STUDENTS' SILENCE IN SPEAKING CLASS: FACTORS AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of four skills that learned by the students in learning English as a foreign language. Through this skill, they are supposed to communicate and express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts in English. Students' silence is a phenomenon that often occurs in speaking class where the students are not actively engaged in a speaking activity. It also happened to the eleventh-grade students at SMA N.1 and SMA N.2 Tembilahan Kota. This problem motivated the researchers to investigate the factors causing the students' silence in speaking class and the teachers' efforts to cope with it. 144 students of eleventh grade and 5 English teachers were the subject of this research. Questionnaires to the students and teachers are the research instruments. The questionnaire data for students was analyzed using descriptive statistic analysis, while the questionnaire for the teachers was analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that the psychological factor dominated the overall score with percentage 42%, linguistic factor 39%, and socio-cultural 19%. While the teachers' efforts to cope with students' silence are implementing various strategies and teaching techniques, using audiovisual media, and personal approach to help students' difficulties in Speaking.
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Keywords: *students' silence, speaking, teachers' effort*

INTRODUCTION

English as a global language is like a bridge connecting people from different countries and having different languages. They can do verbal interaction, so the idea, feeling, and purpose of communication they meant are delivered very well. Along with strengthening English as a language for international communication, English is used not only for everyday communication but also for various fields such as politics, culture, art, commerce, business, and education.

In the education field, especially in Indonesia, English has become a compulsory subject that students have to learn at Junior High School until university level. There are four skills they learn, namely Reading, Writing, Reading, and Speaking. One of the speaking goals is to enable the students to express the meaning in simple short spoken language both transactionally and interpersonally. Unfortunately, there is a popular phenomenon that occurs in speaking class, namely silent phenomenon where the students do not respond to the teacher when learning is running. In that case, students might not be able to

say something, especially about a particular topic in class. Based on the preliminary research, it has been found that many students at SMA N.1 and SMA N.2 Tembilahan tend to be silent in speaking class. They can not practice the task or even respond the teacher's instruction. It becomes a question that motivates the researchers to investigate why they do not actively speak in the classroom, whether they feel shy, nervous, or have limited words to express. While learners often evaluate their success in language learning and their English course effectiveness based on their improvement in their spoken language proficiency (Richard, 2008).

Based on the phenomenon above, this research has two purposes. First, to know the factor that makes the students silent in the speaking activity. Second, to know the teachers' efforts to cope with their students' silence. Hopefully, by conducting this research, the dominant factors that cause students silent can be investigated and the way out to overcome the problems that other English teachers from other schools may face can be found. Moreover, this research will also reveal the teachers of SMA N.1 and SMA N.2 efforts to cope with their students' problem. So the researchers will show the factors of students' silence and the techniques or strategies applied by the teacher to actively engage the students in speaking classroom. This is done to achieve the aims of teaching and learning English.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Speaking

Besides Writing, Speaking is one of the two types of productive skills as stated by Chastain (2004) Speaking is productive skill since it produces ideas, massages, and suggestion and we need to practice. Hornby (2005) says that speaking means saying something to express ideas and opinion. According to Kushartanti (2005) Speaking is a set of voice uttered by one and understood by someone else. Those definitions draw the same line that speaking is producing sounds of meaningful utterances that contain idea, opinion, or feeling.

Then Speaking becomes the most important aspect in learning a second or a foreign language as stated above that the success is measured through the ability of learners in interacting orally in the target language. The learners are required to be able to express their feeling and to be able to respond of what others say. According to Rivers in Erwadi (2004), what the learners need in a target language is the skill to use the language in acts of communication, because speaking is a very complex and different skill to learn especially by the foreign language learners. Simply it can be said that Speaking skill needs direct interactions where a person speak to another directly.

Collie and Slater (2005) expressed their idea about speaking, "Speaking will encourage the development of fluency in spoken English. Speaking fluently, of course, involving speaking easily and appropriately with others but it carries a further assumption in simple term." This statement reveals an indicator of speaking namely fluency. There are five indicators of language influence speaking ability (Hadfield, 2009):

a. Pronunciation

Understanding the features of pronunciation helps the learners to understand the language they are listening to. It also helps them to produce the language

more accurately, though they do not necessarily pronounce English perfectly, just well enough for other people to understand them. They have to know how to pronounce the words that made up of three areas; sounds, stress, and intonation.

b. Grammar

Grammar is required by the learners to arrange a correct sentence in a conversation. According to Hadfield (2008) grammar is a description of the language system – it shows how to order words in sentences, how to combine them and how to change the form of words to change their meaning. A learner who mastering grammar will know how to create good sentences.

c. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is presented in dialogues and reading passages where the new words appear in context and in combination with other words. It is very important for the speaker and listener. The speakers can speak fluently when they have a lot of vocabulary. In addition, the listeners also can comprehend the speakers' utterances when they have much vocabulary.

d. Fluency

Lennon in Cucchiarini, Strik, and Boves (2002:) defines that fluency is the speaker's ability to produce speech at the same tempo with the native speakers without the problems of silent pauses, hesitations, filled pauses, self-corrections, repetitions, and false starts.

e. Comprehension

Comprehension refers to the speakers' understanding about what they are saying to the listeners in order to avoid misunderstanding information. In addition, its function is to make the listeners easily to get the information from the speech.

