STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY (A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF NINTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 18 BANDA ACEH)

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi persepsi siswa terhadap kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris. Peneliti menggunakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif sebagai metode dalam penelitian ini. Observasi dan wawancara digunakan sebagai instrumen. Untuk meningkatkan validitas data digunakan catatan lapangan untuk mendukung metodologi penelitian. Setelah menganalisis data, peneliti menemukan bahwa persepsi siswa terhadap kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris bervariasi. Mereka menyadari bahwa berbicara adalah keterampilan penting dalam bahasa Inggris yang harus dikuasai dengan baik. Mereka berpendapat bahwa berbicara adalah keterampilan penting untuk berkomunikasi satu sama lain terutama sebagai bahasa Internasional dan global yang digunakan di dunia. Sayangnya, sebagian besar dari mereka tidak dapat berbahasa Inggris dengan baik dan lancar, dan banyak siswa juga menilai bahwa berbicara sulit untuk dikuasai karena beberapa aspek seperti kosakata yang terbatas, pemahaman tata bahasa yang kurang dan juga pengucapan yang tidak dapat dipraktikkan dengan baik. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa tema yang diambil dari wawancara yaitu kesulitan siswa, harapan siswa dan kebutuhan bantuan guru.

Kata Kunci: persepsi siswa, kemampuan berbicara, bahasa inggris.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify students' perception towards English speaking ability. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research as the method in this study. The Observation and interview were used as the instrument. To increase the validity of the data, field note was used to support the methodology of the research. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the students' perception toward English speaking ability is various. They realized that speaking is an important skill in English to be mastered well. They argued that speaking is important skill to communicate each other especially as the International and global language used in the world. Unfortunately, most of them could not speak English well and fluently, and many students also considered that speaking is difficult to be mastered because of some aspects such as limited vocabulary, less understanding of grammar and also the pronunciation which cannot be practiced

well. The result also showed that there are some themes drawn from the interview, namely students' difficulties, students' expectation and need of teacher's assistance.

Keywords: students' perception, speaking ability, english language

INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is a skill learned by students to master a second language for the development of other language skills, so that students can use speaking in studying and communicating. Students should be assessed in speaking using a performance instrument that provides students a chance to demonstrate their ability to participate in a conversation. It means that if the students can speak English fluently that can help them to easy communicate and also explore their ideas. Cooper (2010:88) speaking is a skill that requires someone to listen and respond to what is said by someone who speak. It means that when students start talking, it will feel strange if they speak on their own without anyone hearing or responding to what they say. Therefore, students are usually asked to conduct conversations in their speaking practices. It is done to make students can interact with each other to be able to help them improve their speaking abilities. Most of speaking activities are in the form of face-to-face dialogues, therefore speaking is meant to involve interaction.

Speaking as interaction function refers to how students interact with other people in their social environment. Speaking as interaction means that the purpose of speaking itself is a tool of communication between two or more people to maintenance social relationship among them (Brown, 2013:140). If students can speak English fluently, it can help them to communicate easily and also explore their ideas. According to Gert and Hans (2008: 207) speaking is a speech or speech with the aim of having the intention to be recognized by the speaker and receiver to process statements to acknowledge their intentions. That way, this will allow students to continue to speak a second language and communicate with their classmates. In addition, this can also help them communicate with the people around them in their daily lives even though they do not always use vocabulary or language structure correctly when speaking.

But for beginner students in learning a second language, vocabulary is one of the most important that they must master in speaking because it will guide them to speak English easily (Takae, 2008: 72). Therefore, teachers always ask students to speak in front of the class even almost every day, so students do not forget the vocabulary they get in learning English because they can get new vocabulary every day during their learning period, and that can help students to improve their speaking skills in English.

Students can improve their pronunciation, fluency and understanding in speaking, because practicing speaking every day will get them accustomed and will eventually develop in each component of the conversation. According to the 2013 Curriculum, teachers become facilitators for students in improving their speaking skills. The teacher will explain some of the material and then ask students to do the tasks in the textbook in accordance with the curriculum being implemented. For speaking subjects, the teacher usually provides several topics for students and they will be asked by the teacher to speak in English. Of course, many students will refuse because they feel unable to speak in

English, but usually students will be given as much motivation as possible so they want to try to speak English as much as they can. This will greatly help students improve their speaking skills.

