

AVAILABILITY OF LANGUAGE INPUT, CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN LEARNING LANGUAGE AND MOTIVATION AND ITS RELATION TO LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT

There are several factors affecting learners' language proficiency. Those are availability of language input, conducive social environment, availability authentic materials, and motivation. This case study aims to investigate the way how the learner's language proficiency in speaking English is, how the availability of language input affects the learner's language acquisition, what the roles of the environmental factors in helping the learner mastering English are, and how the learner motivates himself in learning English. In-depth interview is used to collect the data and the subject of this study was the eleventh grade student from a science class at SMAN 3 Malang. The results show that he answered all of the questions briefly and clearly as if he got all of the ideas from each of the question. In terms of his fluency, it is in scale 4 because he spoke with near-native fluency and any hesitation did not interfere the communication. Besides, his pronunciation and intonation is in scale 3. It was concluded that there were only few mistakes in his pronunciation although he used Indonesian accent. In using grammar and vocabulary, the subject of this study is in scale 3 because he mostly used grammar and vocabulary choice or diction correctly. The subject shows that he does intentional learning. He takes English course instead of just learn English at school. Besides, the kinds of motivation found are integrated and instrumental motivation.

Keyterms : language proficiency, conducive environments and motivation

INTRODUCTION

Acquiring a second language is never simple as it seems. Learners must face several new terms related to language like new vocabularies, structure or grammar, idioms, pronunciation and others. Some individuals, however, achieve better than others in acquiring a second language. According to several researches, there are several aspects behind these differences and have formed theories that may be helpful to English as second language learners in developing language skills in both academic achievement and social interaction.

Learners' characteristics, such as introvert and extrovert, seem to play a role in how well they can acquire a language. Introvert can be defined as a learner who is more interested in his own thoughts and feelings than in things outside himself, and is often shy and unwilling to speak or join in activities with others (Zhang, 2008). In other words, learner who is introvert tends solve problems by him or herself such as opening a book or pace back and forth to come for solution. However, there are some examples

of introvert EFL learners becoming proficient regardless of their timidity in language classes (Anthony, 1963; Entwistle, 1972; Morris, 1979 in Mohammadian). It can be noticed that introvert cannot be an indicator for someone to consider the language proficiency level.

Another characteristic is extrovert. Learner who is more interested in what is happening around him than in his own thoughts and emotions can be called as extrovert learner. If the extrovert learner has problems, he or she would more than just likely find someone to help. In other word, he or she overcomes the problems by sharing ideas, feeling, arguments, and opinion during interaction with others. Besides that, extrovert learner who is confident and outgoing finds it easier to learn a second language. They have less fear of making mistake, and making mistakes is an integral part of learning a new skill, especially language skills. Naiman and Todesco (1975) also argued that extroverts will be willing to try to communicate even if they are not sure they will succeed. In conclusion, Extroverts likely achieve better in language acquisition.

The situational and environmental factor also plays significant impacts in acquiring language. According to Wang (2009) said that most of us know or know of learners who have learnt to speak a foreign language quite fluently because of their situational and environmental. Acquiring language is not only based on teaching and learning process. They who travel and work abroad a lot, stay in their own country but who mix with speakers of another language can acquire language. Besides that, learners whose families and communities support the process language acquisition will have better result in language mastery. The higher amount of language exposure will be essential. Learners do better when they try to learn new language more because it is where the shaping process happens. Besides, language learners also need more exposure to native English speakers, both written and spoken form. If learners are provided with more native-like language, the level of competence will improve faster.

Further, motivation is considered significant in its role in acquiring language. Along this line of thoughts, learners' motivation in learning English can influence their learning results. Motivation is one of some factors affecting second language learning. Harmer (2007) defines motivation as "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal or internal drive in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized, and successfully or unsuccessfully acted out". Those can be concluded that Motivation is simply as an interest, curiosity, or a desire to achieve. So, in order to understand why language learners were motivated, it is essential to understand the learners' ultimate goal or purpose for learning the language. There are some kinds of motivation according to some experts. Gardner (1985) stated in his theory that motivation is identified in two distinct orientations; namely, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Both of them affect foreign language learners in one way or another.

