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Speaking Skills of EFL Student Teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang: Problems and Strategies

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to find out the problems faced by the student teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in speaking English and to find out the strategies used by the lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang to cope with the problems. A case study was used and purposeful sampling was utilized. The interview was used to find out the student teachers' problems in speaking English. Interviews and documentation were used to find out the lecturer's strategies to cope with the problems. The problems and the strategies were: 1) lack of vocabulary mastery, to cope with the problem, the lecturer kept the student teachers on speaking the target language; 2) lack of grammar mastery and the strategy was the lecturer provided oral feedback to the student teachers' grammar used; 3) lack of pronunciation, in order to cope with the problem, the lecturer provided some speaking activities and oral feedback; 4) anxiety-provoking situation, to deal with the problem, the lecturer used small groups, promoted equal participation after giving preparation time, and gave positive feedback; 5) lack of self-confidence, to deal with the problems, the lecturer applied small groups discussion, gave them the equal opportunity to speak after giving preparation time, and enforced repetition; 6) the interference of the mother tongue, in order to cope with the problem, the lecturer applied some speaking activities and encouraged them to speak the target language. By knowing the EFL student teachers' problems and the strategies to cope with them, the lecturer could prepare herself in case she encounters the aforementioned problems again and find out more appropriate strategies.

Keywords: *Speaking Problems; Speaking Skills; Strategies*

Introduction

English as a foreign language of Indonesian learners has an increasingly notable role in many scopes. For example, in AES (Asian Economic Society), English is used as a communication means among people in running business activities. Alonso (2011) mentioned that on the global stage, English as a second language becomes a language that has a progressively vital part in business, industry, science, and career expansion.

In learning English as a foreign language, speaking is the primary skill that should be mastered by the learners than the other three skills. In line with this, Ramadhan (2017) argued that speaking is an important skill to master when people learn a foreign language and when they want to convey something to interact. Moreover, speaking is a skill used as an evaluation to know how far students have mastered the language they are learning. Speaking is a productive skill that significantly contributes to the communication relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor. Samhudi (2015) asserted that the critical element of communication is speaking. It means that by speaking, someone's feelings, emotions, and thoughts can be expressed to others.

In speaking English mastery, which is known as a complex skill, students face several problems, and strategies are required. Then, Brown (2007) uttered that clustering; redundancy; reduced forms; performance variables; colloquial language; rate of delivery; interaction; stress, rhythm, and intonation are difficulties for the foreign language learner in speaking English. In brief, speaking English is not easy for EFL students due to several problems. Concerning the problems, several strategies need to be implemented by the teacher. Ur (1996) revealed some strategies that can be used by teachers to solve problems in speaking, are using group work, basing the activity on easy language, making a careful choice of topic and task to stimulate interest, giving some instruction or training in discussion skills, and keeping students on speaking the target language. Hence, the ways teacher deal with students' speaking problems are known as teachers' strategies.

Furthermore, several prior studies found several students' problems in mastering speaking skills and several strategies to overcome those problems. First, Prasetyanigrum et al. (2020) mentioned that restlessness of speaking, lack of vocabulary mastery, limited grammar mastery, poor pronunciation, lack of motivation, inadequate listening facilities, unsupportive environment, lack of teaching speaking strategy, and inexact curriculum are the problems of EFL students in practice speaking English. Second, Widyasworo (2019) showed that students' problems in speaking English could come from linguistic and non-linguistic areas. Several problems of linguistic regions are lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. In comparison, the problems of non-linguistic areas are inhibition, nothing to say, uneven participation, mother tongue, anxiety, shyness, lack of self-confidence, and low motivation. Subsequently, teachers' strategies in overcoming those

problems are role-playing, drilling, brainstorming, and encouraging students. Last but not least, Sari and Zainil (2020) pointed out that using group works, basing the activities on easy language, giving some instructions or training in discussion activities, and keeping students speaking the target language are the strategies used by the teacher to overcome students' problems.

The researcher conducted the research with several differences and similarities from the previous studies. Most studies investigated the general students' problems in speaking English, and the strategies in teaching speaking English. However, this study provided more specific student teachers' problems in speaking English and the strategies to cope with the problems. The study was conducted in UIN Raden Fatah Palembang with the student teachers of the 2019 class and a lecturer from the English Education Study Program. Some of the problems in speaking English encountered by the student teachers and the lecturer's strategies to cope with the problems were the topics that concerned the researcher. As a result, the researcher conducted the following investigation to determine: (1) The problems faced by EFL student teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in speaking English; (2) The strategies used by the lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang to cope with the problems.

