

# **A STUDY ON THE SPEAKING ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMPIT AT-TAQWA PELALAWAN**

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**Abstract:** *This descriptive research was conducted to find out the students' speaking ability in term of recount text. The samples of this research were 40 students from SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan. The researcher used cluster random sampling technique to choose the samples. The instrument to measure the students' speaking ability was in the form of monologue, retelling a story in recount text. The students' speaking scores were measured by three raters. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the mean score of the students' speaking ability is 53. From each aspect, it could be seen that the highest score was in terms of vocabulary with the average score of 64. It is followed by grammar with the average score of 60, then comprehension with the average score of 57.5, and fluency with the average score of 49. The lowest score was in terms of pronunciation with the average score of 46.3. Therefore, it was recommended for the teacher to provide more speaking activities which support students' speaking skill, particularly in terms of pronunciation and fluency, since these aspects are the lowest, and the students' need to practice their speaking skill inside and outside the classroom.*

**Key Words:** *Speaking, Ability, Speaking Ability*

# STUDI TENTANG KEMAMPUAN BERBICARA SISWA KELAS DUA SMPIT AT-TAQWA PELALAWAN

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian deskriptif ini dilaksanakan untuk mengetahui kemampuan berbicara siswa dalam bentuk recount text. Jumlah sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah 40 siswa dari SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan. Peneliti menggunakan teknik *cluster random sampling* dalam memilih sampel. Alat yang digunakan untuk mengukur kemampuan berbicara siswa yaitu dalam bentuk monolog, menceritakan kembali sebuah cerita dalam bentuk recount text. Nilai berbicara siswa dihitung oleh tiga rater. Berdasarkan dari analisa data, dapat disimpulkan bahwa nilai rata-rata kemampuan berbicara siswa adalah 53. Dari tiap aspek, dapat dilihat bahwa nilai tertinggi terdapat pada aspek *vocabulary*, dengan nilai rata-ratanya yaitu 64. Kemudian diikuti oleh *grammar*, dengan nilai rata-rata 60, kemudian *comprehension* dengan nilai rata-rata 57.5, dan *fluency* dengan nilai rata-rata 49. Nilai terendah terdapat pada aspek *pronunciation*, dengan nilai rata-rata 46.3. Oleh karena itu, disarankan kepada guru untuk memberikan lebih banyak aktifitas berbicara yang mana dapat mendukung kemampuan berbicara siswa, khususnya dalam aspek *pronunciation* dan *fluency*, karena kedua aspek ini mendapat nilai terendah. Dan siswa harus melatih kemampuan berbicara mereka baik di dalam kelas, maupun di luar kelas.

**Kata Kunci:** Berbicara, Kemampuan, Kemampuan Berbicara

## INTRODUCTION

Understanding English is very important in our modern society and global era. Humans need to communicate to fulfill their needs in their life. They communicate and interact one and another using language in spoken form in daily life. In Indonesia, English is very important because English is one of the languages that must be learned in accordance with the national curriculum.

In learning English language, there are four skills which are important to learn, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills are supported by some components such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciations, etc. and all of the skills should be mastered by the learners through learning.

Speaking is one of four language skills which needs and important to be mastered by students. Speaking is important because without speaking nothing can be conveyed. Without speaking, we cannot share something that we want to say to each other. People with good communication skills have more positive and productive relationships with others, because they will be able to get information that they need easily. In addition, language speakers have more opportunities to find jobs in different organizations and companies. These statements have been supported by Baker and Westrup (2003) who mentions that a student who *can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion.*

Solcova (2011) defines speaking as an interactive communication process between speaker and listener in order to get their communicative goals. Harmer (2007) states that the ability to speak fluently is not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language 'on the spot'. Making students understand the message clearly and accurately is the central focus, rather than the participants and how they socially interact with each other.

In learning a second or foreign language, speaking is the main aspect that must be considered. Success can be measured through students' or learners' skill in carrying out a conversation and interacting orally in that language (Nunan, 2000). So in conclusion, speaking is very important in our life because without speaking we cannot know what others are saying or talking about. And also, speaking is the way that we use to interact with other people.

