

The Asian EFL Journal

December 2020

Volume 27 Issue 5.2



**Senior Editor:
Paul Robertson**



Published by the English Language Education Publishing

Asian EFL Journal

A Division of TESOL Asia Group

www.asian-efl-journal.com

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Publisher: English Language Education (ELE) Publishing

Chief Editor: Dr. Paul Robertson

Associate Production Editor: Ramon Medriano, Jr.

ISSN 1738-1460



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Foreigner's Role in Helping Jember Young Learners Speak Better English

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Abstract

Teaching English for Young Learners is the main road to introduce English as a foreign language to lower class group (grade 1, 2, and 3) of elementary school students. In Indonesia where English is positioned as the first foreign language taught at school, children do not yet have an adequate understanding of the importance of learning English as an international language. One alternative to overcome this issue is by creating a fun and positive learning environment and providing new experiences for them to interact directly with foreign speakers. This research aims to investigate the extent of students' speaking skill in class 2C SDN Jember Lor 3 and will also explore thoroughly the factor associated with students' speaking such as how foreigners can help young learners speak better English. As it turns out, the students tend to have sufficient skill in speaking and are capable of conducting simple conversation with native teacher. Concerning to this matter, the adequate mastery of students' speaking may be influenced by several factors, especially those related to the help of the native teacher who models pronunciation, intonation, sentence stress, grammar, and vocabulary using valid and veritable accent.

Keywords: *TEYL, young learners, native teacher, speaking ability*

Introduction

There were several assumptions about the use of the term *young learners* which are associated with the limitations of children's age. For some certain case in Indonesia, we can divide *young learners* into two groups; (1) Elementary school student in grade 1, 2, and 3 identified as lower classes, and (2) Elementary school student in grade 4, 5, and 6 known as upper classes. In the development of psychological theory, there is a connection between age and the process of learning foreign languages. Growth and development are processes that occur not only in the physical, but also behavioral matter. In relation to language learning, including foreign languages, there are some fundamental reasons why English is important to learn from an early age.

In the light of a research done by Lightbown & Spada (1999: 60) on some children whose families immigrated and settled in the United States of America, it was found that those children who had not yet reached puberty could pronounce English words like native speakers. Other finding of the study is that their parents cannot as well pronounce those words as their children. Indeed, they are able to speak English fluently but are still facing problems in pronunciation, word selection, and grammar.

Lightbown & Spada (2013:13) later developed a theory that children acquire the ability to use language to understand others in their pre-school years, and this ability expands and improved in their school years. Another significant development that could evolve in the early years of school is the acquisition of different language register. Children learn how to differ written and spoken language as well as formal and informal use of language. At this particular time, children will need to figure out that the standard variety is required for successful academic work. The work of language learning in the early school years provides additional opportunities and challenges for the students in their later academic years.

MacIntyre (in Aubrey, 2011) urges that “the major motivation to learn another language is to develop a communicative relationship with people from another cultural group” (p. 241). Students who are more internationally oriented have more willingness to speak up and engage in classroom activity using English. In this matter, it seems like teachers of English as a Foreign Language obviously needs to implant international posture in their students. Previous studies done by Boonkit (2010) and Lockley (2015) supported that out-of-class factors enhancing EFL students’ speaking development includes international posture such as listening to music and watching western movies, also through history as content and language integrated learning.

In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language taught officially in school. English is very rarely used in the community in spite of the fact that it is very much needed to be acquired for

learning experience outside the classroom. During the learning process, children especially the lower class groups (grades 1, 2, 3) tend to be influenced by their feelings about their teachers, their classroom situation, their activities outdoor, the teaching methods, and their parents' opinions.

The condition of EFL learners and teachers in Indonesia nowadays is actually similar with those in Thailand. Adamson (2005) elaborates that majority of students are reluctant to express their ideas and do not really respond to classroom activities. They hesitate to ask and answer question from their teacher, and create passiveness in discussion. These problems are summarized by Santosa (2017) and Exley (2005) in their research on learning approaches and learner characteristics of Asian EFL students. Cultural awareness could be the barrier of communication between countries, especially Asian and western countries where English is the mother tongue as they have different cultures and frames of reference (Nguyen, 2020). Ruso (in Mahmud, 2018) argues that “students tend to feel less motivated when the teachers did not provide sufficient speaking opportunities in the classroom”. It means that students need more time to practice their speaking with the help of a qualified teacher.

In the light of these problems, Rahmawati (2016) suggested social strategy and memory strategy. In social strategy, students (in this particular case, young learners) could practice with friends and teachers – native teachers to be precise. Memory strategy includes practicing grammar; which would be best taught by a native, and attending an English course.

This research aims to clearly describe the speaking ability of the students, elaborate the issues related to the teaching and learning process of speaking, and reveal the foreigner’s role in improving students’ speaking ability. In addition to that, another goal is to provide new experiences for the second grade students of elementary school and give them the opportunity to interact with native speakers of English from various countries in the world. Through these activities, students are expected to improve their ability to speak English and practice it in both school environment and daily activities.