In this case, the background of researcher to conduct this research is to find out how students' perceptions of English language abilities. Student perception is important in the learning process, because student perception can be a positive or negative effect for students. Some research on perceptions has been done. First by Anggraeni (2018) titled Student Perceptions of Teacher Talks in English Classes. The results show that when the teacher gives questions, students prefer referential questions over display questions. Yanti (2016) conducted a study entitled Student Perceptions of the Effects of Joining English Debate Classes on Students' Speaking Skills. The results showed that most students responded that joining the debate increased their fluency as they could speak with long pauses and broad expressions, more than half of the students said that the debate helped their accuracy in speaking which improved their ability to speak.

Perception can be interpreted as student observation of certain situations or environments. This can be a mental picture, concept or awareness of environmental elements through physical sensations which can be interpreted as the ability of students to see, hear, feel and present or understand everything about their environment both in their daily lives and in their school life. According to Koentjaraningrat (2011: 99) argues that "perception is the whole process of human reasoning that is conscious in describing the surrounding environment". Based on the theory above students' perceptions are how they feel about something they experience or things they have from others including lessons that the teacher gives to them. Students' perceptions can also be interpreted as the process of how students accept or interpret things so that they and conclude or interpret what they have received.

This research was conducted because researcher wanted to find out how students' perceptions were related to their ability to speak English, whether students found it difficult to learn English in speaking, or whether they might think that learning to speak English was important or not. The researcher also wants to find out whether asking students to practice speaking in class continuously can help them improve their English skills. This is related to students' perceptions of English language skills. Regarding whether asking students more in practice can be said to be successful or not, it all depends on students 'perceptions. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a descriptive study of how students' perceptions at SMPN 18 Banda Aceh regarding English language proficiency.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, researcher used descriptive qualitative research as a research design. Sugiyono (2005: 60) states that qualitative research is research that is used to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and thoughts of people both individually and in groups. Penelti conducts research at SMPN 18 Banda Aceh because The researchers found that some students still had difficulty speaking. In obtaining the data, the researchers chose ninth grade students (IX2) at SMPN 18 Banda Aceh to be the sample of this study. The researcher chose class IX2 which consisted of 30

students at SMPN 18 Banda Aceh to become a sample for his research. Samples were taken using purposive sampling, which is the sample selected based on the research objectives. Therefore, researchers only chose 15 students to be interviewed based on their learning achievements. 15 of these students are still under achievement. So researchers want to know their perceptions.

In this study, researchers used several instruments to obtain valid data from students. The instruments used by researchers were (1) Observation is designed in order to get the related to vocabulary mastery in speaking. The writer observed the students' activity in speaking when they express their idea, (2) interviews, Arikunto (2010: 198) interviews were dialogues between questioners and responders aimed at obtaining some information related to research. In this case, the researchers used the interview to to know how is the students' perception toward their vocabulary mastery and their speaking ability. Moreover, the focus of interview was conducted to gain the range of opinions among students which aimed to be a source of validation and to provide an explicit basis for exploring the difficulties which were faced through discussion so that each student may have several different opinions about their perception. The interview were conducted by the researcher to some students and using open question with in-depth interview technique, it was explained by Sugiyono (2011:68), that in-depth interview technique is the way interview which is conducted face to face between the researcher and the samples exhaustively and continually to get the accurate data as the reference to decide the result of this study. The aim of this interview is to know the students' perceptions toward their vocabulary mastery and their speaking ability clearly after teaching learning process. The result of the interview used as the extra data to support the result of field note because the result of field note was not strong enough to conclude the students' perception toward their vocabulary mastery and their speaking skill, and (3) field notes refer to qualitative notes recorded by scientists or researchers in the course of field research, during or after their observations of a specific phenomenon they are studying. The notes are intended to be read as evidence that gives meaning and aids in the understanding of the phenomenon. In this study, the writer made field note related to the students' activities in speaking to complete the observation and interview result.

The study was conducted around three days in class IX2 at SMPN 18 Banda Aceh including in giving interviews and field notes to find out students' perceptions. In this study, researchers will analyze how students' perceptions of their and speaking abilities. Data analysis methods in qualitative research are useful for developing theories that have been built from data that has been obtained in the field. Qualitative research methods in the first stage the researcher explored and collected data in depth, from observation to report preparation. In this study, the analysis of the data used was qualitative using clear words and speech forms from students. The purpose of data analysis is to simplify and also facilitate data to interpret more qualitative data expressed in terms of words or symbols.

