Photovoice: Exploring the Role of Teacher's Question for University Students' Fluency in Speaking Class

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Abstract. Speaking skill is essential in language learning and teaching process because the goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate using the target language. Fluency is one of the leading criteria that the students should accomplish in speaking skill. However, most of EFL students tend to be more nervous if they speak English, and this will impact their fluency. The objective of the research is to investigate how questioning gives an impact for students' fluency in academic speaking class. The researchers used narrative inquiry to collect and process the data using Photovoice. The participants of this research were 12 university students. The finding shows that the use of questioning can develop students' speaking fluency in academic speaking class. As the implication, teachers can give questions followed with feedback to enhance the students' fluency.

I. INTRODUCTION

Students evaluate whether they succeed in English language learning based on how well they can communicate using the language (Febriyanti, 2011). There are four characteristics of successful speaking activity; learners talk a lot, high motivation, even participation, and acceptable level of language. (Ur, 1996, p. 135). Brown (2007) in Fakir (2014, p. 183) states that to assess the success of speaking activities, we can use some criteria such as fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, discourse features, and task.

Fluency is one of the leading criteria that the students should accomplish in speaking skill. Hedge (2000) in Yang (2014, p. 197) argues that speaking fluency is in line with 1) the acceptable answer in the changes of communication; 2) suitable use

of linking distinct devices; 3) appropriate intonation and clear pronunciation.

However, most EFL students have some difficulties in speaking English which can affect their fluency. Tuan and Mai (2015, p. 8) point out that some language learners are still not able to speak English accurately and fluently. Pishkar, Moinzadeh, and Dabaghi (2017, p. 69) argue that finding alternatives to enhance someone's speaking fluency is one of the most challenging problems in foreign language learning. Many methods and techniques can be used to train students' fluency in speaking.

Questioning is one of the ways that can be used to train students' fluency and language competence. A preliminary study which was conducted by Wahyudi (2017) shows that questioning can improve

students' speaking skills such as fluency, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and students' confidence and participation. Students will be more active to speak if the teacher is more intense to ask questions; moreover, students' language proficiency is developed (Vebriyanto, 2016). A previous study which was conducted by Barjesteh and Moghadam (2014) reports that teachers should ask questions which need elaboration and obtain an answer which is longer and syntactically complex. Another study that was conducted by Al-Zahrani and Al-Bargi (2017) shows that the higher the participants' language skills, the higher interaction that occurs. It means questioning can activate students' thought, expand their confession, and manage the class well. In this study, the researchers used photovoice methodology followed with SHOWeD analysis to explore the role of teacher's question for students' fluency in speaking class. This study is guided by a research question: What is the impact of questioning towards the students' fluency in academic speaking class?

Literature Review

In recent years, English becomes essential language around the world. In English, there are four skills to be mastered, one of them is speaking. Speaking is one of the primary skills in language learning which has a goal that is to be able to communicate. Speaking is speech production which evolves into a part of people's life (Thornbury, 2005). Efrizal (2012, p. 127) defines that speaking is considered as a process to transfer a message and idea orally.

Speaking becomes necessary skills that should be mastered by language learners with other language skills. Since English becomes essential language around the world, the needs of speaking have increased. According to Graves (2008), as

cited by Mohammadipour and Rashid (2015), the need for speaking mastery in English has been increased because of the position of English as a language for international communication has strengthened. Nazara (2011, p. 29) argues that it has become apparent that EFL students have considered themselves successful and good learners if they can communicate effectively and fluently in English. That is why in speaking, students should speak appropriately and efficiently based on some criteria, one of the requirements is fluency.

Fluency becomes one of many problems in speaking. There are many ways to solve this problem; one of them is through questioning. Campbell and Mayer (2009) state that asking questions is used to improve their learning and engaging students in college lectures. Also, Wangru (2016, p. 144) states that teacher can use questioning to control the interactions that happen in the class since it can activate students' thought, expand students' recognition and maintain the students' to participate in the class. The role of teachers' questions in higher order, that is, questions that inscribe the top cognitive processes in Bloom's Taxonomy, i.e., analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions, in improving EFL students' critical thinking ability (Feng, 2013). As stated by Harmer (2000), it is a crucial part of the teacher to make the students speak using the language they are learning. This statement is supported by Oradee (2012) who argues that with the purpose to encourage students to study and talk in English, it is a need for teachers to use many English speaking activities and raise learning classroom environment. Thus, questions are helpful to increase classroom interactions with communicative language.

