

EFL students' speaking ability in descriptive text

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Abstract

This study aimed to find out EFL students' speaking ability in a descriptive text. This research was a descriptive survey. The participants were chosen by using cluster random sampling technique where there were twenty students at the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 4 OKU. The data were collected through oral test in the form of online test and telephone survey. WhatsApp application was used as an online platform in data collection. The result of the study showed that the total of students' score was 1142 and mean of the students' score was 57,1. There were 1 student (5%) who gains score 80-100 in very good criteria, 2 students (10%) who gain score 66-79 in good criteria, 10 students (50%) who gain score 56-65 in enough criteria, 5 students (25%) who gain score 46-55 in low criteria, and 2 students (10%) got score 45 in fail criteria. Based on the data, there were only 13 students (65%) who passed the students' speaking ability. In conclusion, the frequency of criteria of students' speaking ability is in enough criteria.

Key words: *EFL; Speaking abilit; Descriptive text*

INTRODUCTION

Nunan (2003) stated that speaking is the productive aural/oral skill. It consisted of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. Speaking has five components, they are: comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency (Syakur, 2007). It is one of the most important and essential skills that must be practiced to communicate orally. But just as it is very essential skill to support further oral communication especially in English, it is also the most difficult skill to develop. According to Bueno, et. al. (2006), Speaking is one of the most difficult skills language learners have to face. Speaking is considered the most important of the four language skills of English. Even the learners learn the language for so many years; they find it difficult to speak in real time situations when it is demanded.

Speaking is a productive language skill (Siahaan, 2008). It means that speaking is a person's skill to produce sound that exist at the meaning and can be understood by other people, so it is able to create a good communication. Furthermore, speaking is the use of language to communicate with others (Fulcher, 2003). It means that this activity involves two or more people in whom the participants are both hearers and speakers having to react to whatever they hear and make their contribution high speed so each participant as intention or a set of intentions that he wants. So, the English teachers have to make the students active in speaking by providing communicative language activities and interesting media in the classroom and giving them opportunities to practice their speaking skill as much as possible.

English in Indonesia compared to the neighboring country such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong are widely spoken as a second language. English in Indonesia is more likely to be taught and learn only as foreign language. Which means learning and teaching English are mostly done in classrooms, and not commonly used as a daily communication (Sulistiyo, 2016).

Descriptive text is text that describe about things like white house, animals, fruits, etc. According to Priyana (2008) descriptive text is a text which is telling about the characteristics of a particular thing, such as person's characteristics or descriptions. These texts are particularly important in English and Science.

The importance of speaking skills

When speaking, we construct words and phrases with individual sound, and we also use the pitch change, intonation, and stress to convey different meaning (Harmer, 2007). Efrizal (2012) expressed that speaking involves speech or sentences with the aim of having intention to be identified by speaker and the receiver process them to understand their purposes. The significance of speaking was indicated with integration of the other language skills. Speaking helps learners develop their vocabulary and grammar skills better than written skill. Students can express their emotions, ideas, say stories, request, talk, and show the various function of language.

The concept of descriptive text

Descriptive text has two main parts, they are identification and description. The structure of a text is called the generic structure. A Descriptive text is like describing white house, animals, fruits, etc., and according to Priyana (2008), descriptive text is a text which is telling about

the characteristics of a particular thing, such as a person's characteristic or description. These texts are particularly important in English and Science. The Purpose of descriptive text is to describe a particular living, non-living or natural phenomena.

The generic structure of descriptive text

According to Sunarto, et.al (2018), the Generic Structure of Descriptive Text is presented on the table 1.

