
Tertiary EFL Female and Male Students' Perception in Speaking Class: Gender-based Violence Issue

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Abstract

Exploring how stories of gender-based violence boost students' speaking skill. This article focuses on student's experiences and captures phenomena of gender inequality including sexual violence and domestic violence in the neighbourhood that may affect on speaking skill. This study was implemented in the second semester for English literature students. The topic of gender violence was discussed in 14 meetings and elicit them to tell stories related to gender issues. This research results show that females and males have different perspectives from the implementation of gender-based context in speaking class. The majority of females excited in learning English through the social issues, particularly on gender violence matters. However, males prefer to discuss other topics relevant to males' issues and the learners do not really enjoy discussing the topics provided. All respondents agree that gender-based violence contents can boost students' motivation in speaking and their critical thinking because the learners were encouraged to tell stories experience-based and the pupils be more aware on violence in the neighbourhoods. This contributes to a new insight for education field particularly for educators, educational experts and relevant stakeholders.

Keywords: Gender-based Violence, Motivation, Speaking Skill

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1. Introduction

Speaking skill is one of the main courses that learnt by students in schools; (Timpe-laughlin et al., 2020) state that it is a significant component of the curriculum aimed that the learners enables to speak the target language. Speaking skill is one of pivotal roles in many fields both for academic and non-academic sectors, particularly English because it is used from different linguistic and cultural background for various goals throughout the world (Liu et al., 2023), for illustration, in Marocco, three components namely linguistics, culture, and ethnic background are believed rich and complex (Said, 2023). Adem & Berkessa (2022) reveal that one of the most essential skills seeking by employers is speaking skill; (Liu et al., 2023) for instance in China, individuals study English for variety aims in which one of those is to job sectors. In Indonesian context, learning English aimed to seeking better job because graduate students might apply in bigger companies and some of for academic purposes. Subsequently, the growth of high demand for learning English in the current new era (Bashori et al., 2022). In this new era, English as a lingua franca or as an international language becomes a substantial skill that should be master on it. There are several considerations that the reasons of learning English particularly for speaking skill. Bashori et al. (2022, p. 1059-1060) note that three considering in learning English:

1. The position of English as one of the compulsory subjects in Indonesia
2. The increasingly high demand for English speaking skills in the global era.
3. The importance of research on EFL learning technology in coping with FLSA.

However, high demands and needs in mastering speaking skill face many challenges because most students are afraid to express their ideas or feeling orally. Providing interesting topics in speaking is one of effective ways to push them to speak. The topics selected in teaching and learning affect on the learners' motivation, in this case, speaking skill, for instance, entertainment, politics, culture, and social issues. It is crucial because the learners are able to exposure their ideas or feelings excitedly when speaking topics that they like. Concerning on students' motivation and interest are more crucial than the academic performance (Chen et al., 2022) because motivation is the key success and crucial in learning both a second or foreign language (Azizi et al., 2020). The topics provided are not only interesting issues but also the topics might grow the learners' curiosity and motivation in speaking. It leads the pupils to learn more about social problems and identify the viable solution to the matters.

Method, approaches, strategies and media have a pivotal role in shaping students' performance both in productive and receptive skills. It has impact on students' motivation and achievement. Particularly, this study concerns on speaking skill that complexity. This is because the ample components should be imbedded when speaking such as vocabularies, grammar, and pronunciations. With the complexity, students often are afraid to speak

English. Therefore, the tutors need to ask them tell their stories with special issues of sexual violence. It leads them to think critically. In 2007, the first national programme for Equal Opportunities and Rights (Primer Plan Nacional de Oportunidades y Derechos) highlight for gender equality issues in education in which the materials or textbooks are designed to foster and promote gender equality in education (Canale & Furtado, 2021). Producing well-organized and comprehensible discourse has a significant role in establishing communication (Benshams et al., 2020). Critical discourse urge students to think critically because they discuss an issue in more details leading to sharpen their critical thinking. Therefore, the pupils are encouraged to analyze deeply of social problems. Critical thinking involves the ability to analyze and evaluate issues or situation (Etemadfar et al., 2020) leading to unveil solution. It is believed that through this way could be one of viable solutions to solve language problems and (Mohammadi et al., 2022) reveal that it could devote fruitful of effective and successful on language development skills. Implementing discourse analysis in pursuing critical discourse analysis is relevant to critical analytical strategy in creating more enjoyable learning other skill including reading and writing (Macgilchrist, 2021). It is believed that critical thinking assists the students to speak more related to certain issues. It is because critical thinking and motivation in speaking are linked.