Silence

Definitions of silence are greatly varied, depending on the theoretical framework. Most researches interpreted silence as face saving, a difficulty voidance strategy, or a silent request for help which is acceptable, tolerable, r indeed productive if teachers are able to engage with students' non-verbal responses (Qi & Shu, 2017). Oxford English Dictionary has the following definitions: 1) abstaining from speech or utterance, sometimes with reference to a particular matter; 2) the state or condition when nothing is audible; 3) omission of mention or notice. In speaking classroom setting, Silence is generally considered as a student's negative response to the teacher since the students do not participate in the classroom interaction (Min, 2016).

Nugroho (2017) stated that there are three factors affecting the students to be silent in speaking class:

1. Psychological Factor

Students are concerned about their lack of proficiency and are fearful of making mistakes. This leads to a lack of confidence in their ability and discourages them from interacting orally; students who feel inadequate in their language abilities tend to protect their self- image by not participating in class communication. Some psychological factors are lack of motivation, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes.

2. Linguistic Factor

The linguistic factors affecting students' silence in speaking activities are lack of vocabulary, lack of understanding grammatical pattern, and incorrect pronunciation. Those aspects, as mentioned above, are three of five indicators of speaking skill. Lack of vocabulary knowledge could lead to students' difficulties in language reception and production and becomes an obstacle for them to express their ideas in English; Grammar provides students with the structure they need in order to organize and put their messages and ideas across; and Incorrect pronunciation can cause the students to be poorly perceived and understood by others.

3. Socio-cultural factor

It deals with attitudes towards the teacher and classroom conditions. The teacher is very important in motivating the students and helping them to be confident for speaking the target language (English). In teaching and learning process, the student also needs classroom condition which gives them a pleasant situation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a mixed-method since the researchers used a survey instrument that mixed quantitative and qualitative methods.

The research was conducted in SMA N.1 and SMA N.2 Tembilahan Kota. The eleventh-grade students' population was 288, and 50% of it or 144 students chosen as the sample by using the random sampling technique. Meanwhile, 5 teachers became the subject of this study. They were taken using purposive sampling technique in which they all were the teachers who taught eleventh-grade students.

This study's instrument was Fifteen closed-ended questions that using likert-scale type were distributed to the students to know the factors of their silence during speaking activity. The questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistic analysis which all the entries were analyzed statistically to determine the means of each item being chosen by the participants. Furthermore, to know the teachers' effort to cope with students' silence, the researchers distributed 10 open-ended questions to five English teachers, three are from SMA N.1 and the two others are from SMA N. 2 Tembilahan. The questionnaire was distributed online through google form, and it was analyzed using thematic analysis. The researchers transcribed and read through the results of the questionnaire, coded the teachers' ways in the speaking classroom, combined several codes into a single theme, reviewed the theme, and finally naming the themes.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

1. Factors of students' silence in speaking

The data found by the researchers about the factors of students' silence in speaking could be described as below:

a. Psychological Factor

There are four categories regarding the psychological factor causing students' silence in speaking: lack of motivation, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes . It is developed into five statements

that were responded by the students and the mean of each statement is shown below.

Table1. The statements of psychological factor

Item	Statements	Mean
1	I am afraid of being laughed by my friends when I do some mistakes in speaking	2.9
2	I am nervous when I have to speak English in front of the whole class or being asked by the teacher that I chose to keep silent	2.7
3	I get bored in learning English	2.1
4	I think my English is bad so I am not confident to speak	2.9
5	I am shy to state my opinion or answer my teacher's question even though I really want to	3.1

The table above presents that the highest score is 3.1, which means that shyness is the first factor that makes them silent in speaking class in psychological problems faced by the students. Students' lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes is the second which their mean scores are 2.9, while students' anxiety mean score is 2.7, and the lowest is for statement 3 about students' boredom 2.1. Students' boredom can be interpreted that they have low motivation in learning English, especially in speaking skill.

b. Linguistic Factor

There are three aspects of linguistic factors that make students silent in speaking activity: lack of vocabulary, lack of grammatical pattern, and incorrect pronunciation. They are developed into five statements and the mean score described in the table below:

Table 2. The statements of linguistic factor

item	Statements	Mean
6.	I don't understand what my teacher and my classmate talk about when they speak in English.	2.7
7.	I use new words to add and develop my vocabulary in Speaking	2.8
8.	I use synonym or describe the word that I don't know the English word	2.2
	I get it difficult to pronounce English words	

9.	I can speak English with good grammar	2.5
10.		2.4

Regarding the three aspects of linguistic factor, lack of vocabulary becomes the dominant factor that cause students' silence in speaking class. It is shown by the mean score of statement 7 and 6, 2.8 and 2.7. Incorrect pronunciation is the next factor with a mean score of 2.5. A lack of grammatical pattern is the last factor with a mean score of 2.4. Statement 8 belongs to the lack of vocabulary aspect and has the lowest mean score. It also tells that the students have limited stock of vocabulary.

c. Socio-cultural Factor

There are two categories regarding socio-cultural factors causing students' silence in speaking class: attitudes towards the teacher and classroom condition. They are developed into five statements that has been responded by the students and described as follows.

Table 3. The statements of socio-cultural factor

Item	Statements	Mean
11.	My teacher gives motivation not to be afraid speaking in English	1.2
12	The teachers help me whenever I get it difficult to answer questions	1.3
13	The teacher gives a compliment when I can answer a question or have performance	1.2
14	My teacher uses interesting media and technique in teaching Speaking	1.5
15	My teacher gives a chance to all students to respond and answer her questions.	1.1

As presented in the table above, attitudes toward the teacher nor the classroom condition become the main factor that cause students' silence. All the mean score are under 2 which means in low level. The students argue that their teachers always motivate them, help them whenever they are in difficulty answering the teachers' questions, compliment them, use interesting techniques and media, and give all students a chance to participate in a speaking activity. It means that they have good attitude towards the teachers for the teaching-learning process they have experienced in the classroom.

The result of the students' responses on socio-cultural factors is in line with the teachers' answers. There is no one of the teachers stated that the classroom condition affects their students low speaking performance.

2. Dominant Factor of Students' Silence

After analyzing each item, the researchers found some final findings which are presented in the figure below:
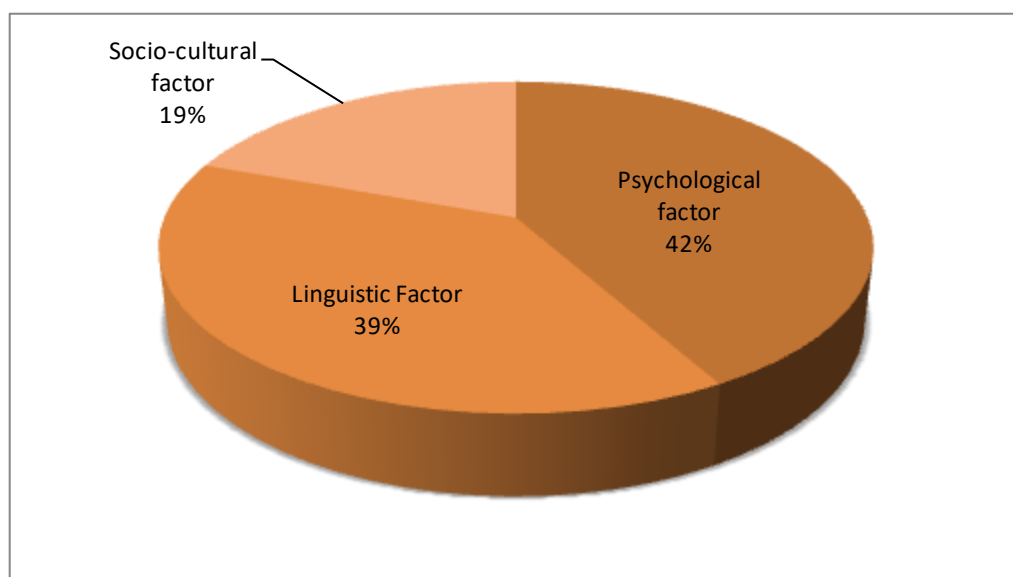

Figure1. Dominant Factor of Students' Silence in Speaking

Regarding the given responses, the eleventh grade students of SMA N 1 and SMA N 2 Tembilahan experienced different factors that affected their speaking performance in the classroom. Among the three factors that make most of the students perform passively in speaking activity, psychological problems is the dominant factor with percentage 42%, linguistic factor becomes the second with percentage 39%, and socio-cultural factor which deals with teacher and classroom situation is the last factor with the smallest percentage 19%.

