IMPROVING THE STUDENTS’ SPEAKING ABILITY THROUGH ZOOM APPLICATION AT POTENSI UTAMA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Regarding the worldwide use of virtual applications in the EFL teaching and learning process, there were a lot of obstacles and limitations. In developed countries as the USA, Europe, etc, they were able to manage how to use virtual application very successfully in teaching and learning process. Even though, the improvement of using each virtual application still needs more researches for specific applications’ effect. In this research, the writer used the zoom application as a tool to examine the effect on students speaking ability. The research consisted of 20 English students at Potensi Utama University. They were tested to know theirs speaking ability in scores and taught speaking material through zoom application. The zoom application was used in teaching the students of the third semester of the academic year (2020-2021). Data were collected from the study participants using an oral speaking test, an attitudinal questionnaire, and Semi-structured interviews. The results indicated that there was a significant improvement of students after studying using the zoom application. The progress of speaking ability is significantly found in fluency, pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, and vocabulary due to the virtual classes. However, using the zoom application could satisfy the lecturer and students. It showed the average scores of the Pre-Test were 49,1, Post Test-1 was 69,2 and Post-Test II was 90,7. There were a significant improvement from Pre to Post Test I and a higher figure at Post Test II. The questionnaire and interview findings also revealed that students generally had positive attitudes towards using zoom application as virtual classes particularly because they found it helpful and efficient in improving their speaking ability. In those findings, the researcher suggested using zoom application could be a favorite teaching method in the mids of the pandemic to increase students’ speaking ability. The words: EFL (English as Foreign Language), Zoom Application, Speaking Ability

Keywords : EFL, Speaking Ability, Zoom

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is the most spoken language in this world, not only as a main or a second language but also as a foreign language. English is used by people to communicate between two parties around the world. The main function is to send messages from the speakers and understand the messages from the receivers. With the progress of the communication system, people were pushed to have the ability in mastering English without exception. It is the most widely used language in the world in the international trade relationship, diplomacy, film, tourism, medicine, product, education, technology, and
scientific publications as well as publishing newspapers, magazines, and other books (Khoshsima and Sayadi, 2016). English stands as a major language that is used all around the world and so firmly established as a dominant global language in the above-mentioned fields.

Due to the distinguished position of English, mastering English has become a phenomenon that everyone should master and learn. Thus, many Asian countries in general and Indonesia, in particular, have paid great attention to prepare their young generation for mastering communication in English with the people of the world for various reasons. In Indonesia, the situation is not different where English has become an obligatory language subject from primary school until university.

Indonesia, as one of Asian countries, is also struggling to make English an inherent part of its national education programs. English is taught as a subject of school in primary, secondary, junior high school and senior high school and also university. The English subject is a must in all grades of school. Actually, the main purpose of English teaching in Indonesia; schools and universities is to prepare the students to have a good capability in English communication skills so that they become familiar with English speaking when they enter the employment market and to increase their opportunity in gaining jobs, obtaining knowledge, learning others' cultures, studying overseas and traveling abroad (Khoshsima and Sayadi, 2016). To achieve these purposes, the method teaching of English in Indonesia is focus on developing students’ competence in the four main English skills as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Alhawiti, 2017).

Of all the four essential English skills, speaking has the first priority as part of communication (Sanjay and Narayana 2020). Speaking is generally considered the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language (Rao, 2019). Speaking means learners can make communication, presentations, offering somethings, describe things or situations, make reasonable requests, and express ideas and opinions (Lui, 2014). The English mastery in speaking skills is the main priority for most second or foreign language learners. As an obligation, being able to speak English is a must in the 21st century. Many English learners think that being able to speak English means being able to speak fluently. Lui (2014) confirms that success in learning language is measured by the ability to convey targeted information in a conversation. Consequently, learners often claims their success in language learning based on the effectiveness of their English courses. So they could feel the improvement in their speaking ability.
Despite the importance of speaking skills, it is widely acknowledged that currently learning English in many countries is fail, despite the program of studying for students begin from primary to senior high school. It is about 13 – 14 years studying English. According to the findings from recent researches in the Asian context, it is found that many students study English for many years but they cannot apply the skills in real-life communication and failed to fulfill the market requirement of workers. Students cannot speak, talk or discuss in English because of shyness, fear of making mistakes in front of others, inadequate vocabulary mastering, or lack of idea. Most students cannot make a complete conversation with others without making mistakes or they will mix with the local language to convey the messages. They don’t have sufficient confidence that hinders the increase of speaking skills (Al Turki, Aldraiweesh & kinshuck, 2016). Most of them wish that they could speak English fluently in the future, but it’s never happened because they don’t have precise learning English method.