Strategies to select relevant and interesting topics are important to be considered for example, to be more focus on student's interactions. Nowadays, English language learning has been changed from a teacher-centred learning to a student-centred learning (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Providing more opportunities to exposure and providing opened-question to the students could be one of the solutions in supporting students to speak. To elicit and force students to speak, the tutors need to select topics that close to them, for illustration, stories based on their experiences such as gender inequality, sexual violence, and other social problems. Even though the materials are gender-oriented but if the contents are not discussed in the classrooms, it is believed that it will not be more meaningful. Masculinity theory is influenced by gendered peer culture and clarifies how students act at schools (Vantieghem et al., 2014). This study aims to explore how gender issues might boost students' speaking skill and affect on students' motivation in speaking class. Some research questions are addressed:

1. What effect does gender-based violence context have on students' speaking skill?
2. How can gender-based violence context affect on students' motivation to speak?

2. Method

This study is qualitative research with semi-structured interview that focus on an EFL classrooms in the second semester of English literature department students. This research was based on data collected from speaking English class in one of Indonesian private universities in which English is as foreign language. Eighteen EFL learners were interviewed

during one semester for academic year 2022/2023 with informed consent. During one semester, the students were asked to discuss about gender issues such as sexual violence, domestic violence and other relevant gender topics. Fourteen meetings were allocated to observe and to drill the students to speak of the topic provided with various topics such as domestic violence, sexual violence, catcalling, harrashment, perpetrators of child sexual abuse, and sexual abuse.

The students were pursued to share their experiences or other experiences observed in neighbourhoods related to gender inequality matters by eliciting them with crucial questions. One student shared his/her experience and other students' response to the story. The participants were provided freedom to exposure and express their opinion, mind, and perspectives about the topics (Alhassan & Ali, 2020). The interview results are the primary data and transcribed the data then analysed those. The recordings were transformed into written and interpreted the texts. For the initial coding, students are classified into some groups based on the questions.

1. Do you enjoy discuss of gender-based issues in speaking class? Why?
2. In what extent do you agree, discussing gender issues boost your English-speaking skill?
3. How do you instil your values in English speaking skill?
4. Do you think that discussing of gender issues encourage your critical thinking?
5. Are there any challenging in elaborating your feeling when discussing the topics?
6. How do you feel when sharing of gender-based issue with others?
7. After discussing the issue, do you more frequently read articles or news related to the topics?
8. Do you gain additional input when learning and talking of gender-based issue?

3. Findings and Discussion

This research findings gained from the results of the interview with the students. The learners were asked some questions based on the research questions, then elaborated into some pieces of questions. All respondents were interviewed to identify how are their perspectives of implementing the discussion of gender-based violence in speaking class. The respondents were separated into two groups based on their sexes. Various opinions stated with different perspectives particularly for both categories, females and males.

3.1 Females

The majority of females really enjoy discuss of gender-based violence issues in classrooms and they believed that this issue is interesting and fabulous. The reason is because it relates

to their experiences and the phenomena close to them such as sexual violence, bullying, intimidation, catcalling, domestic violence, and other relevant gender inequality matters in the society. Afterwards, it is believed that telling on lived experiences create a pattern to ground the discussion about how contextual variable may affect on dictions and language use (Savić et al., 2022). Telling story with the learners' context have different vibes because the pupils might speak more detail and more confident related to the events experienced.

Data 1: "Yes, I enjoy because from that we can share mind to our friends and I know their opinion about this topic and I can improve my skill English, I can get vocabularies from that and I can get more vocabulary from my friend. May be if I don't understand I can ask them the meaning" (Olla, 12 July 2023).

Data 2: "Yes I enjoy because actually I have experience about that and it's cool to learn to what we feel so everyone can know what I feel and what they can see the fact" (Alfi, 12 July 2023).

Besides, they can share their feeling to reduce the stresses or burden and they aware that many of them have the same experiences. Therefore, it releases their anger and burden and feel better after sharing the story. Releasing opinion and ideas or even their anger becomes one of the benefits in speaking because students express their emotion in good a way. The respondents mention that sharing bad experiences probably are able to reduce people's burden.

Data 3: "I feel relieved. I feel confident and relieved. Finally we can express our feeling because not all people can share their problems. When other people share their stories, we feel that we are not alone, there are some people have heavier problems than us". (Linda, 12 July 2023).

Data 4: "yes, there are plenty cases of gender violence especially in Indonesia for patriarchy cases, women was forced to oppressed and men has high position in society" (Linda, 12 July 2023).

Canale and Furtado (2021) mention that when classroom interaction is regulated to provide a place for the students to voice their opinion and ideas freely and they can share their own meaning-making processes and openly discuss freely about social reality represented by textbooks or materials, the teaching and learning process becomes more contestable. Females' students tend to be more relieved after telling their story to others, even though in some circumstance feeling burden to share the story. The reason is females tend to reduce their stress by sharing their feeling to their family, friends, or other people. The learner also reminds their unfair treatment to women and grow awareness to the learners. This condition encourages the pupil to speak.

