

# SPEAKING SKILL CONTRIBUTIONS ON STUDENTS OF USU FUTURE CAREERS

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## *Abstract*

This research dealt with the common phenomena in the contributions of speaking skill on students' future careers. The objectives of this study were: (1) to find out students of English Department perceptions about the contribution of speaking skills to their career; (2) to find out the effects of the contribution of speaking skill to students of English Department career performance. The data were obtained from the utterances of thirty graduates English department students of University of North Sumatra that has involved in the professional world. The research applied qualitative research design. The data were collected through collecting the questionnaire. The findings of this study showed that: (1) all participants had a positive perception on the contribution of speaking skill to their career; (2) Speaking skill could enhance students' communication and interaction, speaking skill support in conducting a successful interview, speaking skill help students in doing job interview, by being able expressing themselves.

**Keyword:** *Speaking skill, Students, Contributions, Career*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English Department is one of the well-known department in University of North Sumatra. In this department, it offers various courses that urge students to be actively involve in any English speaking activities. From the researcher personal experience, some courses also has purposes in making students mastered and understand the importance of English speaking skill. Which believed, will be very useful for students' employment in the future. According to Piquett (2017) there are several workplace tasks that

needs communication skills ability such as, dealing with clients, giving presentations, doing interviews, and engaging in work process and problem solving. From the researcher observation on previous studies, most students agrees that by having a good speaking skill, it will support the success of students' communication and interaction, necessary for teaching, do the public speaking, express their ideas, able to prepare for the interview, and able to work in several fields. Utomo (2019) However, learners personally still deal with some difficulties

in speaking, especially the ability to speak in public. Therefore, through this study, it is expected to help students overcome these problems and become aware of speaking skill significance to their future career

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A good performance of speaking skill is when we can understand our audience and our goals in speaking. It applies everywhere especially in workplace. Mastering speaking skill puts out numerous great impacts for self-performance in workplace. Hudson (2007) stated “good speaking and listening skill are the key aspects for having employment such as getting a job, maintaining employment, and progressing at work. Besides, for the people who can communicate English effectively and properly, they can deliver the ideas and get credits of work to form the idea in working field.” It can be denied that by having a good speaking skill is important nowadays in students’ employability. As Ting (2017) puts it “From the mass media reports and research papers on graduate unemployability, it is clear that it is important for graduates to have good communication skills and English proficiency to get employed.”

Communication and globalization phenomenon keeps on increasing brought by the rapid change in technology. Rapid changes are taking place in the cultural, political, social and economic fields all over the world. This creates a very competitive environment among people. People are lining up to show their abilities and self quality. Everyone is seen as a competition.

Despite that, not a few that are facing troubles in showing the ability they have. Some people still don’t possess speaking skill which can put their employability on risk. This is why no human being should underestimate the importance of speaking skill. Especially for the one who currently in a position as job seeker. Pesky (2017) This resulting for effective communication to be determine as important qualification for employment. It applies for every roles in workplace, especially manager. Effective communication between the employees and the manager is thought to increase the motivation of the employees and increase the job satisfaction in individuals. For this reason, the most important thing for managers to do is to help their employees reach their highest level of satisfaction (İşcan, & Timuroğlu, 2007).

Good speaking skill also can effects self position in workplace. Lee and Blaszczynski (1999) indicate that the importance of communication skills to entry-level positions is likely to grow. Moreover, the increasing importance of communication skills is not unique to PR, marketing, media and communication-based degrees and positions. Just on the contrary : it is regardless of specialty that business employers rank communication skills highly. Siegel (2000) To be success in workplace is not merely achieve by being focus on improving hard skills such as, technical and computer skills. Also to be able to put attentions on soft skills, commonly on speaking and communication skills. Kermode (2017) Good communication skills refer to the ability to transmit and receive information clearly, and include the ability to read the audience in order to avoid and resolve conflicts.

