Examining Students’ Perspective of Photovoice on Speaking Class: An Interview Study at Tertiary Level

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Abstract. This research is limited to the students’ perspective toward the use of photovoice in the teaching and learning process. The objective of this study is to explore the perspective of students about the use of photovoice on the teaching and learning process in speaking class. The researchers collected the data by individual semi-structured interviews. Data analysis used is thematic analysis by (Braun, Virginia & Clarke, 2006). Interview were transcribed verbatim to ensure data integrity by double-checking the transcripts with recorded interviews. The research findings show 7 theme based on interview with students who describe their perspectives and experiences in learning photovoice. These themes are: 1) experiences, 2) social, 3) intellectual, 4) speaking, 5) emotion, 6) challenges and difficulties, and 7) future direction of photovoice.

INTRODUCTION

Implementing technology in effective teaching is a challenge, but with the development of technology nowadays, it is easier for students to learn English. One of these technologies is called photovoice (C. Wang & Burris, 1997). Previously, this methodology was called photonovella. C. Wang & Burris (1994) use the idea of “novella” to describe the process of using an image or photo that represents someone telling a story. Several years later, they replaced the term with “photovoice” to describe a photographic technique in which the process of identifying, representing, and enhancing the community in acquiring people knowledge. Photovoice has recently been adapted as a pedagogical teaching tool for education. Many researchers apply photovoice in research projects, ranging from the world of health, disability education, and feminism (Geduld, 2015). However, only a few in the
world of education, especially English, researched the use of photovoice. For instance, research on students’ perceptions at the tertiary level is still very limited. Therefore, the current research focuses on semi-structured interviews about students’ perspectives and experiences on photovoice in speaking class. This research contributes to the participants, where the data is taken from them and impact them. This research is called epistemologically driven data collection.

Speaking is a skill that is often used to convey ideas or opinions in daily activities. For example, interactions occur between teachers and students in teaching and learning activities. In learning foreign languages, the development of students’ speaking skills is a huge challenge (Leger, 2009). The phenomenon has also accrued in many different contexts worldwide, as reported by many contemporary scholarly articles. Sun et al. (2017) has investigated first-grade EFL class in China, arguing that a strong focus on accuracy causes speech impairment. Kantisa & Sitthitikul (2020) carried out the study with 102 students, they have been studying English since their primary education level and graduated from high school in Thailand, stating that Thai students have difficulty speaking English fluently. Also, Tsunemoto & Mcdonough (2020) asserted that 62 English participants, L2 secondary school students in urban schools in Japan, had difficulty speaking English, especially pronunciation. This often happens to students who are still difficult to communicate with and are not confident.

They need the best methods, media, and materials that will facilitate students to master speaking skills. The success in learning languages, especially speaking, can’t be separated from the ability of the lecturers who teach it to students. Therefore, it is crucial to find and use the best teaching methods, material, and media in mastering speaking skills. In other words, to succeed in the speaking class, it is necessary to use the right approach, engaging activities, and the right tools.

Photovoice uses of images to generate discussions and involve students actively in the teaching and learning process (Perry et al., 2009). The pictures they take become tools for them to write or talk about the ideas they want to convey. Previous research by Ciolan & Manasia (2017), based on research results, found that photovoice provides access to subjective closeness to learning in everyday context and experiences. In addition, photovoice support the involvement of participants as researchers. Mckernan & Gleddie (2019), which applies photovoice as a student-centered approach to understanding the relationship between school and home environment, reports that in-class sessions, students embody the participatory nature of photovoice, as they are consistently involved as researchers. Another article reported that photovoice supported the involvement of the participant as co-researcher (Ciolan & Manasia, 2017).

**Speaking English in Indonesian Classroom Context**

In this globalized world, English has become an international language. In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), English has been used as the lingua franca and a primary communicative tool for interaction (Baker 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2010 in Boonsuk, 2020). In 1945, after Indonesia’s independence from the Netherlands, English became the first foreign language taught in schools (Low & Ao, 2018). English is taught and studied from junior high school to university. Most of the world’s language learners learn English to develop proficiency in speaking (Richards and Renandya 2002 in Gan, 2013).
However, the number of Indonesians who are fluent in English is still low (Kirkpatrick, 2010 in Low & Ao, 2018). The ability to speak English is considered a daunting task for most language learners. A common difficulty faced by students in the context of English foreign language (EFL) is the lack of opportunities to apply the language knowledge they have acquired into practice in the environment. Namaziandost et al., (2019) revealed that students don't communicate efficiently with others to use the target language as it is used in real life. For the majority of EFL students, practice speaking in the target language is usually limited in language classes and outside the classroom, there are very few opportunities for speaking practice. This opinion is supported by Uztosun et al. (2017) has the same point that EFL students are less active in class and outside the classroom.

