

## ENHANCING SCHEMATA – BASED SPEAKING TASK TO PROMOTE STUDENTS’ SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AND MOTIVATION

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**Abstract** This study was aimed at (1) drawing the process of schemata based speaking task implementation in enhancing students’ speaking performance effectively; (2) seeing the tasks’ effect on students’ speaking performance and motivation; (3) determining which of the task effect the students’ speaking performance most. This research was conducted to tertiary level students. To collect the data, questionnaire, speaking test and observation were administered. The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The result showed that (1) each task has different stages of schemata activation; (2) all of the tasks give significant effect on the students’ speaking performance and motivation; and (3) among the three tasks, schemata activation by providing word list enhances students’ speaking performance most. Based on the findings, it is suggested that English lecture should consider the students’ schemata activation since it may help the students to communicate by using English better. Further discussion on this issue might focus on each aspect of speaking performance by providing sufficient data with the different subject.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) melihat proses aplikasi task yang didisain berdasarkan skemata terhadap kemampuan berbicara; (2) melihat apakah ada perberdaan yang signifikan terhadap kemampuan berbicara dan motivasi; dan (3) aspek apa saja kah dari kemampuan berbicara yang meningkat. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan kepada mahasiswa. Untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti menggunakan kuisisioner, tes dan observasi. Kemudian data dianalisis secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) setiap task memiliki tahapan aktivasi skemata yang berbeda; (2) semua task memberi pengaruh signifikan terhadap motivasi dan kemampuan berbicara siswa; and (3) aktifasi skemata dengan menggunakan daftar kata paling meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa. Sesuai dengan temuan tersebut, disarankan agar pengajaran bahasa Inggris mempertimbangkan aktivasi skemata siswa dan kepada peneliti selanjutnya agar membahas lebih lanjut tentang setiap aspek kemampuan berbicara berbasis skemata dan melakukan penelitian dengan subjek yang berbeda.

**Key words:** schemata, speaking, motivation

## INTRODUCTION

The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners (Richards, 2008). In this case, speaking becomes the parameter of the learners' success in mastering English. As one of the central elements of communication, speaking needs special attention and instruction in an EFL context like the one in Indonesia (Cahyono and Widiati, 2006).

In spite of the fact that more Indonesians use English in their daily life, English instruction is a failure in this country. One of the reasons for the failure is that there has been no unified national system of English education (Huda, 1997) and, therefore, improvements of English communicative ability are painstakingly made. In reality, actually English is a compulsory subject for secondary school. Unfortunately, despite studying English for six years in junior and senior high school, overall Indonesian students have low proficiency in English up – on graduation from senior high school (Lie, 2007; Marcellino, 2008; Larson, 2014).

Surprisingly, tertiary education level students have similar problems with secondary level students in using English as a mean of communication, especially in spoken interaction. As stated by ministry's Directorate-General of Higher Education (*Dikti*) in *PP 43/DIKTI/Kep/2006* that English is compulsory subject for the first and second semester university students, as the requirement to meet the global era need which is able to

communicate by using English as international language.

In spite of meeting the qualification from *Dikti* that tertiary level students should have no problems on communicating by using English, many research's results show the opposite. As stated by Maulana, *et.al.* (2016) the most problems that university students faced in learning speaking skill are lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, less confidence to speak and afraid of making errors while speaking. Further research by Sayuri (2016) found that university students face some problems while speaking English, namely not having self-confidence, shyness to speak, being afraid of making mistakes, feeling nervous, and having nothing to say.

Highlighting these problems, it could be argued that this is a result of the curriculum and the focus of teaching not reflected the needs and the local context of the learners (Freire, 1997 in Larson, 2014). In addition, the lesson is difficult to understand due to the content is unreachable for the students' mind. Thus, it effects to the students' motivation in learning English and students' speaking performance.

In addition, different from reading which is receptive activity, speaking activity is a productive activity in which the students tend to express their knowledge and idea orally. In this case, students will be easy to express what exactly in their mind rather than speaking something that is not in their mind. This statement in line with Liu (2001) who states that there are debilitating factors that becomes students' obstacles in

mastering speaking English which are a lack of content knowledge and schemata coupled with poor speaking ability inhibit students from trying and lead them to rely avoidance strategies.

