

CASE STUDY: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE INPUT AVAILABILITY, LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, AND MOTIVATION IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: ENGLISH SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

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Abstract

The discussion of factors affecting the acquisition of second language has turned into a profound prodigy among linguists. On behalf of it, this research has focused on examining the role of those three factors selected: language input availability, learning environment, and motivation toward the second language acquisition. The method in this research was qualitative descriptive. Instrumental case study approach was selected as the research design to illuminate a particular issue regarding second language acquisition in term of English speaking proficiency. Qualitative research was selected as a fundamental methodology in examining the proficiency level of speaking skill of the subject which is influenced by the affective factors. The data was collected through deep-informal interview, document observation, and filling speaking score rubric. For its framework for analysis, the research drew upon embedded and reflective analysis that focused on exploring a single case in which the purpose was to elicit detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event. The interpretation of data was based on both an emic, the insider as well an etic the outsider perspectives. In doing so, the research thus aimed at investigating and providing a depiction on how the three aspects above contribute to the subject's current level of English speaking proficiency. The findings revealed that aspects of language such as language input, learning environment, and motivation belonged to "Good" category. As the consequence, they determined the research subject's language proficiency into 'Intermediate' level.

Key words: Language Input, Learning Environment, Motivation, Speaking

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the way of expressing ideas and emotions in the form of signs and symbols. These signs and symbols are used to encode and decode the information. There are many languages spoken in the world. The first language learned by a baby is his or her mother tongue. It is the language, which he or she listens to from his or her birth. Any other language learned or acquired is known as the second language.

The definition of second language acquisition and learning is the acquisition and learning of a second language once the mother tongue or first language acquisition has been established. Second language acquisition or SLA is the process of learning other languages in addition to the native language, even though it may actually be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired (Saville-Troike, 2006: 2) For instance, a child who speaks

Bahasa Indonesia as the mother tongue starts learning English when he starts going to school. English is learned by the process of second language acquisition.

Some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught by those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence. However there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner.

The primary factor affecting language acquisition appears to be the input that the learner receives. Stephen Krashen took a very strong position on the importance of input, asserting that comprehensible input is all that is necessary for second-language acquisition (Krashen, 2003: 4; 1994: 45-77). Krashen pointed to studies showing that the length of time a person stays in a foreign country is closely linked with his level of language acquisition. Further evidence for input comes from studies on reading: large amounts of free voluntary reading have a significantly positive effect on learners' vocabulary, grammar, and writing (Elley, 1991: 375-411; Krashen, 2004). Input is also the mechanism by which people learn languages according to the universal grammar model (Cook, 2008: 76-77).

The type of input may also be important. One principle of Krashen's theory is that input should not be grammatically sequenced. He claims that such sequencing, as found in language classrooms where lessons involve practicing a "structure of the day", is not necessary, and may even be harmful.

While input is of vital importance, Krashen's assertion that only input matters in second-language acquisition has been contradicted by more recent research (Bahrani, 2013). For example, students enrolled in French-language immersion programs in Canada still produced non-native-like grammar when they spoke, even though they had years of meaning-focused lessons and their listening skills were statistically native-level (Swain, 1991: 91-103). Output appears to play an important role, and among other things, can help provide learners with feedback, make them concentrate on the form of what they are saying, and help them to automatize their language knowledge (Skehan, 1998). These processes have been codified in the theory of comprehensible output (Swain, 1995: 125-144).

Researchers have also pointed to interaction in the second language as being important for acquisition. According to Long's interaction hypothesis (Ellis, 1997: 47), the conditions for acquisition are especially good when interacting in the second language; specifically, conditions are good when a breakdown in communication occurs and learners must negotiate for meaning. The modifications to speech arising from interactions like this help make input more comprehensible, provide feedback to the learner, and push learners to modify their speech (Long, 1996: 413-468).

Another factor influencing the second language acquisition is everything that learners hear and see around them in the new language which is called environment (Dulay, *et. al.*, 1982: 13). Language environment has a prominent role to the acquisition process. It gives many effects to the development of the target language including the

characteristics of the target language, the style, the speed in acquiring, and model of the target language.