Types of Classroom Speaking

Six kinds of categories can be brought to the speaking class (Brown, 2000). (1) imitative, this category covers the ability to practice pronunciation and focus on some of the elements of the language form. That is just imitating a word, phrase, or sentence. The teacher uses drilling in the teaching and learning process. Using drilling can help students get the opportunity to hear and speak, repeating a few words. (2) intensive, the activity of imitating or practicing some phonological or grammatical aspects of language. This category can be done alone or in pair or group work activities. (3) responsive, activities that include interaction and understanding tests. Sometimes it includes short replies to the teacher or student-initiated questions or comments. (4) transactional (dialogue). Transactional aims to convey or exchange information. The example is a conversation that is done in pair work. (5) interpersonal (dialogue). It is aimed at conveying facts and information. Interpersonal involves several factors, namely a casual register, colloquial language, emotionally charged language, slang, ellipsis, sarcasm, and a covert agenda. (6) Extensive (monologue). Extensive is carried out in a more formal and deliberative manner. This monologue can be planned or impromptu. Extensive aims to provide an expanded monologue in the form of an oral report, summary, or short speech.

The Problems in Speaking Class

The teaching and learning process in speaking class is not as easy as people think. Lecturers and students face several problems. Besides, Gan (2013) found some difficulties in speaking English, especially in speaking skills. This study found several difficulties in speaking English. First is linguistic barriers. Where students tend to make grammar and vocabulary mistakes in the acquisition of speaking skills. Second is the difficulty in paying attention to fluency and accuracy among students. Third, there is a lack of substantial opportunities to use English for spoken communication inside and outside the classroom. Fourth, academic speaking skills tend to be easily overlooked by some college students because most assessment assignments are written assignments and partly because of students' general discomfort with disciplinary socialization in the target language.

Furthermore, problems in teaching and learning were also stated by (Ur, 1996), (1) students' inhibition, often students are inhibited or afraid to speak English when inside or outside the classroom. Feelings of fear of being criticized or embarrassed when making mistakes in speaking English make students choose to be silent rather than speak English.
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(2) nothing to say, where students sometimes don’t have the desire to communicate. This is due to several factors such as less interesting topics being taught, loss of vocabulary that students want to use, and lack of confidence in speaking skills. Students feel they have insufficient skills to express what students want to say to be reluctant to speak. (3) the low or uneven participation, in one class students have different intelligence and abilities. There are active and passive students in teaching and learning, where active students have a lot of time to talk and be heard, while passive students only have little time to talk and even tend to be silent. This problem causes passive students to be reluctant to participate in class. (4) mother tongue-use, many students use their mother tongue in the classroom because they find it easier. The use of foreign languages makes students feel unnatural to talk to each other. This causes students to find it difficult to speak foreign languages.

Photovoice

Photovoice is a meaningful teaching tool for conveying students’ ideas and insights through participatory photography (Fitzgibbon & Stengel, 2017). Graziano (2015) found photovoice to be a valuable teaching tool, students felt included by allowing them to explore their point of view. Photovoice was initially developed by Wang & Burris (1997; 1994) to study women’s health in developing countries, to identify employment issues affecting the overall health of Chinese women. Photovoice has three main goals: (1) to enable people to record and reflect their personal and community strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through group discussions of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers (C. Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice uses visual images to provide evidence and promote effective and participatory ways for various skills and knowledge. Photovoice has been adopted to document students’ experiences in critical qualitative research (Ferdiansyah et al., 2020). Photovoice provides insight into participants’ points of view and analytical discussion (Khoir et al., 2019). For example, photovoice is used in qualitative research to collect data where participants are asked to document the participant’s life using photovoice (Call-cummings et al., 2018).

C. C. Wang (1999), argue that Photovoice is a specific photographic technique which kind of process identifying, represent, and enhance the community in acquiring people knowledge. Photovoice is also qualitative research that uses documentary photography and storytelling to obtain and collect data (Graziano, (2015) and Koltz et al., (2010)). Students can explore or talk about problems related to their own life and can collaborate with other groups to learn about other communities.