### **Problems of the Study**

The study attempts to provide an answer to the following questions:

1. What are the contribution of speaking skill perceived by graduates of English Department to their career?
2. How are the contribution of speaking skill affects graduates of

English Department career performances?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this article are:

1. To find out students of English Department perceptions about the contribution of speaking skills to their career
2. To find out the effects of the contribution of speaking skill to students of English Department career performance

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted by applying qualitative research. Creswell (2012), qualitative research is highly suitable to address a research problem which contains unknown variables, and it needs to explore a problem from the phenomenon. By using qualitative design, it will help the researcher to gain information regarding the problems based on the participants view. The sources of the data in this study were 30 graduates of English Department of USU. The data in this study were the utterances in thirty graduates English department students of University of North Sumatra that has involved in the professional world. The

data of this study were collected through questionnaires. The researcher decided to use online resources during this research. These online resources includes online questionnaire and social media. The questionnaire was conducted by using the *Google Form* platform. Then in distributing the questionnaire, also looking at the current pandemic situation, the researcher unable to distribute the questionnaire offline. The researcher used *Instagram* direct message to spread the questionnaire to the participants. The data were analyzed by applying Creswell's theories by doing following steps (Creswell, 2009:183). [1] Spreading the questionnaire, [2] Reading and understanding all the data, [3] Coding and classifying the data, and [4] Drawing conclusions.

## **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Findings**

Having all the data been analyzed based on the three research problems, the findings are described as the following:

There are five categories emerged, as supported by Osborn (2008), effective speaking skills result in achievements during ceremonial speaking activities, job training activities, job interviews, and many other business purposes. Therefore, speaking skill contributes to these

categories namely: having speaking skill can enhance communication and interaction, necessary for job interview and presentation, essential for teaching, and support marketing and dealing with clients.

#### **4.1.1 Speaking skill can enhance communication and interaction.**

From 30 graduates that responded to the questionnaire, ten of the participants stated that speaking skill can be use to clarify one communication and interaction. As a human being, we talk and interact with others on the daily basis. These interactions happened in any form of situations among people. Also, the purpose of every human to speak are not the same. In this case, speaking skill could be used for work place communication. In order to create and maintain a good communication among workers is very important. Moreover, when talking to bosses or the people we work for. As Husnul stated, "*Speaking Skill helps me in communicating with foreman and fellow co-workers*" Likewise, Fariz added "*Speaking Skill is necessary in communicating with foreman that uses English frequently*" It is not an new thing to use English as a tool in communication. Besides the ability to speak, to possess an universal language like English is also very

important. Because it create a wider connection among people. Especially knowing every person that we work with might came from different backgrounds, ethnicity and etc. With a proper knowledge of English language, it can help the process of communication.

In addition, speaking skill also contribute on communication in the educational field. As Hans who work as a teacher stated, *“Because I work in an International School that uses English as its daily language, Speaking skill is helpful for me to communicate with students and fellow teachers.”* Reka also contended the significance of speaking skill in work place communication, *“As a facilitator who always meet and communicate with a lot of people, Speaking skill has a big contribution in supporting the delivery of material. So that, it can be easily and clearly understood by the participants.”*

Based on the statement above, speaking skill does contribute in every day communication and interaction at work place. This is in line with Tartan (2013), English speaking skill is needed if the people want to register in workplace such as giving the presentation in English, having the communication with the clients, leading the meeting and

negotiation, and making a communication with other employees.

#### **4.1.2 Speaking Skill is useful for a successful presentation**

Another ideas regarding the contribution of speaking skill to career of the graduates emerged. 7 out of 30 participants agreed that speaking skill contribute significantly in doing presentation. In the professional world, it demands employees to be ready at every turn and situations. Conducting a presentation can be one of the example that demand employees' readiness.

Of course, it is important to be relaxed, well prepared and confident before starting a presentation. Especially knowing that facing audiences can be one of the challenge in doing presentation. Because after doing presentation, it will leave an impression towards the audience. They can value whether the presentation was great, average or maybe bad. Therefore, the key in being confident in doing presentation is mastering a good public speaking skill. This is supported by Windi, *“In doing presentations, especially with clients, it is important to ensure the material presented are properly understood by the listeners as what was conveyed by the speaker.”* It can be understand that giving

presentations is not merely about talking continuously. But it is also important to make sure that the ideas that were uttered received clearly to the audience.