There are two kinds of language environment in acquisition process. They are *macro-environment* and *micro-environment*. Four broad overall features of the environment (macro-environmental features) exist: (1) *Naturalness of the environment* in which the focus is on its content rather than on its linguistic form; (2) *The learner's role in communication* meaning the manner the learner participates in communicative exchanges; (3) *Availability of concrete referents* depicting subjects and events that can be seen, heard, or felt while they are being talked about; (4) *Target language models* of which the learner's choice of model to follow in speech production.

Micro-environmental features comprise characteristics of specific structures of the language the learner hears and are regarded not to have the major effects on learning that were expected. They are *salience, frequency, and correction* (Dulay, *et. al.*, 1982: 13-43). The next paramount factors affecting the language acquisition is motivation. A great deal of research on the role of motivation has been conducted. Whole findings show that positive attitudes and motivation are linked to the success in second language learning (Gardner, 1985).

Motivation in second language learning is a complicated prodigy which can be defined into two factors: learners' communicative needs and their attitudes towards the second language community (Lightbown and Spada, 2001: 56). Motivation involves the attitudes and affective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn. Various kinds of motivation have been identified, they are: (1) *Instrumental motivation*, learning language for some functional reasons, such as to pass examination or to get a job; (2) *Integrative motivation*, learning language for personal growth and cultural enrichment; (3) *Resultative motivation*, meaning motivation is the cause of second language achievement; (4) *Intrinsic motivation*, it involves the arousal and maintenance of curiosity in learning situation; (5) *Social group identification motives*, like integrative motivation added with the desire for becoming the real members of the group that speaks the new language (Ellis, 2008: 75-76; Dulay, *et. al.*, 1982: 47-51).

Some previous researchers have proved that input, learning environment, and motivation correlate with the students' achievement. Zhang (2009) investigated Chinese English learners speaking skill related to input and interaction. She found that most learners failed to speak English fluently because of the lack of effective input and no real need for interaction. Wu and Wu (2008) studied the physical environment, instructional arrangements, and social interaction and correlate them with the motivation of the students. They found that those inputs motivated the students to learn English more and to achieve good result. In addition, Dital (2012) found that the respondents who were highly motivated towards learning English have good speaking skill. They were both instrumentally and integratively motivated as they want to learn English for career purposes and to be able to speak with English speaking people. Istianti (2013) also found that there is a significantly positive correlation between motivation and students' speaking ability.

In this research, the researchers conduct a deep search into the process of becoming a proficient English learner, discussing how the three aspects above contribute to the

subject's current level of English speaking proficiency. The researchers' comments, conclusions, and suggestions regarding learning or acquiring English in Indonesian context are provided as well.

1.1. Research Question

1.1.1 How are the availability of language input, learning environment and motivation of the learner?

1.1.2 How is the role of those aspects to the L2 acquisition of the learner?

1.2. Research Objectives

1.2.1 To investigate the availability of language input, learning environment and motivation of the learner.

1.2.2 To describe the role of those aspects to the L2 acquisition of the learner.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Research Design

The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. Qualitative research is chosen as a fundamental approach in examining the proficiency level of speaking skill of the subject which is influenced by the three aspects affecting the second language acquisition/learning; the availability of language input, learning environment, and motivation. Case study is selected as the research design involving an in depth-exploration of a single case in which the purpose is to elicit detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998: 54; Mertens, 2010: 233). It is chosen to investigate the influence of the effective factors such as language input availability, learning environment, and motivation on the subject's English speaking proficiency.

2.2 The Presence of the Researcher

In qualitative research, human becomes the key participants, which leads to the selected subject who is qualified to be investigated as the participant of the research. The presence of the researchers was important; therefore, the researchers themselves collected, organized, and analyzed the data before finally came to the conclusion of the findings. The instruments used in this research were interview list, scoring rubric, and audio recorder.

