



The Outcome of Authentic Material-Based Teaching in Speaking Class

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Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze the language outcome variety of authentic material-based speaking classes of a private university in Yogyakarta. The acceptance of World Englishes variants in the world has led to several changes in English language education, one of them being the focus on native-like accents that has previously been the focus of English language classes. Authentic material, teaching materials created by native speakers of a language, is one way that has been proven to be effective for teaching. However, instead of checking its effectivity, this study researches the language variant of the students. To that end, the researchers interviewed five teachers of speaking classes from a private university in Yogyakarta. The results of the research show that despite all classes using authentic material as a method of instruction, the language variation of the students vary. Some students attained native-like speaking proficiency, while others speak in the Indonesian variety of World Englishes. The future direction of any subsequent research to succeed this one is to find out how this phenomenon could happen.

Keywords: Language Variant, Accent, Authentic Material, Speaking Class

Introduction

The English language occupies a certain hierarchy in the world. As the language that connects the entire population of Earth, it has more non-native speakers than native speakers. A research by Wang (2016) cited that there will be 508 million English speakers by 2050 (Wang, 2016). The English language is so commonly used that it even influenced some countries' stances on matters other than linguistics. In Southeast Asia, ASEAN adopted English as the official organization's language, despite the fact that not even half of the member

countries uses English as a primary language (Waterworth, 2016) to foster "respect for the different cultures, languages and religions of the peoples of ASEAN ... in the spirit of unity in diversity" (Kirkpatrick, 2017).

However, being such a massive language comes with its drawbacks. One of these drawbacks is the confusion over which variation of English should be taught in classrooms. Most people would refer to the native variation of English, those spoken by L1 English users as the native variation of English is the model used to measure linguistic competence (Fang, 2016). However, as English continues to spread and becomes more varied, some non-native learners of English seem to regard native speakers of English as an idol to model their linguistic style on, but never actively aspire their own linguistic style on it (Wang, 2016). Others would simply settle on using a variation of English that are unique to that region (Pradana, 2019). The position of native English teachers are challenged, as non-native teachers can teach with the same efficiency (Elyas & Alghofaili, 2019).

Nowadays, most classrooms still base their teachings on native variations of English (Fang, 2016). This is reflected by the use of authentic materials in language teaching and learning sessions. Authentic material is described as teaching material that was not made for the sole purpose of teaching (Huda, 2017). Authentic materials are made by natives of the language (Akbari & Razavi, 2015), so they are as close to native variation languages as any material can be. By using these materials in their instruction method, teachers are modelling their instructions on the native variation of English. This research aims to find out the language output of a classroom that uses authentic materials its instruction.

There have been many research projects on the use of authentic materials in the classroom, in many levels from grade school (Estrada & Ortega, 2016) to high school (Giouroukakis & Honigsfeld, 2010). The gap of this research is that this research focuses on the variation of the English language, instead of its

effectivity. There have been many research projects regarding the effectiveness of authentic materials, but those research projects do not contain the variation of the students' English. To that end, the objective of this research is to find out the variant of one such class by observing a college-level English class that uses authentic material as an instruction medium and determine what category of English variation they are included in. As such, the research question of this research project is thus:

What variation does the English language spoken by authentic material-using class students belong to?

The subject of this research is students of an English Language Education Department (ELED) from a private university in Yogyakarta. The class teaches Listening and Speaking for Academic Purposes. Because the researchers aimed to investigate the students' language variant, the researchers chose to limit the research to the speaking part of the class.

Authentic material is a definition of teaching material used in language classrooms that are not produced solely for the aim of teaching (Akbari & Razavi, 2015). Teachers make use of authentic materials to provide examples of how the language is used in a natural way, thus giving the lesson an "authentic" feeling. Some researchers would add an additional caveat in defining authentic material, namely that it is created originally for consumption by native speakers (Huda, 2017).

Authentic material is among one of the most used materials in teaching (Anam et al., 2019). Its form can range from videos (Kristiana, 2018) and short stories (Siyabi, 2017) materials that are expected to appear in classrooms, to more exotic materials such as online discussion boards (Liu et al., 2018). However, not all teachers support the use of authentic materials as a whole. Researchers such as Anam et al (2019) consider authentic materials important to the classroom to make students more interested in learning the target language and highlights the abundant availability of authentic materials in the

internet (Anam et al., 2019). However, Kristiana's (2018) research proves that there is an inconsistency between teachers' beliefs regarding authentic materials and classroom practices. She mentions the importance of developing positive beliefs on the use of authentic materials.

