STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON SPEAKING IN ENGLISH EXTRA CLASS: A DESCRIPTIVE QUALITATIVE STUDY

Urip Sulistiyo
usulis2012@gmail.com
Syofranita Astini
Jambi University, Indonesia

Abstract: The purpose of this research was to explore students’ perspectives on speaking in English extra class provided for the second year of senior high school students at one private senior high school in Jambi City. Data for this study were collected through a demographic questionnaire and in-depth interviews with ten students. The data were analyzed using within-case and cross-case displays and analysis. There were four major themes obtained from the interview. The first theme was related to students’ perspectives on English extra class. The second theme was related to the students’ perspective on speaking in the English extra class. Then, the third theme was related to the activities that were provided by the English extra class. The last theme was related to the factors that handicap students to speak English. The implication of this research is as a source of information for the schools and teachers about the other ways to improve students speaking skill it is by having English extra class.

Keywords: Students’ Perspectives, English Extra Class and Case Study

INTRODUCTION

One of the ways to see whether a person is good or not in ‘using’ a language is by seeing the way he or she speaks. Someone may say she or he is good at a language especially in writing, listening or reading skill but if that person has problems in speaking, no one believes she or he is really good at that language. That is why speaking is recognized as the hardest skill among the four. Additionally Zhang (2009) stated that speaking is also a great challenge for foreign language learners and students must master several difficult micro skills, including the pronunciation of unfamiliar phonemes, the correct placement of stress and intonation, and the appropriate use of formal and informal expressions.

considering the ‘challenges’ and the importances of speaking skill, many schools provide extra times for the students to learn English in order to improve their students’ speaking skill. There are some ways in doing so, the most well known one is by having English club. Mostly the English club is provided for students after school time and the students who join it usually only they who have interest in learning English. In the other side, there is another way to increase students’ speaking skill beside English Club, it is English extra class as provided by one of private vocational senior high schools in Jambi province, Indonesia.

The English extra class is a compulsory subject, just the same as an English subject. If in English subject a teacher needs to teach grammar, texts and some expressions and so forth, in this English extra class the teachers emphasizes more on increasing the students’ speaking skill. Thus, the activity that is mostly conducted in this English extra class is conversations. The purpose is to give the students extra times to practice their English speaking skill. The existence of this English extra class is as a proof that this private vocational senior high school has more efforts to increase their students’ speaking skill. Even though this school has already provided an extra class but as the matter of fact, most of students in this school still have difficulties in their speaking skill. This assumption is based on some observations done by the researcher when she conducted her teaching practicum in this private vocational senior high school.

Relating to the fact above, actually there have been many studies conducted related to problems that handicap students in increasing their speaking skill. The previous research had tried to find the solution of it (Tâm, 2012; Eman, Aly and Diyyab, 2013). As the result, there are many ways to increase students’ speaking skill but no data related to English extra class found. Based on it, this research wanted to see how the use of English extra class in increasing students’ speaking skill.

METHOD

This research used qualitative research with a case study approach to describe students’ perspective on speaking in English extra class and their speaking problems as well. Cresswell (2007) stated that case study involves the research of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bound system. Yin (2003) stated a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the research is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the research; (c) you want to cover
contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under research; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

In collecting data, this research used demographic questionnaires and interviews. Those demographic questionnaires and interviews were constructed in Bahasa to minimize the risk of participants’ misunderstanding. The demographic questionnaires were used to collect data about participants’ age, gender, level of education, academic year, first language used and future career.

Beside demographic questionnaire this research also used interview as another instrument to collect data. Johnson and Christensen (2008) stated that qualitative interviews were also called in depth interviews because they can be used to obtain in-depth information about a participant’s thought, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivation and feeling about a topic. The interviews took place in an informal classroom with the students from this private vocational senior high school as the participants. Employing a semi-structured interview technique, whereby 25 questions had been prepared before the interview and some additional questions were asked on the spot. Each participant interviewed one time for about 20 until 40 minutes to investigate their perspectives on speaking in English extra class. All interviews were recorded using a smartphone with the consent of the participants and transcribed by the researcher.

