

Principles Underlying Successful EFL Learners' Oral Fluency

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Abstrak

Kemampuan untuk menguasai kefasihan lisan bahasa Inggris melalui Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris telah menjadi perhatian besar di bidang pendidikan, terutama di era modern ini. Hal itu tidak hanya akan mempertahankan suasana komunikatif di kelas Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing, tetapi juga akan mempromosikan kehidupan profesional peserta didik di masa yang akan datang. Oleh karena itu, guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing diharapkan mampu menyediakan cara yang lebih efektif untuk meningkatkan kefasihan lisan peserta didik dalam bahasa internasional tersebut. Beberapa penelitian sebelumnya mengungkapkan bahwa setiap keberhasilan besar peserta didik Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing sangat dipengaruhi oleh seperangkat akidah yang membimbing tindakan mereka. Sementara prinsip-prinsip yang melandasi akidah peserta didik dalam pembelajaran bahasa lebih mengontrol tindakan mereka, para peneliti terdahulu tidak menawarkan diskusi mengenai hal tersebut secara mendalam. Sebagai upaya untuk mengisi kesenjangan dan menyajikan jawaban yang lebih komprehensif, penelitian ini dilakukan. Peneliti bekerja sama dengan dua siswa sekolah menengah atas tingkat akhir di Indonesia dengan bahasa Inggris lisan paling fasih di antara peserta didik lain menurut guru bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing mereka. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, kajian dilakukan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur yang mendalam perihal prinsip-prinsip yang digunakan oleh dua pelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing yang sukses untuk membimbing mereka dalam kefasihan lisan mereka, alasan mereka dalam mengandalkan prinsip-prinsip tersebut, dan cara prinsip-prinsip tersebut membantu mereka dalam mencapai tujuan mereka. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kedua peserta didik mempunyai prinsip-prinsip yang pasti yang berkontribusi pada perkembangan kefasihan lisan mereka.

Kata kunci: *prinsip, pelajar sukses, pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing, pengajaran bahasa Inggris, kecakapan lisan, kefasihan lisan*

Abstract

The ability to master English oral fluency through English Language Teaching (ELT) has become a huge concern in the field of education, notably in this modern era. Not only will it maintain a communicative atmosphere in EFL classrooms, but it also will promote learners' professional matters hereafter. Therefore, teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are expected to provide students more efficacious ways that might boost their oral fluency in that international language. Some previous studies revealed that every massive triumph and success of EFL learners is immensely sustained by a set of beliefs guiding their deeds. Whereas the principles underlying learners' beliefs in language learning happen to be more controlling on the actions they execute, former researchers do not profoundly offer such discussions. As a means to fill the gap and provide more comprehensive answers, this study is conducted. The researcher works with two final-year high school students in Indonesia whose spoken English is considered the most fluent among their friends by their EFL teachers. Employing qualitative approach, investigations are done through in-depth partially-structured interviews on the principles used by two successful EFL learners to guide them in their oral fluency, their reasons in relying on those principles, and the ways those principles help them in achieving their goals. The findings show that both learners hold definite principles that contribute to the developments of their oral fluency.

Keywords: *principles, successful learners, English as a Foreign Language learning, English Language Teaching, speaking skill, oral fluency*

INTRODUCTION

Mastering English through English Language Teaching (ELT) has been a concern in the field of

education (Rahayu, 2018). Having a new position as an international language, the ability to conquer its skills and competences becomes one of the needs of people all around the world as what Yang (2014) found in a study

she conducted. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, Samaranyake (2016) highlighted that there are only few opportunities for EFL learners to practice their speaking skill outside the classroom. Learners have been provided with plenty of learning resources, but there are still a few of them having other English users being their interlocutors in using the target language verbally (Albino, 2017). Therefore, EFL learners' speaking proficiency needs to be the focus of attention in language teaching.