### Aspects Of Speaking Skill

According to Heaton (1990), either four or five components are generally recognized in analyzing the speech process:

a. Pronunciation

Thornbury (2005) states that pronunciation refers to the student's ability to produce comprehensible utterances to fulfill the task requirements. Harmer (2001) provides more issues related to pronunciation. He suggests pitch, intonation, individual sounds, sounds and spelling, and stress.

- b. **Grammar**  
According to Brown (2001), grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. Yule (2010) states that grammar deals with the language structure, the grammar could generate well-formed syntactic structures of a language and fail the wrong one.
- c. **Vocabulary**  
In order to improve their ability to speak, students must be able to enrich their vocabulary. Harmer (2007) argued that the knowledge of the word classes also allows the speakers to perform well. Willis (1990) added that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.
- d. **Fluency**  
According to Hughes (2002), fluency is the learners' ability to speak in an understandable way in order not to break down communication because listeners may lose their interest. Thornbury (2005) research into listener's perception suggests that pausing is one of the factors of fluency.
- e. **Comprehension**  
In speaking, comprehension is one important thing to consider because the objective of the speaking is to deliver information or the message. Comprehension helps the listeners or the speaker in avoiding miss understanding. Hence, the successful speaking is determined by the successful in delivering the information or the message (Brown, 2004).

### **The Nature Of Speaking**

Nunan (2000) defines speaking as the use of language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency. Moreover, Bailey and Savage in Celce-Murcia (2001) state that for most people, the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing the language since speech is the most basic means of human communication. They add that speaking in the second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four skills.

Supporting the above definitions, Brown (2001) processes that when someone can speak a language it means that he can carry on a conversation reasonably and competently. In addition, Pinter (2006) says that to be able to speak fluently, we have to speak and think at the same time. Thus, it requires plenty and careful sources of skills.

In conclusion, speaking is one of productive skills which is used to produce language that is useful for expressing ideas, knowledge, information, opinions or feelings of someone to others that can be learnt by using some teaching-learning methodologies.

## **Types Of Spoken Language**

Brown (2001) divides spoken language into monologue and dialogue. In monologue of spoken language, when one speaker uses spoken language for any length of time, the hearer must process long stretches of speech without interruption. In a monologue, the stream of speech will go on whether or not the hearer comprehends. Monologue is categorized into two subtypes. They are planned and unplanned monologues. Brown (2001) says that planned monologues usually create a little redundancy and are therefore relatively difficult to comprehend while unplanned monologues exhibit more redundancy, which is made for ease in comprehension but the presence of more performance variables and other hesitations can either help or hinder comprehension. So, it can be said that a planned monologue is better prepared than an unplanned monologue which contains more redundancy.

Meanwhile, dialogues involve two or more speakers and can be subdivided into those exchanges that promote social relationships (interpersonal) and those whose purpose is to convey proportional or factual information (transactional). Those subcategories are classified further into familiar and unfamiliar categories. In each case, participants may have a good deal of shared knowledge (background information, schemata). Therefore, the familiarity of the interlocutors will produce a conversation with more assumptions, implications, and other meanings hidden between the lines. References and meanings have to be made more explicit to assure effective comprehension within conversations between or among participants who are not familiar with each other.

## **Assessing Speaking**

There are five categories of speaking assessment tasks proposed by Brown (2004).

- a. Imitative. These are types of speaking performance tasks that deal with the ability to imitate a word or phrase or possibly a sentence. The example of these kinds of tasks is repetition.
- b. Intensive. This category of speaking assessment tasks related to the linguistic difficulties either phonological or grammatical aspect of language. Kinds of intensive speaking tasks are direct response, read-aloud, dialogue completion tasks and oral questionnaires, picture-cued tasks, and translation.
- c. Responsive. These kinds of tasks include interaction and test comprehension but at somewhat length of utterance. Question and answer, giving instruction and directions and paraphrasing are categorized as responsive speaking tasks.
- d. Interactive. Interactive speaking tasks can be described as tasks which produce interaction either transactional language or interpersonal exchange. Interview, role play, discussions and conversations, and games can be set as interactive tasks.
- e. Extensive. These oral production tasks which are termed as monologue tasks include speeches, oral presentation, and story-telling. These can be planned or impromptu.