In the context of this research, the researchers consider all authentic material to be relevant for the practices of teaching and learning. Authentic materials have multiple different forms. The most important characteristic of authentic material is that it was not made for the purpose of teaching but is used to teach because of their use of the language that is to be taught (Akbari & Razavi, 2015).

One of the most prominent variation of the English language is the native version. Native English is the standard with which an English learner's competence is measured (Fang, 2016). The native variation of a language is the one used by its native speakers. In the case of English, it is the British, American, and Australian variation of English. These variations are included in Kachru's inner circles of English, the most common classification of English language variation (Lewis & Deterding, 2020).

The authority of native English in the world of English learning has been weakened (Wang, 2016). This is due to the increasing number of new varieties of English language, a phenomenon referred to as World Englishes (Lange & Leuckert, 2019). World Englishes refers to the variation of the English spoken in different countries. Indonesia uses English solely as a method of communication (Waterworth, 2016). As such, English language instruction in Indonesia uses an "English as a Foreign Language" format that focuses on the learners' perspective (Lange & Leuckert, 2019). More and more research projects are using World Englishes as a way to make English language learners aware of other variations of the English language (Matsuda, 2019).

One of the largest and oldest debates of English language learning is native vs non-native variations of English. This can range from the teachers to

the language itself. A research by Crystal mentions that both native and non-native teachers have their own advantages and drawbacks, and that both variations have merit (As cited in Pradana, 2019). Other researchers adopt a more critical stance to the debate, mentioning the indifference between native and non-native English speaking teachers in their participants (Elyas & Alghofaili, 2019) or the fact that their participants are showing signs of accepting ELF (Wang, 2016).

Research Methodology

This research was a qualitative research, and it aimed to find the trends within a certain group. In this case, the researchers wished to find the language variant of an English classroom that includes authentic material in its instruction. The researchers considered the qualitative research method to be the suitable method.

To investigate the language variant of an authentic material-using classroom, the researchers chose the purposeful sampling method to select the participants of this research. The purposeful sampling method is used in a research when the researchers want to select participants with a certain characteristic that made them suitable to become participants. The only characteristic for the participants is that they have taught Listening and Speaking classes in the past. To that end, the researchers selected teachers from two classes of a private university in Yogyakarta that involves speaking in their curriculum, namely listening and speaking for academic purposes class and listening and speaking for career development. The reason the researchers chose these classes is because one of the researchers have taken these classes and knows that the class used authentic material to provide sample of academic purposes and career development. In addition, as the class' name has stated, it provides samples of speaking, providing plenty of samples for variant. As such, the researchers chose this class for this research.

To collect the data for this research, the researchers employed the interview method. The researchers recruited teachers of these classes to become participants for the research. Between the two classes, five lecturers were assigned to teach both subjects. To make sure the participants answer the questions freely but truthfully, the researchers employed the open-ended interview method using interview questions and guideline specifically designed for this research.

The researchers had intended to interview the participants face-to-face, but the COVID-19 requires all citizens of the country to practice social distancing, making face-to-face interviews almost impossible. As such, only two participants were interviewed on the spot. The other participants were interviewed through online media such as Skype, Zoom, and WhatsApp. The interview used the Indonesian language to make the questions clearer and avoid misunderstanding, but because the participants are lecturers of the English language, some of them would respond to the questions in English. The interviews were recorded using the available media (cell phone for face-to-face interviews, and the corresponding programs for online interviews) and were later transcribed into a word document for clarity.

This research employed the coding method to classify the data gathered in the video and the rubrics. Using the open coding method, the researchers labeled the data of the rubrics before categorizing them using axial coding. Lastly, the researchers selected which data is relevant for the research using the selective coding method.

Findings and Discussion

This research aimed at identifying whether the use of authentic materials affected students' speaking proficiency especially in their accents. Perceptions

of five teachers were studied. Conclusions on whether students have native-like or localized accents were drawn from the perceptions of the teachers.

In the selective coding step of data analysis, the researchers grouped the participants' responses into relevant categories namely, native-like and localized accents. Later in the analysis the localized accent was categorized as part of world Englishes or Indoglish as suggested by the previous researchers (Pradana, 2019; Saddhono & Sulaksono, 2018).