Speaking is one skill in English that is an integrated activity of assembling meaning involving the process of receiving, producing, and examining particular information (Brown, 1994). Alayah (2018) supported this statement by asserting that EFL learners' speaking expertise is linked to their communication competence. It requires them to have an obvious production of language exposure in order to create effective communication. More importantly, oral fluency is the ability to produce understandable utterances with not much effort in which rate of speech and number of errors are some components underpinning it (Albino, 2017). Brumfit (1984) also clarified that oral fluency is the capability to construct verbal expressions smoothly, meaning that language learners are considered orally fluent once they are able to verbally communicate their ideas and thoughts as naturally as possible in various contexts.

Having good oral fluency is important and it provides the users lots of benefits. For example, Yang (2014) emphasized that oral fluency in English is one vital speaking competence that benefits the users in many international language proficiency tests, such as TOEFL and IELTS. Those standardized tests might likely widen EFL learners' opportunity in pursuing higher education and getting a desired career in the future as English expertise is needed in a number of areas. In fact, however, things do not always work smoothly when it comes to conveying knowledge and ideas verbally, mainly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Though learners are expected to deliver their notions orally with ease, there are still countless of them having problems with it and seeking ways to overcome those issues (Albino, 2017; Alayah, 2018). Meanwhile, in EFL setting, there will be no communicative atmosphere in the classroom if learners are rather unable to use the language productively and receptively in spontaneous situations on the instructions given by EFL teachers. Hence, EFL learners' oral fluency needs to be prioritized and taken seriously by EFL teachers for it will boost their communicative skills; enabling them to talk out when it comes to solving any pedagogical problems (Kagan & Miguel, 2009).

Hirsh, Psencik, & Brown (2014) revealed that every massive triumph of a learner is hugely sustained by a set

of beliefs underlying his visions and practices in achieving his goals. Generally, beliefs are definite core values an individual holds and relies on to be true that drive what he says, thinks, and does; and principles are the reasoning and implementations of one's beliefs that become the guidelines of his particular actions (Atkin, 1996). Both beliefs and principles are the foundations that determine what a person executes in order to attain intended results, plans, and expectations for success (Hirsh, Psencik, & Brown, 2014). They make what a person firmly stands for clear and explicit with the result that his actions on something might be well-directed. In language learning, when EFL teachers value the idea of collaboration and believe that students thrive more by learning from each other, for instance, they will likely create and provide more opportunities for those language learners to work and solve problems together both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, they will also equip students with relevant skills for effective collaboration. These actions are the implementations and manifestations of their belief as EFL teachers, namely the principles derived from the reliance in collaboration. After all, EFL learners' academic performances, including the ones whose achievements are high, exceedingly reflect what they value the most in learning. Since the principles happen to be more controlling on what language learners execute toward their learning, investigations on the principles underlying successful EFL learners' beliefs, specifically in their oral fluency, are needed to be done.

Some former studies exploring successful EFL learners' beliefs have been conducted. For example, Gan, Humphreys, & Lyons (2004) investigated the differences between successful and less successful EFL learners' way of thinking that result in dissimilar outcomes and academic achievements. They worked with some university students in China. The study clearly shows that successful EFL learners who have better outcomes and higher accomplishments are those who set clear and obvious beliefs in language learning. Another example is an exploration done by Mercer (2011) examining postgraduate English students with outstanding educational performances. That study shows that the reliance of those successful learners in persistency and efficacy of hard work definitely results in intended and desired learning outcomes. Supported by other studies (e.g. Freeman, 2003; Gan, Humphreys, & Lyons, 2004; Rubin, 2005; and Patahuddin, Nasrullah, & Rahman, 2018), having beliefs is proven crucial in the area of language learning as those values are kept by learners to be true and are likely to guide them in interpreting experiences and behaving toward expected goals. However, most studies above only focus and are limited on the core values held by successful EFL learners.

Former researchers do not provide deeper explorations on the principles guiding learners' actions in language learning, particularly on what makes them being fluent speakers of English. Therefore, this study is executed to investigate the principles underlying successful EFL learners' oral fluency more profoundly.

In order to guide the investigation of this study, the researcher formulates three research questions stated as follows:

1. What principles do successful EFL learners use to guide them in their oral fluency?
2. Why do successful EFL learners rely on those principles in their oral fluency?
3. How do those principles help them in achieving their goals in their oral fluency?

