

The Absence of Student Needs and Multiple Intelligence Profiles in English Speaking Textbooks: What do They Really Need?

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Abstract—This is a part of research and development under the issue of developing English speaking textbooks oriented to Multiple Intelligence Accommodation (MIA) for students of Junior High Schools (JHS). This study is aimed at determining the students' needs and Multiple Intelligence (MI) profiles to develop English speaking textbooks. It is evident that a great number of the existing English textbooks for JHS students do not meet the student needs and ignore MIA. Nevertheless, these books provide merely a small number of speaking tasks. This leads to a failure at acquiring English speaking proficiency on the part of the students. This study involved 64 students of seventh grade of JHS in Kebumen Regency of Central Java as the sample. The surveys, tests, and interviews were done to obtain the data. The data analysis is conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. In accordance with the data analysis, two findings are documented; (1) the major students convey high necessity of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation tasks in the learning materials; and (2) Logical/ Mathematical, Linguistic, Visual/Spatial, Intrapersonal, and bodily/ kinesthetic intelligences reflect the students' MI profile.

Keywords—*student needs, multiple intelligence profiles, speaking textbooks*

I. INTRODUCTION

In reference to the MI theory proposed by Gardner [9], there is an assumption that no learner is stupid; rather every learner can be low in one domain area but high in another. All learners possess the intelligences, but they are varied degrees of strength and skill. The diversity of learners' characteristics and their unique needs have attracted many researchers to conduct relevant studies and many of them acknowledge the implementation of MI theory in the classroom [6].

Moreover, English Language Teaching (hereafter ELT) also has got high attention from researchers in its relation to MI theory. MIA in ELT is considered to be a strategic framework to help teachers understand the

learners' characteristics as well as to set effective lesson plans as MI theory can provide teachers various interesting tasks to apply [2]. On the other words, MI theory allows teachers to provide various contexts for learners to help them effectively engage in meaning making activities since the activities incorporate their MI profiles. To support successful English language teaching and learning, the concept of MI theory should be accommodated in the whole elements determining the success of language teaching and learning.

A textbook plays an important role in language teaching and learning success because it serves as a guide for students and their teachers of any level of education to be actively engaged in classroom practices [15]. Hutchinson and Torres [12] state that teaching learning process can be considered complete when it includes relevant textbooks. The relevant textbooks may refer to those which can fulfill the needs of different students and their MI profiles. Hence, to get relevant textbooks, teachers should base the teaching learning processes on at least the students needs and MIA in terms of the inventory students' MI profile.

In the educational field in Indonesia, based on the current curriculum, all secondary high schools (junior, senior, and vocational high schools) are obligated to use English textbooks which are developed by the center for curriculum and textbook development serving as the main textbooks in the process of English language teaching and learning [15]. The book is designed by the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) with regard to the general needs of Indonesian students. As a matter of fact, this consideration is not in accordance with the needs of Indonesian students who have varied cultural backgrounds, basic knowledge of English, and potentials. The concept of MIA has not been implemented sufficiently either.

On the other hand, the preliminary observation result shows that the content of the book is lack of grammar items, quantity of vocabulary, range of vocabulary, pronunciation exercise, individual sounds, work stress and intonations. Thus, the book is not enough to be a single written resource of teaching and learning materials. Since the English speaking learning process in Indonesia is still constrained due to some problems concerning the students' need in learning English [1], teachers and students urgently need supplementary materials for fulfilling the student needs of learning speaking.

To fulfill the absence of the students' needs and MI profiles in the main English textbook provided by MoEC as well as the lack portion of speaking materials in the book, teachers are encouraged to develop speaking materials by considering the students' needs and MI profiles. Nevertheless, in fact, a great number of teachers in Indonesia prefer using ready-to-use textbooks rather than developing teaching materials which genuinely meet the students' needs and MI profiles. Some factors including teachers' insufficient knowledge towards MIA in ELT as well as time, tool, and equipment to support the teaching process may cause this condition. Many teachers are busier teaching and completing administrative duty such as implementing the current syllabus, lesson plans, and some other compulsory teaching administrative items.