Accordingly, the obstacle of EFL learners in speaking has drawn the attention of many educators and researchers to find out the reasons for EFL’s weak performance in speaking skills. For example, Aljadili (2014) has attempted to investigate the causes behind the poor performance of students’ speaking ability. He reported that the use of inappropriate teaching methods is one of the main reasons for students’ weakness in speaking skills. The same finding has also been reported by Hussein (2016) who described the speaking problems to the use of outdated approaches that have not provided sufficient opportunities for practicing the English language. There are few opportunities for students to practice their speaking skills outside the university to interact and communicate with peers and a teacher regardless of time or place. Accordingly, many language teachers, experts, and researchers are seeking to find a different means that helps in providing sufficient speaking opportunities and environments for interaction and communication with peers and a teacher anywhere and anytime. The main obstacle is the poor English skill of speaking opponent in society.

Online learning is one of the proposed means that supports teachers and students to interact as if they were in a face-to-face learning situation. Online learning has begun to be used all over the world and used various types of technologies such as video conferencing, videotape, satellite broadcast, TV broadcast, Internet, virtual classes, and so on (Khoshshima and Sayadi, 2016). Regards to achievement of application and Internet technologies in the past 20 years, virtual environments have emerged as a new dimension
of the teaching process, and educators are using them as teaching media. (Dalgarno, 2002)

Education is a tool to make the teaching and learning process conducive. The main point is to push students can actively develop their abilities and skills to fill their roles in society. In Indonesia, the level of education unit which is equivalent to the basis of education is at the elementary school level (Sumantri & Sa’ud, 2003). In elementary schools, students could obtain good experience of preparing the students to the next grade of education. Basic education where the implementation is carried out informal classes or schools is held to provide basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills for students which are further developed to improve the quality of students themselves (Sujana, 2019).

Due to the COVID-19 period, learning in Indonesia has also made huge changes, one of which is that the learning process is carried out online from home (Pajarianto, Kadir, Galugu, Sari, & Februanti, 2020). It has a positive impact on the society to upgrade their knowledge and application of technology that supports the progress of long distance learning process, especially for educators, lecturers or teachers and students even though they are only at home, working area, office, or vacation. The popular technologies that are often used today is the online video conference application via Zoom Meeting, which has functions as a communication tool which according to teachers or lecturers are easier to use than other online video conference applications.

Generally, the development of network technology has caused traditional methods to be replaced by virtual classes. “Virtual classrooms are one of the main components of synchronous settings that share certain similarities with real classrooms” (Cakiroglu, 2014, p. 1). According to Beatty (2010), the term “virtual classes” refers to an “electronic classroom” that can be expandable in time, space, and content”. “Virtual classrooms are one of the main components of synchronous settings that share certain similarities with real classrooms” (Cakiroglu, 2014, p. 1). Hussein (2016) defines the virtual classroom is a system that gives the same opportunities for the teaching and learning process, beyond the the limits of the traditional classroom walls. It is called virtual because "it can relax the spatial constraints (users at different locations no matter how far about) and the temporal constraints (users interacting over time via asynchronous communications)” (Beatty, 2010, p. 171). This study proposed to facilitate practicing speaking by utilizing virtual classes.

Moreover, the extensive use of the virtual learning system in teaching learning process could assist the progress of communication among students, teachers, and sharing resources for knowledge (Cakiroglu, 2014). Using virtual classes can enhance communication ability
and have a positive impact on developing speaking skills (Danesh, Bailey & Whisenand, 2015). Besides, virtual classrooms are challenging and effective because of many reasons: teaching material could be delivered at any time of the day; different methods of communication could be used by teachers at various times of the day for interacting and instructing students; students are organized into groups and time could be saved a lot.

One of the most used virtual applications is Zoom Application which is used by almost all companies, universities, government institutions, government officers, others meeting and so many parties around the world use it. Concerning the pandemic covid-19 period, the campus and other institutions must work hard to accustom using zoom application to prevent from people crowd.

Base on the effectiveness of using zoom application, the writer makes the title “Improving The Students’ Speaking Ability Through Zoom Application at Potensi Utama University”.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Speaking

Speaking is the most important part of four main language skills because speaking is an oral communication which takes more effective and efficient than others. Usually, people use speaking skills to keep up a good relationship, influence people, and make negotiations. Many methods could be applied for developing students' speaking ability. Planning, discussion, practising, repetition are some of the methods which play important roles to enhance speaking skills (Haskills 2011). Related to give a clear description about how to improve the students’ speaking skills, it is also important to discuss the type of skills in speaking. According to Brown (2004), there are some differences between micro-skills and macro skills of speaking. The micro-skills are skills related to the production of the smaller chunks of language units such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations, and phrasal units. On the other hand, the macro skills are skills related to the mastery of the larger elements of language units, for example, fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion, nonverbal communication, and strategic options.