RESEARCH METHODS

The approach of this study is qualitative. Its aim is to explore two successful EFL learners' principles on their language learning, particularly their oral fluency. The subjects of this study were two students in grade twelve from different high schools, majors, and genders who were given English as one of the subjects at school for at least a total of three years of study. The researcher worked with some EFL teachers during the process of selecting the most compatible learners to make sure that those who are preferred fit the criteria. EFL teachers from both schools were asked to choose one of their students whose speaking skills in English were considered more fluent than other students with the same year of study. Moreover, the students' both academic and non-academic achievements in English were also considered. The EFL teachers finally recommended two students who had been involved in some English competitions and won them. The chosen EFL learners were contacted both directly and through *WhatsApp* and asked whether they were willing to take part in this study and available for the interviews. To maintain their privacy, they were given pseudonyms Ben and Cath.

In-depth, partially structured interviews were used so that the process of obtaining the data might be flexible, following the plot of the conversations, with fews of open-ended questions as the guidelines in order to keep the process of data collection in line with the purposes and main issues of the study. An audio recorder was utilized to provide an exact transcription of the responses. To keep the data accurate, additional questions were delivered for direct follow-ups and clarifications on the given responses.

The preparation period of data collection started in February 1, 2019 as the researcher worked with some EFL teachers from the chosen two different schools in Sidoarjo. Firstly, teachers from the first school had chosen

four students in grade twelve who belonged to different majors, namely Accounting, Multimedia, and Software Engineering, whose English were considered more fluent than others. On March 11, 2019 the researcher was asked by the EFL teachers to meet those students at school to get to know their oral fluency firsthand by having small talks in English. After the meeting was done, the researcher and some EFL teachers had a discussion on which student to choose. As the result of the discussion, a male student majoring in Accounting was chosen to be one of the subjects of this study and interviewed on the selected upcoming day due to his English oral fluency and academic performance in EFL classrooms. On March 14, 2019 that student was interviewed once for thirty minutes before his class began in a quiet area around school.

The second student from another chosen school majoring in Language was female and selected directly by the EFL teacher due to her English oral fluency and obvious academic achievements in several English competitions. The researcher was asked to come to school and directly interview the student on March 25, 2019. The interview was also administered once in a noiseless counselling room for twenty-five minutes after the student finished her class. On April 4, 2019 all data from both students were already transliterated.

After collecting the data through comprehensive interviews, the researcher analysed them descriptively according to the three stages that Ari et al. (2010) pointed out. Firstly, in the phase of familiarizing and organizing, the researcher listened to the verbal data repetitively and expansively until the data became familiar. The voice recordings were played several times. After being acquainted with the data, the researcher transcribed all utterances of both participants. After that, the data were organized and sorted based on the time they were obtained.

Secondly, in the phase of coding and reducing, the researcher classified all words, phrases, and sentences from the interviews that had been transcribed into five categories. Those categories are 1) participants' beliefs, 2) participants' principles, 3) participants' reasons in relying on those principles, 4) the ways those principles work in participants' oral fluency, and 5) participants' practices. The researcher did this phase by directly highlighting any utterances written on the transcription papers related to those five categories. Besides, brief notes and explanations were written when necessary.

Thirdly, in the phase of interpreting and representing, the researcher interpreted the results collected through comprehensive interviews by creating a table. There are nine categories written, namely 1) themes, 2) participants' name, 3) participants' beliefs, 4) participants' utterances, 5) explanation of beliefs, 6) participants' principles, 7)

participants' practices, 8) participants' reasons in relying on particular principles, and 9) the ways those principles work in participants' oral fluency. In short, participants' principles were grouped into three main themes, namely 1) principles about self; 2) principles about analytic learning; and 3) principles about experiential learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Principles used by successful EFL learners to guide them in their oral fluency

During the interviews, the two EFL learners were given a number of common beliefs held by other successful EFL learners from around the world who had been participating in several former studies with linear fields and topics as stimuli. Though both participants' responses were heterogeneous, they relied on some similar principles underlying their beliefs in their oral fluency.