From those preceding aspects affecting the language acquisition, a case study was conducted in order to know what the effective ways of acquiring a language are. Therefore, this study will formulate research problems as follows:

1. How is the learner's language proficiency in speaking English?
2. How does the availability of language input affect the learner's language acquisition?
3. What are the roles of the environmental factors in helping the learner mastering English?
4. How is the learner's motivation in learning English?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Since the study is a case study, in collecting the data the researchers conducted an in-depth interview. The subject of this study was the eleventh grade student from a science class at SMAN 3 Malang. The initial name is VS. The researchers chose him because he is considered as the most proficient learners at his school. The detailed analysis of how proficient he is in speaking English can be seen in the research findings. The instruments used in this study were tape recorder, interview guide, and notes. Besides, the researchers used scoring rubric which was adapted from Cohen and Brown (2001) in scale 1-4. (See Appendix 1)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Subject's English Proficiency

The accuracy and fluency of language use can be seen from the speaking ability someone has. Before going further into the analysis, it is also important to measure the subject's proficiency in speaking English. Speaking is needed in learning language because it functions as the vehicle of communication. Thus, in investigating the subject's speaking ability, the subject was interviewed using several questions related to his interest, hobbies, and families. The subject's level of English acquisition will be measured based on the following aspects: communicative, fluency, the use of grammar and vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Seen from scale 1-4, the subject's communicative aspect was 3. It was concluded because he showed his doubts in answering the questions and he asked for the repetitions. However, he answered all of the questions briefly and clearly as if he got all of the ideas from each of the question. In terms of his fluency, it is in scale 4 because he spoke with near-native fluency and any hesitation did not interfere the communication. Besides, his pronunciation and intonation is in scale 3. It was concluded because the researchers found that there were only few mistakes in his pronunciation although he used Indonesian accent. In using grammar and vocabulary, the subject of this study is in scale 3 because he mostly used grammar and vocabulary choice or diction correctly. However, the number of his diction was limited. In sum, the score of the subject's speaking skill is 89 as measured based on the accumulation score on the speaking rubric used. (See appendix 1)

The score of the subject's speaking showed that he acquired the language well because he could answer the questions by not only saying yes or no but he mentioned the reasons as well. He could express his opinion and shared his thoughts when the researchers asked his opinion in the interview sessions. It was concluded that the subject' level of acquisition has reached the intermediate level. As synthesized from Krashen (1983), there are five stages to predict learners' ability. There are silent period, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency. Based on these stages, the subject of this study belongs to intermediate fluency because of several aspects were present in this stage. In the intermediate level, learners tend to use more complex sentences when speaking. They are willing to express opinions and share their ideas. They clarify what they have learned in the class. The learners are also able to comprehend English literature and social content. They also use strategies from their native language to learn content in English. Some of those aspects were shown during the first session of the interview. The subject has a friend from Thailand who speaks native-like to practice his English. Besides, he also uses several books, magazines, and video to improve his English. Thus, the English of proficiency of the subject of the study is considered as good.

There are many factors influencing the level of proficiency of the subject. These factors are availability of language input, conducive environment for learning English, and motivation.

The Availability of Language Input

Based on the interview, the subject confessed that he has already learnt English since he was in first grade of elementary school. It is about 9 years until now. It shows that it has been long enough for him to learn English. Zhao and Morgan (2004) concluded that there are potential advantages in an early start to second language acquisition. In this early age, learners learn their second language unconsciously. They show natural desire to participate in their social life which can also help them in learning language. Related to this study, the subject has great willingness to learn English seen from when he starts to learn that language.

The subject shows that he does intentional learning. He takes English course instead of just learn English at school. He goes to the course once a week. In his course, he usually speaks English with his friend from Thailand. His friend speaks English every time they meet so the subject can practice his English.