Fluency becomes one of the significant problems in speaking skill that often

happens among students who are learning a foreign language. Rahmawati and Ertin (2014, p. 202) state that fluency in a language signifies the speaker can deliver the message well and confidently and be able to give a response without many pauses. Diyyab, Abdel-Haq, and Ali (2014, p. 6) define fluency in speaking as speaking at average speed without making repeated mistakes and sounds with ideal English, transferring the message of the speaker in a clear, accessible, and understandable way, using a simple language which is suitable with the listener's level, creating coherent sentences without much confusion, showing the speech physically and cognitively, establishing some pauses, hesitations, corrections, backtracking, and using gap-fillers accurately. Iswara, Azib, and Rochsantiningsih (2012, pp. 5-6) state that speaking fluently means being able to talk spontaneously as carefully, smoothly, quickly, comprehensible, lucid, and efficient without many errors which may make a distraction for the listener. In simple terms, fluency means kind of ability to speak freely without having much hesitations and stops.

II. METHODS

Photovoice which is an action research methodology is carried in this study. Wang and Burris (1997, p. 369) define photovoice as a process where people can analyze, show, and improve their society using a specific photographic technique. Strack, Magill, and McDonagh (2004) state that participants in the photovoice process learn how to use cameras and are asked to capture some photographs regarding weaknesses and strength in the society. Photovoice is a form of qualitative research which applies storytelling of collected photography. Narrative inquiry is used to obtain and construct the data.

In conducting the research, the authors took several steps to reach the goal of the study. The researchers used observation, questionnaire, and interviews. The first step was the observation in which the researchers observed the situation of the classroom. Then, the researchers continue to use photovoice technique by taking some pictures. The criteria of the photos are: (1) the photos should be considered when there were activities, (2) the photos should show that there was an interaction between the teacher and the students, (3) the photos should be taken in the classroom. After some pictures have already been made, the researchers gave questionnaires to the participants. Afterwards, the interviews were conducted.

The participants of this study were 12 university students of English speaking class; consisting of three males and nine females in the age between 18-22 years old. They were divided into four groups with an even distribution of the male students.

The researchers asked the participants to represent their point of view towards the pictures. In showing their opinion, participants were guided by using SHOWeD which is the acronym of six questions that can guide to the results of the study:

S = What do you see here?
H = What is really happening here?
O = How does this relates to our lives?
W = Why this situation exist?
E = How could this image educate the community? And
D = What can we do about it?

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A. Results

The finding presents the data analysis undertaken in this research. This research was carried out to explore the activity in speaking class mainly in the function of

teacher's question to improve students' fluency in speaking class. The researchers found that teacher's question is used to enhance the students' fluency in speaking class. This is supported by the fact that the students have answered the teacher's question smoothly and without many pauses. This is caused by the frequently asked questions from the teacher.

In every meeting, the teacher has provided some videos related to the speaking materials. The videos were played after the students were asked to share what they have known related to the contents. While playing the video, the teacher would give more explanation and some examples. Afterwards, the teacher would ask the students one by one to recall their memories about what they have learned in the video. Then, they were asked to make their examples and delivered it orally. In this session, the questions might come from the students if there were some parts that they did not understand yet.

Figure 1 shows that the activity in the speaking classroom was not the only monologue but also asking and answering questions which provided two-way communication. The picture shows that it was important for the lecturer to ask questions to the students after the lecturer explained the material. It was necessary to check the students' progress and the fluency when they were answering the questions. Most of the participants said that before asking and answering activity began, the students needed to listen and pay attention to the lecturer so that they could gather the information which was required.

Student A (see Figure 1) was explaining her answer towards the lecturer's question. Before watching the video, the lecturer had instructed about what the students need to do. After the students had watched the video, they were given

time to do the instruction. Then, each of the students should explain the work she has done following by answering the additional questions from the lecturer.

