Investigating the Students' Views on the Authentic Materials Used in Basic Speaking Class

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Abstract:
This current study was intended to investigate the student point of views on the use of authentic materials (AMs) used in the process of teaching and learning speaking at the first semester in English Department, IKIP Budi Utomo Malang. A descriptive qualitative was employed to portray the intended data. The data were revealed from 22 students experiencing learning speaking by using authentic materials (AMs). To help the researcher, as the key instrument, to obtain the data, the researcher used an interview guide. To make the data display clear, the findings were classified into three classes; they were students' views on the use of videos, student' views on dialogues used in Basic Speaking, and students's point of views on the pictures used as Ams. In general, the interview results showed that AMs were basically interesting, motivating, providing information on how the language used and how English culture is, raising students' feeling of confidence. In term of the comprehensibility of the materials, however, only a few students stated that the presented materials were understandable; while the others thought that they could not understand the AMs because the spoken communication made by native speakers was too fast. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the teaching material presented in the Basic Speaking class viewed in positive manners by the students. Some students, however, found that the materials, especially conversation made by native speakers, were seen incomprehensible as the models in the video spoke too fast and used long sentences. This informed the teachers that even though AMs were found to be beneficial, AMs should be carefully selected; by so doing, it is expected that the AMs will opt to the students' level.
Keywords: *Basic speaking, students' view, authentic materials*

1. Introduction

Being able to speak is the ultimate indication that ones have mastered a language; this does not only happen in learning first language but also in learning foreign language (FL). Unfortunately, speaking by using foreign language, English particularly, has been reported as a complex task for learners due to the fact that, to be able to deliver an effective communication, learners are supposed to use the language properly in social interaction (Shumin, 2002: 204). Further, Shumin (2002: 204) adds that what makes speaking English as a foreign language complicated is that it does not involve linguistic elements as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation only but also involves paralinguistic elements (pitch, stress, and intonation).

Considering the complexity in speaking by using English as a foreign language (EFL), EFL teachers, therefore, do need to understand well how to facilitate their students to be able to communicate by using the target language. To enable the EFL teachers to facilitate learning, there are some principles teachers need to bear in mind when they intend to obtain such goals; amongst of them are understanding students' psychology, classroom managements, selecting suitable teaching strategies and media as well as teaching materials. Focusing on teaching speaking (Brown, 2007:331) highlights that one of the principles EFL teachers need to hold in teaching speaking is putting up authentic language during the teaching. Therefore, to be able to provide authentic language, teachers need to give their students authentic materials.

Discussing about authentic materials, some definitions have already been uttered by experts as Dascalos and Ling (2005: 11); they claim that authentic materials refer to language used in society's daily life and is not meant for pedagogical communication. Talking about non pedagogical communication in authentic material domain, Belaid and Murray (2015: 16) put it as the appropriateness of the materials with the students' need and the learning objectives. The two given definitions, lead us into an insight that, in language teaching field, authentic material is that any written and spoken language which the students hear, see, and use in their daily life; the language is not meant for educational purposes but still can be so beneficial in the teaching and learning language process. Some benefits of using authentic materials are they contribute a positive effect on student motivation; provide students information about the real culture of the target language; expose students to real language; relate more closely to students' needs; and support more creative approach to teaching (Berardo, 2006: 64). Further Harmer (1994 in Al Azri and Al-Rashdi, 2016: 252) state that authentic materials have good impact on language learners because they can assist learners to produce better language output; help learners acquire the target language; and boost students' confidence to deal with language used in real life.

Believing in such advantages, many researchers purposefully have conducted research dealing with the use of authentic materials. The research, however, has focusing on the effectiveness of authentic materials and the use authentic materials to improve students' language proficiency; for example, research done by Idayani

(2014); having implemented Classroom Action Research, she found that authentic materials have successfully improved the speaking ability of the tenth graders at SMA Nurul Falah, Pekan Baru, Indonesia. Besides, she revealed that authentic materials could also raise students' confidence and enthusiasm. Different from Idayani (2014), Rahseed (2014) was trying to examine the effectiveness of using authentic materials in teaching speaking for EFL learner at Secondary School in Malaysia; his final finding showed that students significantly gained better score after they were taught by using authentic materials due to the fact that authentic materials were able to stimulate and enrich the experimental group experience in learning language.

In addition to the aforementioned research, some studies elicited on student perspective had been carried out. One of them was performed by Firmansyah (2015). His findings showed that students taught by using authentic materials admitted that authentic materials were interesting (make them enjoy the class), challenging (keep them enthusiastic in learning), and motivating (make them involved actively during the class).