Data 5: “Yes, absolutely. I have my own experience when I was in middle school, I accidentally kicked my classmate's chest and he suddenly fell down. I feel horrible, I think I will drop out of school. (Alfan, 12 July 2023)”

The females note that this issue push them to read more and research of gender-based issues to dig the understanding more of the issue so that it elicits their critical thinking. Encouraging students to discuss social problems leading them to be more critical. Zembylas (2022) states that this in-depth understanding boosts the probability for nurturing critical thinking for students in higher education. The more people understand a topic, the better their understanding of it. Critical Thinking is as a common buzz in education sectors (Ryen, 2020). It is because it is needed to sharpen learners’ critical thinking to drill them identify viable solutions of social problems. The learners share and negotiate the problems because of feeling empathy and sympathy of people who experienced the violence and unfair treatments. The critical thinking shapes the students’ perspectives and behavior to be more aware on gender issues.

This topic encourages the learners to speak a lot in speaking class. It has close correlation between interesting topics and students’ motivation so that the pupils enjoy discuss about the topic so that it boosts their English-speaking skill.

Data 6: “Of course, because this is interesting topic because it talks about my gender so I think it can boost like sometimes I practice at home speaking English about this topic, I try to talk with myself, what if I be like this like this” (Olla, 12 July 2023).

Data 7: “When I debate with my friends (men) about this, I will speak up a lot about this, I will not look weak and I will show them that women are not weak” (Alfi, 12 July 2023).

They agree that gender-based content support them to keep speaking because it close to them and discuss about them. Interesting topics might relevant to learners’ motivation in learning English because it rises their willingness to speak. Taboo topics might elicit them to speak because it is debatable issue and teenagers are interested in discussing those. Controversial issues is the furore because it can be debatable in certain circumstances; therefore, it might be challenging for them to speak about the topics. It elicits the learners also to think critically because they have to stand in one position and identify some reasons to support their opinions. Taboo issues are advantageous on learning English as Foreign Language. Horan (2013,p. 284) mention that “taboo language often express personality, identity as well as humour, and should, therefore, feature in Foreign Language Learning”.

It is also relevant to their motivation in reading the topics and gain new vocabularies. Before and after discussing the GBV topics, the learners realize that they search more information from news, social media and articles.

Data 8: “I gained new vocabularies when discussing of this issue because I never talk about this heavy topic previously, of course I get some vocabularies that we can use in our dictionary” (Linda, 12 July 2023).

Mastering on plenty vocabularies is one of the factors in speaking English because the pupils are more confident to speak because the store many words in their mind. As a result, they are more fluent to deliver their ideas.

Instilling curiosity leads to critical thinking because the learners might drill them to ask about social matters that need solutions.

Data 9: “It can increase my curiosity and knowledge about the issue because I myself is a woman, probably I never experience it but I finally know that they fight for gender violence and they get minimum support from other people, therefore, it becomes positive sides of this.” (Linda, 12 July 2023).

Critical thinking also affects on thinking about consequences (reference). One of the respondents mention that after discussing social issues, he is be wiser to acts negatively so that he can control his attitude in treating other people.

3.2 Males

However, the dominant males’ perspectives are different from the counterpart. Even though some of them enjoy to speak the topic because they can speak freely and they can share their opinion related to the issues. The majority of males’ group did not really enjoy discussing the issue in speaking English class. The learners also aware that plenty of bad things existed in the society so that they more realize that they need to reduce the gender inequality matters. Almost all males’ students state that they did not really enjoy much talking about gender-based violence issues even though they believe that the topic is crucial to discuss.

Data 10: “for me, I think I don’t really enjoy that much, I just think that it’s just another topic to discuss but I think the topic is important because it is about something that related to humanity and about crime, and violence of course” (Revin, 12 July 2023)

One of the respondents said that he got bored to talk about gender issues. They prefer to discuss about another broaden topics such as crime, sports, environment, and the others. Most males mention that discussing of gender issues in classroom are not really interesting because it is supposed as a threat. Other topics were proposed such as sports, entertainment, environment, and other issues. This is relevant to intensity of reading sources.

Data 10: “I don’t think so, because I don’t want to read some news about violence because I feel so guilty when I hear about this issue related to my past experience. So, I think reading about gender-based violence is not necessary because it is not related to me” (Tio, 12 July 2023).

The respondent believes that reading of the topic is not beneficial because it is not align to their condition. It is because he believes that “both men and women experience this kind of violence. But, the majority of victims are women or girls.”

However, there are some of the learners were interested on this issue because they aware how this matter affect on social life.