Review of the Literature

A Theoretical Study of Foreign Language Acquisition for Young Learners

Learning activities carried out at an early age and adulthood produce different outcomes. Learning at an early age is like "writing on a rock", while studying at adulthood is more like "writing on water". This also applies in learning English. Flege (in Munoz, 2007) argues about the age-related differences in children and adult:

‘The younger L2 learning starts, the easier it is to perceive phonetic differences that trigger the creation of new phonetic categories, while with increasing age, learners tend to assimilate the new sounds to their L1 categories, observing a paradox that at an age when children’s sensorimotor abilities are generally improving, they seem to lose the ability to learn the vowels and consonants of an L2’

In line with this, Oliver (2009) stated that the way adults and children acquire a second language is totally different, and the way they interact during the learning process is also different. In terms of their physical development, emotional, social, and psychological, children aged five to seven differs from those above middle childhood years. Visconde (2006) in her research found that Filipinos who can speak English well were the one learned the language since they were in a very young age.

Fenson et.al., (in Hurtado, Marchman, & Fernald, 2008) explain further on the case: “Infants begin to understand and produce words and sentences through interaction with experienced speakers of the language they are learning. While most children become increasingly proficient over the first few years, they also vary considerably at every age in the numbers of words they can produce”.

Why do we need to learn English early? It is usually linked to the Critical Period Hypothesis: earlier is better. Myles (2017) points out that young children keen on learning new languages and they seem very enthusiastic. They believe that foreign language is fun; they enjoy finding new ways to say things and discover a whole new different world.

When children develop their fluency in foreign language, their comprehension also increases and they would be able to apply more complex construction (Clarke, 2009). Clarke further argues:

“Early childhood professionals have a major role in supporting both the learners’ acquisition of comprehension and their production of English through the use of modifications to speech, use of key words, repetition and paraphrase, and expansions of the learners’ utterances.”

Children have a brilliant learning period called the golden age, ages 6-12 years, which allows them to learn languages quickly. Their brains can absorb the subject matter easily, especially if the material is related to the language used as a means of communication. Hawkins (1999) proposes in his study that in their early stages of learning, most children performed quite well when asked to repeat and mimic undifferentiated chunks of language.

The memory of children's brains is extraordinary. Children have a great sense of curiosity. They like to ask questions, explore things, and look for and find new ways to accomplish things.

Brotherson (2005) believes that the main function of the brain in an infant is for learning, as it is quoted below:

“An infant’s mind is primed for learning, but it needs early experiences to wire the neural circuits of the brain that facilitate learning.”

Elementary school children aged 7-12 years are in the middle-childhood period. According to Hurlock et al. (1990), this age becomes the golden age for learning languages besides mother tongue because the ability of children at this age is more developed by means of concrete operational concepts. Elementary school children are able to understand foreign languages as well as understanding their mother tongue which includes four abilities; speaking, listening, writing and reading. This means that they are in the golden period to learn English.

What are the benefits of learning English early? First, children will not feel strange with English. As they have learned it since their childhood, English is no longer a frightening specter. In fact, English will be more familiar because they can listen to it every time, they watch children's cartoon films from foreign channels. In the midst of a crisis of quality television viewing for children today, it feels like watching foreign cartoon films or events such as *Discovery Channels* becomes a healthy and enjoyable alternative to watch.

Second, children who master English are considered to have more skills that make it easier for them to have an enjoyable school period (Marsh & Langé, 2000). This is because English skills are also taken into account even at elementary level. English-language contests are also widely held and the child who wins it usually has more value in the eyes of the teacher and his friends. Third, the gates of knowledge are increasingly wide open. As is known, English is the language of knowledge, the language of instruction in the latest knowledge, both online and offline. Armed with mastery of English, a child can access more information and knowledge from abroad which makes it easier to update on the latest scientific developments. The impact is higher scores and greater analytical power compared to friends who don't know the information.

Fourth, learning English from an early age will prepare it to be more mature in facing the future. Abramova, Ananyina, & Shishmolina (2013) believe that English is a global language used by most of the world's population; almost all professions, and almost some situations. English is the language of communication, the language of knowledge and the language of business. If the child wants to continue his education abroad, mastering English from an early age will certainly be very beneficial. If you want a career, English also becomes a consideration. In short, English makes it easy for a child to compete in all fields with a strong mental provision.

Issues Related to the Teaching and Learning Process of Speaking in Young Learners

English language skills seem to be mandatory for children today. In fact, many elementary schools begin to teach advanced English (not basic English) to their students. However, English as a foreign language is considered difficult for Indonesian students and young learners, specifically the speaking skill. This is supported by Zhang (2009) who argues that for the majority of foreign language learners, it is the most difficult skill to be acquired and most learners are still incompetent to communicate orally.

The areas of factors causing the speaking difficulties among EFL learners are quite vary (Rababah, 2005). They include the curriculum, the teaching strategies, boredom, laziness, and the environment. Ur (2012) added some other factors covering difficulties to express ideas, inhibition, mother-tongue use, and low or uneven participation.

1. Curriculum and the teaching strategies

The goal in learning English in SDN Jember Lor 3 is so that students can master the language skills of reading, listening, speaking, and writing a number of vocabulary and functional skills in English sentences and utterances related to the environment of students, schools, and surrounding areas. Kersten & Rohde (2013) argue that TEYL requires a specific teaching approach as the communicative context is considered a major issue for young children. For this reason, approaches needed for TEYL should be based in principle of “using English to learn it”. The problems that arise during the process are; first, teacher who doesn't speak English well. For this, teachers who are certified as graduates from the university department of English are required. Second is tools and infrastructure: the unavailability of textbooks in schools can hinder or reduce the motivation of students and teachers. One example to overcome these problems is to provide subject matter related to the daily lives of students such as the names of days, dates, numbers, fruits, animals, and objects that are in the environment of homes and schools.