Similar to Firmansyah's study, this current study was also meant to investigate the student perspectives on the implementation of authentic materials. Differently, this study was carried out in higher level of education, at under graduate program in one of private institution in Malang; and it involved adult learners participating English Language Teaching (ELT) program. By having different setting and subjects of the study, the researcher believed that this study could contribute broader insights on the use of authentic materials; therefore, the researcher thought that this study was worth doing.

2. Research Methodology

This study involved 22 students attending Basic Speaking class at English Department, IKIP Budi Utomo Malang; six of them were female and the others were male. To gain the data, students' perceptions on authentic materials, those students were taught by using authentic materials. Then they were interviewed by using interview guide in order to help the researcher to figure out their perspectives on the implementation of authentic materials. The result of the interviewed, then, were transcribed and classified based on the existing insights of authentic materials pronounced by the scholars.

3. Findings

The results of interview about the student views on the use authentic materials were generally classified into six classes to specifically cover their views on the video, picture, and dialogue included to the developed Authentic Materials (AMs). The brief description of students' views on the video used in Authentic Materials (AMs) is displayed in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Brief Description of Students Views on the videos used as Authentic Materials (AMs)

No	Students' Views	Number of students	Percentage (%)
1	Interesting	21	95.5
2	Motivating	18	81.8
3	Providing information how English cultures are	22	100
4	Providing information how to use the language	18	81.8
5	Raising student confidence	15	68
6	Understandable	9	40.9

From Table 1, we can see that in general, authentic materials (AMs), especially in term of materials presented in videos, were viewed positively by the EFL students at *Basic Speaking* class. This was so because 21 students admitted that authentic materials were interesting because they were so excited to watch how native speakers of English spoke. Next reason why the subjects of the study claimed to have positive attitude toward the use of videos because 18 students admitted that those videos were motivating; after watching video during the teaching of speaking, some students said that they wanted to learn English in order to be able travel around the world. Furthermore, 68% or 15 students stated that the AMs presented in the videos could boost their confidence. Dealing with raising student confidence, some students confessed that after watching video, in which the speakers made pauses and incomplete sentence, they found that it was fine to make flaws in speaking. The students' statement indicated that well structured dialogues, which we mostly find in speaking materials, could sometimes discourage the students to perform oral communication. By presenting AMs, particularly in forms of videos, to the students, teachers simultaneously have demonstrated that oral communication does not always need to run flawlessly. Even though students showed their positive views on the implementation of AMs, a question related to the comprehensible language got negative response as only 9 out of 22 admitted that they could understand the spoken discourse used in the videos; the others said that it was hard to catch the words pronounced by the native speakers. This situation is quite understandable for the students' real environment those spoken discourses were hard to be found. If it happened to be easy to find those spoken communications from the internet, students still found difficulties to imitate linguistic and paralinguistic elements such as intonation, pitch, and stress. This happened due to the fact that, in EFL students' real life, students only could practice their English and get corrective feedback when they were in campus; and this sometimes hindered the students from interacting and speaking by using the target language.

The second part of the finding of this study is the brief description of students' views on the pictures used in Authentic Materials (AMs) which is displayed in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Brief Description of Students Views on the pictures used as Authentic Materials (AMs)

No	Students' Views	Number of students	Percentage (%)
1	Interesting	20	90.91
2	Motivating	17	77.27
3	Providing information how English cultures are	18	81.82
4	Providing information how to use the language	15	68.18
5	Raising student confidence	18	81.82
6	Understandable	21	95.45

Table 2 above indicates the student views on the pictures used in the developed Authentic Materials seen from six aspects. The first finding was that 20 students (90.91 %) agreed that the pictures used in Authentic Materials (AMs) was interesting. They argued that the presence of pictures attracted them to look into the materials. They got excited as the materials were supported by pictures as the visual aid. The second finding was that 17 students (77.27%) pronounced that the use of pictures in the Authentic Materials (AMs) gave them motivating effect to learn. The available pictures stimulated the students to practice their speaking ability. The third was that 18 students (81.82%) said that they obtained the sense of how English cultures are from the pictures included in the Authentic Materials (AMs).