Figure 1. Student A was answering the lecture's question

S: What do you SEE here?
Answer: It is a picture of me answering the lecturer's questions.
H: What is really HAPPENING here? (The unseen story behind the photo)
Answer: The lecturer looks at the students' work and asks about it. By doing this, the lecturer demands the student to give an answer which could enhance students' speaking skill such as fluency. This happens because it will trigger them to deliver their idea.
O: How does this relate to OUR lives? (or my life personally)
Answer: It is a common activity in the class when a lecturer giving a material and checking the students' progress.
W: WHY this situation exist? (what will I or we DO about it?)
Answer: This kind of activities always exists in daily life not just between a student and lecturer.
E: How could this image EDUCATE people?
Answer: A good lecturer check on the students' progress and keep the students practicing their speaking skill such as their fluency by asking them questions.
D: What can we DO about it?

Answer: We need to pay attention to the lecturer.

In the interview, Student A stated that questioning could influence her speaking fluency even if there is still a lack of it. She said that the teacher's questions made her practice the way she delivers her idea. By the lecturer giving some problems, the students will prepare themselves to listen to the material and construct the answer related the questions.

"Regarding whether or not my speaking skills are improved, I think that there are still some improvements in my speaking skills, but I don't think that it's already good enough. However, at least I can deliver my ideas to people so that they will understand what I am talking about. I tend to sputter even in my mother tongue, so I think that through practicing questioning, I can speak more comfortably in English".

However, she thought that the thing which still needs to be fixed is the synchronization between the things in her mind and what she said.

Besides to check how far the students could understand the materials after the lecturer explained it, the lecturer also reviewed the students' fluency in answering questions. Some participants' stated that in questioning and answering activity mean involving discussion. When the lecturer gave several questions to the students, the lecturer provided a chance for them to have a discussion. Through this study, the students can share the knowledge or the information that they have got with other students.

After the discussion, the students started to give their responses. Nonetheless, some answers sometimes did not cover the given questions. Student B (see Figure 2), explained that after she gave her answer, the lecturer gave

feedback or comment dealing with her previous response. Student B revealed that the lecturer did not only provide more explanation regarding the material but also about her fluency while answering the question.

Figure 2. The teacher is giving more explanation towards his question for Student B

S: What do you SEE here?
Answer: The lecturer is teaching, and I was listening to him.
H: What is really HAPPENING here?
Answer: This happens in speaking class, the lecturer is asking me a question and then I try to answer it. However, there are some parts in my answer that do not cover the question, and then my lecturer gives me more explanation what I have missed during answering the question. The lecturer also revises my answer, especially in my speaking fluency.
O: How does this relate to OUR lives?
Answer: It is essential for a lecturer to apply questioning in the class to challenge the students' thinking. By questioning, I think it can improve the students speaking fluency. They have opportunities to review their learning, think critically and practice their speaking ability. The important is they can improve the speaking fluency.
W: WHY this situation exist?

Answer: To motivate students to become actively involved in lessons.

E: How could this image EDUCATE the community?

Answer: This image shows that the classroom atmosphere should be effective. The relationship between the lecturer and the students should be close enough. One way that can be done is by questioning. It can train the students' speaking fluency since they have chance to deliver their mind. The more we speak will make our speaking more fluent.

D: What can we DO about it?

Answer: If the lecturer asks me a question. I will try to answer. It does not mean my answer is correct or not. However, be an active learner like answer the question every time the lecturer gives question is a big opportunity to practice and improve my speaking fluency.

The participant explained that by questioning, she could have more opportunity to speak.

"*Questioning can encourage students to review their knowledge regarding the subject, so the students be able to train their speaking fluency. If this technique is used continuously in speaking class, it can improve the students' speaking fluency because they have a lot of opportunities to speak*".

According to her, this situation did not happen in all classes even though another participant said that questioning is a common thing happening in the classroom. Student B thought that not all lecturers asked many questions to the students who made students felt as if they had less chance to speak.

Another participant stated that questioning is essential for us to not only inside the classroom but also outside the school. Student C (see Figure 3) indicated that questioning does not only help her to

have the right answer to the question but also tell her how to answer the question appropriately. Students will think about what they should and should not do while answering the questions. Student C included politeness as one of some aspects that should be considered while giving a response to the teacher's questions.