To sum up, a need analysis and exploration of the students' MI profiles are very important to do especially in developing speaking textbooks. It is due to the necessity to associate the learning materials with the students' needs and the students' potentials. Moreover, the analysis of the students' needs and their MI profiles will focus on the interesting topics of learning materials, learning media, learning activities, and students' learning styles. This template, modified in MS Word 2007 and saved as a "Word 97-2003 Document" for the PC, provides authors with most formatting specifications needed for preparing electronic versions of their papers. All standard paper components have been specified for three reasons: (1) the easy use when formatting individual papers, (2) the automatic compliance to electronic requirements that facilitate the concurrent or later production of electronic products, and (3) the conformity of style throughout a conference proceedings. Margins, column widths, line spacing, and type styles are built-in; examples of the type styles are provided throughout this document and are identified in italic, within parentheses following the provided example. Some components, such as multi-leveled equations, graphics, and tables are not prescribed although the various table text styles are provided. The formatter will need to create these components by incorporating the applicable criteria that follow.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Speaking Skill in English Language Teaching

Florez [7] defines speaking as a process of constructing meaning interactively in which both forms and meanings are influenced by the context where it occurs. The context itself refers to the speaking participants, their collective experiences, the physical environment during the interaction, and the purposes of speaking.

Daily communication always includes cultural and social contexts. People speak in order to conduct various social activities. Although they may not always be consciously aware of doing so, during speaking, they organize the words and the meanings they wish to convey for specific purposes. Burn and Seidlhofer [5] argue that during speaking learning, language learners are developing obvious and detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate as well as mastering complex skills for producing and managing interaction, such as asking questions or commanding. Moreover, Brown [3] argues that when someone is considered capable of speaking a language it means that he can carry on a conversation reasonably and competently. In addition, Brown states that successful acquisition of language is proven when the speakers can show the ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through an interactive discourse with other language speakers.

In designing instructional speaking materials for second language or foreign-language teaching, it is necessary to recognize the different functions of speaking which are performed in daily communication and the different purposes for which the students need speaking skills. Dealing with these, Brown [3, pp 271-274] proposes five types of speaking performances including imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive speaking. Furthermore, Harmer [11] identifies some speaking activities which are most widely used in speaking classrooms. Teachers may conduct those activities in speaking classes in order to obtain interactive and communicative learning. The activities are action from a script, communication games, discussion, prepared talks, questionnaire completion, simulation, and role-play.

The various kinds of speaking performances can be done in the speaking classrooms by considering the following principles [3, pp 275-276]: 1) using techniques that cover the spectrums of learners' needs, from the accuracy-based to message-based interaction, meaning, and fluency; 2) providing intrinsically motivating techniques, 3) encouraging the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts, 4) providing appropriate feedback and correction, 5) capitalizing on the natural link between speaking and listening, 6) giving students opportunities to initiate oral communication, 7) encouraging the development of speaking strategies.

B. Multiple Intelligence Theory

Gardner [8] in his MI theory claims that every human being has at least eight kinds of intelligences namely Verbal/Linguistic intelligence, Logical/Mathematical intelligence, Spatial/Visual intelligence, Bodily/Kinesthetic intelligence, Musical intelligence, Interpersonal intelligence, Intrapersonal intelligence, and Naturalist intelligence. MI theory exists as a new perspective against the questionable standard intelligence testing IQ test [10]. Gardner [8] considers that this intelligence test has a low validity value because the assessment of the test is conducted outside the natural learning environment, so that it could not be used to differentiate human potentials. Moreover, he argues that IQ test reveals little exploration of individual competence or potential in a particular field or enterprise. Gardner [8] proposes the MI theory based on different cognitive processing required for demonstrating intelligent or creative performances in different individuals. Each human being is claimed to have eight intelligences combined in different manners, so each individual has a different intelligence profile, which is a combination of all the intelligences in various degree of strength. Each person has some strong intelligences while some others' are not well developed.

The intelligences can develop through many ways [2] and one of them is through educational settings [9]. On the other hands, designing learning instructions based on MI theory is considered more effective [2]. It is due to the fact that by considering MI theory, curriculum designers can plan an educational program which cope the students desires (e.g. musical or kinesthetic training). Moreover, ELT also has got high attention from researchers in its relation to MI theory. By considering students' MI, not only will students learn language more effectively but they can also recognize their own strength which can help them solve problems. MIA seems to be more helpful for teachers of EFL since it offers them various activities based on contexts.

C. Relevant Studies

This part deals with studies that address MI theory and needs analysis in English language teaching.