Advantages and Disadvantages Photovoice

The increased use of photovoice as a research tool has many advantages for all involved in the process. C. Wang & Burris (1997) revealed several advantages of photovoice. First, photovoice allows participants or researchers to see a different point of view than usual. Second, photovoice allows participants to describe their needs. Third, photovoice can freely accessible. Fourth, it facilitates sampling from different social and behavioral settings. Fifth, photovoice gives participants the opportunity to provide
explanations and story ideas from other participants. The last, photovoice can be a tool for reaching, informing, and managing community members.

Another advantage is also stated by Nykiforuk (2011), photovoice allows participants to apply various disciplines to visualize individual perceptions, it helps to ignite dialogue among participants about the participants’ perceptions on the issue discussed or different ideas, and it also increases the participants’ ability to accurately capture the meaning of a problem from the participant’s point of view. In addition, Photovoice reflects in-depth and applies critical thinking skills to understanding oneself and others, and offers participants a sense of the value and meaning of important components of participant well-being and motivation (Herbert et al., 2018). Photovoice raises students’ awareness of the environment and provides a voice for policymaking. C. C. Wang (1999) argues that photovoice can influence policymakers as well as wider society. Also, Mulder & Dull (2014) reports that photovoice helps students develop their voices and understand complex identities from various social positions and roles.

Besides having several advantages, photovoice also has disadvantages or limitations. C. Wang & Burris (1997) stated that, first, the photovoice poses an explicit risk for participants. Another limitation is that personal assessment can interfere with multiple levels of representation. Moreover, photovoice is difficult to analyze and summarize. Its methodological ideals may not coincide with reality. In line with previous statements, Nykiforuk (2011) stated that photovoice participants could create ethical dilemmas about raising awareness and expectations among communities, photovoice results are difficult to analyze, and the photovoice process is very time-consuming. In addition, C. C. Wang et al., (2010) invoices found some limitations of photovoice, namely the results of participant photos were uncertain and unpredictable, making participants afraid and censored what to be photographed.

**Previous Study on Photovoice**

Several previous studies have been conducted and paid more attention to the photovoice learning tool for students. Edwards et al., (2012) investigated 15 students who had just finished an online graduate course that used APTs, including PV, as teaching strategies. This study explores graduate students' perspectives on the effects of an artistic, pedagogical technology (APT) called photovoice (PV) on interactions in online post-secondary classrooms. This study focuses on students’ perspectives regarding the effect of photovoice on interactions among students and students and instructors. The research assistant obtained informed consent from 15 from a total of 64 potential participants. Participants were from various Canadian provinces. All participants completed a master's degree in nursing, health studies, or a nurse practitioner program. Data were collected using an online questionnaire. Data analysis included a descriptive statistical analysis of the quantitative data from the questionnaire. Additionally, the qualitative data from the focus group notes and questionnaires were analyzed using NVivo software. This study found that photovoice had a positive influence on interactions, and their sense of community, sense of comfort in an educational setting, and how well they knew themselves, other students, and instructors.
Meanwhile, Ciolan & Manasia (2017) examined eighty-nine undergraduate students from three regular universities regarding the problem of using photovoice to research the learning process. Eighty-nine students were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-three, of whom forty-six were girls and forty-three were boys. This study aims to identify undergraduate perceptions of learning strategies. Second, to analyze the relationship between the two to identify learning patterns. This qualitative research obtains data from the perspective of undergraduate students. Study results concluded that photovoice provides access to the subjective closeness of learning in everyday contexts and experiences. In addition, photovoice supports the involvement of participants as researchers.

METHODS

Design

This is a qualitative interview study with a descriptive design. The research focused on students' perspectives and descriptions of their experiences using photovoice on the teaching and learning in speaking class. This research used semi-structured telephone interviews to elicit a detailed and nuanced description of students' perspectives and experiences about the use of photovoice on the teaching and learning process in speaking class. The methodological approach is adopted in this study because it seeks to understand and explore phenomena or experiences from the individual's perspective. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis from (Braun, Virginia & Clarke, 2006). The results of qualitative data analysis will be presented in descriptive form.