Presentations can be held in several workplace contexts, such as meetings, making reports, interviews, introducing a product or ideas etc. Maria also added her comment on speaking skill contributions in doing presentation, *“(Speaking Skill) contributes in presentation (meeting and training).”* This is continue to support the ideas that presentation is one of the main work place activities that applies in several work contexts that needed speaking skill. This is in line Bodie (2010) Public speaking, an important part of leadership communication, is a crucial workplace skill, and making presentations is very often a necessary part of work responsibilities.

#### **4.1.3 Speaking skill is necessary for job interview**

Job interview is one of the main activity that needed the role of speaking skill. This activity is an opportunity for job-seekers to introduce themselves and let the interviewee know more about them. 6 participants agreed that speaking skill is important for job interview. Not merely as an opportunity to introduce

themselves, but how one person able to do it in such a way, so it gives a good impression towards the interviewee. Therefore, it is important to be in control during an interview. By being aware on the questions asked, so that job-seekers can properly produce a good answer. This also can be a determination for the interviewee to hire a person. As Venice stated, *“Speaking skill is one of the common skills that need to be mastered these days. Especially in order to get a job, almost every companies these days are looking for employees with a good speaking skill. Moreover, if they can speak multiple languages .”* It can be understand that being able in doing technical work place task are not enough nowadays. Even having technical skills are necessary, to possess soft skills such as speaking skill is one of the important thing most company are looking for in a person. Therefore, through job interview people can show off their speaking ability by telling more about themselves, their reasons in applying for a job and their qualities. Hence, job seekers can attracted the interviewee and get the job they desired.

In addition, Mia also stated *“During job interviews and presentations, speaking skills greatly influence interpersonal qualities and has*

*a great value in my career.*” For that particular reason, it can be concluded that speaking skill does affect the quality of a person in doing interview. How people manage to express their ideas verbally influenced by the role of speaking skill. This is supported by McKay (2005) statement, articulating thoughts clearly and concisely will make a difference in both a job interview and subsequent job performance.

#### **4.1.4 Speaking Skill can support marketing and promotion**

5 out of 30 participants agreed that speaking skill is helpful in the process of marketing and in doing promotion. This activity includes the way a person deliver, offer and communicate about one product or service to society, specifically their clients and customers. How a person able to convince others, so that they intrigued in buying or consuming their products. Azri as an entrepreneur commented on how speaking skill contribute to his career, *“In my life, speaking skill has contribute when it comes to marketing. Also, when communicating with customers.”* Zola added *“Speaking skills contribute greatly in negotiation with clients and communication with teams.”*

In addition, dealing with customers is part in the daily life of an entrepreneur. It is necessary to be able to respond customer properly. Knowing every human being has their own personality traits, it is safe to say this is a challenging activity. Still, it is important to make sure every person is being treated with kindness, especially clients. As stated by Uswa, *“It (Speaking skill) is necessary in the field I work in as I always deal with outside customers.”* It can be understood, speaking skill is a necessity in dealing with client or customers. Because in the case of entrepreneurship, people that we might face has their own level of understanding. People became critical especially on consuming something. They often ask multiple questions non-stop. They would like to know the detailed information about one product and service offered. For example in culinary business, people obviously has the rights to know what are the ingredients that contains in the food they about to eat. They needed to know what the food is made and whether it is safe or not. For people that offer products, they commonly wanted to know whether it has an insurance to it. Or whether the products fulfilled the purpose they desired. That is why the importance of speaking skill has its role here. In order to inform and make them sure about the

product or service a person is introducing. Moreover to make people interested on a person's offer. This is in line with Young and Murphy (2003) that pointed out communication skill is one of the skill that is needed in marketing, "Communication skill are important tools in the development of early marketers' verbal skills"

#### **4.1.5 Speaking skill is essential for teaching**

Last, 2 participants argued that speaking skill is useful and essential in academic teaching. Having speaking skill will help teachers to explain about the teaching material clearly, so that it can be understood by the students and make sure there is no misunderstanding. When there are no confusion, this will make the students actively engage in all learning activities. Thus, it will create a harmonious learning process. As stated by Melda "*In the field I work in, speaking skill greatly contribute because I'm a teacher.*" She also added, "*Speaking skill is very influential.*" One of the important way to maintain a good relationship between teacher and learner is being able to communicate. As the person who taught, teacher have to put their focus not only on giving materials, but also on how the materials are given in a good way.