Transcription Convention

I : Interviewer

VS : The subject's initial name

Episode 1

I : What about speaking?

VS : Aaa... and then because I'm in a group in my course with my English friends who speak English everytime I meet them

I : Ok, so you take English course?

VS : Yes

I : How often was that in a week?

Based on the transcription above, we can see that the subject try to learn English not only at school but also at the English course. He practices his speaking skills by interacting with his friends and because one of them is from Thailand, so they communicate by using English. Alsayed (2003) in his research found that by doing early exposure to the second language, learners could have high achievement in oral skills. Related to the subject in this research, it is seen from the scoring rubric above that the subject's speaking skills is good. It is likely as the result of learning through exposure.

In learning English, he never interacts with the native speaker of English because he does not have English native speaker teacher. However, few of his teachers in English course, which is from Indonesia, had been stayed in United States for few years so the teachers speak like the native speaker. Besides, the subject also learns English by practicing his English with his parents even though it is not quite often. He said that he uses English almost everyday in written or spoken. He usually speaks English with his parents, friends, and teachers. Following is the transcription of interview about this issue.

Transcription Convention

I : Interviewer

VS : The subject's initial name

Episode 2

VS : Yes, my friends and then my parents and then my teachers, and then umm yes from native speakers from aaa...

I : With your parents, how often do you use English?

VS : Not really often

I : Not really often but once in a while use English

VS : Yes

Referring to Dulay, et. al. (1982) about frequency as one of the micro-environmental factors, it is known that the more learners hear the second language they would acquire that language sooner. In other word, by doing communication, speakers can express their ideas, opinion, arguments, and feeling by speaking to their hearers. Automatically, hearers without forcing to give feedback to their interlocutors indirectly get positive impact to their second language acquisition. The subject in this research hears English quite often because he hears in his school, in his course, and also in his house.

Besides, one of macro-environmental factors, target language models, also influences the availability of the learners' language input. Parents are the closest environment to the subject. Thus, it could help him in acquiring English. Muho and Kurani (2001) also concluded that interaction gives positive effect on learner's development of second language acquisition. Interaction may provide challenging situation for the learners to

understand the process of acquisition. By having interaction, they may engage in discussion and since it happens in conversation, the language learning process is meaningful.

Regarding to the incidental learning, sometimes he reads books, watches some English programs on TV and also in the internet to help him learn English. In improving his vocabulary, he reads English written novel entitled “The Hunger Games”. In that novel, he likes a character named Peeta. Based on Yamashita (2013) in his investigation, reading a text which student chooses by him/ herself will increase the positive feeling towards reading attitude. It also may increase learner’s intrinsic motivation more than their extrinsic motivation. Moreover, by watching some English programs or videos, he indirectly learns about the pronunciation from the native speaker like the accent. It could help him in learning English since he does not have any native speaker teacher.

Conducive Environment for Language Learning

One of the important factors to support learners learning English is to provide them with the conducive and accommodating environment. Several effective ways can be addressed to achieve a perfect environment in learning English. Based on the interview conducted to the subject of the study, it was found that the availability of the authentic reading materials is helpful to improve learners’ English skills. The subject said that in his house, National Geographic magazine is provided. It is also said that the subject has some favorite pages from the magazine. One of his favorite pages from the magazine is about anything related to wild animals. It is likely that he enjoys reading the part and he also finds it interesting. In short, he does reading as an enjoyment.

Transcription Convention

I : Interviewer
VS : The subject’s initial name

Episode 3

I : You already mentioned about some magazines that you read including National Geographic. Do you have other source of reading materials like books that help you learning English?

VS : I only read the magazine and some other articles on the internet.

The availability of other kinds of books as accommodating materials has also played a role in providing the subject with a conducive environment in learning. However, as stated by the subject during the third session of the interview, it was known that the subject does not have any more books to read but internet articles and magazines. It seems that the subject does not have any interest to read other kinds references except from magazines and online articles. It was then noted that the subject is only motivated to read when the reading materials is in the form of articles taken from magazine or online articles. That is quite reasonable knowing that those two reading sources are interesting. Moreover, the subject does not seem to enjoy reading a bit serious topic.