2.3 Setting and Subject of the Study

The subject of the research was a college student majoring English in Language Teaching at Brawijaya University. The subject was 20 years old and was in her 6th semester. The active practice and a good confidence in speaking English as well as having an A score in her speaking class were the considerations in choosing the subject of the research to be investigated. It was intended to see whether or not the aspects of the availability of language input, learning environment, and motivation brought various effects and influence to the subject's English speaking proficiency since she had good practice and confidence.

2.4 Data collection

The data were collected through document observation and deep-informal interview. The document observation was conducted in order to ensure that the subject of the study was qualified to be investigated. The interview was conducted in one session and face to face in order to make the conversation run well and smoothly. Several questions of a selected topic related to three aspects: the availability of language input, learning environment for learning English, and the subject's motivation were asked for a deep search covering the subject's background, the subject speaking habit, or even the subject's dream which contributed to her motivation in learning and speaking English (*see Appendix 1*). At the same time during the same session, the speaking rubric was filled to measure the subject's English proficiency (*see Appendix 2*).

2.5 Data analysis

The subject's interview recording was transcribed, interpreted, and reviewed in order to make it easier in analyzing. Each of the role of the three aspects was described and explained based on the interview, then be categorized as very good, good, moderated, or poor in the form of a table. The discussion of how the three aspects contributed to the subject's current level of English speaking proficiency was the last step of the data analysis.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Availability of Language Input

In the elementary school, the learner once took an English course for only several months, she then quit because she disliked English. The reason why she disliked it because her teachers in the course and school did not have good English skill and their dialect influenced their pronunciation. They do not also have interesting technique in the teaching, so the learner was bored. There were also no native teachers who taught English in the classroom. Therefore, she did not get any model to apply her English skill. To improve her English skills any more, in junior high school, she took English course until third grade of senior high school.

When the learner was ten years old, she read Harry Potter novel since she was asked by her cousin who had good English skill. She did not intentionally read the novel to improve English, it was only for the sake of excitement. Even though she did not know every single word within the novel, she was still able to understand the message by thinking the main idea and sometimes asking her friends and cousin about the vocabulary. At that time, she practiced her speaking skill with her cousin who encouraged her to apply it. Besides, in the elementary school, she joined a spelling bee competition in her town and won the third winner. Despite she disliked English, she liked to join the competition as it was fun. She was trained by the teacher before the competition so she was able to win it.

3.2 Learning Environment for Learning English

The learner was encouraged by her father to learn English by asking her to read English newspaper and magazine so she read them. Fortunately, there was a TV cable at her home so she liked to watch cartoon Nickelodeon which was an English program. She

understood it as it was translated into Bahasa Indonesia. This program was able to give her a model of good and authentic speaking. Unfortunately, the environment in her school did not support the EFL learning for instance, there were no public notices written in English even though it was located in the center of the city. Moreover, the teacher always asked the learner to do tasks that have been done before so she was bored.

In senior high school, she started to love English because her teacher had good English skill and fun teaching method by giving various challenging tasks which were usually given to university students. Finally, her love in English triggers her to take English in Language Teaching in her undergraduate degree. To improve her English skill, she was encouraged by her bestfriend who is a clever student in the class to practice her speaking and writing. When meeting him, she always speaks in English and texts him by using English and her friend corrects her English. The lecturers who teach the learner in the classroom have good ability and teaching strategy. Therefore, she is able to improve her English skills more. She also improves her English skill by reading English magazine, watching movies and listening to music.

3.3 Motivation

As the research subject studies English Language Teaching at university, she has high motivation to learn English. Therefore, she has good efforts to improve her English knowledge, especially speaking. She thinks that English is important in the global era and she believes that her English skills will help her to get a good job. After graduation, she wants to become an English teacher, like her high school teacher who has excellent English skills. If she is able to teach English properly, she will inspire her students to have good English, like what her teacher did back then.