2. Boredom and Laziness

Children who are required to learn a thing from an early age, one day will experience boredom. This can be seen from children who are getting lazy to do their homework or to find an excuse so they do not need to study because their mind have been divided into other things such as watching television or even playing with peers (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2017). In the early period of growth, children are easily distracted by things around them.

3. Environment

Influences of environment on children's learning language are elaborated in the studies by Asgari & Mustapha (2011) and Hoff (2003). Asgari & Mustapha (2011) discover that environment and parent's education have a strong influence on children's four English skill: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Parents with proper education urged their children to learn English, supported and encouraged them at the early stage which resulted in their achievement at school. In addition to this, Hoff (2003) on the research about *The Specificity of Environmental Influence* underlines that "children whose families differ in socioeconomic status (SES) differ in their rates of productive vocabulary development because they have different language-learning experiences". This means that children who come from higher economy rate tend to be easier to understand lessons taught at school.

4. Difficulties to express ideas

Young children in Jember, as in most elementary school students, do not get proper English education. Due to the lack of education, they have very limited vocabulary. Most of them actually have the ideas and *know what to say* but *do not know how to say it* because they cannot translate sentences into English and afraid of making mistakes, as is it mentioned by Al Hosni (2014). They fear for critics, or simply shy. For some other students, speaking anxiety is one obstacle which prevents them from delivering ideas freely as it is mentioned by several investigators (e.g. Ganschow et al., 1994; Saito and Samimy, 1996). Ganschow et al. (1994) reveals that students experienced a significant difference in their Speaking and Writing achievements in relation to the amount of foreign language anxiety they suffer from. In line with this, Saito and Samimy (1996) examined the connection between the study of Japanese and anxiety, and concluded that motivation and anxiety, along with attitude, were crucial factors which affect learners' performance in productive skills.

5. Mother-tongue use

Teachers in elementary school across Jember are not experts in their fields of education since they have to teach a lot of subjects and topics for the same grade. One who graduated from mathematic faculty, for example, has to teach English, science, and art at the same time. It will be difficult for them to teach English using English language because they do not really understand the structure; as a foreign language, English is not commonly used in daily life. This is the main reason teachers use mother-tongue in teaching English and for class management, which can lead to young learners' difficulties in speaking as it is argued by Littlewood (1981).

6. Low or uneven participation

An ideal class for Speaking is a small one. This can hardly be found in public schools in Indonesia; one class usually consists of 28 up to 40 students. As a result, not all students can participate in the discussion or talk at the same period of time. In addition to this, Ur (2012) argues that there is also a tendency of some students to dominate during speaking class while their peers reluctantly say a word and causes an uneven participation.

Another study by Derakhshan, Tahery, & Mirarab (2015) investigated how to help adults and young children communicate confidently in speaking class. They found that most of the students do not have adequate motivation in learning and the teachers fail to encourage them. From a sociocultural perspective, Robbins (2007) points out that children sometimes feel shy and anxious, sometime forgetting words or tongue tied especially when speaking in front of native person due to culture differences and context in language. Richard & Renandya (2002) in their study state that in order to stimulate students' motivation, teacher must provide interaction among them, conduct more speaking practices and create the needs and willingness to speak.

Foreigner's Role in Improving Students' Speaking Ability

Árva & Medgyes, (2000) argue that native speaker of English offers many special advantages that you can rarely find with local teachers. Another study by Medgyes (1992) believes local teachers can never achieve a competence of native teachers, whether it be education, experience, perseverance, motivation, or aptitude. Issues about native versus non-native has long been discussed in several researches (e.g. Long, 1983; Medgyes, 1992, 1994; García Merino, 1997; Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Bence & Medgyes, 2005). Native speakers have perfect spelling or pronunciation, of course this is because they have lived in places where English is used daily. Some non-native teachers might have better grammar skills than the native; however, their ability to speak English naturally is the most important thing in the process of learning English (McNeill, 1994).

Many people learn foreign languages in an English course or in foreign language schools where there are several foreign instructors. This is very good considering the role of native speakers in teaching foreign languages is very important either as a conversation practice partner or as a source that can explain a little more in detail about language and the culture (Kachi & Choonhwa, 2001). Foreign language learners may be able to understand grammar well and combine several words and phrases to then create their own sentences in the foreign language. Some may even be able to speak fluently after making these combinations and creating their own

sentences. However, often the sentences they composed sounded awkward to the native speakers. Why is that? The answer is that most foreign language learners create their own sentences by thinking and modeling the sentence patterns they normally use in their native language (Long, 1983).

So it can be said that Indonesian who learn English will tend to speak English with Indonesian patterns that might sounds awkward to native speakers of English because the sentence used never appears in the daily conversation of the native speakers of English. This is actually not a bad thing in learning a foreign language, but using clumsy sentences for native speakers can sometimes create a shift in meaning or misunderstanding between foreign language learners and native speakers.