Findings

To answer the research question of "What variation does the English language spoken by authentic material-using class students belong to?" the researchers grouped the answers according to the participants' statements. From those statements, the English language spoken by the students can be grouped into two categories, namely native-like speaking proficiency and World Englishes. Five different research participants were interviewed, each of which have had teaching experience ranging from two to eighteen years. The data gathered from the interviews can be seen in the following excerpts.

Native-like Speaking Proficiency

Out of five participants, two of the research participants considered that their students have spoken similar to a native speaker. Participant 1 (Derek) and Participant 4 (Parker) believed that at least some of their students have reached some sort of native-like proficiency in speaking. However, the two participants have different reasons why they think their students have received native-like levels of speaking proficiency. The students of Derek's speaking class who have reached native-like speaking proficiency speak in an American accent:

"I think they are competent enough to choose the right words and pronounce them correctly." (Derek)

Teacher Derek's students believed that the authentic materials of American English had contributed to their use of certain accents. When asked about the accent of the authentic material that he used in their class, Derek answered that his authentic materials have always been in American:

"They tend to use American Pronunciation, which can be seen on how they pronounce CAN'T as /kænt/, not /kant/." (Derek)

When it comes to language proficiency, students of a second language have been known to idolize native speakers of said language (Wang, 2016). This, combined with the tried-and-true effectiveness of authentic materials in English teaching (Sadiq, 2019), means that it is likely that the students who reached native-like speaking proficiency have likely modeled themselves on the authentic materials that were used to teach them. Teacher Parker is another participant who claimed that some of their students have reached native-like speaking proficiency. However, he made it clear that his claims came with a caveat: said students have spent some time abroad:

"There are some who spoke like a native speaker, but we have to be informed, that they had some experience living abroad." (Parker)

English language learners who spent some time abroad are likely to be affected by their experiences abroad, and this applies to linguistic matters as well (Hooper, 2019). In addition, when asked about the language variant of the Authentic material used in the class, Teacher Parker stated that even though he prefers to use materials delivered in British English, he uses a variety of authentic materials and he does not pay particular attention to what accent the authentic materials use:

"If it's possible, I prefer to use British English. But that doesn't mean I don't use American English if the topic that I look for isn't available in British English. I mean my preference, well, the truth is, it's not like a big deal." (Parker)

Keeping the fact that these native-like students have already spent time abroad, the speaking proficiency of these students might have been the result of their personal experiences rather than the authentic materials they were taught with.

Localized Accents or World Englishes

After the data from the research was analyzed, it was found that four out of five participants had students who speak using the World Englishes variant of English. This revelation came in a number of different evidences. Teacher Derek stated that his students used Indonesian adjective placements:

"As an example, their adjective placements that are supposed to be in front of the nouns." (Derek)

On the other hand, teacher Andrew stated that his students used Indonesian phrases, grammar, and expressions:

"I am more concerned about expressions that exist in their first language but it doesn't exist in foreign language. They can't simply just adopt it by translating it." (Andrew)

Meanwhile, Teacher Irene stated that her students used Indonesian structure and terms:

"For example, in speeches, even if it's an academic speech they still use a form that is used in Indonesia. Like uh... like "Honored"" (Irene)

And Teacher Prische stated that her students used codeswitching, Indonesian grammar, and literal translation:

"they code switched, they use some Indonesian grammar, or even they do some literal translation" (Prische)

Mixing elements of an English language with L1 elements is a sign of world English accents (Saddhono & Sulaksono, 2018). In the context of Indonesian ELLs, this variation is called "Indoglish" (Pradana, 2019; Saddhono & Sulaksono, 2018). With so many evidence of the usage of various Indonesian elements in their English-speaking activities, it is safe to say that most students of ELED of this private university utilized the "Indoglish" variation of English, mixing English words with Indonesian syntax.

An interesting take that can be found in the findings is that despite speaking in Indoglish, the students can understand each other's English, which means that the basic requirement for communication has been fulfilled. Teacher Irene stated that her students can speak with each other, but she had difficulties speaking to them:

"For example, when they do a speech most of them each other, but sometimes I struggle to understand. What are they saying? I need to learn from them." (Irene)

An explanation to this phenomenon can be found in Teacher's Andrew's statement. When he teaches, the students could understand his pronunciation, but not that of the natives:

"when I have a quiz and then I pronounce the word by reading the text they can understand the content quickly with my pronunciation. But when it comes to like native speaker recording. It comes to confusion. They are familiar with my accent" (Andrew)

This suggests that non-native speaker teachers can also leave an impression on language learners. This is possible if the students do not consider native speakers as a model for their English language learning (Wang, 2016).