3. Teachers' efforts to cope with students' silence in speaking

After analyzing the open-ended items using thematic analysis, the teachers' answers sorted into three themes:

a. Applying Various Teaching Strategies and Techniques

According to the questionnaire has been responded by the English teachers, the efforts that they do to cope with students' silence are implementing various strategies and techniques in teaching. Role play, group discussion, elicitation technique, peer teaching, presentation, and vocabulary games are the most often they implemented in teaching speaking. A teacher clearly wrote her stages in teaching, *"Firstly, teaching a kind of conversation. Second, teaching the pronunciation repeatedly. Third, listen the native speakers. I have to make them familiar practically with English. They need to presume English is not such a strange or foreign language. They have to treat that English is their own language. Fourth, they make a new conversation of the material I have taught before. And I ask them to practice as if they are a*

native speaker by expressing as free as they can. They must enjoy dramatically when speaking English."

Besides those strategies, every teacher had their special own technique to break students' silence and motivate them. They were singing a song, telling jokes, giving them more time to do the assignment, not judging their mistakes, and giving rewards or compliments to the students for even their little step of achievement.

b. Using Teaching Media

The teachers also used teaching media to help students' problem in speaking. The use of media can decrease students' boredom in learning. All the teachers used the audio visual media to attract students' attention. The video displayed a conversation of animation characters or real dialogues of native speakers. The students got authentic material of pronunciation as what said by one of the teachers that by listening to western music or watching Western movies, they can learn pronunciation and add the stock of vocabulary.

c. Personal Approach

Some teachers approached the students personally. Being like a friend, guide them personally, such as coming to a student's table and asking the difficulty they faced. One of the teachers tried to motivate the students that English is not difficult and important for their future., she said, *"I convince them that learning English is as easy as learning Indonesia regional language, such as javanese, minangnese, and so on. I also explain the importance of English for their career."*

Discussion

Based on the results above, students' silence in speaking is a psychological factor with 42%. Among the four aspects included, shyness becomes the biggest one that makes them silent. This finding is supported by a previous study which revealed that Indonesian students are culturally passive, quiet, and shy in the class (Exley, 2005). Although they have opinion or idea to share and want to respond teacher's instruction they chose to keep silent. The other aspects that cause the silence are lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and low motivation. Seeing this phenomenon deeper, shyness actually is the root of emerging the other aspects. Shy students are less confident than their friends. They also think that they will make mistakes when they speak and are anxious that their classmates are being laughed at. Shy students have a negative perception on their ability.

The second factor of students' silence is a linguistic factor with a percentage 39%. Lack of vocabulary has the highest mean score 2.8, which means that it is the first aspect of linguistic affecting students' silence, and it also revealed by the teachers that their students have very limited stock of vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of the five speaking skill components besides pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehension. It plays an essential role in speaking as Alqahtani (2015) stated that vocabulary knowledge is a critical tool for second

language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language impeded successful communication. Having lots of English words can be one of the keys for students to be successful in speaking. At the same time lack of vocabulary hits two sides of the students, receptive and productive skills. First, they cannot catch the utterances said by other people who automatically do not get the meaning. The second, as the impact, they cannot give any response. They just remain silent.

The last factor influence students' silence is the socio-cultural factor related to attitudes toward the teacher and classroom situation. With the smallest percentage is that 19%, it can be said that most students do not have problems with the ways of the teaching process or the situation of the classroom. Based on the result of questionnaire, the student give the same response that their teachers have done several ways to attract them speaking in English by motivating them, using interesting technique and media, helping them whenever they are in difficulty, giving compliment, and being fair to all students in which they have the same opportunities to speak in the classroom. So, the students keep silent and cannot participate actively in speaking activity coming from themselves.

Applying various strategies and techniques in teaching speaking, using audio visual media, and doing personal approaches to the students' efforts. According to Daniel (2013), some benefits of audiovisual media are draw the students' attention, create interest for learning in the students, and make learning English easy. The students watch and listen to the authentic material that help in concentrating the attention of them. Applying the various techniques and strategies in teaching can decrease students' boredom and cover all students with different learning styles and characters, including shy students. It gives the same opportunities for all students to participate in the activity.

All efforts the teachers make, at the same time, cover all the factors of students' silence. For example, applying vocabulary games can overcome students' linguistic problems and psychological problems as well. It helps students add and develop their vocabulary in a fun way, making them interested and enjoying the learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, there are two final results of this study. First, psychological problems are the dominant factor that mostly makes students perform passively in speaking activity with percentage 42%, linguistic factor with percentage 39%, and socio-cultural factor that deals with teacher and classroom situation, is the last factor with very small percentage 19%. The second is the teachers' efforts to cope with students' silence are implementing various strategies and teaching techniques, using audiovisual media, and personal approach to help students' difficulties in Speaking.

One of the results that becomes a great concern to the factors causing student' silence in the speaking class is shyness, which is included in the psychological factor. This aspect affects four other aspects, namely lack of confidence, anxiety, low of motivation, and fear of making mistakes afraid of making mistakes, and having low motivation. So it can specifically be made the focus of further research in an effort to deal with the shy character of the students.

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