Some studies have been conducted in line with how schemata effect the students' comprehensible and fluently in four English skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this case, although schemata are mainly applied to reading, there is no reason that activating schemata cannot be applied to any of the other four skills. Allowing the students to personalize the information is a strong concept to assist learning in a context void of ability to physically recreate.

The word schema is a technical term in cognitive psychology. Nishida (1999) defined schema as generalized collection of knowledge of past experiences which is organized into related knowledge groups and is used to guide our behaviors in familiar situations. In addition, as stated by Jig-tao (2012) that schema helps us to focus our attention to comprehend, to interpret, to remember, to make inferences, to set goals and expectations, to reason and solve problems. In addition, schema plays a vital role in explaining what happens when old knowledge meets new (Brewer and Nakamura as cited in Marzuki, 2013). Based on these, the working definition of schema in this study is the prior knowledge from any source which is activated referred to and possibly followed when experienced something.

In EFL (English as Foreign Language) context, schemata gives benefit more on receptive skills of English: listening and reading. Some studies have been conducted in line with how schemata effects on listening and reading. Mai (2014), examined the effect of schema construction activities on EFL's learners' listening performance. Her finding shows that there is positive effect of activating students' schemata on students' listening comprehension.

In addition, a study by Yu-Hui, Lirong, et.al (2010) that examines how schema works on reading comprehensibility. The finding shows that students' schemata give valuable help for students to comprehend the reading materials. In line with that, students' schemata appear to have a higher level of comprehension when the content is familiar to the students (Cravota, 2001). The study on relation between students' schemata and reading comprehensibility is rapidly show positive correlation.

Further research focusing on speaking and writing, as productive activities, they have been a controversy on the role of schemata in speaking and writing. Yet, considering that both activities deal with the use of vocabulary that will build a written or oral product, without schema or background knowledge, students will not write and speak something. High school students may have to write a dialogue about restaurants and receiving bad service, the students may have received this in the past. Hamed and Benham, et.al (2014) conducted a study to examine the

role of formal schemata in the development of writing ability in Iranian EFL context. The result shows that familiarity with the formal schematic knowledge of the texts will result in better performance in writing.

In relation to speaking skill, task-based learning, discussion, dialogue and debates fit very well into activation of schemata. Ultimately, activating schemata is a winning situation for students as it enables them to personalize the information as it is connected to real experiences. Teaching English by activating schemata motivates the students to get more understanding on the subject and decreases their anxiety in speaking. In addition, as stated by Dornyei (2001) as cited in Astuti (2013), he divides generating initial motivation into five categories; enhancing learners' language value and attitude; increasing the learners' expectancy of success; increasing the learners' goal orientation; making the teaching materials relevant to learners; and creating realistic learners' belief. Highlighting the relevance materials to the learners can be interpreted as contextual materials to the students that involve their schemata. In enhancing learner's value, Dornyei (2001) as cited in Astuti (2013) mentions that learners' intrinsic motivation can be aroused by presenting interesting materials. The content of the subject which touches the students' personal experiences will give meaningful learning process to them.

In this case, some attempts have been made to classify the functions of speaking in human interaction. Based on Brown and Yule's (1983), there

are three functions of speaking which are talk as interaction, talk as transaction, and talk as performance. Talk as interaction refers to conversation and describes interaction that serves a primary social function. Talk as transaction refers to situations where the focus is on what is said or done: the message and making oneself understood clearly and accurately is the central focus, rather than the participants and how they interact socially with each other. Talk as performance refers to public talk that transmits information before an audience. Talk as performance tends to be in the form of monologue.

In addition, actually the activities in the classroom should reflect the three functions of speaking. Speaking activity which is a productive activity in which the students tend to express their knowledge and idea orally, students will be easy to express what exactly in their mind. Rather than speak something that is not in their mind. This statement is in line with Liu (2001) that states that there are debilitating factors that become students' obstacles in mastering speaking English which are a lack of content knowledge and schemata coupled with poor speaking ability inhibit students' from trying and lead to rely avoidance strategies. Thus, in order to facilitate student learning, material should be organized according to the students may already be familiar with or their schemata. Thus, this study focused on the process of schemata activation enhance the students' speaking performance effectively, whether schemata based speaking task affect the students' speaking performance and motivation and determination on

which task enhances the students' speaking performance most.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study used quantitative and qualitative approaches. The researcher used descriptive qualitative method by analyzing the process of the schemata-based task effect the students' motivation and speaking performance effectively. In addition, the researcher also conducted an observation to investigate it. Then, to answer the second, third and fourth research questions, this research belonged to quantitative one. The subject of the research was chosen purposively at two classes of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of college students in Tertiary Education Level at Darmajaya Business and Institute who are taking English Language class in 2016/2017 academic year in the odd semester. They were taking management informatics system major.