After conducting the interviews then data were analyzed. In analysing the data the researcher first transcribed them manually then the researcher made coding. In the final step of analysing the data, the researcher made theme and subtheme.

Several measures were taken to insure the trustworthiness of the data collected. To establish the “trustworthiness”, (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the research or to verify the accuracy of data, findings, and interpretations (Creswell, 1998), the researcher did following procedures. The researcher transcribed the interviews and after that the researcher gave them back to the participants that have been interviewed to make sure what they had said are original.

The researcher used a convenience sampling in this research. Johnson and Christensen (2008) stated that researcher use convenience sampling when they include in their sample people who are available or volunteer or can be easily recruited and are willing to participate in the research study. When convenience sample are used, it is especially important that the researchers describe the characteristic of the people participating in their research studies (p.238). The research focused on students with two years of learning English in extra class in order to obtain their opinions regarding their speaking activities. Dornyei (2007) stated that the researcher selected participants whose experiences were typical with regard to the research focus. The reasons to select the students in the second grade because the researcher thought the students in this grade had more experiences in learning English in extra class and because of that fact they were supposed to be more skillful in English speaking ability rather than the students in first grade. The consideration to choose the students in this private senior high school in this research because the students in this school had learned speaking not only in English class as general but also English in extra class. The participants of the research were 10 students from this private vocational senior high school with the average age 17 years old.

FINDINGS

Participants’ Demographic Information

There were 10 participants in this research. They were 6 males and 4 females. Most of the participants admitted that the ability of speaking skill was important for them in this new era but they still had many problems during the speaking practice.

Interview Result

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<th>Themes related to the factors that handicap second year of senior high school students to speak English</th>
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Students’ perspectives on English extra class

Within this first point of the table above there were four major themes: (1) it is necessary to improve speaking skill, (2) necessary as additional lesson beside English class as usual, (3) giving chance for the low-level students, (4) useless because the students are feeling bored.

It is necessary to improve speaking skill

In this research we were talking about English extra class that provided a place for the students to practice their English and as the interview result some participants stated that the English extra class is necessary. Three participants thought that English extra class was necessary because in their perspectives on English extra class could improve their English speaking skill. From the data above seems like implicitly the English extra class actually was a place for them to learn more about English especially in speaking skill.

Necessary as an additional lesson beside English class as usual

The other perspectives about English extra class are still necessary, actually but they were stated it in different reasons. They said it is also good as additional lesson of English that has been a compulsory subject in the and is very helping and very necessary.

Giving chance for the low-level students

Some other participants had different perspectives on English extra class. From those statements above we could see that actually English extra class was needed for the students to practice their English speaking skill. And the English extra class was not only needed for the high-level students but also for the low-level ones.

Useless because the students are feeling bored

Interestingly, even tough most of the participants stated that English extra class had many positive “sides” but in fact, while the other participants had positive feelings toward the English extra class, there was one participant had different point of view toward the English extra class. This participant was in the negative side of the English extra class itself and it showed that even tough English extra class actually had tried to help students speaking skill but it still had a “spot” in one of participant’s point of view.

Students’ Perspective on Speaking in the English Extra Class

Speaking skill is improved by practices in the English extra class

Most of the participants in this research stated that their English speaking ability is improved by the English extra class. Tâm (2012) found in his research is quite same with one of the findings in this research, almost all of the participants in this research also stated that oral presentation (practice) can help them to improve their speaking skill.

Two statements explained clearly in how English extra class could help them in improving their English speaking skill, whereas the way to improve it was by having many practice whether it is practice to peers or to the teacher. The other perspective about speaking that were founded in the interview results were still about the English extra class that help participants’ English speaking ability to be improved.

Activities Provided by the English Extra Class

Activities are the most important factors that can influence or encourage someone in learning something (in this case English speaking learning). Many activities can be used in order to trigger someone to speak. Based on a source in brief, EFL teachers should create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that promote oral language.