Interviewing is a method that is widely discussed in social and qualitative research. Interviews have the aim of exploring or collecting data in a study. Some experts define interviews from different points of view. Gillham (2000) defines an interview as a conversation that is usually held between two people, namely interviewer and interviewee. Communication process using question and answer as a response (Hasrani, 2019). On the other hand, Einarsdottir (2007) in Ponizovsky-Bergelson et al., (2019) describes interviews as data collection mostly done in a study. Interviews are an effective method in constructing context-free truths about objective realities that produce relevant responses with minimal bias (Qu & Dumay, 2011). This method is beneficial for studying other people's worlds, even if the understanding of others is challenging to understand. The interview emphasizes the importance of participants' experiences and perspectives to develop a deeper understanding (Edwards & Holland, (2013); Flick, (2018) in Döringer, (2020). In addition, interviews contribute to conceptual and theoretical knowledge based on the meaning of life experiences for the interviewee.

Participant

Participants in this research were students one of private university in Jember, especially in the third semester of class A and class B. Participants were 7 students based on the agreement of the availability of conducting interviews. They consist of 5 females and 2 males. Participants were recruited to participate in the research and informed about the
research topic. Consent (See Appendix 1) was obtained from each participant before the interview. 5 students are willing to sign the approval attachment, while 2 students give their consent to participate in the interview via telephone.

**Procedures**

The photovoice process has four stages as proposed by C. Wang & Burris (1997), those all procedures are going to be illustrated in the following discussion in more detail:

1. **Orientation.** In this first stage, percentage to get to know photovoice in the form of understanding photovoice, concept, and purpose of photovoice, operationalizing, and examples of photovoice.
2. **Taking and selecting photographs.** In the second stage, participants took several photos using their personal cellphone camera and chose one photo that matched the predetermined theme.
3. **Writing text.** In the third stage, the selected photo is written according to the photo's condition.
4. **Photograph display.** In the last stage, students prepare a presentation of the photos in front of their friends to explain and exchange information related to their photos.

**Data Collection and Analysis Method**

Data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews. Telephone interviews were chosen to facilitate access to interviews with current conditions (Covid19). Interviews were conducted from February to March 2021. The date and time of the interview were communicated to each participant. All interviews were conducted in participants’ native language, Bahasa Indonesia and audio-recorded. The individual semi-structured questions are mainly adopted from several recent scientific publications (Herbert et al., 2018) and (Widodo, Handoyo Puji & Rozak, 2016) (See Appendix 2) to capture participants’ experiences and perspectives on photovoice learning and participants were asked about future expectations for good teaching and learning. The duration of the telephone interviews was between 15-30 minutes with an average of 20 minutes. Each participant conducted interviews 3 times.

After the data was collected, the recorded interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. A method that provides access and a flexible theoretical approach to analyzing qualitative data (Braun, Virginia & Clarke, 2006). Interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure data integrity by double-checking the transcripts with recorded interviews. Interview transcripts were reviewed and categorized by topic, and then themes were generated based on open, exploratory, and data-based comparative analysis. The thematic analysis process is carried out in six stages, as proposed by (Braun, Virginia & Clarke, 2006).

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The explored data is based on interviews with students who describe their perspectives and experiences in learning photovoice. The researcher conducted a semi-structured as a deeper understanding of the unique features of the photovoice. Through the analysis, seven main themes emerged. These themes are: 1) Experiences, 2) social, 3)
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intellectual, 4) speaking, 5) emotion, 6) challenges and difficulties, and 7) future direction of photovoice.

Based on the result, it was revealed that photovoice is a valuable tool that provides an interesting experience for students in learning photovoice. Students stated that photovoice was a unique and newest tool for them. This is because photovoice is by the visual dominant learning style of students. In addition, students think that photovoice is a unique tool because it combines photos and words. Photovoice is an interesting method because the photos taken can be objects to be discussed. So that the majority of students feel photovoice is an interesting experience while learning photovoice. This finding is similar to the opinion of students in research Cook & Quigley (2013), stating that photovoice is an interesting thing and a unique experience in helping the students in the learning process. However, this study also found that a minority of students had less interesting experiences with photovoice because they still felt confused and lacked understanding about photovoice. Students still need a deeper explanation about photovoice.

Another finding from this research is that students’ speaking gets better when learning to use photovoice. Photovoice is a valuable tool because it provides space for students to express their aspirations, feelings, and hobbies. Students who have basic photography have space to learn photography while giving voice. Photovoice makes students aware of the subjective voice, a photo that depends on who gives the voice. In addition, students are more confident in speaking English. Based on the results of learning photovoice, students stated that students felt more confident speaking English not only in class but outside of class they also felt more confident. This finding was similar to Hidayat et al., (2019), which stated that photovoice was an effective method of enhancement students’ speaking skills. Ciolan & Manasia (2017) also found that photovoice provides access to the subjective closeness of learning in everyday context and experiences.