The speaking type in this research was extensive speaking as the designing assessment. In this speaking activity, the students were asked to make a presentation on

a topic of their own choice. This kind of talk was prepared and more writing-like, so that they are not designed for informal spontaneous conversations.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research which involved collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of the study (Gay, 1990). It is useful for examining a range of educational problems. Further, Williams (2007) states that descriptive research is research design used to examine the situation involving identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis. Therefore, the aim of this research is to find out and describe the students' speaking ability of the second year students of junior high school in Pelalawan.

The Population of this study was the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan in the academic year 2019/2020. The total population of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan is 66 students. They consisted of 3 classes: 8.1, 8.2, and 8.4. According to Gay (2000) if the population is homogenous enough and the population is less than 100 persons, the sample taken is 50%, but if the population is more than 100 persons, the sample taken is 15% of them. Since the population in this research is less than 100 persons, the writer took 50% as the sample. Therefore, the writer took 2 classes for the sample.

The researcher used cluster sampling technique in order to get the sample. Cluster sampling is used when it is more feasible or convenient to select groups of individuals than it is to select individuals from a defined population in Borg and Gall (1979). Therefore, the researcher used the lottery technique to choose the sample. The class which was chosen is class 8.2 and 8.4, with the total number of 40 students.

The instrument to measure the students' speaking ability was in the form of recount text. In this research, the students were required to present a recount text in the form of the speaking. Each student spoke about 2 to 3 minutes one by one as a performance test. The speech will be recorded in order to get reliable data. Three raters checked the result by listening to the students' recorded monologue. The raters are English teachers at MTs Thariqul Hidayah, Santa Maria, and SMPIT At-Taqwa. The raters gave scores for each student. Finally, the scores of the three raters were totalled and then divided by three.

The formula to analyze students' speaking ability is below:

$$SA = P + G + V + F + C$$

SA = Students' speaking ability

P = The students' ability in pronunciation

G = The students' ability in grammar

V = The students' ability in vocabulary

F = The students' ability in fluency

C = The students' ability in comprehension

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The speaking ability of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan is as follows:

### The Students' Speaking Ability

**Table 1. The Students' Speaking Ability**

No.	Score Classification	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Excellent	0	0%
2	60-79	Good	12	30%
3	50-59	Average	15	37.5%
4	0-49	Poor	13	32.5%
	<b>Total</b>		40	100%

Based on the information above, it is found that the highest number of students is in the average category, which are 15 students (37.5%). Then, there are 13 students (32.5%) in the poor category. Furthermore, there are 12 students (30%) who can achieve good category. Moreover, there are no students who can achieve excellent category. The students' mean score is 53 which are categorized into the average category. In conclusion, the students' speaking ability of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan falls into the average category.

### The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Pronunciation

**Table 2. The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Pronunciation**

No.	Score Classification	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Excellent	1	2.5%
2	60-79	Good	14	35%
3	50-59	Average	6	15%
4	0-49	Poor	19	47.5%
	<b>Total</b>		40	100%

Table 2 shows that the highest number of students is in the poor categories, which are 19 students (47.5%). Then, there are 14 students (35%) who can achieve good category. Next, there are 6 students (15%) in the average category. Moreover, there are only 1 student (2.5%) who can achieve excellent category. In conclusion, the speaking ability of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan in terms of pronunciation is at poor level.

### The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Grammar

**Table 3. The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Grammar**

No.	Score Classification	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Excellent	2	5%
2	60-79	Good	19	47.5%
3	50-59	Average	8	20%
4	0-49	Poor	11	27.5%
<b>Total</b>			40	100%

Table 3 shows that the highest number of students is in the good categories, which are 19 students (47.5%). Then, there are 11 students (27.5%) who achieve poor category. Next, there are 8 students (20%) in average category. Furthermore, there are only 2 students (5%) who can achieve excellent category. In conclusion, the speaking ability of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan in terms of grammar is at good level.

### The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Vocabulary

**Table 4. The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Vocabulary**

No.	Score Classification	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Excellent	5	12.5%
2	60-79	Good	24	60%
3	50-59	Average	4	10%
4	0-49	Poor	7	17.5%
<b>Total</b>			40	100%

According to table 4, the highest number of students is in the good category, which are 24 students (60%). Then, there are 7 students (17.5%) who achieve poor category. Next, there are 5 students (12.5%) who can achieve excellent category. In addition, there are 4 students (10%) who achieve average category. In conclusion, the speaking ability of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan in terms of vocabulary is at good level.