The students explained that the pictures provided hints of how the English cultures are and let them know how to manage the knowledge of the cultures in speaking English. They thought that it was important to understand the culture of their target language since they could adapt to their English speaking skill practice. The next finding was that 15 students (68.18%) told that the pictures in Authentic Materials (AMs) provided information how to use the language. The pictures supported their understanding of the described materials and some of them helped them to find how to use English in speaking practice. The next finding was that 18 students (81.82%) declared the pictures attached to the materials upgraded their confidence in speaking practice. It was because the students were visually helped by the pictures so that they understood the materials better. The final finding was that 21 students (95.45%) said that the pictures could be easily understood clearly which means that the presence of the pictures in the Authentic Materials (AMs) was relevant to the materials.

The third part is the brief description of students' views on the dialogues featured in the Authentic Materials (AMs) which is displayed in *Table 3*.

Table 3. Brief Description of Students Views on the dialogues featured as Authentic Materials (AMs)

No	Students' Views	Number of students	Percentage (%)
1	Interesting	18	81.82
2	Motivating	20	90.91
3	Providing information how English cultures are	17	77.27
4	Providing information how to use the language	22	100
5	Raising student confidence	19	86.36
6	Understandable	20	90.91

Table 3 provides the percentage of the student views on the dialogues featured in the developed Authentic Materials seen from the same six aspects. The first finding was that 18 students (81.82 %) argued that the dialogues featured in the Authentic Materials (AMs) was very much interesting. They explained that they were helped a lot to understand the materials presented in each chapter better because the dialogues represented the context. The students were happy to study the materials applied in the form of dialogues. The second finding was that 20 students (90.91%) agreed that the portion of dialogues available in the Authentic Materials (AMs) boosted the students motivation to practice their speaking skill on the specific chapter of materials. The dialogues were attached to support the materials and students learned about how to apply the materials into practice dialogue form. They stated that it was easier that way. The third was that 17 students (77.27%) said that they got better picture of how English cultures are from the dialogues presented in chapters of the Authentic Materials (AMs). Since the presentation of English cultures knowledge was more contextual in dialogues, the students portrayed the cultural senses better in the use of language. Supporting the video, dialogues could also become an important element to upgrade students' knowledge about the culture of target language. The next finding was that all of the students (100%) in harmony said that the dialogues featured in Authentic Materials (AMs) became a useful source of modelling on how to use English. The dialogues were a great help for the students to comprehend the materials as the dialogues were presented in relevant situation. It brought enlightenment for the students of when and where to use the language. However, the students stated that it would be better if the dialogues were completed with the modelling video. The availability of the modelling video would help them to obtain more precise pronunciation, intonation, or gesture used to apply the dialogues. The next finding was that 19 students (86.36%) pronounced that their confidence was greatly improved because of the availability of the dialogues in the Authentic Materials (AMs). The students practice their speaking skill on the materials based on the modelling from the dialogues which helped them to upgrade their confidence compared to when they have to practice speaking without any modelling. The last finding was that 20 students (90.91%) argued that the dialogues well represented the Authentic Materials (AMs) as the students could understand the dialogues clearly.

4. Discussion

From the findings of the study presented on the previous section, discussion is developed to see the implication of the result of the study. The discussion part is classified into three parts which covers: the use of videos, the attachment of pictures, and the inclusion of dialogues in the Authentic Materials (AMs).

The first part is discussion on the use of videos included in the Authentic Materials (AMs) for Basic Speaking. The finding elicited from students' interest on watching videos approved Firmansyah's (2014) research which also elicited that authentic materials could make the students enjoy the learning process as they minimized the students feeling of boredom. The second discussion dealing with the use of videos as AMs used in Basic Speaking Class focuses on the impact of videos toward student motivation in learning English. As it was stated previously, students judge the videos as motivating media; after watching video during the teaching of speaking, some students said that they wanted to learn English in order to be able travel around the world. Besides, the pauses made by native speakers during the talk could also boost the students' confidence in Speaking English because they found that it was fine to make pauses during speaking. This particular finding was in accordance with the class room action research finding elicited by Indiyani (2014) who found that AMs could intrigue students' motivation. This contribute positive information for EFL teachers so they can find an alternative way on how to motivate their students to learn the language; they can ensure their students that learning English is seriously important. Besides motivating, the videos were also claimed to be so informative; the videos demonstrated how English language was used by its native. This finding supported insights uttered by Bernado (2016) who put that, in addition to relating students' need and raising students' confidence, AMs could also provide information about how native speaker live along with their tradition and provide an exposure on how the language used. This surely beneficial for students living in expand circle coutries where students cannot interact with English native speakers and cannot eyewitness directly how English is used in daily life.