Ibnanian and Hadban [13] investigate the implications of the Multiple Intelligence theory in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field in their paper-based research. The result of the research shows that it is possible to encourage learners in learning English by activating multiple ways of meaning-making through the use of tasks relating to the different intelligences. The researchers also conclude that MI theory must have a vital role in creating an attractive, encouraging and motivating atmosphere in ELT classes. Moreover, they say that ELT teachers and specialists need to make use of the different types of intelligence described by Gardner [8, 9] and design activities that take into account the students' attitudes, interests, and intelligence levels in order to keep them engaged and

involved as well as to motivate them to put more effort into learning.

The second study is conducted by Soleimani et al. [10]. It investigates the effect of instruction based on attitude and learning of General English course among students of Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch in the second semester of academic year of 2010-2011. A quasi experimental method with a pre- and post test were used in this study. The results of the study indicates that there is a significant difference between between experimental and control groups in a General English course. In other words, the competencies of students who are taught based on MI theory exceed the traditionally instructed students both in general and in each sub-skill of English (vocabulary, reading comprehension, and structure). The results also indicate that students' attitudes towards learning English in experimental group improve significantly.

The last is the study conducted by Ampa et al. [1] who investigat students' needs for speaking learning materials. The subjects of the research are 60 students from the third semester of English Education Department of UNISMUH Makassar, Indonesia. The research instrument is questionnaires that are used to find out the needs, existing knowledge, and characteristics of students. The results of the analysis indicate that all aspects of speaking skills should be included in the learning materials for speaking skills. Similarly, the analysis of the students' English speaking indicates that their proficiency level is in the "average" category (56%). The results of analysis of learning media indicate that the students need printed materials (75%).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a part of research and development under the issue of developing English speaking textbooks oriented to MIA for students of JHS targeted to determine the student needs and MI profiles in developing English speaking textbooks. To achieve the objectives, the researcher invited 64 seventh grade students of JHS in Kebumen Regency of Central Java as the subjects of the study. Three techniques: distributing questionnaires, administering Multiple Intelligence Scale (MIS) tests and conducting interviews were done to obtain the data. The data analysis is conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. To do so, the instruments: questionnaires, MIS tests, and interview guideline were used to collect data.

The questionnaire was designed to reveal the target needs and learning needs as the basis of the development of the students' speaking materials. The questionnaire included semi-structured questions, where most questions are designed in a way where close-ended questions (multiple choice questions) is followed by the open-ended ones for further explanation/additional answers. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed by using the

percentage technique. The formula was: $P : F/N \times 100$, where P is per cent, F is the frequency of the responses, and N is the total number of responses. The data analysis included answers with the highest percentages. The MIS test was designed to determine the students' MI profile which is also taken into account as the basis of the development of the students' speaking materials. The test included the items consisting of eight words or phrases reflecting each intelligence. The students were asked to rank the options by giving number 1-8. Students' MI profile was obtained by accumulating the numbers/ranks for each intelligence. The interview guideline was designed to get data from the students in more detailed information. The collected data were then analyzed by using descriptive the qualitative method.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

Students' needs of speaking materials have been identified in a needs analysis survey. The needs are categorized into the students' necessities, lacks, and wants.

Based on the given indicators, the result of the analysis shows that a large number of students speak English only when they have an English class (75%). Only a few students speak English in leisure time or daily conversation. The data are supported by the result of the interview with 12 students. Most of them state that they speak English only when they have English lessons. Some students also convey that they speak English in an English Club conducted by the school as one of an extracurricular program.

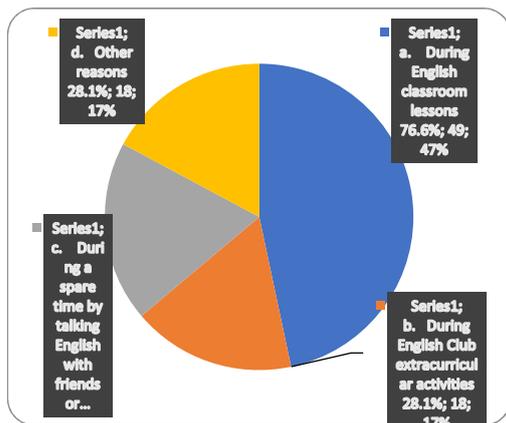


Fig. 1. A Graphic of Students' Habit of Speaking English

Regarding the students' objectives of learning English speaking skills, most students state that they want to be more competent in English subject in the higher education (64.1%). The data are supported by the result of the interview revealing that a large number of students study English to prepare themselves for facing the higher education and the world of work.