To overcome this problem, a foreign language student should ideally practice often with native speakers, listen to many foreign language broadcasts, and read foreign language articles. If it is possible to be able to meet with foreign speakers of the language being studied it is actually very good because only native speakers are able to judge whether or not the sentences made by the learner sounds natural.

From the above explanation it can be concluded that learning a foreign language from a native speaker is very important (Medgyes, 1992; Shin, 2008). Through conversational exercises with native speakers, a foreign language learner will absorb their language style, and clumsy sentences will be corrected during the conversation. Thus, foreign language learners will gradually be able to speak foreign languages more naturally. If a foreign language learner cannot communicate directly with native speakers, he can use the internet and social media to get the "resources" of the foreign language he is learning. He can get examples of conversations between native speakers and copying the sentences they use. In addition, he can also see films that are equipped with English subtitles, so he can understand what is spoken by the speakers and 'copy' their sentences to then be used in their own conversation exercises.

According to Rhedding-Jones, a six-year experienced teacher for children aged 3-8 in Australian preschool, children tend to maintain their mother-tongue and home values during the day care. He further argues:

“As ethnicity links closely to language, to cultural values and to identity, it is crucial to how people learn, play and communicate. This applies not only to the very young but also to the people working with and for them.”

From here, we can assume that it is very crucial for young children learning language to be assisted with professional, qualified teachers. It will be better if they learn, play and

communicate with a foreign teacher while learning foreign language so that they can adapt with foreign culture as well.

Research Aims

This research aims to explore how foreign teachers in Elementary school can help young learners in order to improve their speaking ability. Specifically, the research seeks to generate data, analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively, concerning the teaching-learning activities of foreign teacher and young learners taking place in elementary school in Jember. As such, the study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the problems faced by the students during teaching and learning process?
2. How can foreigner help young learners speak better English?
3. How is the speaking ability of the students?

The first research question focuses on finding the factors influencing students' difficulties in oral communication during classroom-hour. Problems faced by young learners in speaking (as mentioned previously in review of the literature) usually covers the curriculum, the teaching strategies, boredom, laziness, the environment (Rababah, 2005), also difficulties to express ideas, inhibition, mother-tongue use, and low or uneven participation (Ur, 2012)

Second research question aims to know how foreigner would be able to help young learners speak better English. The researcher defines "young learners" as the research subject, is the elementary school student in grade 1, 2, and 3 and aged between 7-8 years old. Meanwhile, "foreigners" in this study is described as people from English speaking country. According to Davies (2003) "The native speaker is for a start one who can lay claim to being a speaker of a language by virtue of place or country of birth... We need to add the notion of adoption as an alternative; the definition then becomes: by place or country of birth or adoption...". In addition, Rampton (1990) argues that native speakers inherit a language which means that they are able to speak that language well.

The third research question is concerned with investigating the speaking ability of the students after they interact with foreign teacher. What is meant by "speaking ability" in the context of this research is the ability to carry out simple conversations in accordance with the required conditions which covers introduction, greeting, parting, and talking about family members. I would like to know how well these second graders speak English after they communicate and interact directly with foreign teacher.

Rationale behind the research. There are some motivations underlying this research. In general, the results of this study are expected to be useful in the scientific field related to the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language. It is hopefully able to provide a theoretical framework regarding to the processes and results of teaching and learning speaking in class 2 C SD Negeri Jember Lor 3. In addition, the researcher expectantly wants to provide an overview to the instructors and curriculum designers of teaching English as a Foreign Language and teaching English for Young Learners related to factors that can help to improve the speaking ability of the students by the help of foreigners to pronounce words and to have some simple conversation practice.

Method

This research is included in a type of case study research that aims to uncover a phenomenon that exists in a particular unit or group (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, Razavieh, 2010:454). The phenomenon associated with this research are (1) The problems faced by the students during teaching and learning process, (2) How foreigner can help young learners speak better English, and (3) The speaking ability of the students

To get answers to the phenomena above, the research method applied is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative research methods related to the use of numbers in analyzing a phenomenon, while qualitative methods are more related to the description through words to explain the nature of a phenomenon (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, 2003).

Quantitative research methods are used to find answers to the research question, “*How is the speaking ability of the students?*”. The research instrument used at this stage was a test. To find answers to the other two research questions, “*What are the problems faced by the students during teaching and learning process?*”, and “*How can foreigner help young learners speak better English?*”, the instrument used is questionnaire. The steps taken in this study are as follows:

1. Determine the research subject
2. Distribute questionnaires to the research subjects
3. Analyze the results of the questionnaire
4. Conduct a Speaking Test
5. Give an assessment and analyze the results of tests
6. Make conclusions from the results of the study

Settings and Subjects

The focus of the present study is on exploring the teaching-learning activities between foreign teacher and second grade students of elementary school. This research involves lower classes student (grade 2 C) of SD Negeri Jember Lor 3. There are 28 students in total and most of them are in the age of 7-8 years old. They have only been studying English since they were in the first class of elementary school. For that reason, these students do not yet fully comprehend the significance of learning English and should have practiced more conversation in their surroundings environment whether it is at school with teachers and classmates or at home with family and friends. In addition to that, they also do not have much experiences engaging with people from other countries. From here, this research provides an overview related to their speaking ability and bring forth connection with the international world by providing them a chance to connect and interact with foreigners that can expectantly help the students to communicate and to speak better English.