There were three classes consisted 20 students in each. There were 60 students who were involved in this research. 20 students belonged to first treatment class, P23, by activating schemata through reading text, 20 students belonged to second treatment class, P19, by activating schemata through watching video and 20 students belonged to third treatment class, P18, by activating schemata through providing word list.

## RESULTS

Activating students' schemata by watching video was the first task design implemented to P23 class. Based on the students' pre and post –

test scores, the statistical data presented significant different of students' speaking performance where is  $P < 0.05$  with the the mean score is -16,500. Activating students' schemata by reading text was the second task design implemented to P19 class. Based on the students' pre and post – test scores, the statistical data presented significant different of students' speaking performance where is  $P < 0.05$  with the mean score is -20.333. Activating students' schemata by using word list was the third task design implemented to P18 class. Based on the students' pre and post – test scores, the statistical data presented significant different of students' speaking performance where is  $P < 0.05$  with the mean score is -21,500.

In order to know the students' motivation, the researcher distributed the motivation questionnaire before and after the treatment. There were 20 items in the questionnaire. The distribution of questionnaire's items were constructed based on Deci and Ryan' (1985, 2000), Zimmerman's (2008), Ajzen's (2005), Garner's (1985, 2006), Bong and Skaalvik's (2003) and Dornyei's (2005). In this case, based on the statistical data, significant level is 0.000. It means that there is significant different of students' speaking performance where is  $P < 0.05$ .

In assessing the students' speaking performance, there were five aspects to be considered which are *pronunciation*, *fluency*, *comprehensibility*, *grammar* and *vocabulary*. Activating students' schemata by watching video drew a conclusion that the mean of students' speaking score for pronunciation is

2.825, fluency is 3.025, comprehensibility is 2.900, grammar is 2.825 and vocabulary is 3.025. In sum that vocabulary and fluency improve more than pronunciation, grammar and comprehensibility.

Activating students' schemata by watching video drew a conclusion that the mean students' speaking score for pronunciation is 2.600, fluency is 2.750, comprehensibility is 2.600, grammar is 2.650 and vocabulary is 2.900. In sum, that vocabulary and fluency improve more than pronunciation, grammar and comprehensibility.

Activating students' schemata by providing word list drew a conclusion that the mean students' speaking score for pronunciation is 2.950, fluency is 3.150, comprehensibility is 2.950, grammar is 3.000 and vocabulary is 2.825. In sum, fluency and comprehensibility improve more than pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

## **DISCUSSION**

The new idea related activating schemata was presented in this research. Activating students' schemata helped the students to enhance their speaking performance. The theory proposed by Jing Tao (2012) that linguistic, content and formal schemata were important part to be considered. Thus, this study activated those components of schemata. Due to this study employed the three kinds of task, each task has different process of schemata activation. Generally, the first and second tasks have the same process of schemata activation which are *confirming the idea, building the*

*idea and communicating the idea* (CBC). The schema was presented in the figure 3 and figure 4. Yet, they have different detail process of schemata activation and students' speaking performance as well as motivation development.

In schemata based speaking task by reading text design, confirming the idea becomes the crucial part of activating schemata, especially the activation of content schemata. While reading the text, the students recall their knowledge related to the topic discussed in the text at the same time. In this case, the students' activate their content schemata by confirming them with the idea presented at the text. This process is in line with Bartlett's theory (1932) in Hui (2012) that the role of background knowledge in language comprehension has been formalized as schema theory. It means that a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge (Hui, 2012). At this stage, the readers construct their idea to be communicated later on.