Moreover, Photovoice makes students think critically. This is in accordance with the objectives of photovoice stated by C. Wang & Burris (1997) the three objectives of photovoice, namely (1) to enable people to record and reflect their personal and community strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through group discussions of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers. Students revealed that photovoice made students accustomed to thinking out of the box or thinking critically. One other thing, photovoice triggers or stimulates students’ interest in learning. Stimulating students’ interest in learning indicates the character of successful speaking. This opinion is supported by Ur(1996), the characteristic of successful speaking is high motivation. These findings are similar to Mahalingam(2018), which states that students demonstrated improvements of creativity, self-compassion, and compassion toward others, mental health, and emotional regulation. Another study from Ferdiansyah et al., (2020), states that photovoice is a pedagogical tool that triggers critical and creative thinking.

Photovoice teaches social and environmental skills to students. This discovery teaches students tolerance to others’ voices, learning the environment, and creating interactions. Photovoice makes students aware of the potential or perception of people that the perception or perspective of each individual has a representation of each. Photovoice also makes students aware of the environment and social surroundings. This statement is
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similar to the benefits of photovoice according to C. Wang & Burris (1997), photovoice allows participants to see a different perspective than usual, and it facilitates sampling from different social and behavioral settings. In addition, photovoice creates good relationships between lecturers, students, and other students. With this tool, students can express opinions and exchange information, and mutually support each other. Edwards et al., (2012) state that photovoice has a positive influence on good interactions with participants’ relationships with other participants. According to Nykiforuk (2011), photovoice helps foment dialogue among participants about participants’ perceptions of the issue being discussed or different ideas. This finding is similar to that of Edwards et al., (2012), that photovoice has a positive influence on social interactions, sense of community, and self-awareness, and their relationships with other participants.

Furthermore, this study found student emotions, including enthusiasm, fun learning, and speaking anxiety. Students feel happy, enjoy, and enthusiastic about learning. Even though the students felt afraid, insecure, and ashamed, the photovoice made the students brave enough to be confident and speak up. One of the students reported that learning photovoice was no pressure because they spoke using vocabulary they could understand. In addition, students become creative and highly motivated to learn. This finding is the same as Graziano (2015) that ELL is enjoyed with photovoice as a technological tool in learning English. On the other hand, Ferdiansyah et al., (2020) found that photovoice was proven to be free of anxiety and was interesting for learning writing. Participants also stated that they enjoyed learning the writing process using the photovoice tool.

However, photovoice has difficulties or challenges. This study found difficulties in analyzing and reasoning. The majority of students reported that they still had difficulty analyzing and reasoning, this was because photovoice was new material and was rarely applied in the classroom. Students find it difficult to arrange ideas to be conveyed. In addition, students find it difficult to describe photos because it requires reasoning. These findings are similar to statements from C. Wang & Burris (1997) and Nykiforuk (2011), the photovoice is difficult to analyze and summarize. In addition, students find it difficult to determine an object or atmosphere that fits the theme. These findings are consistent with the finding in Graziano (2015) that ELLs were not involved in identifying of themes from the data.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates the potential of photovoice as a pedagogical tool for an interesting experience for third-semester students in learning speaking. This study proves that photovoice has the potential to be a valuable teaching tool in achieving this goal. The majority of students perception that photovoice is an interesting experience for students because it makes students’ speaking better and feels highly valued by friends and lecturers. Students are more confident because they are given space to channel their hearts, ideas, and hobbies. With photovoice, students can channel their hobbies as well as learn many things from photovoice. In addition, photovoice contributes to the social, intellectual, and emotional feelings of students. The findings show that photovoice encourages students to think outside the box or critical thinking, increases interest in learning, and be aware of a social sense of the environment.
This study also found students’ enthusiasm in learning speaking. They really enjoy learning photovoice because they feel there is no pressure in learning speaking. Even though there were some difficulties in learning photovoice, it was not pressured for them in learning photovoice. Students feel supported by friends and lecturers. Through this full support, the relationship between students, lecturers, and other friends will be better. Another finding is that photovoice makes students who are passive in the class more active. This photovoice provides an opportunity for students who are only dominant passive, silent, and only transfixed by the words of a lecturer or friend, now they become more active and begin to dare to give their opinion. Not only dare to speak English in class, but they are also brave and confident to speak English outside the classroom.

REFERENCES


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