Principles about self

From twenty-five various principles held by Ben and Cath, the majority of those principles belong to this category. The sets of those principles about self counted by Ben and Cath were the ones on a) their English speaking proficiency, b) having motivation, c) having confidence, d) the balance of innate knowledge and hard work, e) having positive mindset, f) the existence of challenges and obstacles in learning, and g) the importance of having beliefs in learning.

a) Principles on learners' English speaking proficiency

Ben and Cath were asked whether they personally truly believed and agreed that they were standardly proficient in speaking in English as they were considered fluent and trusted by their EFL teachers to represent their fellow learners to be involved in this study. Ben's principle was always reminding himself that he could speak fluent in English. Cath's principle was always trying to speak in English at school when given chances.

b) Principles on having motivation

Ben and Cath were asked on the importance of having motivation when it comes to reaching their goals in their oral fluency. Reflected through their responses, both EFL learners highlighted the significance and implication of holding this belief. Ben's principle was being eager and motivated to make his English better as the time went by. Cath's principle was trying to always have motivation in learning English and developing her skills for her goals' sake.

c) Principles on having confidence

Both EFL learners were asked about their reliance on being confident in using the target language verbally. It was shown that they were greatly into this matter. Ben's principle was being willing to speak in English while doing presentations in EFL classrooms. Cath's principle was always reassuring herself to keep speaking in the target language with confidence.

d) Principles on the balance of innate knowledge and hard work

They were asked whether their oral fluency in English was innately given since birth, meaning they did not need to work too hard in order to be orally smooth in the target language since they naturally got that potential. It turns out that both EFL learners disagreed with such statements above; and instead admitting that their hard works contributed much more on their success in communicating in English. Ben's principle was relying more on hard work than on his innate knowledge. Cath's principle was keep doing anything to improve her English oral fluency.

e) Principles on having positive mindsets

Ben and Cath's ways of thinking indicate that they have growth mindset. Acknowledging the importance of having positive perspectives, Ben's principle was always trying to have positive mindsets on whatever happened during his language learning process. Cath's principle was keep practicing English without hesitation.

f) Principles on the existence of challenges and obstacles in learning

Ben and Cath were asked on any challenges and obstacles they faced throughout their process of mastering English, mainly its oral fluency. Moreover, they were interviewed on how they overcame those challenges and obstacles. Ben's principle was looking for solutions to overcome any existing challenges and obstacles. Cath's principle was giving different responses on different challenges and obstacles.

g) Principles on the importance of having beliefs in learning

After being interviewed on whether Ben and Cath held particular beliefs and, more importantly, certain principles in their English oral fluency, they were asked on how they perceived the essentiality of having those beliefs and principles. Ben's and Cath's principles were believing in the roles of having core values in language learning and relying on certain beliefs during the process of mastering oral fluency.

Principles about analytic learning

Out of twenty-five divergent principles guiding Ben and Cath in their oral fluency, six of them belong to this category. It shows that both learners also learn best by taking any information in the target language sequentially. Those six principles are grouped into four similar types, explicitly the principles on a) the easiness of English; b) the mastery of grammar and vocabulary; c) the familiarity of English; and d) the roles of teachers' competence.

a) Principles on the easiness of English

Regarded as successful EFL learners for their oral fluency, Ben and Cath were asked on whether expressing ideas and thoughts using English is an easy task or, instead, a challenging one. Ben's principle was kept exploring English deeper when confusions arouse. Cath's principle was learning parts of English that she considered easier than other parts.

b) Principles on the mastery of grammar and vocabulary

Ben and Cath were asked on how important the mastery of English grammar and vocabulary to their oral fluency. Ben and Cath prioritized the mastery of those two inseparable aspects of language in different levels. Ben's principle was keep sharpening and polishing his grammar and vocabulary. Cath's principle was always trying to seek opportunities to learn new vocabularies, mainly the ones used in daily conversations.

c) Principles on the familiarity of English

Cath was the only participant who stressed the importance of being familiar with English, specifically when it comes to mastering oral fluency. Being familiar with English means being accustomed to any forms of the target language; both verbally and non-verbally. Cath's principle on this matter was executing actions that drew her to be more familiar with English.

d) Principles on the roles of teachers' competence

Beside relying on a few principles and executing some practices on the familiarity of English, Cath also held certain principles on the roles of having qualified and experienced EFL teachers. Realising that having competent teachers is vital in the development of her oral fluency, her principles were always cherishing and being actively involved in all activities in EFL classroom.