Table 1 Generic structure of descriptive text

Text Elements Content	Generic Structure
Identification	In this generic structure introduces to the subject of description, which Includes who, what, when, and where.
Description	A description of an object. In this part give details of the characteristic features of the subject. Such as: qualities, characteristics, describing the phenomenon in parts, qualities, or/and characteristic, size, physical appearance, ability, habit, daily live, etc. For example, the color, the size, the smell, the taste, etc. For persons: what they look like, what they do, how they act, what they like or dislike, what makes them special. For something: how it looks, sounds, feels, smells or tastes, where it is seen or found, what it does, how it is used, what makes it special

Types of description text

Following are a few types of writing that depend heavily on descriptive language (Carrel, 2001):

- 1) Descriptions of a person, place or thing contain sensory details that bring to life actual people, places, and things.
- 2) Observations describe an event the writer has witnessed. Often, the event takes places over an extended period of time.
- 3) Travel Brochures contain factual information as well as persuasive language to encourage tourism.
- 4) Character sketches describe fictional characters-their appearances, personalities, hopes and dreams.

Descriptive text is a kind of text function to describe a particular object and abstract. The generic structure descriptive text consists of identification and description. Significant lexicogrammatical features focus on specific participants who use a simple present tense, linking verbs, adjectives, and compound

adjectives. So, in teaching and learning process in making descriptive text, the students should know that they want to describe it.

METHOD

Descriptive method was used in this study. The population of this study is the eleventh-grade students of SMAN 4 OKU with the total number was 73 students. Purposive sampling was used in this study. The purpose of this research is to see the student ability in speaking descriptive text by making voice recording and because most of the students are afraid on speaking activity, researcher put three categories as the sample, the categories are (1) the students are wanted to be tested, (2) prepared to be tested, and (3) have media to deliver their test. Based on that, the sample of the students that fulfilled the categories was only 20 samples.

Data collection

Test in the form of oral test was used in collecting the data of the study. The test was used because it is considered as the most reliable instrument to get some information about students speaking descriptive text. To get the data, the students were asked to make a voice recording with the duration of maximum 3 minutes.

The procedure of distributing the speaking test was using online and phone surveys through the platform of *WhatsApp* (WA) application. WhatsApp is an American freeware, cross-platform messaging and original author, by using WhatsApp we can send message and voice. While software for conducting surveys online is well established with both free and paid tools, many surveys are still mostly conducted with a mix of online, phone and face-to-face (F2F) modes of collection. While those transitioning from F2F to online or phone surveys are presenting their experiences, a number of references offer guidance on the development of surveys, from design to dissemination of results and ethical considerations, as well as case studies combining online surveys with other methods and/or illustrating the possibilities of online sampling services. In assessing the students speaking ability, the criterion of assessment was considered from oral proficiency scoring categories proposed by Brown (2004).

Data analysis

Inter-rater reliability was used in analyzing the data to find the individual score. There were two raters in evaluating students' speaking performance, named Rater I and Rater II. The first rater was the English lecturer of Universitas Baturaja, Mrs. Henny Yulia, M.Pd. She has been teaching for about thirteen years in English Education Study Program of FKIP Universitas Baturaja. Her educational background was from Sriwijaya University for master degree and her

TOEFL score was 512. The second rater was the English teacher of SMA Negeri 4 OKU. Her name is Lidya Susandari, S.Pd. She has been teaching English for nine years in SMA Negeri 4 OKU. She was graduated from PGRI University Palembang and her TOEFL Score was 473.

In assessing the students speaking ability, the criterion of assessment was considered based on oral proficiency scoring categories proposed by Brown (2004). The aspects of oral proficiency scoring categories are based on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. In determining the score criteria of the students' ability in speaking, the score interval range was applied and proposed by Sudijono (2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The students' score in speaking descriptive text

Based on the analysis, it was found that various answers were given by the students. It was found that the total of students' score was 1,142 and mean of the students' score was 57,1.