Teachers have to keep in mind that every learners has their own traits. Especially on the process of every learners in understanding a lesson are different. Therefore, teacher has the role to facilitate students by helping them in all learning process including when learners try to understand the subject. This is supported by having speaking skill so that teacher know how to explain, teach and express their ideas.

As stated previously, teacher has the responsibility to be able to deliver the material in a good way. It is done in order for the students to understand it clearly. Presentation is one of the common activity teacher do in teaching process. It is not merely on showing slides full of sentences, pictures and materials. But teacher must have the ability to verbally explain what is being shown. In order for the students to understand and get an information from the presentation. Therefore, speaking skill does help teachers in the process of presenting teaching material. As stated by Fikry "*Speaking Skill contribute in presentation during teaching.*" This is in line with Torky (2006) that stated, speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. In the case of teaching and learning,



teachers as the main act in giving information need a good understanding of a good speaking skill. In short, speaking skill has an important role in all teaching process. Because, it helps in conveying ideas and presenting teaching materials.

## 4.2 Discussion

Had answered one of the question to this study, it also indicates how significance and impactful were speaking skill to the students career performance. As Hudson (2007) Good speaking and listening skill are the key aspects for having employment such as getting a job, maintaining employment, and progressing at work.

Globalization era creates a competitive environment for every person. This applies not just for the one that seek for jobs, but also for the one who already participate in the professional world. It became important to stand out and show what makes a person different from the others. The ability to prove one self uniqueness by performing the skills they have. These days, it requires every person to not only possess technical skill, but also soft skill including speaking skill. Therefore, they can successfully involve in the professional world and engage with numerous people. Cut Nadia puts out her

comment on how impactful speaking skill to her career, *“Yes, of course the Speaking skill greatly affects my work performance. Since my career is in journalism & writing at an international company based in Singapore. Good communication skills, especially in English as an international language, will greatly facilitate a person to interact with the global scope.”* Likewise, Mely added *“Of course, because in the global era and Asian economic competition, we have to communicate in English with the skills we acquire. Moreover, we can contribute by building good cooperation with work teams and clients.”* It is important to keep in mind that it is an obligation to perform the skill we have in order to improve one self quality and set a broader competence.

Reka also argued how speaking skill affects her daily work performance, *“Yes, in building engagement with students and colleagues. Especially when work requires public speaking, presentations, etc. which are done almost every day.”* It can be understand that speaking skill is required in every conversation, from simple to public conversation. Ibnu added, *“Exactly. Good speaking skill really support all things in communication such as expressing opinions, ideas, and explanations that are*

*easy to understand.*” It is crucial to be able to speak our mind in every situations. Letting all the creativity that are kept on our thoughts and explain it clearly in order for the other parties successfully understand what we intended.

For that particular reason, all participants, which are the 30 graduates of English department agreed that speaking skill has a massive effect on their career progression and self-improvement. From creating good cooperation, team works, building engagement with people to expressing ideas. This could support a person in successfully doing daily work tasks and the possibility to reach a higher level job positions that desired. This is in line with Lee and Blaszczynski (1999) ; Siegel (2000) that indicate the importance of communication skills to entry-level positions is likely to grow.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the analysis and findings obtained, due to the discrepancy of English Department students’ backgrounds, it caused the variety of answers, ideas and perceptions on the contributions of speaking skill to their career. The category of contribution that emerged are fully sourced from the

participants’ answers that were received through the questionnaire. It was found that there are various contributions of speaking skill to the career of English department. Those answers expressed in accordance with their experience in the field they work in. Most of the participants work in the education field as a teacher, also work as an entrepreneur, journalist and in offices. The participants agreed that the significance of speaking skill contributed in doing work place tasks. From enhancing communications and interactions, so the ideas are conveyed clearly and able to be understand by the other party. Moreover in doing job interviews, in order to introduce and let the interviewee know more about a person. Also, how speaking skill are helpful in teaching process. In order for the teacher able to do his responsibility as an educator by explaining the teaching material. Therefore, the students became actively involved in learning process, that it will create a harmonious process of learning. Last, how speaking skill helps the participants in the process of marketing and in dealing with customers.

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