He is likely interested only in reading enjoyable materials. This might be a basic dilemma for language learners who still reach the intermediate level.

Transcription Convention

I : Interviewer

VS : The subject's initial name

Episode 4

I : How about the role of your friends in learning English? Do you believe that their role is also important?

VS : I think their role is not big because sometimes they do not speak English much and if I speak English they will say that I am “*Keminggris*”, just like that.

Friends and colleagues will be the last mentioned factors needed to build a conducive environment in learning English. Having more friends to learn English will be better. Friends and colleagues will be of a benefit as an individual will have someone to communicate with in English. However, the subject noted that his friends, specifically his classmates, do not really motivate him to learn English. When he speaks English in class, not during the English class, he said that his friends just ignore him and even emphasize that he should not speak English when it is not the English lesson. Although his friends often show him that negative attitude, thing from the subject never feels unmotivated by his friends' attitude toward speaking in English.

From the finding taken from the interview, it can be concluded that there are several aspects that support a conducive environment in learning English. The aspects are the availability of authentic reading materials like online articles and magazines and the role of friends or colleagues. Since the last two aspects mentioned are related to motivation, it will be explained further in the next sub chapter. Hence, be the focus of the discussion here is the availability of authentic materials since it is considered as the key aspect.

According to Jordan (1997:113), authentic materials are texts that are not written or designed for language teaching purposes. The purpose of using the authentic materials is to allow learners to enjoy reading or watching it. Guariento& Morley (2001: 347) stated that authentic materials is important for learners since it increases learners' motivation for learning, makes the learner be exposed to the contextual and meaningful language. The main advantages of using authentic materials are:

- a. they have a positive effect on learner motivation
- b. they provide authentic cultural information
- c. they provide exposure to real language
- d. they relate more closely to learners ' needs
- e. they support a more creative approach to teaching.

In teaching discourse, or preferably in learning it, authentic materials are suggested to be used. The reason is that authentic materials will result on a meaningful learning. Learners will not only read for understanding, but they will also read to make themselves familiar to the culture and context a text possesses. Besides, authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation. Learners will be motivated more if they learn something that is also useful to their life and environment. Authentic materials might also be able to fulfill the learners' needs and interests. Not all learners like to read textbooks. Rather, it will be better if the English language teachers provide varied reading materials so that learners can choose which text suits to their interest.

Motivation

As we know that factors that influence the level of learners' proficiency in learning English especially learners especially in speaking are language aptitude, learning, intelligence, and personality. Another factor which is frequently cited to explain why some learners are more successful than others is individual motivation. According to Troike (2006:20), motivation can be defined as need and desire to learn. In other word, motivation is simply as an interest, curiosity, or a desire to achieve. Motivation involves the attitudes and affective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn an L2. Troike (2006:86) also explained about the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation. In this study, researchers analyzed kinds of motivation found in the subject who have being studied English at SMA 3 Malang.

Integrative motivation

According to Mohammadian (2013: 2037), learners who have integrative motivation generally identify with the people in the target language group, have the curiosity to understand its culture, and may even want to be accepted as a member by the language community. Troike(86) also define motivation as the interest in learning L2because of a desire to learn about or associate with the people who use it(e.g. for romantic reasons), or because of an intention to participate or integrate in the L2-using speech community. In other word, integrative motivation deals with language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment. Based on the interview with the subject, he has integrative motivation. The fragment of conversation between the interviewer and the subject can be seen below:

Transcription Convention

I : Interviewer

VS : The subject's initial name

Episode 5

I : Next..do you have anything to say about English? What English means to you?