These settings were chosen based on some particular reasons. This research is intended to study the lower class group (class 1, 2, 3) of elementary school students. SD Negeri Jember Lor 3 was chosen because in this school, English is taught since the first grade, while in other schools it could start at the fourth or sixth grade. It also equipped with more complete facilities compared to other schools, like language laboratory and library.

Data Collection

One of the stages of this research is the data collection stage. The first data of this study are related to how well is the speaking skills of the students, and the second data is related to the problems faced by the students during teaching and learning speaking. Other data required is about the foreigner's role in improving students' speaking ability.

There are two methods of data collection related to the types of data obtained in this study. The first method of data collection is obtained using speaking test, in this case a simple conversation covering introduction, greeting, parting, and talking about family member, and the second one is by using Questionnaire.

SPEAKING TEST

During the test, the research subjects are asked to make a conversation with the foreigner based on the situation given by the researcher. The time given for the research subjects in carrying

out the test was five to 10 minutes. This test serves as a research instrument to measure the mastery of simple conversations by the research subjects.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Other instrument related to this study was questionnaire. The use of questionnaire aims to find an overview of the research subjects about the the problems faced by the students during teaching and learning process and their perceptions of the role of foreigner in helping them speak better English. From here, this study not only reports on the students' speaking skill, but also is expected to be able to explain the factors that underline foreigner's role in improving EYL in Jember.

Data Analysis

After the data was obtained from the implementation of the test and questionnaire distribution on the subject of the study, it was then processed and analyzed to answer the research questions. Related to the first type of data obtained from the implementation of the test, the scores of the tests produced were compared with the assessment scale. The rating scale is as follows:

Table 1: The Speaking Category Scores

| Score Category | Interpretation | Frequency | Note |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|--------|
| 80-100 | Excellent | | Passed |
| 70-79 | Good | | Passed |
| 60-69 | Fair | | Failed |
| 40-59 | Poor | | Failed |
| 0-39 | Failed | | Failed |

For the second type of data obtained from the distribution of questionnaires, difficulties commonly faced in analyzing this type of qualitative data are related to how to understand the large amount of diverse data so that a common thread can be found to compile a framework of what is at the core of the data obtained (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, Razavieh, 2010: 480). For this reason, the strategy that has been carried out in analyzing this type of qualitative data is to compose categories from the interpretative framework that represent the opinions of the research subjects that exist in the questionnaire that has been distributed based on the alignment of the meanings / intentions conveyed.

Results

Speaking Problems in the Classroom

Based on the results obtained from the questionnaire that has been distributed to the students, one item on the questionnaire asked the following question: "Do you have any problem learning English (especially speaking)?" and "Please mention the problems below!"

From these questions, we can see the problems mentioned by the students mentioned in Table 2

Table 2: Speaking Problems in the Classroom

| Problems | Number of Students |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Pronunciation | 9 |
| Vocabulary | 6 |
| Lack of practice | 6 |
| Grammar | 3 |
| Fluency | 2 |
| Content | 1 |
| Teaching method | 1 |

From the above table we can see some of the problems faced by the students during teaching and learning process of speaking. Most of them likes to practice conversation, especially if it is based on the real life situation, but having difficulties pronouncing the words and experiencing lack of vocabularies. They also complain about the lack of speaking practice in the classroom as the teacher usually asks them to answer some question on the textbook instead of doing oral activities. On the other hand, some students admit that they have adequate vocabulary and can pronounce words well despite the confusion in arranging sentences. Some others are not feeling confident which results in their not being able to speak fluently. One student says that she actually *know what to say but do not know how to say it*. One of them complains about the teaching method which, until recently, is teacher-centered and text-based approach.

In order to solve the problems, the researcher provided this question: "How would you like your teacher or your parents to help you overcome those problems?" and the answers are quite varied. Most of the students (16 out of 28) stated that pronouncing English words are difficult

due to the distinction of written and spoken context. Referring to this, they would really appreciate if the teacher can learn to pronounce words correctly or provide records of native speaker accent. Students also said that being in the classroom all the time is boring so they asked for more games and outdoor activities. The other 12 students required more oral activities in order to speak more fluently and said that it would be better if the teacher could administer list of vocabularies before the speaking practice. Some of them stated that visiting public places to study is really interesting to be done for their next classes, such as a visit to the traditional market to learn vocabulary on vegetable and food and to practice conversation in shopping. Overall, the students and their parents thought it is a remarkable experience if the school could continue collaborating with native-speaking teachers to help them with the speaking practice.

Students' Experiences in Communicating with Foreigner

Based on the results obtained from the questionnaire that has been distributed to the students, one item on the questionnaire asked the following question: "*Did the foreigner help you to speak English?*" and "*How?*" All participants responded *yes* to both research questions. Most of the students provided the answer of the question "*how*" as stated below:

“Learning English with foreigner helps me a lot with the pronunciation. She also helps by giving clues during the conversation practice. I am able to tell my friends about myself and my family member because she gave a clear example before asking us to practice the conversation.”

Some others believed that foreigner can help with ideas for the content of the conversation, as well as accommodate and guide them to speak with proper grammatical structure.