Practicing conversation by having peer performance

Relating to the interview result of this research that related to the activities provided by the English extra class the participants mentioned many activities that the English extra class provided for them, the first point is about practicing conversation by having peer performance
Five from ten participants in this research said that they usually had conversation or dialog practices when they were studying in English extra class.

**Making conversation by changing the theme**

The other participants still mention that what they did when studying in English extra class was dealing with the conversation but in this case the two of participants stated it in different ways, they stated the activity was still about making conversation but one of the participants in this research stated that sometimes they were asked to make a group, and then they were asked to make conversation in that group or in other word the students were asked to work in group.

**Playing games that trigger students to speak**

Not only providing more skill in practicing or making conversation in order to improve students’ speaking skill but also the other activities that the students usually did in English extra class was playing games and of course games that were provided were games that can trigger the students to speak in English.

**Learning language components**

If the previous explanations above mention the word “conversation” in interview when they were asked about the activities in English extra class, the rest of participants mentioned the other activities that they usually do or the teacher usually asked when teaching. The activities beside activities with conversation that mentioned by the participants were activities that related to language components such as learning grammar, vocabulary, constructing words or translating.

From all the participants’ responses, most of them stated that the English extra class more emphasized in learning speaking. And most of them stated that they learnt to speak by conversation whether it was practice making conversation or practicing the conversation itself. Not only by the conversation actually but also even if the teacher in English extra class gave a game, the game still tried to “force” the students to practice their English (speaking). And beside dealing with speaking practice using conversation or game the students also provided lesson about language components in order to build the students’ knowledge about English itself.

**Factors that Handicap Second year of senior high school students to speak English**

After analyzing the result of the interview the researcher saw that teacher became one of the other factors that handicap second year of senior high school students to speak English and it was not inline to the finding in the previous researcher.

**Incompetent teacher**

Based on the interview results the participants stated that the teacher didn’t have enough knowledge about English even the two of participants gave some suggestion to that teacher. The participants stated may be she (the teacher) is better to have some English course. Specifically, some participants mentioned that teacher’s performance in the class was not interesting. Additionally, participants reported that they found monotonous teaching methods during the lesson.

**Teacher psychology**

Characteristics such as creativity, flexibility, and enthusiasm, friendly, humorous and didn’t push weak learner are essential to be possessed by language teacher (Borg, 2006). Based on the finding of the research above the words friendly and humorous in that previous research were not found in this English extra class teacher, some of the participants stated.

**Double job teacher**

There was a surprising finding that the researcher found when analyzing the interview result. It is actually the teacher of English extra class had double job. She taught in English class as usual and also taught in English extra class.

**Students’ ability**

The first factors from the language component came from the vocabulary. Second factor that handicap second year of senior high school students to speak English well came from pronunciation, one participants realize him self was having problem with pronunciation. The last factor came from translating, some participants thought that this was one of the factors that handicap them when they wanted to speak English.
Classroom environment

The interview result showed that the participants had problem when following English extra class because of the classroom environment. In conclusion, the finding above gave positive perspectives on English extra class especially in speaking. The activities that were provide in that class trained them to speak English. Additionally, most of the participants believed that the English extra class is very necessary for them as a place to improve their speaking ability.

DISCUSSION

Most of the participants stated that English extra class was very necessary. They stated that they got many benefits from it but the other students had different idea. They also stated that practices they did in English extra class could improve their speaking skill. In English extra class they could directly showed off the new “input” on speaking skill that they got. Referring to the goals of learning English for second year of senior high school students departemenpendidikan (2009) stated that the basic competences of learning English for second year of senior high school is to be able to reveal the meaning of the transactional conversation (to get things done) and interpersonal (social) and the formal informal accurately, fluently and acceptable, using simple spoken language variety in the context of everyday life. It means that this research finding about speaking in English extra class is inline with the basic competence of learning speaking for second year of senior high school. The interview result showed most of the participants realized that their English speaking skill were increased after learning in English extra class.