2.2 Assessing Speaking

Thornburry (2005) stated that there are two methods to assess the speaking. They are holistic scoring and analytic scoring. Holistic scoring uses a single score as the basis of
an overall impression, while analytic scoring uses a separate score for a different aspect of the task. Each of those has its advantages where the holistic way is quick and suitable for informally assessing progress. Meanwhile, analytic scoring takes longer since it requires the teacher to take a variety of factors into account and it is more precise and reliable. This study employs an analytic system based on five components to be assessed such as fluency, pronunciation of sentences, grammatical accuracy, comprehension, and vocabulary mastery.

2.3 Zoom Application

Since the beginning of pandemic covid-19 in Indonesia, the ministry of education has already announced the implementation of teaching and learning during the pandemic should be an online method. Based on Presidential Decree Number 3 of 2020 concerning the Prevention of Covid-19 and circular of Education and Culture minister Number 4 the year 2020, all education institutes as school and university must do learning by distance. Throughout this regulation, the teachers are expected to deliver the material to students effectively.

Online learning is a teaching and learning process that utilizes an internet connection and learning platforms. Internet is a media that supports the process of education, especially in the pandemic era. It has a big influence for student’s achievement in the way that learning through the internet are very effective in the world of education, especially in the pandemic era. Online learning is a learning process that utilizes information technology, in this case utilizing the internet as a method of information delivery, interaction, and facilitation. On the other hand, Adijaya & Lestanto also explained that online learning can be done easily because it only relies on applications that are connected to the internet (Swari, 2020). To continue the learning process during this pandemic, many online platforms can be used, such as zoom, Google classroom, Goggle meets, Moodle, etc. The online platforms promote both inquiry-based learning and independent learning since the online platforms facilitate interactions between teacher and students although they are not in the same room (Nartiningrum, n.d.2019).

The Zoom application is a software (platform) created by Eric Yuan that functions as teleconference, work long-distance, distance learning, and social connection that offers several useful and friendly features to fulfill the needs.

Based on data from interviews and questionnaires, it is known that 90% of lecturers in Potensi Utama University only gave assignments through text messages and 70% of
students do not understand the homework from their teachers. This can be seen from the submissions of the student’s work that was originally answered.

Therefore, a more effective way is needed to help the student learning process, one of which is the zoom application. Several Zoom Meeting features support the teaching and learning process, including the following.

a) Raise hand feature. This feature makes students or zoom meeting participants ask questions during the live meeting.

b) Screen sharing feature. A feature that could give students or participants in the zoom meeting to see, watch and capture the contents of the teachers or meeting leader.

c) Whiteboard feature. In the whiteboard feature, teachers can write or draw on the white area provided by Zoom. In addition, teachers can also add text, signs, or images to the share screen that has been previously done.

d) Chat features. The chat feature is very useful if students or zoom participants want to express their ideas or ask questions in written form.

2.4 Teacher Preparation in using zooming application

The role of the zoom application model in the teaching and learning process cannot be separated from the role of the teacher. Teachers’ mastery of the learning model greatly influences the effectiveness and efficiency of a lesson (Alawiyah, 2013). One of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is the lack of teacher preparation. It is related to the teachers’ knowledge and mastery of learning models that can be used during online learning (Mastura & Santaria, 2020). Most of the teachers and students are still not familiar with using the zoom application. The two parties both teachers or lecturers and students must prepare themselves in optimizing the use of the zoom application.

Lack of preparation of both sides or one side before doing online learning will disturb the teaching and learning process. It is important that additional training of learning applications for teachers will increase their quality in conveying the material of lessons. (Suhandiah, Sudarmaningtyas, & Ayuningtyas, 2019).

One of the online application platforms that can optimize the distance teaching and learning process is Zoom Meeting (Guzacheva, 2020). Besides being able to do face-to-face learning, teachers can also apply learning models that are following the material. The teacher can also make an assessment shortly after the lesson ends without ending the face-to-face process so that the teacher knows each student’s character when working on the assessment. One of the learning models that can support the Zoom Meeting-based teaching
and learning process is problem-based learning with a realistic mathematics approach. The steps of the problem-based learning model activities are following the learning process through Zoom Meeting, namely orienting students to problems, organizing students to learn, assisting independent or group investigations, developing and presenting work results, analyzing and evaluating the problem-solving process (Tarmizi & Bayat, 184).