Compared with the students' responses on problems related to the teaching and learning process of speaking which tends to be varied, their responses to experience in the learning speaking with foreigner is quite homogenous. Students' responses to the questionnaire on how foreign teacher can help them improving their speaking skill are summarized below:

1. Foreigners can model how to pronounce word perfectly as English is the language they use in the daily life.
2. Not only pronunciation but they can as well demonstrate the intonation, sentence stress, and accent.
3. Foreign teacher uses proper grammatical structure in during the teaching-learning process.
4. Students can hear how words pronounced correctly in formal and informal ways.
5. One of the ways to learn languages is by *social learning* approach.

Speaking Skill

Data obtained from the implementation of speaking test related to a simple conversation with the foreigner shows that the majority of 2 C students do have adequate mastery of speaking.

Table 3: The Speaking Category Scores

| Score Category | Interpretation | Frequency | Note |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|--------|
| 80-100 | Excellent | 7 | Passed |
| 70-79 | Good | 18 | Passed |
| 60-69 | Fair | 3 | Failed |
| 40-59 | Poor | | Failed |
| 0-39 | Failed | | Failed |

It is shown that 18 out of the 28 students (64.3%) who took the test got scores between 70-79 (good), and seven students (25%) got 80-100 (excellent). Only three (10.7%) got score below 70 and categorized as failed. Based on the score criteria used in this study, the mastery of the conversation in English for the students was included in the *good* category because — for the simplest reason — they really love and interested in English lesson. Most of them were able to pass the speaking test (64.3% of the total number of students) but only 25% can be categorized as excellent. From these criteria, it is also known that this *passed* category also varies. This variation is related to the top category, which approaches adequate value (good), up to the highest category (excellent)

Discussion

Research Question 1

The research aimed to find out answers to the following question:

1. What are the problems faced by the students during teaching and learning process?

The present study reveals that the research subjects face several problems in learning English as a foreign language: pronunciation, vocabulary, lack of practice, grammar, fluency, content, and teaching method.

PRONUNCIATION

As it is claimed by Eskenazi (1999), speaking will not be considered effective if the nonnative speakers of English do not have correct pronunciation:

“Below a certain level, even if grammar and vocabulary are completely correct, effective communication cannot take place without correct pronunciation (Celce Murcia & Goodwin, 1991) because poor phonetics and prosody can distract the listener and impede comprehension of the message.”

A decade later, Zhang & Yin (2009) did a research analysing problem that frequently occurs among English learners in China. Factors leading to problems concerning pronunciation usually interfere with culture, learners’ mother tongue, and limited or no knowledge of phonetic and phonology. This is similar with the present study concerning Indonesian young learners. Students in SD Negeri Jember Lor 3 (SDNJL) have inadequate knowledge of English phonetics and phonology which later affects their acquisition of pronunciation. In line with Zhang & Yin, Sifakis & Sougari (2005) analyzes on pronunciation issues and EIL pedagogy in Greece. They argue that pronunciation-specific issues relate to “the possible links between pronunciation teaching, English as an international language (EIL), and the sociocultural identity of nonnative speakers of English (NNSs).” So in this case, it is clear that sociocultural identity and mother tongue interference have a huge impact on learners’ ability in pronouncing English words.

VOCABULARY

Leading researchers on the field of vocabulary (Meara & Jones, 1987; Laufer, 1997; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997; Nation, 2001) argue that one of the key factors in foreign language learning, especially in the early stages where learners have insufficient knowledge of EFL, is the number of vocabularies they acquired. The more vocabulary they have, the better they speak, read, write, or listen to the English words (Catalán & Gallego, 2005). This is supported by Catalán & De Zarobe (2009) who highlighted that “the number of words known by learners makes a difference in language learning: those learners with large vocabularies tend to perform better in the target language than learners with low vocabularies.” Based on the interview done with the teacher and the students during the study, students who have high number of known English words are frequently exposed to English media like YouTube videos, cartoon, and TV programs. They also come from upper-class economy and their parents are well-educated people. The questionnaire results from this present study showed that most students in class 2 C of SDNJL understand only basic words used in *introduction*, *greeting & parting*, *numbers*, and *professions*, but that is not quite enough number to be able to speak English fluently. As stated in Al Hosni (2014) that children who do not know the English word to express what they mean will face difficulties delivering their ideas during learning process in the classroom, and consequently, will not be able to communicate well with the teacher and their friends.

LACK OF PRACTICE

Al Hosni (2014) also stated other issues in children acquiring foreign language, like low participation during discussion and lack of speaking practice. This happened due to time limitation in SDNJL that usually only last for 60 minutes per meeting, in which the teacher has to handle around 28 students. I agree with Copland, Garton, & Burns (2014) that class size is a significant factor in learning:

“Big size class, poor teaching and learning conditions”

Sometimes, the discussion is dominated by smart students answering questions from their teacher. Some other time, the rest of the students just feel bored or not knowing what to say. It also happens that the teacher is picky; prefer to interact with the smart students. This gets worse as during the class-hour, teacher usually ask students to do English exercises on their textbook rather than doing speaking practice or doing some fun activities. Students rarely practice outside the school hour as English is not commonly used in daily communication among people across Jember. This is what we call as a “lost opportunity” for sstudents (Bolster, Balandier-Brown, & Rea-Dickins, 2004). They’re not really fond of speaking because English is a brand new language; totally different with the mother tongue, not feeling familiar to it, and they are not yet aware of the importance of English (Buckingham & Alpaslan, 2017; Tse, 2000; Muñoz, 2014). Furthermore, Lazaraton (in Romero, 2009) discussed about issues faced by EFL students and teacher; lack of practice, lack opportunities, and lack of motivation. However, these problems can be solved with solution and strategies like giving the students equal opportunity to practice oral communication and to keep motivating them.