Another motivation of learning English is the subject's dream. One day, she wants to visit New Zealand so she tries to learn English more. Moreover, her best friend who has good English skills becomes her motivation. She wants to become as good as him. As he always scolds her incorrect English, she tries to learn better until he does not scold her any more. As the result, she always practices her English skills such as talking in English when they hang out and texting in English when they communicate. Here, peer is a good factor improving the subject's English proficiency.

3.4 Subject's Language Proficiency in Speaking

After selecting a second language (L2) learner, the researchers had an interview to know her language productive proficiency regarding to the English speaking proficiency. In conducting the interview, the researchers had some questions on the topics such as hobbies and English education background. During interview, the researchers used scoring rubric to measure the subject' speaking proficiency. This rubric contains three aspects on speaking that are accuracy including grammar and vocabulary, fluency and intelligibility.

In line with the description above, the researchers conclude that English learners' speaking proficiency is intermediate proficiency. This proficiency can be seen on how the subject (learner) was talking during interview, using vocabulary, fluency in speaking, and her intelligibility to answer and to deliver her message. The researchers determined her score range 78-69, with the right score is around 73. It means that she is an intermediate L2

learner. Her ability in speaking can be seen in the result of interview that has been transcribed.

Related to the theory of interlanguage, this case can be explained related to the interlanguage theory proposed by Selinker (1972) “interlanguage” that means learners’ developing second language knowledge, L2 learners construct a linguistic system that draws on the learner’s L1 but it also different from it and also from the target language. Here, L2 learner tries to develop their knowledge or ability in using second language. The characteristic of learners’ interlanguage can be influenced by the learner’s previous learned language(s). Therefore, in this case, L2 learner may have some mistake in using second language. Moreover, Ellis (1997) an interlanguage L2 learner, s/he has some error made in their speaking. These errors can be varied such as developmental errors, overgeneralization, and simplification errors. In this case, the subject chosen still produced some errors in choosing verb for past tense, namely developmental error made such as when she said, ”I go” that should be “I went”, ‘he brings’ instead of ‘he brought’, ‘when I’m in senior high school’ instead of ‘when I was in senior high school’.

She frequently made mistakes when talking the past even in which she should use past tense rather than present tense. She also made overgeneralization mistakes in which she should not use V-ing in a sentence “I usually going” but it happens sometimes. The dictions selected by the subject are categorized poor for instance she said ‘travelling in place outside’ when she actually wanted to say ‘nature’ and ‘my step sister’ to say ‘my cousin’. She also made mistakes in distinguishing verbal and non-verbal sentences such as ‘I’m join course’, ‘she is come to my house’, and ‘we are just do the task’.

In addition, during the interview, the subject was quiet when she did not really understand what interviewer said. Sometimes, she used their body language or gesture to convey her meaning. Besides, when she did not know how to say this particular meaning of the word, she often used repetition and used code switching in talking for example . Related to the theory of interlanguage concerning on learners employ various learning strategies to develop their interlanguage, the errors made by the students reflect her different learning strategies. The subject here has some strategies to develop her English such as reading an English novel book, watching movie and talking with others people who have good in English. Here, the subject usually talks to those who are capable in English such as her friend and her cousin.

3.5 The category of the subject’s aspects of language

Aspects	Category			
	Very good	Good	Moderate	poor
The availability of Language Input		√		
Conducive Learning Environment		√		
Motivation		√		

After conducting an observation, the researchers decide to classify the subject's English speaking proficiency as an intermediate level. Most of the three aspects contribute to the subject's current level of English proficiency as it means that language proficiency is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language. Therefore, English speaking proficiency is more about the speaking skill of the learner in which it is related to the fluency and the language competence as well.

As for the first aspect that is the availability of language input of the subject being observed, it is categorized as a good one. She gets the knowledge of English by doing several activities aside of formal one as in school. The unavailability of a good model in speaking English does not stop her from learning English even though she starts to like English a bit late as stated previously. Her interaction with her sister improves her speaking skill gradually and it is showed by the way she speaks with no hesitation. She lets everything in her mind out without minding a lot of grammatical errors she produces.

