stopping, and thinking of appropriate vocabulary, shy and hesitant, short responses, yes and no answer and no ideas (Hemerka, 2009)

However, especially for grammaris, it is not only a problem faced by students who are in the coastal city of Bengkulu, this problem also worldwide. For example at an international school in Australia (precisely in Surry Hill, Sydney), a common problem faced by them is writing academic; writing using good and correct grammar (Nguyen, 2010). In fact, many students who study English have a limited exposure in learning the grammar and vocabulary of English even though they are very master other fields(Kurzwell Educational System, 2004).

The inability of a person to speak in English is not only due to weak grammar or vocabulary mastery, but also due to their inability to use the grammar or vocabulary in appropriate situations. This means that students may have sufficient knowledge (competence) about grammar or vocabulary, but in the stage of action (performance) they often fail to use it. In short, in speaking, one is not only required to have a good linguistic competence but also linguistic performance such as politeness, style, originality, and others (Hemerka, 2009).

While the problems associated with vocabulary mastery is due to the lack of opportunities students read English reading. This also results in their low comprehension when understanding English lessons both orally and in writing. Therefore, the solution that can be done is to ask the students to keep active in learning the academic and nonacademic English (Kurzwell Educational System, 2004). Meanwhile, solutions that can be given in overcoming

students' difficulties in learning English include students being asked to read various types of texts using skimming and scanning techniques, as well as being given expertise in English language presentations, writing, listening and recording important points on reading (Nguyen, 2010). In addition, today many websites that offer lessons online and the use of the Internet as a medium of communication between teachers and students is an important part of the development of technology in education. In addition, many software that can be used in an effort to increase student exposure in learning English, for example Kurzwell 3000 that can help students in improving the English language skills (Kurzwell Educational System, 2004)

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

It can be concluded that in general the result of mapping ability to speak English in school in coastal area of Bengkulu city included in medium category (moderate) which means ability of student still in fair stage. Furthermore, from the analysis results found that there are weaknesses and strengths of students; they first experience difficulties in terms of grammar, fluency and vocabulary. However, they also have the power of pronunciation to speak English and at the same time have a good understanding when they are asked a question, what they answer in sync with the intent of the question. In response to these findings, it is advisable to conduct further research by pressing on ways or strategies to overcome the weaknesses and shortcomings of students in English speaking classes at other schools in Bengkulu province.

## **REFERENCES**

- Gardner R.C., Gardner and Lambert. 1959. Fifty years and counting. *Presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics, Ottawa.*
- Hemerka, V. 2009. Low speaking performance in learners of English. Thesis. Masaryk University Brno, Faculty of Education, Departement of English Language Literature.
- Kurzwell Educational System, 2004. Using technology as a solution for English language learners in higher education. Kurzwell Educational System, Inc.

- Miles, Matthew B and Huberman Michael A. 1984. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*. Sage Publication. Beverly Hills, London.
- Morozova, Yulia . 2013. Methods of Enhancing Speaking Skills of Elementary Level Students. *Translation Journal*. 2013. Volume 17.No. 1
- Nation, I.S.P and Newton, J. 2009. *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*. New York: Routledge.
- Nguyen, T.M.P. 2010. EAP and LLNP students: common problems and startegies. *English Language Teaching Journal*. Vol.3 No.2;
- Nunan, D. 1999. *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Richard-Amato, P.A. 1996. *Making It Happen: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom: From Theory to Practice*. White Plain, N.Y: Longman.
- S akale, Sana. Rethinking Speaking Skills in EFL (English as Foreign Language) Setting. *Sino- US English Teaching Journal*. 2012. Vol 9. No. 4 April 2012 pp 1100-1111
- Talley, Paul C & and Hu-Ling, Tu. 2014. Implicit and Explicit Teaching English Speaking in the EFL Classroom. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*..Vol 4. No.6 April 2014. Pp 38-42.
- Trent, J. 2009. Enhancing oral participation across the curriculum: Some lessons from the EAP classroom. *Asian EFL Journal*. Volume 11 No.1.pp 256-270.
- Voller, P. 1997. Does the teacher have a role in autonomous language learning? In P. Bearson & P.Voller (Eds). *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning* (New York: Cambridge University Press. (pp: 145-167)