Principles about experiential learning

The last five principles held by Ben and Cath were categorized into this type, namely experiential learning. Those principles are specifically on a) the long process of English mastery, b) the roles of social interactions, and c)

the importance of living in English-speaking countries. The following principles indicate that Ben and Cath developed their speaking fluency by reflecting on what they were doing in the target language.

a) Principles on the long process of English mastery

Ben and Cath were asked whether they needed a short time to be that fluent or a long one instead. In fact, both successful EFL learners agreed with the latter option. They firmly asserted that there were long stories and processes underlying their current level of fluency. On this matter, Ben and Cath's principle was learning the target language and its skills as early as possible. More importantly, Cath stated that she learned English since she was in primary school.

b) Principles on the roles of social interactions

Ben and Cath were requested to link this matter on the importance of embracing talks with the native speakers of English. There are little differences between their responses. Ben's was initiating random conversations with people surrounding him, such as his friends at school and parents. Cath's was making friends with those living in overseas.

c) Principles on the importance of living in English-speaking countries

The one who had a strong reliance on this matter was only Cath. She supported the view that living in any countries where English is being the first language would highly contribute to her oral fluency. Her principle was keep focusing her mind on her goals in language learning in which one of them was to be able to go abroad and stay there for some time.

Reasons of successful EFL learners in relying on those principles in their oral fluency

Beside exploring the two successful EFL learners' principles that guide them in their oral fluency, the researcher also investigated both participants' reasons in relying on those principles.

Reasons on principles about self

The reasons that belong to this category are the ones related to the roles of both successful EFL learners and how they perceived themselves in their oral fluency.

a) Reasons of the reliance on learners' English speaking proficiency

Emphasizing the importance of being eager in improving their oral fluency, Ben's reason was he assumed that encouragement and desire come from within. He felt the need to have passion and spirit to better

his English. Meanwhile, Cath's reason was she had definite goals in learning the target language, mainly in improving her smoothness in speaking English, which she really wanted to make.

b) Reasons of the reliance on having motivation

Emphasizing the importance of being eager in improving their oral fluency, Ben's reason was he assumed that encouragement and desire come from within. He believed that the urges inside him would give great impacts on his oral fluency. Meanwhile, Cath's reason was she had definite goals in learning the target language, mainly in improving her smoothness in speaking English, which she really wanted to make. She presumed that if she did not have the desire, she would not go anywhere as well as being fluent in English.

c) Reasons of the reliance on having confidence

Both participants were guided by one similar principle on this matter, namely they kept having the courage and confidence in speaking in English. Ben's implicit reason was he believed that he could be confident only by practicing being confident; only by trusting his capabilities. Cath's reason was she assumed that without being confident, she would not be able to improve her speaking fluency. She felt the needs to force and believe in herself.

d) Reasons of the reliance on the balance of innate knowledge and hard work

Assuming that Ben and Cath did not have prominent innate knowledge in English, they highlighted the significant roles of working hard. Ben and Cath relied on the principles on this matter as they wanted and were interested to explore the target language as early as possible; knowing that mastering English definitely took time. Notably to Cath, she knew she needed to work hard for she wanted to reach her goals in language learning.

e) Reasons of the reliance on having positive mindsets

Ben and Cath's principle was they constantly tried to direct their mind toward positive ways of thinking. Ben was sure that executing a growth mindset encouraged and motivated him to keep going. Cath emphasized her reason on practicing the target language without hesitation, though she might make mistakes sometimes. She held that principle since she presumed that it was totally fine for the non-native speakers of English, including her, to make mistakes, as English is not their mother tongue.

f) Reasons of the reliance on the existence of challenges and obstacles in learning

Ben's reason on why he responded positively to any coming barriers by looking for solutions to overcome them instead of giving up in learning was he considered them something natural and common in language learning process. His strong premise was he believed that there were always solutions and ways out for every challenge and obstacle. At the same time, Cath's implicit reason on why she did not all together give positive responses toward the existing barriers was not all barriers were encouraging and might influence her in a favourable way.

g) Reasons of the reliance on the importance of having beliefs in learning

One reason underlying Ben's and Cath's principle on this matter was they simply believed that relying on something that could guide them in their speaking improvements was vital. On Cath's side, her central reason was she presumed that holding unambiguous beliefs would guide her in her speaking improvements.