Discussion

The primary purpose of this research was to find out the variant of English language spoken by the English Language students that was taught in Authentic Material-based class. The researchers chose this topic because knowing the language variant of authentic material-based teaching is important to see whether or not the authentic material used in a classroom affects the language variant of the students. Initially, authentic materials are used to teach because they are modeled after a native variation of the English language. However, as more and more variations of English are accepted in the world, the use of Authentic materials might have to be reconsidered, especially if the language variant of the students does not resemble a native variation. As such, the researchers decided to interview five lecturers at a private university in Yogyakarta to find out the variant of one such class by observing a college-level English class that uses authentic material as an instruction medium and determine what category of English variation they are included in.

From the findings above, we can see that the speaking language variant of English language learners varies, even in classes that uses authentic materials as teaching materials. For example, as seen Teacher Derek's statement regarding his students' usage of Native English accent, the language of the authentic material does have an impact on the students' speaking language. This is in line with Huda's research regarding the effect of exposing the students to an accurate representation of Native English. In his research, Huda mentioned that authentic materials expose the students to an accurate representation of Native English, a notion that, according to Anam et al. (2019), can motivate the students to learn English. Some of Teacher Derek's students, after being exposed to the American variant of English, was able to speak in the American accent, meaning that they were motivated to learn said accent

after being exposed to it, a notion that, according to Anam et al. (2019), can motivate the students to learn English (Anam et al., 2019).

Accordingly, Teacher Parker stated that his students who have attained native-like proficiency spent some time in different countries, which means that they have been exposed to other variants of English during their time there. English language learners who have been exposed to their experiences abroad will be affected by said experiences (Hooper, 2019). This is similar to the findings of Li's research. According to Li's research, the language input of the material matters to the language variant of the students. Because teacher Parker's most prominent students were exposed to the English language variants of the countries they visited, their English variant would mimic those of said countries' variants. As such, when they returned to their home countries, their English variant would be more similar to the country they visited rather than their regional dialect.

The interesting but not entirely expected outcome of this study is the fact that the students are capable of communicating with each other using "Indoglish". Teacher Irene, who has taught English for over ten years, struggles to understand her students' dialect when they speak, but other students can understand them well. This can happen if the students in question do not have a particularly strong attachment to another English variant (Wang, 2016). According to teacher Irene, only 30 – 40% of her students were able to speak using native idioms. However, they were able to speak to each other using their own variant of English. This may be possible because the students have the same L1, and their English speaking is influenced by the same language, namely Indonesian. This means that they essentially speak with the same language, the "Indoglish" version of World Englishes. According to Braj Kachru's Circles of English, World Englishes variants develop in regions where English is not used as a primary language (Lewis & Deterding, 2020). Indonesia, a country that only uses the English language as a foreign language, does not actively

expose their citizens to any Native variation of English. Because of this, the students developed a different variation of English, one that mixes elements of the Indonesian language. Teacher Irene could not understand the students' well because she is unfamiliar with this variation.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that although the usage of authentic material can help English language learners with their speaking, the language variant of said students vary between students. Some students, such as teacher Derek's students, have a native-like speaking ability because they were taught using authentic material that exclusively use the American accent. Other students would speak with the accent they are most comfortable with, which in this case, is the "Indoglish" variation. Considering how World Englishes continue to be accepted, this research should help teachers who intend to focus on just one accent, be it native or non-native.

Regarding future research projects, the researchers would like to implore future researchers who chose to continue with this topic to investigate how this phenomenon happened. The students were given materials that utilize the native variation of English, and only some of them has native-like characteristics as a speaking variant while others resort to using compensatory methods such as codeswitching to speak with an "Indoglish" accent. As an end note, the researchers would like to emphasize that this research was not conducted to see which accent is considered superior. All English accents should be considered as a cultural identity, and no one should be despised or looked down upon because they speak differently. In the end, it comes down to communication; If the meaning is understood, then you are communicating properly.

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