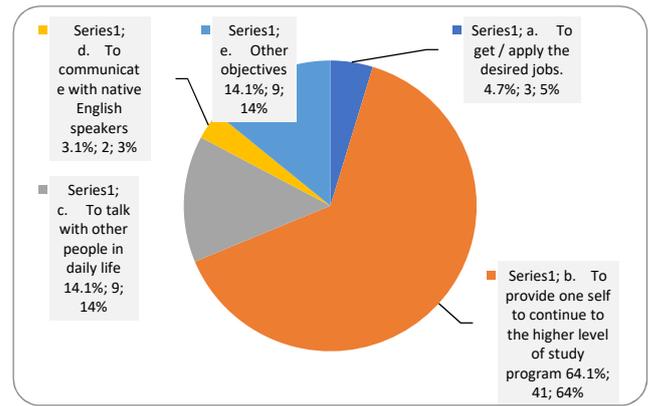


Fig. 2. A Graphic of Students' Objectives of Learning Speaking.

To be more specific, the result of the needs analysis also shows that a large number of students learn English speaking skills to be more fluent English speaking and to be able to communicate in English using common utterances used in daily conversation (54.7%).

In terms of the students' lacks, below is the graphic showing the result of the needs analysis focusing on the students' English proficiency levels and the problems found in English speaking learning. Almost half of the students state that they are in A1 level or breakthrough/beginner level (46.9%).

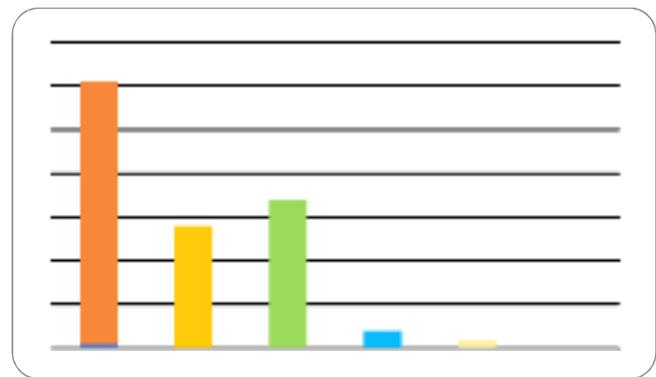


Fig. 3. A Graphic of Students' Proficiency Level.

Furthermore, a great number of students state that they it is difficult to speak in English because of some reasons, e.g. low pronunciation mastery (54.7%), low vocabulary mastery (48.4%), and anxiety (10.9%).

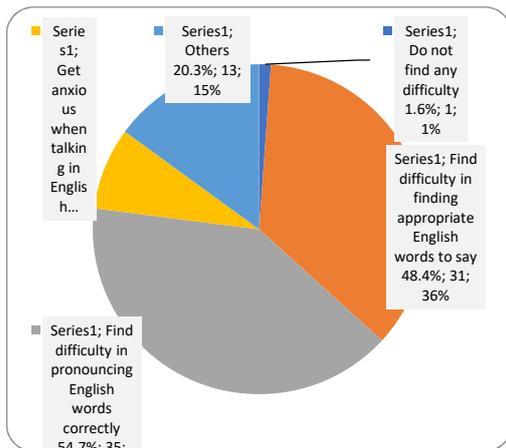


Fig. 4. A graphic of students' difficulties in learning speaking

The students' wants concern anything that they intend to do, to get, or to experience during English learning activities. The materials of which the students want to learn in speaking classes are those which are written in the curriculum syllabus (Introducing one's self, Descriptive text, Instruction, Thanking and Apologizing, Greeting, Leave Taking, Warning/Caution, and Stating and Asking for the Name of Animals, Things, as well as Public Facilities). Moreover, the result shows that a large number of students prefer learning the materials which are related to daily activities (62.5%). Other students state that they want to improve their skills in speaking by mastering the correct pronunciation (50%) and structure (35%). In terms of speaking activities, the results show that students prefer simulations (87.5%), presentations (85.9%), conversations (82.8%), discussions (73.4%), and games (73,4%) as the best activities for learning speaking.