Reasons on principles about analytic learning

The reasons that belong to this category are the ones underlying the two successful EFL learners' principles linked to their first most dominating learning style, namely analytic learning.

a) Reasons of the reliance on the easiness of English

Ben's unstated reason on his principle about this matter was if he stopped learning, he would not be able to be fluent in English. The more obstacles coming, the more he felt the need to encourage himself. Meanwhile, Cath's reason was she implicitly thought that if she learned parts of English starting from the ones that she liked the most, it would make her enjoyed learning.

b) Reasons of the reliance on the mastery of grammar and vocabulary

While Ben highlighted the importance of mastering both grammar and vocabulary, Cath only underlined her preference in vocabulary. Ben's reason was he thought that mastering those two parts of English was vital, mainly when it came to attending interviews and going overseas. On Cath's side, her reason in emphasizing only in the importance of having good knowledge of English words was grammar was less important.

c) Reasons of the reliance on the familiarity of English

Cath's reason on why she did anything that might enable her to be familiar with English was she believed that executing various and creative ways of learning

definitely helped her memorized any forms of English much faster.

d) Reasons of the reliance on the roles of teachers' competence

Cath's underlying reason on why she valued every activity she did throughout the process of teaching and learning in EFL classrooms was she simply felt encouraged to respond her English teachers' talks and questions using the target language. It was because if she did not actively use and talk in English, she would feel bashful and awkward; be it to her teachers or classmates.

Reasons on principles about experiential learning

The reasons that come under this category are the ones underlying the two successful EFL learners' principles linked to their second most dominating learning style, namely experiential learning.

a) Reasons of the reliance on the long process of English mastery

Both learners' reason in relying on their principles on this matter because they simply realized that being orally fluent in English needed a long time. Ben and Cath were aware that what they do in the present moment would highly contribute to their oral fluency in the upcoming time.

b) Reasons of the reliance on the roles of social interactions

While Ben highlighted executing interactions with people surrounding him, Cath did more on carrying out ones with the foreigners. Ben's reason was he simply enjoyed learning and improving his oral fluency together with his friends and family. Cath's reason was her huge interest in making friends with people from overseas. Moreover, she felt that practicing speaking skill with the foreigners was much easier and more helpful.

c) Reasons of the reliance on the importance of living in English-speaking countries

Cath's reason in kept focusing her mind on her goals in which one of them was to get an opportunity to visit and live in particular English-speaking countries was she had a strong mindset that living with people whose first language is English would improve her oral fluency more than if she just lived in non-English speaking countries. Besides, she had a strong desire and interest to know how being surrounded by the native speakers of English felt like.

The ways those principles help successful EFL learners in achieving their goals in their oral fluency

Beside knowing the two successful EFL learners' reasons on why they held particular principles, it is also important to understand how those principles work on their oral fluency. All principles influence both participants' speaking smoothness in different ways.

The ways principles about self work

This section offers how the principles on the roles of the two successful EFL learners affect their oral fluency. The principles coming from within the participants hugely contribute to their smoothness in using English as the target language verbally.

a) The ways principles on learners' English speaking proficiency work

Realizing that their oral fluency level still did not fully meet their personal expectations, Ben and Cath's principle was they always embraced the given opportunities to keep working on their speaking skills. Referring to all participants' principles, the more they used the target language orally, the more fluent they would be. Practicing a lot contributed to their easiness in producing utterances as the expressions of their ideas and thoughts.