According to Ary (2002:42) data analysis in qualitative research is processing of categorizing, describing, and synthesizing the data collected. It use after the data collected from interview and field note the researcher will analyze the data to find the end result. This technique is the last step to guide the researcher to the research. The technique that

the researcher uses was percentage formula, from the frequency of information with the number of cases. In this study, researchers used data analysis techniques based on Miles and Huberman (1994) cited by Sugiyono (2014: 247-252) which involved three steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions / verification.

The first step in analyzing qualitative data involves data reduction. Data reduction means summarizing, choosing basic things, focusing on important things, looking for themes and patterns (Sugiyono, 2014: 247). First, researchers collected data about the use of ICTs in teaching English through interviews and documentation. The researcher then copies the data. Irrelevant data that is not related to the research question is discarded. Irrelevant data is data that has nothing to do with the research theme but is related to research. Furthermore, after collecting and reducing data, researchers present the data in a descriptive form.

The second step is data display. A display is an organized and compressed collection of information that allows drawing conclusions and actions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In the process of reducing and displaying data, it is based on the formulation of a research problem. This step is carried out by presenting a set of structured information and the possibility of drawing conclusions, because the data obtained during the qualitative research process is usually in the form of narratives, so that it requires simplification without reducing its contents. After displaying the data, conclusions are taken The third step of qualitative data analysis is drawing conclusions and verification. From the beginning of data collection, qualitative analysis begins to decide what is meant by noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Conclusions are also verified as the analyst proceeds. The conclusion drawing is started after the data were collected 38 by making temporary conclusion. In the other words, it can be said that the conclusion is analyzed continuously and verified the validity to get the perfect conclusion about students' perception toward English ability.

In qualitative research, there are several techniques that can be used to increase the validity of researcher data. Research validity is very important in a study. One of them is triangulation. Bogdan & Bicklen (1998: 101) states that "triangulation is used to convey ideas to establish facts that require more than one source of information". In this study, researchers used triangulation to check the validity of the data. Moleong (2008: 303) explains that "triangulation is a technique to check the trustworthiness of data using other things to compare with that data".

Denzin (in Lexy 2008: 330) states that there are four kinds of triangulation techniques: (1) source triangulation : Source triangulation uses different source to get the same data. It used to check the information which is gotten in different time and tool. The emphasis is on the source of data not in data collecting method or others. (2) methodological triangulation : This triangulation can be done by the researcher to collect the same data by using different techniques or method of collecting data. The emphasis is on the use of different data collecting method and to point out the same source to test the data validity. (3) Investigator triangulation : Investigator triangulation means that the validity of the research can be tested by some other researchers. From some researchers' point of view and interpretation to the all gotten data and collected in the research, and it

is expected there will be the same interpretation that can increase the research validity and (4) theoretical triangulation . In this study, the researcher used methodologi triangulation it means us i more than one perspective of theory to discuss the research problem. From those types of triangulation method, the researcher used methodology triangulation because to check the validity of the data the researcher uses different method to get same data. It meant that, to get the validity of the data in this research, the researcher not only conduct observation but also did making field notes, and interview so that by using those method, the same data could be gotten.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted at SMPN 18 Banda Aceh, in grade IX. 24 students were in class, but the researcher only took 15 students randomly for the research subject. The writer analyzed the result of the study based on the observation sheet and interview. The result of observation can be shown as following table:

No	Activity	Yes	No
1	Students speak in English		√
2	Students interact in English with his friends		√
3	The students ask and answer in English	√	
4	Student speaks English fluently		√
5	Students can speak in English with suitable intonation		√
6	Students comprehend the information given by the teacher	√	
7	The students correct the mistaken vocabulary each other's	√	
8	The students are motivated in speaking English	√	
9	The students help others who are difficult in English		√
10	The students are able to ask and respond in English while discussing in a group		√

Based on the observation, it can be seen that the students at SMPN 18 Banda Aceh did not practice speaking in classroom. They do not interact in English because some factors such as limited vocabulary so that they can't express their idea. Even though the students do not practice speaking well but they comprehend the information given by the teacher. The students do the speaking exercises based on the teachers' instruction.