The previous research conducted by Alimohadi (2015) stated that schemata are important not just in interpreting information, but also in decoding how that information is presented (Alimohadi, 2015). This argument is in line with the finding of this research that in the discussion stage of the task, the students arranged the speaking outline. In this case, the students build the idea by activating the students' linguistic and formal schemata. Reactivating the schemata plays important role to

strengthen the content and way of delivering the idea.

The process of activating students' schemata by watching video has the same process of activating schemata by reading text. Both task designs combine the students' schemata with the idea, might be the new information for the students. In this stage, the students confirm their schemata with the idea presented by the text and video.

The two processes of activating schemata draw a conclusion that text and video helped them to confirm their idea related to certain topic. In this case, confirming the build their self confident to build and communicate the idea with friends. Due to the idea was reachable to their mind, the students were motivated to resolve their linguistic problem related to vocabulary and grammar. The detail processes of activating schemata are presented at figure 1 and 2 (see appendix).

In addition, the process of activating schemata in the third task was *Building the Idea, Building the Idea and Communicating Idea* (BBC). The process was presented in figure 3 (see appendix).

The finding support the motivation theory proposed by Dornyei (2001) that making the teaching materials relevant to the learners motivate them to do more effort to reach the learning goal. In this case, the learning goal of this research was enhancing students' speaking performance and students' motivation. The process of activating schemata of each task supports this theory, that schemata based speaking task, the new task design that

relevant to learners, enhanced the students' speaking performance and motivation.

Providing word lists means that giving students the clue of the topic discussed. Clue helps the students to bridge their schemata and topic outline. In line with Alimohadi (2015) stated that vocabulary is the foundation of expressing and building up all kinds of schemata. In addition, studies have shown that a high degree of background knowledge can overcome linguistic insufficiencies (Shen, 2008 in Munsakorn, 2015).

An (2013) assumed that schema activation by using some words, or groups of words, or the title of a text, are highly suggestive and they can signal a certain schema. Textual stimuli affect a schema in two ways. If a stimulus is highly suggestive of a certain schema, that schema as a whole can be activated. Accordingly, as presented at the figure that while the students were given the word list, they build the idea that came to their mind related to the word meaning in the list at the same time. The idea that came to their mind flew in form of story that they would tell to their friends. In addition, the students tried to arrange the linguistics aspects such as vocabulary and grammar to convey the idea.

Based on Hariss (1969), there are five aspects of speaking performance which are pronunciation, fluency, comprehensibility, grammar and vocabulary. The following table is the explanation in which aspects of speaking performance promote more in each task.

Activating students' schemata through reading text and watching video enhance the students' fluency and vocabulary. Alimohadi (2015) stated that in order for learners to be able to effectively process information, their existing schemas related to the new content need to be activated. In this case, different way of activating schemata leads to the different achievement. The following table describes different aspect of speaking performance aspects achieved by activating students' schemata.

Activating students' schemata by reading text and watching video, or as stated by An (2013) that textual stimuli affect a schema in two ways. If a stimulus is highly suggestive of a certain schema, that schema as a whole can be activated. In this case, while reading text and watching video, the students grasp the information from the resources. They noted the new vocabulary in the text and video. Thus the vocabulary aspect of speaking performance improved. Further, reading text and watching video help the students to confirm their schemata with the ide of the resources. In order word, their schemata supported by the new idea in the resources. Both tasks improve linguistic and formal schemata most.

Different from reading text and watching video, providing word list improve students' speaking fluency and comprehensibility. Word list comes with two main project for the students to be accomplished; defining the meaning and building the idea. In this case, the students were not provided by new idea of the topic being discussed. But they build their idea by themself. There was no confirming the idea stage. Thus, the

idea being discussed originally comes from their schemata.

Due to the students are tertiary level students, they are mature enough and have high level of thinking. Thus, activating content schemata could be conducted by asking them to recall their knowledge related to certain topic. Without providing them the source, they can build and develop the idea. The thing that should be considered is on how the teacher makes the students eager to express the idea in form of speaking.

Among the tree task given; activating students' schemata by reading text, watching video and providing word list, teaching by proving the word list give more significant effect than the other tasks.

The significant effect was due to the third task required all of the topic sources to be discussed was based on the students' schemata. So the activation of students' content schemata made make the two others schemata component activated. The students in this class were more active than in the other two classes.