GRAMMAR

According to Lazaraton (2001), speaking is based on some competences. One of those competences includes grammatical competence which covers word and sentence formation, vocabulary, and phonology. Navarro Romero on his study about improving speaking skill argue that English learner, in order to be able to speak fluently, must have a proficient use of grammatical structure of the language (Romero, 2009). This is clear that grammar is essential in improving one’s oral communication. Some of SDNJL second graders seem to have sufficient vocabulary, but they cannot arrange sentence formation correctly. Mostly, the problems deal with subject-verb agreement. They still confuse and not being able to tell the difference between plural and singular, or forget to add s/es to the verbs when the subject is a third person singular. I believe grammar is the most difficult aspects for those children to

acquire. Some of them are not used to speaking in English, have lack of practice, also lack of vocabulary. This is similar to Copland, Garton, & Burns (2014) who believe that speaking is the most difficult skill to learn and that grammar is the most challenging issues.

Surely, there is a good reason to focus on grammar. Harley (1998) evaluated the grammar of the second grader of *French as a second language* in Canada and drew conclusion that "children were able to focus on form and derive benefits from an approach that focuses on grammar". Similar to this, Cameron (2001, 2003) believes that skillful grammar teaching provides certain benefit for young learners.

FLUENCY

In a lot of countries where English is a foreign language, young learners have failed to accomplish native-like fluency due to the teaching/learning system and some are caused by lateralization process (Al-Ahdal et. al, 2014). A study on Critical Age Hypothesis by Lenneberg (1967), an American psycholinguist, showed that lateralization process occurs when children are at about two years old:

“Language skills begin to be limited in the left hemisphere of the brain. This process, known as lateralization, seems to be completed at about the time of puberty. Thus for some reason, puberty seems to mark the point in time when a young adult’s ability to acquire a new language will wane.”

However, every individual has a different level on the degree of fluency due to their geographical accent, tone, and selection of words/tones. This doesn’t matter much as young learners will eventually master English as a foreign language if they keep learning and practicing (Levis, 2006). They have a natural instinct to cultivate language in order to build oral communication with other people. Celce-Murica (2001) suggested learners to read a lot because reading is believed to be able to improve accuracy and fluency in their speaking. Celce-Murica further stated that “*If the learners are children, it is better because they are the most holistic learners for communication*”. To help learner improve their speaking proficiency, teachers need to provide sufficient and proper teaching media and give them a lot of time to practice (Derakhshan, Khalili, & Beheshti, 2016).

CONTENT

In 2014, Lina Lee studied how to improve speaking skill and build the learners’ content knowledge. She found that the use of technology can help a lot with the practice of speaking and writing, e.g. using Voice Thread to practice students’ oral communication (Lee, 2014).

Similar to this, Lasagabaster (2008) believes that content of the speech is considered essential. One cannot deliver meaning correctly if they cannot put proper content in their message. This one of the reasons why teachers and educators around the globe needs to put content knowledge into priority.

TEACHING METHOD

Dilitemizoğlu (2003) evaluates the attitude of young learners towards learning English. He compares several teaching methods used in teaching-learning process and underlines the differences between young learners' and adults' way of learning. Teachers need to comprehend the urgency of understanding students' characteristics so that they can make the right decisions about what is taught and how to teach it. Children, especially those aged 5-10 years, have a learning style that is very different from teens or adults. Children have the needs to explore new things, and have a quite wild imagination (Rust, 1999; Cherry & Mattiuzzi, 2010). Some leading researcher in education (Hannafin & Land, 1997; Sandholtz, 1997; Estes, 2004; Attard, et.al., 2010; Barriage, 2016) argue that Student-Centered Learning or SCL is a learning approach that is believed to be effective in improving the quality of student learning. In SCL, students become the center of the learning process. Teacher provides the broadest opportunities for children to construct their knowledge through learning experiences, exploration, and freedom to choose activities that suit their needs and interests.

As I have mentioned previously that the teacher in SDNJL focused on teacher-centered method instead of SCL. This needs to change in order to give young learners better opportunity to speak and acquire EFL.

Research Question 2

The study also set out to answer a second research question:

2. How can foreigner help young learners speak better English?

Learning environment has a quite big impact in helping students speak better English (Ibrahim & Yusoff, 2012; Yang et.al., 2013; (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015; Ginaya, et.al., 2018). When the surrounding environment is nice, students find themselves high-motivated and encouraged (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015). Foreign teacher can implement immersion teaching in the classroom by facilitating a structured learning environment.

One of the ways to learn languages is by *social learning* approach (Hilton-Jones, 1988; Fitria, 2013; Kiilo & Kutsar, 2012). This approach requires students to make friends with people from

different cultures. When students are interested in learning culture and habits from new friends, they will also be able to easily learn the language.

Foreign teacher also provides abundance of information about their language and cultures.

Learning is helped by the subconscious system of the body. The young learners' subconscious will absorb actions and language quickly and deeply when there is abundant information.