Even though there were no previous research related to the term English extra class but Chwo, Jonas, Tsai, & Chuang (2010) conducted similar research on adding supplementary subject in order to improve EFL learners’ listening and speaking skill. Their research showed significant improvement as a result of implementing supplementary materials into classroom instruction. This finding is actually the same; the supplementary subject and the English extra class could improve the participants’ speaking skill.

The importance of English extra class didn’t stop there. The English extra class was not only necessary in improving students’ speaking skill by facilitating them to practice more, in fact the English extra class also could help some students that had many difficulties in following the English class as usual. Data from interviews showed that by having this English extra class the low level students could have the same chance with the other students to learn English more. It because they were provided more times to fix their English during this English extra class.

Meng (2009) stated that group work could help students to develop their competence of English speaking skill. Relating to this previous research one of the activities that was also provided by the English extra class was group work. The data from the interview result showed that sometimes the students were asked to work in group. The activities were: practicing conversation by having peer performance, making conversation by changing the theme, playing games that could trigger students to speak, learning language components. All the activities mentioned above were done in a group by the students. The purpose is to give the students different way of learning and made them interest more to practise their English speaking skill.

Talking about the factors that handicap second year of senior high school students to speak English there were three major factors that had been found; the teacher, the students and the classroom environment.

Kayi (2006) stated that speaking is referred to the gap between linguistic expertise and teaching methodology. Linguistic expertise concerns with language structure and language content. Relating to the data finding participants reported that based on their experience they thought the teacher didn’t fill the gap as mentioned in the previous research above. Based on the participants’ opinion they stated that the teacher had low knowledge toward the English itself for example she had less vocabulary even some participants suggested her to take English course in order to get more understanding about English.

According to Kayi (2006), teaching speaking is not like listening, reading, and writing. It needs habit formation because it is a real communication and speaking is a productive skill so it needs practicing as often as possible. Actually this English extra class had provided “place” for the participants to practice their English but based on the interview result the participants said that the way she taught was boring. Thus, she just doing the same thing when teaching and because of this monotonous teaching the participants were not really interested to study and finally it impacted the learning English speaking process.

The second factors came from the students. The data showed that the students had only a little motivation to study, but unfortunately no further explanation toward the factors behind their low motivation. Beside, students still had many problems in mastering some language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar. Thus, the students also had problem in translating.

The last factor handicapped the students was classroom environment. But unfortunately, no data found of why classroom become one of the factor that handicap second year of this senior high school students to speak English.
In conclusion, actually the participants realized that English extra class was important in improving their English speaking skill. They felt that their English speaking ability were improved after doing many practices in English extra class, but the English extra class itself still needs many improvements too. One of the major things that need to be improved by the English extra class was the teacher’s ability. This study showed that participants wanted the teacher to fulfill their needs, know their difficulties, help them learning English and make learning becomes more fun.

Most of the findings from the previous related studies were compared between the strategies to improve someone speaking skill. Then, even though the strategies were different but the finding between the previous study and the research on speaking in the English extra class are same, all the strategies were success to improve students speaking ability.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Relating to the interview result the activities that were provided for students were quite good in increasing the students’ English speaking ability. The activities in English extra class emphasized the students to have many works in conversation to improve their speaking skill. Beside that it also provided the lesson about language components to improve students’ knowledge about English.

Even tough the English extra class has many advantages especially for the students’ English speaking ability, in fact, st ill there are many things need to be improved by the English extra class itself in order to make it becomes really effective for the students in that school. The major things that need to be improved come from the teacher’s side who teaches that class and the school regulation for the teacher’s job that need to be evaluated.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the researcher strongly recommended the English teacher to implement these findings into their teaching. The researcher also suggested the other schools to have this kind of extra class (English extra class) in order to improve the students’ English speaking skill. It because this extra class can be a good place for students to practice their speaking. Beside that, the further researchers that want to conduct other research in the same scope to gain in depth information about the students’ perspectives on speaking in English extra class can read this research. Hence, the researcher also hopes the other research may be can investigate the teacher’s perspective on teaching in the English extra class.

REFERENCES