After almost two years in the pandemic period, Many teachers prefer using zoom application to teach the students because of its' efficiency (Wael Abdulrahman, 2016).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the experimental research. The use of experimental research in this study was to see how Zoom Application can give the effect of students’ speaking skills during online learning in the pandemic covid-19. This action study began with observation in which the researcher discussed the problem in the English-speaking classroom during online learning due to pandemic covid-19 and apply zoom application as the English-speaking material.

Before applying the zoom application, the researcher tested the students’ speaking ability to determine their level in speaking. During the zoom meeting, the researcher observed the progress of students’ speaking ability and make some notes to revise the next meeting to accomplish good results.

The result of the observation was recorded. Furthermore, after carrying out the teaching process, the researcher recites the occurrence in the classroom as the reflection of the action. The researcher evaluates the process and the result of the implementation of the zoom application in English teaching.

The object was third semester students of University Potensi Utama in the academic year of 2020-2021 that consisted of 20 students. To collect the data, this study used some instruments as observation, which provides total concern to the research object of the sense, which aims to explain the situation in-class activities, individual involvement in some activities, and the relation between situation, activity, and individual. Documentation is conducted to obtain information explicitly and test which is in the form of multiple-choice question. After data were collected, they were later analyzed into qualitative and quantitative analysis to explain the result of observation and test.
Table 1. Average Score Of Speaking Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST</th>
<th>FLUENCY (1-20)</th>
<th>PRONOUNCE (1-20)</th>
<th>GRAMMAR (1-20)</th>
<th>COMPREHENSION (1-20)</th>
<th>VOCABULARY (1-20)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST-1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST-2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the pretest, the average score of the students’ speaking test was 49.1 from 20 students. Later on, the average score of speaking in Post-Test I was 69.2, and Post-Test II was 90.7. it could be concluded that using a zoom application can affect speaking ability significantly.

Test of Verbal Fluency

The verbal fluency test is a short test of verbal functioning (e.g., Lezak et al., 2012). It is divided into two groups of tasks: category fluency (called semantic fluency; Benton, 1968) and letter fluency (called phonemic fluency; Newcombe, 1969). In the standard tasks, students are given one minute to produce as many unique words as possible within a semantic category (category fluency) or starting with a given letter (letter fluency). The students’ score in each task are total number of unique correct words.

On each test, participants were asked to mention English words in a specific category as many as possible within 90 seconds. First, category fluency was assessed in two trials: participants were asked to produce words in occupation category and then in the food and beverages category. Letter fluency was assessed in the next two trials: participants were first asked to produce words that start with the letter A and then with the letter D. Students were prohibited to mention names of places, peoples and words’ repetitions.

Test of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way a word or language is commonly spoken in which someone utters a word. According to Hornby (1995:928), “Pronunciation is how a language is spoken; how a word is pronounced; the way a person speaks the words of language”. Harmer (2001:187) states “The areas of pronunciation which we need to draw our students’ attention to include individual sounds they are having difficulty with, word and phrase/sentence, stress and intonation”. But students will need help with connected
speech for fluency and the correspondence between sounds and spelling. These areas of pronunciation are as follows:

a. Working with sounds We often ask students to focus on one particular sound. This allows us to demonstrate how it is made and show it can be spelled. A major concern with English is that there is a far less one-to-one correspondence between sounds and spellings than there is in some other languages.

b. Working with stress Stress is important in individual words, phrases, and sentences. By shifting it around in a phrase or a sentence, we can change emphasis or meaning.

c. Working with intonations We need to draw our students' attention to the way we use changes in pitch to convey meaning, to reflect the thematic structure of what we are saying, and to convey mood.

d. Sounds and spellings Although there are many regularities in English spelling (such as word roots and grammatical endings), the fact there is no complete one-to-one correspondence between letters and phonemes causes many problems for learners. Good pronunciation does not just mean saying words in correctly sound but pronounce with adjusted intonation when having contact with others. This is something we need to draw students' attention to focus on pronunciation teaching.

Test of Grammar

The test of grammar ability is one of the main assessment of language testing. While such tests will figure out the capability to recognize or produce correct grammar and how to use it. They do not need the ability to express the meaning of words or sentences.

However, it can be debated that a basic knowledge of grammar focuses on the ability to use language in expressing the meaning of words or sentences, and so grammar tests have an important role in language programs.