The next part is discussion on the attachment of pictures in chapters developed in Authentic Materials (AMs) for Basic Speaking class. First of all, the finding indicated that most students agreed that the availability of pictures in the materials was greatly interesting as they did not only learn the materials by written text. Pictures supported the students to learn materials better. It accords Moore (1982) who assumes that visual aids, especially pictures and colourful posters can add much to the attractiveness and atmosphere of a classroom. An attractive visual aid such as pictures used as the learning media may help boosting the students' interest to learn. As mention by Aqib (2013), media for learning should be visible, interesting, simple, useful, accurate, legitimate, and structured. Aside from the attractiveness point, the attachment of pictures may also give motivating impact to the students. The finding of this study for that point is agreed by the explanation of Mannan (2005:108) who pronounces that visual aids can be a helpful tool in the language classroom since they help the teacher to clarify, establish, correlate and coordinate accurate concepts, interpretations and appreciations, and enable him to make

learning more concrete, effective, interesting, inspirational, meaningful, and vivid. In addition, Wright (1989) supports that pictures can motivate students to take part in speaking activities. Those statements are very much in agreement with the views of students as they said that pictures in the Authentic Materials (AMs) are interesting and motivating them in practicing the speaking materials. The finding of this study also highlighted that the availability of pictures feature in the Authentic Materials (AMs) for Basic Speaking class promoted information of English cultures. Through the speaking materials, students also learned to be aware of how the cultures of their target language are. The finding matched to Bush (2007) who declared that when instructors (in this case, lecturers) integrate authentic images found online, the teaching of cultural awareness becomes more motivating and effective, as it increases the cultural content of the course. Moreover, the students agreed that pictures attachment in the Authentic Materials (AMs) also provided information of how to use English language. The thing is that even if teachers have delivered materials, it does not automatically make the students able to use them. However, the pictures attached in Authentic Materials contributed to help the students figured out how to use English. In accordance to the finding, Dai (2011) suggests that students can use pictures, maps, charts, and video shows as visual aids to learn how to conduct basic interaction. Students also witnessed that pictures in this Authentic Materials (AMs) helped them to boost their confidence. This finding was in accordance with Ramirez (2012) whose research found that the use of pictures supported shy and less participative students to help explaining their ideas. They seemed to be more confident when using poster and pictures. Those benefits of attaching pictures in the Authentic Materials (AMs) were obtained because the pictures used were relevant, understandable, and authentic.

The last part is discussion on the inclusion of dialogues included in the Authentic Materials (AMs) for Basic Speaking. Most students approved that the dialogues included in the materials were interesting and motivating. The Authentic Materials (AMs) appoints interesting dialogues as one of the main 'tools' to encourage the students to actively take part in the teaching and learning process. Somdee & Suppasetseree (2013) suggest that an interesting instruction and activities in the classroom also can attract the student to participate teaching and learning in the classroom. Next, the dialogues included in the Authentic Materials (AMs) contributed to the students' process of attaining how the cultures of English and how to use the language. Through the dialogues, the students were stimulated to practice simulations on how to use English as the target language and, hand in hand, learn the cultural values. Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) describe fantasy simulations in EFL situations can create a vivid connection between the classroom experience and the target culture. Moreover, the inclusion of dialogues in chapters of Authentic Materials (AMs) for Basic Speaking promoted the students' confidence to practice speaking as they got an understandable modeling on how to apply the materials in contextual conversation through the dialogues. The statement of the finding is in accordance with one of research findings conducted by Dewi (2011) which declared that the use of dialogues is an effective approach to teach speaking and improve the students' confidence.

5. Conclusions

The above findings and discussion lead us into conclusion that the implementation of authentic materials in *Basic Speaking* class were responded positively by the EFL learners. This conclusion was made because from the interview, students agreed with the existing ideas about the benefits of AMs declared by some scholars. However, when it came into question whether the AMs were comprehensible or not, students thought that authentic materials, especially in spoken one, were not easy to digest. This can be so understandable since the real environment, where the students interacted, did not provide such spoken discourse. The students' thoughts informed the researcher as well as the EFL teachers to provide more and more spoken English in order to get the students exposed. The exposure can be done using English as a medium of instruction during the teaching and learning process, or by using more authentic materials. Focusing on the implementation of authentic materials, EFL teachers do need to consider the complexity degrees of the AMs so that the AMs will be comprehended easily by the EFL learners.

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