For example, concentrating on a word or grammar might not help you much. But listening to music, radio and films in English, as well as reading material, or being surrounded by native speakers, will allow you to absorb sounds and information unnoticed. For pronunciation, foreigners can model how to pronounce word perfectly as English is the language they use in the daily life. Students can also learn broader, more extensive vocabulary used in both formal and informal situation if they interact directly with the foreign teacher.

When native teacher teaches, English is used as a mean of communication in the classroom and will definitely be in a proper grammatical structure.

Research Question 3

3. How is the speaking ability of the students?

Figure 1 below is the speaking test given for class 2C

SPEAKING TEST

*Read the situation given about **introduction** and do the instruction!*

1. Say Hello to your friends and introduce yourself.
2. Introduce one of your friends to your teacher and classmates.
3. Tell the class about your family.

In Question 1, students are required to do *greetings* and personal introduction. Before doing this, the foreign teacher gave example and the students repeat what she said. There's no difficulty and they can do the task well. They speak with correct vocabulary and pronunciation.

In Question 2, they need to do more difficult challenge by introducing one of their friends to the teacher and their classmates. Usually when they do this, they hesitate to pick the 'one friend' and experienced little anxiety speaking in front of the audience. There still some gaps in their speaking, but they start to build a correct sentence structure.

In Question 3 (students say that this is the most difficult), they have to describe about their family member. They have to speak using a more complete sentence and looked anxious as

they are afraid of making mistakes in grammar and content. They think a lot about what they are going to say. However, the foreign teacher had already given the concept and what they have to do is to fill in the blank like the following example:

I have a big and happy family. There are ... people living in my house. My Dad, my lovely mom, , my sisters and a cat name etc.

In describing the family member, students can also tell about their parents' *profession*, how the family member looks like, and their personality as well, using the list of adjectives given during the class hour.

Figure 2. Speaking Test Result

| NO | ASPECT OF EVALUATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total Score | Converted Score | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---------------|---|---|---|---|------------|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|-------------|-----------------|---------|---|---|---|---|--------|---------------|----|---|---|
| | Fluency | | | | | Pronunciation | | | | | Vocabulary | | | | | Grammar | | | | | | | Content | | | | | Detail | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (21/30) X 100 | 70 | | |
| 2 | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (20/30) X 100 | 67 | | |
| 3 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (22/30) X 100 | 74 | | |
| 4 | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (21/30) X 100 | 70 | | |
| 5 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (25/30) X 100 | 84 | | |
| 6 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (23/30) X 100 | 77 | | |
| 7 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (22/30) X 100 | 74 | | |
| 8 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (26/30) X 100 | 87 | | |
| 9 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (23/30) X 100 | 77 | | |
| 10 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (26/30) X 100 | 87 | | |
| 11 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (21/30) X 100 | 70 | | |
| 12 | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (20/30) X 100 | 67 | | |
| 13 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (22/30) X 100 | 74 | | |
| 14 | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (21/30) X 100 | 70 | | |
| 15 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (22/30) X 100 | 74 | | |
| 16 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (24/30) X 100 | 80 | | |
| 17 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (22/30) X 100 | 74 | | |
| 18 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (26/30) X 100 | 87 | | |
| 19 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (23/30) X 100 | 77 | | |
| 20 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (23/30) X 100 | 77 | | |
| 21 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (28/30) X 100 | 93 | | |
| 22 | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (19/30) X 100 | 64 | | |
| 23 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (22/30) X 100 | 74 | | |
| 24 | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (21/30) X 100 | 70 | | |
| 25 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (25/30) X 100 | 84 | | |
| 26 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (23/30) X 100 | 77 | | |
| 27 | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (22/30) X 100 | 74 | | |
| 28 | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | (23/30) X 100 | 77 | | |

The overall results of the implementation of the speaking tests can be said to have given a reflection of the simple conversation mastery as part of EYL (see Table 3 in *Research Results*). From these results, it can be concluded that the answer to the third question in this study is: the mastery of simple conversation by class 2 C students can be considered adequate in the field of speaking but they still need to learn more about vocabulary and grammar in order to speak excellently.

Conclusions

Back to the questions raised in problems of the study, there are some conclusions we can draw:

1. The issues happening in the classroom during the process of teaching speaking includes pronunciation, lack of vocabulary and practice, grammar, fluency, content and teaching method
2. The speaking skill can be considered adequate but students still need to learn more about vocabulary and practice a lot in order to speak excellently
3. The adequate speaking skill may be influenced by actors related to the help of the foreigner who gave example of how to pronounce words correctly using valid and veritable accent, how to arrange sentence and speak using proper grammar, creating fun and positive learning environment, and providing new experiences for them to interact directly with foreign speakers

Suggestion

Suggestions that are likely beneficial for students are:

1. To develop their motivation and their sincere and consistent learning efforts.
2. Most importantly to practice more conversation in daily life with family, teacher, and friends.
3. In addition to the speaking practice, the teacher might try to use some new methods which will draw students' attention such as interactive games or performing more activities outdoor so they will have direct experience when they have to interact with people in the surrounding environment.
4. Creating fun and positive learning environment and providing new experiences for them to interact directly with foreign speakers.
5. Teacher could also implement distributed practice and social learning for the continuous learning process.

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