The fact that she is already in the sixth semester of her study with her fair speaking skill leads to the conclusion in deciding her English proficiency. Since intermediate level is characterized as a learner who understands and speaks conversational and academic English without apparent difficulty, but understands and speaks academic English with some hesitancy, and also who continues to acquire reading and writing skills in content areas needed to achieve grade level expectations with assistance, therefore, it is concluded the language input the subject gets for the time being contributes enough to her English speaking proficiency level.

The second aspect which contributes to the subject's level of English speaking proficiency is condition of learning environment. Its category is classified as good enough based on the analysis of the subject's interview related to her hobby. The subject's father plays a big role in her further English learning when she was a child. Furthermore, her senior high school English teacher shares his contribution to the subject's improvement as well. She also has a peer who is good in English and is willing to correct her errors little by little.

The last aspect of language discussed is the motivation of the subject. Gardner and Lambert (1972) point out the notions of instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to the learner's desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes (such as employment or travel or exam purposes) in the context of language learning. On the other hand, integrative motivation refers to the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community. As the subject states several reasons behind her interest to English, her dream to go abroad motivates her passion in learning English the most. Therefore, she always tries to improve her speaking skill and it does not position her in the beginner level since her English skill develops for the time being.

4. CONCLUSION

The discussion of second language acquisition cannot afford to forestall many linguists in studying every aspect of such issue. Language input availability, learning environment, and motivation have been regarded as ones of several factors influencing such process. This research has focused on examining how the selected factors affect the second

language acquisition in which they have an effect on the level of English proficiency in terms of speaking skill.

The findings indicated that aspects of language such as good language input, learning environment, and also motivation determined the research subject's language proficiency into intermediate level. The data collected revealed that the subject has learned English through several ways, formally and informally. She also has exhibited certain reasons for learning the language. However, it does not mean that an English proficiency of learner stop at all costs. As long as in learning or acquiring English as a second or foreign language, the learners are able to utilize what they already have in their surrounding as well as keep learning and practicing such as setting the goal in order to improve their motivation, being aware that English is important and essential to be learned such as by using English whenever the learners can, talking to people about English, or even finding a friend who is learning English. Those activities, as the trigger, could increase the level of English proficiency they have up to advanced learners. Since learning English requires action, therefore, learners need to improve themselves not only in such formal institution such as school, but also other activities which are beneficial to them.

In accordance with the phenomenon discussed previously, there are several suggestions to English teachers and the Indonesian government in order to encourage students to learn language especially English, and to increase their learning motivation. Teachers have to find practical ways to motivate the students to learn and appreciate the language, and at the same time, sustain students' interest in the language learning process. Such meaningful and enjoyable activities which are process-based (teaching life-long language skill) rather than the product-based (students getting high score) need to be implemented in schools more. One way to do that can be developing a continuous program which includes an integrated in-class and out-of-class activities. Additionally, the teachers can also apply new teaching techniques in teaching process. Other activities can be in the form of group-based, communicative activity such as game type, integrative activity, pleasant or challenging ones, since these activities can promote students' self-confidence, and learning satisfaction.

Furthermore, the curriculum of English teaching of Indonesian schools may need to be improved well in order to maintain students' motivation and interest in learning English. However, English teachers, as the organizers, play such crucial role in order to arouse the students' English motivation and improve the efficiency of English learning and teaching by guiding the students to establish the right goal since goal is one of the factor which impacts motivation in learning language aside from attitude, belief, involvement, environment support, and also personal attribute. They also need to pay more attention to communicative learning that can stimulate students to learn effectively.

Although the research has reached it aims, there were some inevitable limitations and shortcomings. First, because of the time limit, the research was relatively conducted in a short time. Moreover, it was accomplished on a single subject whom the researcher believed fulfilled the criteria of the subject intended. Thus, the research should have involved multiple subjects at different levels as well as been done in longer time. Given that it is exceedingly recommended to future researcher that the research be carried out in a new context, setting and/or culture, and make use of more complete instruments with more

complex criterion. Still, there are others factors affecting one's second language acquisition which are needed to be studied.

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