Method

The goals of this study were to look into the EFL student teachers' problems in speaking English and their lecturer's strategies for resolving those problems. This study was designed as a qualitative study. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a method of determining an issue based on the experiences of the participants themselves. The case study research design was used in this qualitative study. Lucas et al. (2018) mentioned that a study with more than one case to investigate a population, phenomenon, or general condition is a case study. It would be used to identify the EFL student teachers' speaking problems and the strategies to deal with the problems in UIN Raden Fatah Palembang

The data was collected at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Purposive sampling was used for selecting the participants in this study. Five student teachers from the classes of 2019 and one lecturer who has taught the subject of academic speaking for the four classes of 2019 were chosen as the participants. To gain detailed information from the study samples, the sample size in the case study of qualitative research should not be more than 4 or 5 individuals (Creswell, 2013). Hence, one lecturer and five student teachers were the researcher's participants.

Interviews and documentation were used to collect data in this case. The interview was an effective tool for gathering data from participants. The interview would be conducted in a semi-structured format. Mclntosh and Morse (2015) stated that semi-structured interviews are used to get peoples' subjective opinions about a specific situation or phenomenon that they have faced. Next, documentation is the source of information needed to support and develop an in-depth understanding of the interview data. According to Creswell (2012) newspaper, minutes of

meetings, personal journals, and letters are examples of documents.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is thought to be the best fit for any research that seeks to explore through interpretations. It offers a systematic approach to data analysis. It assists the researcher in associating a theme's frequency analysis with one of the contents. This will increase the accuracy and complexity,as well as the value of the study. There are six steps of thematic analysis in data analysisbased on Maguire and Delahunt (2017). The first step is to become acquainted with the data.The second step is to generate initial codes. The third step is to look for themes. The fourth step is to go over the themes. The fifth step is to define and name themes. Sixth isin charge of producing the report.

Results

In this chapter, there were two findings presented. First, the problems faced by the EFL student teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in speaking English. Second, the strategies used by the lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang to cope with the problems.

Problems faced by student teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in speaking English

Based on the data received from the research, there were seven problems faced by the lecturer in teaching essay writing to the pre-service teachers**.**

Table 1: Themes and codes of problems faced by the EFL student teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in speaking English.

No	Themes	Codes
1	Lack of vocabulary mastery	a. The student teachers claimed that it was difficult to express what they wanted to convey or they could not speak fluently because of limited vocabulary. b. The student teachers stated that they chose to stop speaking for a while to think the suitable words/expression or combined English and Indonesian when they did not know what vocabulary to use. c. The student teachers revealed that the lecturer rarely exposed them to new vocabulary related to their current discussion, so they got confused in determining the proper vocabulary. d. Most of the student teachers believed that they did not upgrade their vocabulary

		constantly, because even after they watched the western films and listened to English songs, they still had the lack of vocabulary mastery.
2	Lack of grammar mastery	a. Most of the student teachers claimed that grammar became their stumbling block in speaking English, especially in formal situations. b. Some of the student teachers revealed that they relied on their feeling when speaking English, and they did not pay too much attention to their grammar used, which caused them having a problem in grammar mastery.
3	Lack of pronunciation mastery	a. The student teachers stated that their lack of pronunciation mastery made them afraid of making mistakes in pronouncing the words, so the feeling hindering them to participate in speaking activities. b. The student teachers confessed that they did not put so much exposure on their pronunciation practice.
4.	Anxiety-provoking situation	a. The student teachers revealed that in speaking English, they had communication apprehension which caused them to tremble, be nervous, lose focus, be silent and be confused b. The student teachers said that they were anxious when they had to be tested in speaking English. c. Most of the student teachers claimed that when they spoke, they were afraid of getting negative criticism such as being scolded, ridiculed, vilified, and laughed at by the lecturer and the audience.
5.	Lack of self-confidence	a. The student teachers confessed that their lack of ability to speak English made them felt not confident when they had to speak in front of people or the lecturer. b. The student teachers believed that they got lack of self-confidence when the audience could not catch the point of their

		utterances which caused them to be nervous and confused.
6.	The interference of the mother tongue	The student teachers believed that the dominant use of the mother tongue in the environment made them heard it more frequently than English, so the interference of the mother tongue made the student teachers not familiar with using English.

The strategies used by the lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang to cope with the problems

Based on the research findings, there were numerous strategies were used by the lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah to cope with the student teachers' problems in speaking.