### The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Fluency

**Table 5. The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Fluency**

No.	Score Classification	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	80-100	Excellent	3	7.5%
2	60-79	Good	13	32.5%



<b>3</b>	50-59	Average	6	15%
<b>4</b>	0-49	Poor	18	45%
	<b>Total</b>		40	100%

Table 5 shows that there are 16 students in poor category (40%). Then, there are 13 students (32.5%) who achieve good category. Next, there are 6 students (15%) in average category. Moreover, there are 3 students (7.5%) who can achieve excellent category. In conclusion, the speaking ability of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan in terms of fluency is at poor level.

### The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Comprehension

**Table 6. The Students' Speaking Ability in Term of Comprehension**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Score Classification</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>1</b>	80-100	Excellent	4	10%
<b>2</b>	60-79	Good	14	35%
<b>3</b>	50-59	Average	6	15%
<b>4</b>	0-49	Poor	16	40%
	<b>Total</b>		40	100%

Based on table 6, it shows that the highest number of students is in the poor categories, which are 16 students (40%). Then, there are 14 students (35%) who achieve good category. Next, there are 6 students (15%) in average category. Furthermore, there are 4 students (10%) who can achieve excellent category. In conclusion, the speaking ability of the second year students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan in terms of comprehension is at poor level.

## DISCUSSION

The result of this research showed that the speaking ability of the second year students' of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan according to the score classification by Harris (1974) categorized as average. It can be seen from the mean score of the students which is 53. The number of respondents is 40 students. There were 12 students (30%) in good level, 15 students (37.5%) in average level, 13 students (32.5%) in poor level, and none of the students achieved excellent level.

From the students' mean score in each aspect, it could be seen that the lowest score was in terms of pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. In speaking English, students have to speak with the correct pronunciation in order that the listeners can grasp the message of what is said. The English sounds have to be pronounced correctly. According to Dardjowidjojo (2009), sound or combination of sounds are causing different meanings it will lead the hearers to misunderstand what is being tried to deliver. For Indonesian students, learning pronunciation and speak English fluently considered quite difficult as they have been used to speak with their mother tongue since childhood. According to Harmer (2007), there are many problems faced by

students to study pronunciation. First, some students have great difficulty hearing pronunciation features which they want them to reproduce. Frequently, speakers of different first languages have problems with different sounds. Second, learning a foreign language often presents with the problem of physical unfamiliarity (i.e. it is actually physically difficult to make the sound using particular parts of the mouth, uvula or nasal cavity). Last, some of students find it extremely difficult to hear tunes or to identify the different patterns of rising and falling tones.

The grammar and vocabulary aspects in this study were in the good category. For the reason that students were given the opportunity to prepare the text they will present in advance. Therefore, the students can make their text effectively, taking into account the existing grammar, and also with the help of a dictionary, and get as much vocabulary as they want. So far, grammar has always been considered a difficult aspect to learn, so that teachers prioritize their time to teach grammar to students, by using a variety of fun activities in the classroom. Teaching grammar by using audio visual aids and authentic materials comes to the inference that grammar is no longer tedious, but interesting and dynamic when authentic materials are used to grammar teaching (Eun, 2010). According to Elkilic and Akca (2008), positive attitudes of students studying English grammar at a private primary EFL classroom towards studying grammar. A little more than fifty percent of their participants stated to enjoy grammar very much and only approximately ten percent reported having some difficulty in learning and remembering grammar.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The conclusions that can be obtained after conducting research entitled A Study on the Speaking Ability of the Second Year Students of SMPIT At-Taqwa Pelalawan was that the speaking ability of the students is at the average level; with the mean score 53. Based on the five speaking aspects discussed in this study, the result of data analysis shows that the highest score is in terms of vocabulary, with the mean score 64. The lowest score is in terms of pronunciation, with the mean score 46.3.

### **Suggestion**

Based on the conclusion, the researcher would like to offer several recommendations which are expected to be useful in the process of teaching and learning English especially in speaking;

1. It is recommended to the teacher to provide more speaking activities which support the students' speaking skill, particularly in terms of pronunciation and fluency since these are the lowest aspect.

2. It is recommended to the students to practice their speaking skill inside and outside the classroom, particularly in terms of pronunciation and fluency in order to have better speaking skill.
3. It is recommended to the next researcher to conduct extended research about speaking ability by using different instruments and methodologies.

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