Activating students' schemata in teaching speaking motivated the students to reach the goal of the teaching and learning process. In relation with the student on how schemata affect most to the students' reading skill, the study by Hamed and Benham, et.al. (2014) that formal schemata become the most important part in enhancing the students' reading skill. Yet, this research provides a conclusion that content schemata become the most important part of enhancing the students speaking performance.



## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Considering all the data gathered after finishing the research which was conducted in Darmajaya, some conclusions were taken as follows:

The research questions were to know on how the schemata based speaking task enhance the students' speaking performance and motivation, to find whether the schemata based speaking task enhance the students' speaking performance and motivation and to find which task give significant effect most toward the students' speaking performance. The result and analysis of this research come to the conclusion that schemata based speaking tasks give significant effect toward students' speaking performance and motivation. The task by providing word list gives significant effect most in enhancing the students' speaking performance. It is due to this task ask more students' schemata as the learning source than the two other tasks.

Activating schemata in speaking skill were different from the reading skill. In reading skill the students' do not need to build the idea but in speaking skill, the steps are *confirming the idea, building the idea and communicating the idea* or sometimes the steps of *confirming the idea was mixed with the building the idea*. After getting the fixed idea to be delivered, the students will be easier to communicate the idea to their friends.

Building the idea becomes the most important part of activating schemata. It involves the tree component of students schemata; content schemata, linguistic

schemata and formal schemata. When the three components of schemata activated, it will be easy for students to communicate their idea.

The most important part of this research is activating the students' schemata is not enough to enhance their speaking performance and motivation. To make the students speak up, conveying the idea should be trained. They need technique to communicate their idea.

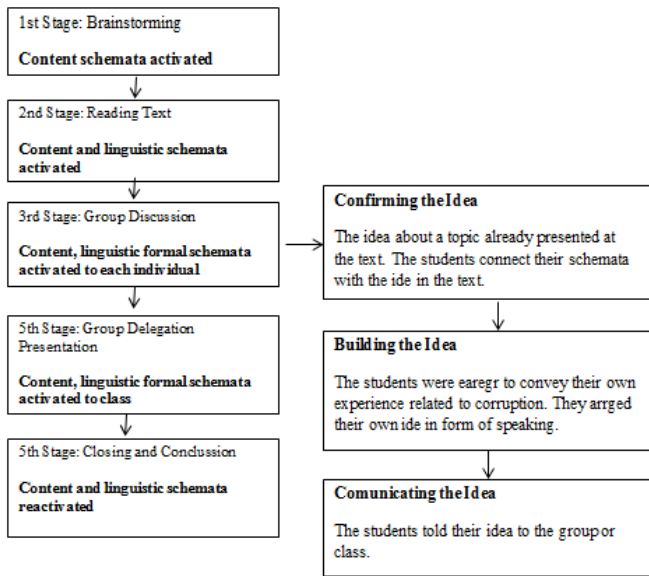
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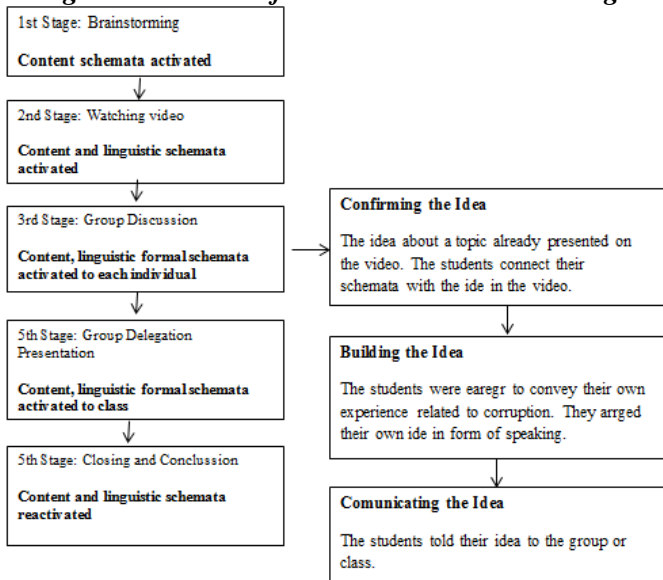
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**Figure 1: Process of schemata activation through reading text and video**



**Figure 2: Process of schemata activation through watching video**



**Figure 3: Process of schemata activation through Word List**