Data 11: “I think I can interest of this issue but long time ago, after knowing about what gender based violence, I search on google, it is more like about violence, gender inequality, and then like domestic violence, sexual abused and sexual harassment, that happen to both men and women but more frequently those things happen to mostly women but of course also there are victims that are also men but after I read about that men more got gender based violence in war, just like the method of imprisonment and terrorist method. I think my words are going to be more sensitive here. There are just like force writing prison, genital torture, and slavery, mostly to the men because they have more strength to do daily activity but for the women of course they become more like comfort women to do this or this that attacking the country, and there is a lot of terrible things when wars happening and gender-based violence is a big thing for women.” (Abiyu, 12 July 2023).

The learners also reveal that sharing gender-based violence stories drill their critical thinking because they start thinking to the problem more and try to identify the solution. Both critical thinking and the ability to identify solution have close relationship. Some scholars believed that respect to other ideas and perspectives assist the learners or children to create solution (Pollarolo et al., 2023).

Critical thinking “will provide a strong foundation for thinking-based curriculum (Li, 2023, p.2). It is believed that “critical thinking can affect and be affected by other factors involved in the process of teaching and learning” (Etemadfar et al., 2020, p.4). The students reveal that exploring controversial issues boost their critical thinking and encourage them to speak. Consequently, the gender-based context discussing in the classroom have a positive impact on speaking English skill. The interview data show that discussing of gender-based issue assist them to be more critical, which critical thinking means that critical thinking is not only concern on cognitive aspects such as reasoning, logic, and inference but also in emotional aspect (Zembylas, 2022). Critical thinking is not only changing their perception but also their attitudes to be more empathy and more aware.

Data 12: “Personally, I think that it improves our critical thinking because it makes us think about in way of how other people think in their position, how to prison the perpetrator and the victim, it makes us to think in both ways and because of that our brain moves a lot and make us think critically and allow us to speak more because of it quite controversial topics of course, more feeling and feel about it comes out basically, your opinion what is it call, emotion-based” (Abiyu, 12 July 2023).

The respondent believed that gender-based content is one of the most controversial issues because it is supposed as taboo topics such as sexual violence, domestic violence, and child abuse. Afterwards, the taboo issues broke down by supporting them to speak and to discuss. The discourse of gender context and experiences leading to sharpen learners’ critical thinking. Bagai and Faimau (2021) state that discourse produces and reproduces knowledge and power in certain condition and experience of people.

In terms of gaining new input, they believed that this issue encourages them to speak and gained new vocabularies because they have willingness to search and read more article related to the topic. Some sophisticated inputs are read from the news so that the learners can use the dictions in speaking class. Speakers can be more confident when they know the topic that relevant to their experiences or observe from the neighbourhoods. Leading and forcing them to read materials and information related to social issues is crucial because people can be what they read and observe. Social problem issues can be gained by the learners from any sources such as news, magazine, articles, and other subject fields. Encouraging students and boosting their autonomy in learning have a positive impact to develop the learners’ intrinsic motivation (Namaziandost et al., 2019). This intrinsic motivation has a pivotal role in boosting their confidence in speaking English. Iwaniec (2014); Xu and Gao (2014) state that students; motivation has significant factors in determining the success in learning language (Fan, 2023) including learning English.

Based on the interview shows that after sharing the sexual violence and domestic violence, the learners search further information related to the issues. It is because they need more information to the materials discussing with their classmates. Consequently, the condition force them to read news from any other sources such as magazine, newspaper, and online media. Most of the respondents believe that the activity elicits them to identify other news or even articles related to the topic. Consequently, it affects on positive habit and form good attitudes to learners to be more motivated in reading articles or news. Understanding and cooperating related to social actions is fundamental for the development and mutual understanding in human interaction and carries a meaning (Vatanen et al., 2021). Moreover, the pupils’ comprehension of social issues and social justice issues might be develop through any other different subject areas (Brown, 2022). Learning on social issues in more detail arise awareness to the pupils so that they can pay attention to the matters and encourage the critical thinking. Critical thinking has significant impact and crucial to be implementing in many

sectors particularly in education field. European Parliament and the Council, 2006 emphasize on policy documents that concern on critical thinking is important to young people to be instilled through formal education field so that they are able to grasp realities, differentiate fact from opinion, to identify propaganda (Marin & Copeland, 2022).

4. Conclusion

Speaking is one of the most difficult skills supposed by the learners because this productive skill needs some aspects to be considered such as pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and particularly to cope the nervous. The learners also lack of idea during speaking so that they need to be elicited and supported to express their idea orally. Discussing social issues, especially, gender inequality matters based on their experiences are able to encourage them to speak because the learners need to share their burdens to other people. Consequently, it can reduce the stress and probably have a viable solution from the listeners. Sharing social issues also can drill the learners' critical thinking because it arises their wondering and some of the learners realize of bad behaviour in previous experiences and bad treatment to women in the past conditions. It expected that future studies should be more comprehensive and holistic to be discussed by selecting multidisciplinary subjects.

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