The students' percentage score

Based on the result of the test, it was described the frequency of the students' score criteria were at the table 2 and calculated the student's percentage score:

Table 2. The Percentage of Students' Score Criteria

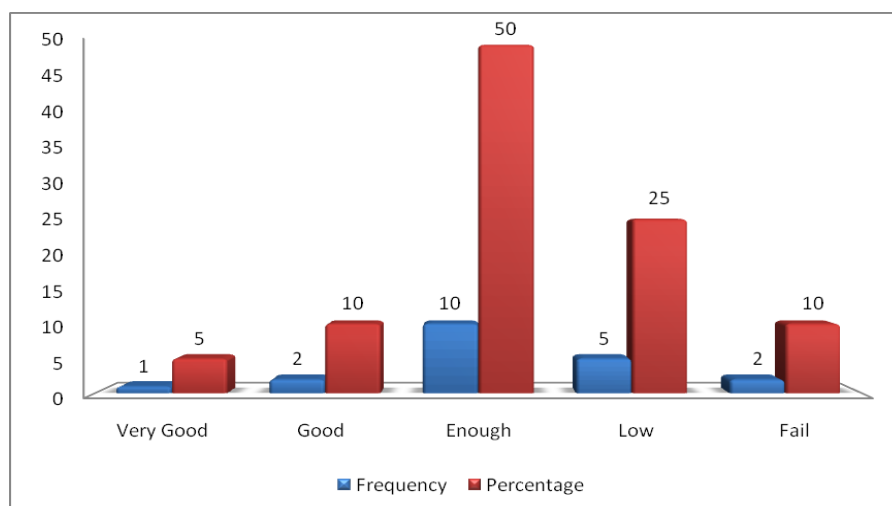
No	Percentage Range	Score Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Very Good	1	5%
2	66-79	Good	2	10%
3	55-65	Enough	10	50%
4	46-54	Low	5	25%
5	≤45	Fail	2	10%
		Total		100%

Sudijono, 2008

The table 2 showed that there were only 1 student (5%) who gains score 80-100 in very good criteria, 2 students (10%) who gains score 66-79 in good criteria, 10 students (50%) who gains score 56-65 in enough criteria, 5 students (25%) who gains score 46-55 in low criteria, and 2 students (10%) got score ≤ 45 in fail criteria.

Based on table 2, there are 13 students who passed the students speaking ability. Based on the calculation of the students' percentage score, 65% students were in enough criteria

Chart 1
Students' Score Distribution



Based on chart 1, it could be seen that the 20 sample of students on the students' ability in speaking descriptive text at the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 4 OKU was in Enough criteria.

Discussion

Based on the finding, the 20 students as the sample could be interpreted into Enough criteria, since most of the sample's students got scores between (55-65). According to Sudijono (2008), based on his percentage score criteria where 80-100 is "very good", 66-79 is "good", 55-65 is "enough", 46-54 is "low", and ≤ 45 is "failed". With the student's percentage score around 65%, it means only 13 the students sample passed the speaking descriptive text. The theory that appropriates to explain this was come from Lynne (2001, p.40), who mentioned that speaking is active use of language, but differs in mental activity involved. Speaking English skill isn't easy for Indonesian students, they do not speak in English and hard to do so can be caused by social condition of students which accustomed to using their local language, so foreign language is difficult to be accepted and communicated

As for the rest of the eleventh-grade students who didn't want to participate on the test because most of them still have difficulties just like what researcher mentioned in pre-observation in the background of the study. The

theory of Juhana (2012) was appropriate with this condition. It can be concluded that the causes of the students' problem in speaking skill were lack of confident, fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, and lack of motivation in learning English, especially in speaking skill.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of test, it was found that the 20 samples scores of the eleventh-grade students at SMA N 16 OKU could be categorized into enough criteria in speaking descriptive text. In finding, most of the student's sample got the upper score in speaking descriptive where most of the students got the scores of 55-65 in enough score criteria. Based on the finding and interpretation of the study, it can be concluded that the percentage of the students' samples upper score obtained in speaking descriptive text was 65% with mean scores of 57,1. It meant that the students' ability in speaking descriptive text at the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 4 OKU was in enough criteria, Sudijono (2008).

The causes of speaking skill problem to the rest of the eleventh-grade students are because of psychological factors, such as unconfident, fear of mistake, anxiety, shyness and lack of motivation that hinder them from practicing their speaking in English, Juhana (2012). The factors, like fear of making mistakes, were commonly caused by their fear of being laughed by their friends when they speak in front of the classroom.

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