The author also made observations to students to strengthen the results of interviews that had been conducted previously. Based on the results of observations, it was found that students had many problems in speaking skills and vocabulary mastery. This is illustrated by the results that students cannot speak English, interact with other students in English, help each other if they experience vocabulary problems. It can be assumed that the teacher does not employ many strategies in teaching speaking and vocabulary. Most teachers discuss and speak Indonesian. It is also drained from the observation that the teacher does not provide special techniques to improve students'

vocabulary mastery. Students are self-initiated to improve vocabulary by watching movies and listening to English songs. Based on the description above, teachers should have efforts and strategies when teaching speaking to overcome students' difficulties in speaking ability. There are several efforts that can be applied by the teacher to overcome student difficulties in speaking skills and improve student speaking skills such as creating speaking groups, memorizing vocabulary, practicing speaking in English, and teaching English with a smile. Thus, if the teacher tries to implement the above efforts and strategies, it can overcome students 'difficulties in speaking ability and can improve students' speaking ability. The teacher's effort is a teacher's way of solving problems and a way of teaching students in the classroom to improve their students' abilities.

The author also took information from field notes as additional information in completing the data related to the students' speaking ability perspective. The taking of time runs from 15 to 20 January 2020. Students experience a lot of difficulty in speaking skills such as; lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and difficulty stringing words into sentences. In general, the problems for each student in speaking skills must be overcome by the teacher. Because if the teacher does not try to solve the problem, the students' speaking ability will not improve.

The researcher conducted interviews with 15 students who had been randomly selected, the 15 students were given several questions which aimed to determine the students' difficulties in speaking using English. It was conducted on 20 of January 2020. The writer interviewed the students and analyzed the result of interview. Of the 15 students who were asked questions, it can be concluded that, Researchers found that students have the same perception that speaking skills are important and difficult to speak. This statement is proven from the results of interviews in this study. This indicates that students feel that speaking has a great influence on their ability to learn English. Speaking skills can make students benefit from their English language skills. With speaking skills, students can interact with other people; students can communicate using English and other advantages. On the other hand, students also have difficulty speaking, one of the reasons is that they do not master vocabulary. Therefore, they were unable to speak. They also answered that the teacher's strategy was not suitable for improving speaking skills or vocabulary mastery. There is no practice and such a vocabulary is applied by teacher to teach students. Consequently, the teacher's efforts must be increased to student problems.

As we know that teaching in English is more difficult to make students understand than other subjects. The teacher's efforts to solve problems in speaking skills such as; The teacher asks students to memorize vocabulary, take English courses to improve students' vocabulary and practice speaking with their friends. Field notes show that students are less active in speaking due to a lack of vocabulary. Then, the methodology used in the classroom is teacher-centered. So that students are less active in providing ideas or opinions. They only pay attention to the teacher's explanation. The activities that are applied in class are discussion, but only a few students are active. Only a few students speak fluent English.

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be seen that students' efforts to improve speaking skills vary widely. There are special efforts that are often used by students as

activities to improve speaking skills. Cohen, Susan J. Weaver, and Tao-Yuan Li (2016) stated that it is possible for students to control their learning process in coordinating their efforts to plan, organize, and evaluate the performance of the target language. Therefore, these activities will help students solve the problems they face in speaking such as tendencies to be silent, lots of pauses, lack of vocabulary, improper pronunciation, and misunderstanding of information. Effort is the student's self-regulating action by controlling the activities they want to do in improving their speaking skills.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, the writer concluded that the students' perception toward English speaking ability is good. They realize that speaking is an important skill in English to be mastered well. They argued that speaking is important skill to communicate each other especially as the International and global language used in the world. Unfortunately, most of them can't speak English well and fluently. Unfortunately, many students also considered that speaking is difficult to be mastered because of some aspects such as limited vocabulary, less understanding of grammar and also the pronunciation which cannot practice well.

The findings of this research come up with some suggestions for students who want to improve their speaking skill, they are The students who have less effort should motivate themselves to have more effort in improving speaking skill, The students have to persist toward their efforts in achieving goals. Other researchers could use this research as a reference to conduct relevance research, The school should provide learning facilities to support the students' effort in improving speaking skill, and The teacher should create the good learning and teaching atmosphere to help students having more effort in improving the skill. It is used to maximize and to achieve the goal of each subject as soon as possible with provided facilities.

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