Table 2: Themes and codes for strategies used by the lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang to cope with the problems

No	Theme	Code
1	Using paraphrasing and preparation time to cope with the student teachers' lack of vocabulary.	a. The lecturer claimed that she kept student teachers on speaking the target language by asking them to paraphrase the words which they could not remember immediately. b. The lecturer said that she gave preparation time to the student teachers to make them state their opinions based on the valid sources by reading and finding out from the books or the research journals.
2	Providing oral feedback to deal with the student teachers' lack of grammar mastery	The lecturer claimed that to cope with the student teachers' lack of grammar mastery, she corrected or revised the student teachers' grammar mistake at

		the end of the meeting and it did not specify to some certain of student teachers.
3.	Providing some speaking activities and oral feedback to cope with the lack of pronunciation mastery	a. The lecturer revealed that she gave some speaking activities to help the student teachers pronunciation mastery get better. b. The lecturer said that she corrected the student teachers' pronunciation when they had pronunciation mistake but not all the time
4.	Using small group, equal participation after giving preparation time, and positive feedback to reduce anxiety	a. The lecturer stated that she used small group in speaking activity consisting of two of three student teachers, only. If the group consisted of too many people, they would feel anxious. b. The lecturer said that she promoted equal participation, she appointed the student teachers randomly to speak, in order to train the student teachers were ready or were not fear to speak in front of the public or the classmate, and did not get the fear of making mistake. c. The lecturer claimed that she did not give her feedback in every meeting or did not give feedback directly, neither did she give negative comments, and mention the name of student teachers, to avoid the student teachers' fear of being a judged.
5	Applying small groups, equal participation after giving preparation time, and some speaking activities followed by repetition to solve the lack of self-confidence	a. The lecturer stated that because there are only two or three people in a group, the student teachers could develop their speaking skills more easily. b. The lecturer believed that the student teachers were afraid to speak voluntarily because they got lack of self-confidence, so the lecturer made the student teachers had the same opportunity to speak and trained their self-confidence by appointing them

		randomly to speak in a speaking activity
		c. The lecturer stated that by maximizing the student teachers' exposure to English through plenty of speaking activities and giving the student teachers a chance to analyze and repeat their daily speaking activity, their speaking could be better and their lack of self-confidence would decrease
6	Applying some speaking activities and encouraging students to speak the target language to cope with the interference of mother tongue	a. The lecturer claimed that she provided some speaking activities such as discussion, asking and answering questions, brainstorming, and concept mapping to make the student teachers stayed focus on the use of English and decreased the interference of mother tongue. b. The lecturer said that she always reminded the student teachers to speak the target language when they did code switching, code-mixing or used their mother tongue.

Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis using thematic analysis, a researcher has provided an analysis of the problems faced by EFL student teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in speaking English. The strategies used by the lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang to cope with the are also provided here. The first problem was lack of vocabulary mastery. Student teachers got confused when translating sentences from their first language into English because their necessary vocabulary was lack. Wahyuningsih and Afandi (2020) revealed that lack of vocabulary mastery was the problem that caused students' ideas cannot convey exactly in English and make their speaking not fluent. In order to cope with the student teachers' lack of vocabulary, the lecturer kept the student teachers on speaking the target language by using paraphrase and used preparation time. Stevanie (2021) revealed that when student was difficult to remember vocabulary immediately, they paraphrased their ideas using lexical item that is a near-synonym from the required word. In line with this, Students would perform considerably better if they could think about what they were going to say and how to say it. Allowing them to think about how they would speak by giving the preparation time to them was one way that can be used (Harmer,

2007).

Second, most of the student teachers said grammar became their speaking English problem. Before making an utterance, some EFL students would consider the specific grammar item concerned. It makes them hesitate to speak up. This is in line with Gan (2012) revealed that Grammar is cited by students as a stumbling block in their spoken English. To deal with the problem, the lecturer provided oral feedback as her strategies. Tesnim (2019) on the result of his research stated that the teachers' oriented corrective feedback and explicit correction could help the students to deal with their grammatical deficiencies.

Third, lack of pronunciation mastery was the student teachers' problem in speaking English. Student teachers as non-native English speakers were afraid of making mistake when pronouncing the words (especially the word that less common), they believed that mispronunciation could cause errors in the meaning of the words spoken. Both Gan (2012) and Tokoz-Goktepe (2014) revealed that lack of students' mastery in pronouncing English words is one of the obstacles faced by EFL students in speaking English. To cope with the student teachers' lack of pronunciation mastery, the lecturer provided some speaking activities and feedback. Achmad and Yusuf (2014) on the result of their study mentioned that the implementation of several speaking activities gave the opportunities to the students to practice their English pronunciation directly. Then, Rahman, Kahfi, and Dalimunthe (2018) revealed that when correcting the students' pronunciation errors, the teacher did five types of corrective feedback, including recast, explicit correction, clarification, request, metalinguistic feedback, and elicitation. The strategies helped the student teachers to improve their pronunciation and made them realized their mistakes and could make the students' pronunciation in speaking English improved.