In her opinion, questioning from the teacher could help her speaking fluency even though not in all parts. The participant stated, "I can construct my ideas in the speaking class, but for speaking without pauses, I think I have not been there yet." The questions from the lecturer made the students be prepared. According to Student C, answering the teacher's question made her felt it was not who she really was. It was caused by her preparation. She already knew that the teacher would ask some questions.

Despite the less benefit that she can get from questioning, she still found that questioning can be useful if it is habituated. Moreover, the other participant, student D stated that questioning could make the teacher and the students engaged in the classroom.

Figure 3. Student C is answering the teacher's question

S: What do you SEE here?

Answer: I was answering my teacher's question. The questions were about practicing speaking for IELTS.

H: What is really HAPPENING here?

Answer: I am not fluent enough speaking in English. Sometimes, when my lecturer asked me a question about

the video he had played, I needed time to construct my ideas into sentences. I like to be given questions because it helps me to train my speaking skill. But, in another time I was also afraid if I cannot answer it clearly.

O: How does this relate to OUR lives?

Asking and answering questions always happened in an a conversation, so it relates to clearness and politeness of the answer. In the society, we do not only answer a question but also answer it with politeness.

W: WHY this situation exist?

Answer: As a student, it is a must for me being able to answer others' questions outside the class, not only in speaking class. Therefore, it's a form of practice to answers question from my lecturer.

E: How could this image EDUCATE the community?

Answer: This image can educate us that in society we have to improve our skill of speaking in order to communicate well with other people.

D: What can we DO about it?

Answer: I will practice speaking using English outside the class with my friends, maybe talking about what we have done and what have happened during the day.

Through this way, the teacher will know the students' weaknesses which leads to giving revisions related to students' problem regarding their fluency. Also, Student E stated that questioning taught people to be brave to speak up their ideas.

B. Discussion

The findings of the research show that questioning influences to enhance the student's verbal fluency. We could see some participants could get some improvements regarding their fluency in speaking class. However, there was a student who did not find questioning was effective enough even though it could influence fluency in some way. In fact, questioning is useful not only in improving the students' fluency but also their willingness to speak.

It relates to the literature review whereby Wangru (2016) states that teacher can use questioning to control the interactions that happen in the class since it can activate students' thought, expand students' recognition and maintain the students' to participate in the class. Thus, it proves that questioning can activate students' thought, expand their confession, and manage the class well. As Harmer (2000) states that it is an essential part of the teacher to make the students speak using the language, they are learning.

Teachers can trigger students to speak by giving questions. Through questioning technique, the students could be more active due to the trigger of answering the teacher's questions. Also, by using the questioning technique, the students are demanded to think critically about the answer and how to deliver their ideas. Thus, the situation between the students and the teacher can be engaged. It is in line with the statement from Campbell and Mayer (2009), asking questions is used to improve their learning and engaging students in college lectures.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this study, it can be concluded that teacher's question influences the students' speaking fluency. The teacher's providing opportunities frequently for the students to practice their speaking skills through questioning can enhance some indicators of fluency skills such as speaking easily and quickly. However, there are still some issues that

need to be fixed: lack of idea and speaking with many pauses.

It can be seen that questioning does not only improve the students' speaking fluency, but it also activates the students to involve in a discussion before answering the questions and engaged the interaction between the teacher and the students. So by using the questioning technique, the classroom situation becomes more lively.

The study implicates that questioning technique is one of suitable ways that can be applied in the EFL classroom for university students, especially in the speaking class. Questioning could be used continuously which is used to provide opportunities for the students to practice their speaking skills and to share their ideas.

In the learning and teaching process, students should be the focus. This means that students are responsible for speaking and actively participate in the classroom. Thus, they will be able to know and evaluate themselves regarding their oral performance. Also, the teacher can monitor the students' progress and give feedback towards their verbal performance.

The limitations which can be found in this study are two. First, the representation of the results should be seen with alertness because there were only 12 participants involved in this study. Second, as only the participants were given questionnaire and being interviewed, the findings may acknowledge the assumptions due to their role as "students." Therefore, it would be more inclusive if the teacher also gave his perspective on this study.

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