Probably the most effective way of testing grammatical knowledge is the multiple choice test. These tests have the advantage of being easy to grade and being able to cover a lot of grammatical points quickly. The most common type of multiple choice grammatical item is one in which the test maker gives the testee a sentence with a blank and four or five choices of a word or phrase which completes the sentence correctly.
Test of Comprehension

The assessments of reading comprehension are the most common type of published reading test that is available. The first step of reading comprehension assessment are asking student to read a passage of text that is leveled appropriately for the student, and then asking some implicit and explicit, detailed questions about the content of the text (often these are called IRIs). There are some variations on reading comprehension assessments, however. For example, the student could be asked to answer inferential questions and make summary about information which was implied by the text, or the student’s comprehension might be tested by his or her ability to retell the story in the student’s own words or to summarize the main idea or the message of the story. Another common reading comprehension assessment is called a "cloze" task — words are omitted from the passage, and the student is asked to fill in the blanks with appropriate words. Also, young students’s reading comprehension can be assessed by asking them to read and follow simple instructions, such as, "Stand up" or, "Go look out the window."

There are many ways to assess comprehension. One simple way to assess comprehension is by asking students to retell what they read and/or asking a couple of questions and scoring their responses using our Retell Rubric. Maximize time by using the same passage you used for the fluency assessment.

Test of Vocabulary

There are many ways to assess vocabulary whether in the form of tests and quizzes. It's ideal to use multiple assessments to discover the best method as part of your assessment process.

Rather than having students fill in the correct word on a written worksheet, have them use their critical thinking skills to respond to auditory examples of sentences with vocabulary words used correctly and incorrectly. There is some guidance in testing the vocabularies of students:

1. Mention two lists of sentences — one with correct usage of vocabulary words and one with incorrect usage
2. Read each sentence aloud, pausing between each one so that students can identify the vocabulary word and determine if the word is used correctly or not.
3. You can have them respond verbally with "correct" or "incorrect" or manually with a "thumbs-up" or "thumbs-down." Alternately, students could make a list of their responses to score and tally at the end of the activity.
Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis is one way to solve research problems. Using data analysis can answer and test hypotheses (Nazir, 2003). Data analysis techniques in this study use a comparison of the mean in Pre-Test, Post-Test I, and Post-Test II. If the mean Pre-Test > Post-Test I/II, then the zoom application is an effective tool to increase students’ speaking ability. Conversely, if the mean Pre-Test < Post-Test I/II, then the Zoom Application is an effective tool to increase students' speaking ability for distance teaching and learning period.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis, the purpose of this study whether to know the effect of zoom application on students’ speaking skills of the third-semester students of the English Education program, PBI Malam B, and to find out the function of the zoom application for teaching speaking skills. Data is collected by managing valid and reliable research instruments consisting of pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. Test and questionnaires were given during Pre-Test, Post-Test I, to figure out the effect of the zoom application.

Researcher conducted the teaching and learning process through zoom application. The material was adjusted to raise enthusiasm in learning speaking. The researcher asks students to practice speaking skills and then provides a post-test to find out the the effect of zoom application on students’ speaking ability

From the above data, we could tell that there was significant effect using the zoom application to enhance students’ speaking ability. It is challenging for each student to be better for every Post-Test. They were eager to practice and study hard to fix their weakness. Some students have a problem with vocabulary and content, but others have an obstacle in fluency and grammar. Every student has his problems and they must have their ways to fix them.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

After researching at the University of Potential Main, the researcher can see the progress of students’ speaking ability. The main data needed for classroom action research is collected through the provision of pre-test and post-test for the subjects studied.
Supporting data is obtained by giving a questionnaire at the test. The average number of pre-tests carried out in the initial reflection clearly showed that the level of students’ speaking skills was not sufficient.

The average scores for students were much higher than the pre-test average. The findings of this study conclusively reveal that the Zoom Application can be used to know the effect of students' speaking ability through zoom application. In addition, the results of the analysis of the percentage of questionnaire scores clearly showed huge progress in student learning using the zoom application. Therefore, this finding clearly shows that students speaking ability definitely could be improved by using the zoom application. This is good news for students especially in the pandemic period because the achievement in learning through zoom application is as good as face-to-face teaching-learning in the classroom.

The result of this study could not be generated for all courses because different subjects will certainly change the result of learning. This study surely could be used for other lecturers with similar courses. Therefore, the findings of this study are reliable using the zoom application to achieve stated curriculums.

**Suggestion**

After doing this research, the researcher has some suggestions as follows:

1. The English teacher can apply zoom.
2. Both teacher and students should be ready and comprehend in using zoom application to optimize its function.
3. Implications for further researchers who want to continue this research are expected to expand to other courses and using another application to find out its effectiveness and make a comparison with the zoom application.

**REFERENCES**