Fourth, there's anxiety-provoking situation. Rumiyati and Seftika (2018) revealed that three main factors of student's speaking anxiety were communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Those factors caused student became silent, anxious, heart pounding, and confused while speaking English. to cope with the student teachers' anxiety, the lecturer used small group, promoted equal participation after preparation time and gave feedback. Based on Aulia, Lengkanawati, and Rodliyah (2019), the implementation of pair work or small group activity in speaking class made the students' anxiety decreased. Hayati and Kaniadewi (2022) stated that having more exposure to oral English and getting prepared for oral English lessons would help the students in decreasing their speaking anxiety. Also, Al-Nakhalah (2016) mentioned that by encouraging the students to speak fluently even if they made some mistakes or errors in their speaking and not criticizing them cruelly, student would not feel the anxiety and the fearful of criticism.

Fifth, student teachers' speaking problems in speaking was lack of self-confidence. The student teachers felt lack of their confidence when they had to speak in front of the lecturer or many people, when talked to people who speak English

fluently and when the interlocutor cannot catch the point of their words. Nunan (as cited in Januariza, 2016) stated that students who lack self-confidence about their abilities and mastery of the English language will inevitably experience communication apprehension. To cope with the problems, the lecturer applied small groups, promoted equal participation after giving preparation time, some speaking activities and repetition. Alfares (2017) showed that students were happy to work in group works, they got the opportunity to share and exchange their ideas. Based on Hayati and Kaniadewi (2022), the students would feel more confident to speak English when they had more exposure to oral English and when they had good preparation. In line with this, Batang (2016) stated that brainstorming was effective in generating students' ideas freely and quickly, and it was good to increase students' self-confidence.

The last student teachers' problem in speaking English was the interference of mother tongue. Having an environment where people used their mother tongue dominantly made student teachers listened and spoke English less than their mother tongue. Similar to this, Bilal et al. (2013) argued in their study that the use of the mother tongue in the school and home environment is more dominant than the use of English. To deal with the problems, the lecturer applied some speaking activities and encouraged them to speak the target language. Sriprabha (2015), the ways to overcome the interference of the mother tongue in the students' speaking English were practicing English speaking regularly and performing as much communication in English as possible. Also, Ur (as cited in Leong and Ahmadi, 2017) stated that in keeping the students speaking the target language, the teacher could always remind the students as much as possible to always practice and use the target language.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this study, it can be concluded that there were several speaking problems faced by the EFL student teacher of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Not only the student teachers' problems but also the strategies used by the lecturer to cope with the problems were revealed here. First, the EFL student teachers' problems was lack of vocabulary problems, and the lecturer's strategies to cope with the problem were the lecturer using paraphrasing and used preparation time. Second, the EFL student teachers faced lack of grammar mastery in speaking English, then the strategy used by the lecturer to cope with the problem was providing oral feedback to the student teachers' grammar used. Third, lack of pronunciation was the speaking problem faced by the EFL student teacher. To cope with the problem, the lecturer provided some speaking activities and oral feedback.

Next, anxiety-provoking situation became another problem faced by the EFL student teachers in speaking English. To deal with the problem, the lecture used small groups, promoted equal participation after giving preparation time, and gave positive feedback. Fifth, the EFL student teachers had lack of self-confidence. To deal with the problems, the lecturer applied small groups discussion, gave them the equal

opportunity to speak after giving preparation time, and enforced repetition. Last but not least, the interference of the mother tongue was the EFL student teachers' problem in speaking English. In order to cope with the problem, the lecturer applied some speaking activities and encouraged them to speak the target language.

Based on the above-revealed finding, the researcher would like to make some suggestions. For the lecturer, to make the effective teaching and learning process, she has to make the speaking activities as interactive as possible, so that the student teachers would not feel bored. For the grammatical aspect, giving a one-day intensive class to discuss the correct grammatical used in speaking or to discuss the common grammatical mistakes made by the student teachers in speaking English could be applied by the lecturer. Next, for the student teachers, the researcher's advices are the student teachers should practice their speaking English constantly. They can do it with their partner or they can practice by themselves. The student teachers can also improve their speaking English skills outside of the classroom by enrolling in an English course or joining an English club. Last but not least, the advice is for the next researcher who wants to conduct the research with the same issue. The future researcher should look for and get the further information or identify the new problems that may be faced by the student teacher in speaking English. Not only the problems, but also the further information about the strategies used by the lecturer to cope with the problems should be mentioned.

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