Concerning the students' MI profile, the data show that there are five intelligences which are dominant namely Logical/ Mathematical intelligence, Linguistic intelligence, Visual-Spatial intelligence, Intrapersonal intelligence, and bodily/ kinesthetic intelligence.

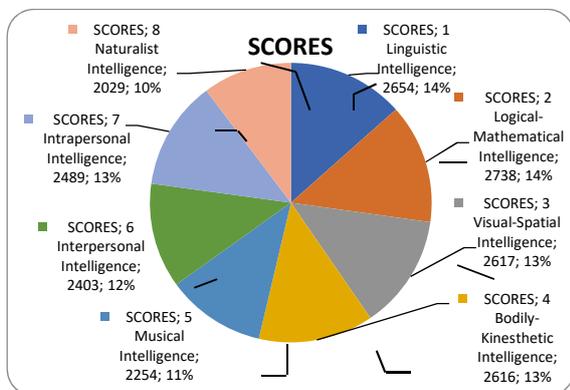


Fig. 5. A computational result of the students' MI profile Scale Test

B. Discussion

The results of the study propose several issues concerning the Junior High School students' needs and their MI profile for speaking textbooks. The data of the students' habit of speaking English show that they are used to speaking English only in classroom settings. The function of English as a foreign language may cause this situation. Students mostly speak in their first and second languages in the daily life. This issue brings an implication that speaking activities in the classrooms should be optimized by encouraging its use in both spoken and written texts and by making use of it to manage the classes [16]. Based on the problems stated in the previous part of this study, ready-to-use speaking materials in terms of speaking textbooks become urgent to develop in order to provide students as well as teachers with various speaking activities.

In Junior High Schools, the students' objectives of learning English are to get them more ready and more capable of mastering the language in higher education and for future job. These issues should be taken into account in developing a speaking textbook that can fulfill the basic competencies based on the students' level of study as well as can provide real-life speaking activities to get them accustomed with spoken English in different contexts. Simulation, role-play, and discussions [11] might become several effective ways for fulfilling these necessities.

With regards to the students' lacks, the result of the study shows that the students are in the level of beginners (B1) of proficiency level. This is the most basic level of English proficiency based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Language. This implies that the developed materials in the speaking textbooks are expected to provide comprehensible input that belongs to level 'i+1' [14]. This consideration also answers the needs of students to overcome their lacks in English speaking including lack of pronunciation mastery, lack of vocabulary mastery, and anxiety.

Concerning the students' wants, the materials to which the students want to learn in speaking classes are those which are written in the curriculum syllabus. Furthermore, the data show that the students prefer learning the materials which are related to daily activities. It implies that the developed speaking textbooks are expected to provide real-life like activities. The simulations, conversations, discussions, and games can be alternatives for teachers or textbook developers in providing contextual speaking activities. Moreover, the students' wants concerning the improvement of the knowledge of pronunciation and structure through learning materials bring an implication that the developed textbook should provide sufficient activities covering topics, such as individual sounds, word stress, intonation, grammar, etc.

The findings are similar to that of Ampa et al. [1]. Their study shows that the students' needs of speaking

material contents are related to vocabulary, pronunciation and structure as mechanics (one of the aspects of area of knowledge).

Dealing with the result of MI scale test, the students seem to have balanced intelligences; there are slightly different percentages among the aspects. The materials developed in the English speaking textbook then are expected to accommodate students with different types of intelligences in balance proportion [8, 9] and to provide activities coping the students' different interests in order to keep them engaged and involved in the learning process and motivate them to put more efforts into speaking learning. Previous studies [10, 13] might become a consideration in developing a speaking textbook by considering MIA.

V. CONCLUSION

The research finding shows that the students' needs and their MI profile are indeed significant aspects to take into account in developing a students' speaking textbook. Thus, it is expected that the developed textbook will more be effective in its implementation. This consideration is relevant to the theory stating that incorporating students' MI profile in the learning activities will help students in acquiring the learning materials. However, the MI profile in this research refers to an amalgam of intelligences (based on the theory of MI) which are various qualities. The result of the needs analysis and MI scale test become two significant points to take into account in developing the speaking textbook. Furthermore, it is recommended to spread awareness among EFL teachers and English textbook developers on the significance of needs analysis and MI profile referring to the development of teaching learning materials for students. Finally, the finding of the research is expected to trigger the researcher to do research and development as well as other researchers to do the same study in other fields of English skills.

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