VS : I think English means a lot for me because it helps me to communicate with some foreigners..and then to improve my skill in leaning language..and then because English helps me to learn other languages because English relates with languages like French and

Episode 6

- I : Ok..that is quite commitment right..then..is there anything to say that why you are interested in learning English?
- VS : Ooo..because I was motivated by my father to learn English and then I was motivated by my teacher in school..and then my English course teacher to learn English because I will get some good experiences by learning English just like speaking with foreigners, and then..ooo.. I can understand more articles fromthe outside world from the Europe and united state of America..their articles I think are better than Indonesian articles...so I can learn more.

Based on the conversation above, it was found that learner is motivated to learn English because he thinks that English means everything for him. He also said that English helps him to communicate with foreigners. In addition, he is motivated by his parents, teachers, and his friends. Because he wants to be able to communicate with foreigners, it was noticed that the learner has integrative motivation because he wants to be accepted as a member of English community. Madsa (2012:2) noticed that learners who have integrative motivation want to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak.

Instrumental Motivation

According to Gardner (1983:203), instrumental motivation is "learning a language because of someone or less clearly perceived utility it might have for the learner. Troike (2006:86) added that Instrumental motivation involves perception of purely practical value in learning the L2, such as increasing occupational or business opportunities, enhancing prestige and power, accessing scientific and technical information, or just passing a course in school. In other word, learners who have instrumental motivation want to learn language just for more immediate or practical goals such as to pass examination. Based on the interview with the learners, he has instrumental motivation. The fragment of conversation between the interviewer and the student can be seen below:

Episode 7

- I : Okay..So you interested in debate..what about the role of English regarding to reaching your future goals...do you think English will has a big impact in reaching your future goal..dreams..thinks like that..?

VS : ????

I : Interviewer
VS : The subject's initial name

Episode 8

I : Okay..good.. the last question..give me brief reason why since now you keep studying English

VS : Yes..as I have told you before...because I want to travel around the world...then I want to get a good job..and then I think quitting from something is not good especially quitting from learning English because it is really important and....

I : It is an international language

VS : Yeah..it is an international language

Based on the analysis of the fragments of conversation above, it was found that the subject does not have only integrative motivation but also instrumental motivation. He learns English because he think that people who master in English have more opportunities to get good jobs than people who does not. Besides, to make the answer reliable, the interviewer replied the similar question regarding to the instrumental motivation and the subject said again that he learns English because he wants to get a good job. So, it indicates that subject has another kind of motivation called instrumental motivation. According to Tahaineh and Daana (2013: 163), with instrumental motivation the purpose of language acquisition is more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, requesting higher pay based on language ability, reading technical material, translation work achieving higher social status.

CONCLUSIONS

There are several factors affecting learners' language proficiency. Those are availability of language input, conducive social environment, availability authentic materials, and motivation. From the interview conducted to the subject of the study, it is believed that he belongs to intermediate fluency. The subject has reached the aspects

required as explained previously. In reaching the aspects, the factors of language proficiency have played a role. Firstly, various language inputs affect the subject in improving his language skills. As explained, he learns English from his native friend, course teacher, school teacher, and his classmates. The more language input an individual has, the more advantageous it is in his language improvement. Secondly, referring to the conducive of the social environment, the subject of the study is provided with several authentic materials such as magazine and online articles. Authentic materials seem to help the subject learn language enjoyably and it also motivates him to learn English. Finally, there are two kinds of motivation that the subject emphasized. He has integrative and instrumental motivation. Related to integrative motivation, the subject is motivated to learn English because he is eager to communicate with foreigners. Seen from the instrumental motivation, the subject learns English because later in the future, he wants to get a good job.

Based on the previous discussion, it is suggested for the teachers that they should provide authentic materials for learners. It will be helpful for the learners since the learning activities will be incidental learning. In addition, teachers should not implemented learning activities which include instrumental motivation. Learners will not effectively learn if after learning, they just expect something in return. For parents, it is important to note that they should always support their children's learning by providing them with some materials like English magazine and TV cable to improve the language exposure. Finally, it is also the role of the parents who guide and motivate their children to learn. Parents are the ones having the most of the time being with children. Therefore, the parents' role to give guidance and motivation to the children is irreplaceable.

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