b) The ways principles on having motivation work

By always trying to be eager and enthusiastic in exploring the target language, they were motivated to seek various ways to learn English. Besides, having the desire in learning English urged them to be persistent in practicing the target language for their goals' sake in their oral fluency. Notably to Cath, being persistent led her to always remember the fact that she really wanted to be fluent in English so that she could talk with her native friends smoothly.

c) The ways principles on having confidence work

On Ben's side, by trusting his capabilities and being brave in speaking in English without hesitations, they kept Ben from stopping using the target language verbally. On Cath's side, reassuring herself to keep communicating in the target language confidently built a positive mindset and attitude toward English. It motivated her to keep learning that target language and working for her fluency enhancements.

d) The ways principles on the balance of innate knowledge and hard work work

To Ben, the earlier he learned the target language, the faster he would acquire and master that language and its skills. He believed that his fluency would get better in years to come if he kept on working hard. Meanwhile, on

Cath's side, she would do anything to improve her oral fluency. By doing it, she would gain a lot of knowledge about English, both the oral and written forms, which would automatically contribute to her speaking smoothness.

e) The ways principles on having positive mindsets work

Having positive ways of thinking enabled Ben to accept the fact that he would not be perfect during the process of improving his oral fluency. Such a mindset helped him to see the bigger pictures of any negative situations. Similar to how such way of thinking worked in Ben's fluency, the more mistakes Cath made while producing utterances in English, the more correct information she learned and acquired.

f) The ways principles on the existence of challenges and obstacles in learning work

On Ben's side, by seeking solutions to overcome any challenges and obstacles instead of giving up in learning encouraged him to do and perform better in English, mainly in his oral fluency. If he stopped learning, his fluency would not enhance. Contrast to Ben, Cath chose to analyse every existing challenge and obstacle she found. To her, choosing only the uplifting ones highly contributed to her eagerness in achieving her goals in her oral fluency.

g) The ways principles on the importance of having beliefs in learning work

By having a set of beliefs, Ben and Cath were able to adjust their daily actions and practices to their goals in mastering oral fluency. Those beliefs that they held affected their deeds and learning strategies that contributed to the improvements of their speaking smoothness. Appropriate and effective learning strategies highly boosted their fluency in using the target language verbally.

The ways principles about analytic learning work

This section offers how the principles on the two successful EFL learners' first most dominating learning style, namely analytic learning, affect their oral fluency.

a) The ways principles on the easiness of English work

By exploring that target language deeper when he found difficulties, Ben's oral fluency would definitely improve since he did not stop trying instead of ignoring something he did not comprehend. On Cath's side, learning parts of English that she considered easier than other parts boosted her enjoyment in learning. As a result,

she would always have the curiosity to perfect her English.

b) The ways principles on the mastery of grammar and vocabulary work

To Ben, by providing himself more time to explore English grammar and vocabularies, his oral fluency would get much better gradually since he knew a lot about the language structures and its lists of words. Meanwhile, to Cath, by constantly seeking opportunities to learn new English vocabularies, her knowledge of English words and terms would be boosted. By that, she would be able to produce more utterances and expressions in English.

c) The ways principles on the familiarity of English work

According to Cath, executing simple, yet effective ways of learning helped her a lot with being familiar with the target language, be it oral or written forms. If she recognized English and its forms well, native-like way of using the target language verbally would be possible for her.

d) The ways principles on the roles of teachers' competence work

By responding her English teachers' talks and questions actively and enthusiastically using the target language, Cath was forced to speak in English and such an action definitely improved her speaking fluency as the time went by. The more often she used the target language on a daily basis, the smoother her speaking performance would be.

The ways principles about experiential learning work

This section offers how the principles on the two successful EFL learners' second most dominating learning style, namely experiential learning, affect their oral fluency.

a) The ways principles on the long process of English mastery work

By exploring and doing their best to acquire English as the target language as early as possible, Ben and Cath would be pushed to work on their fluency developments as soon as possible. It made them realized that what they did at the moment gave impacts to their speaking performance in the upcoming time.

b) The ways principles on the roles of social interactions work

According to Ben, social interactions built his social skills. The more talks he had with others, the more it enabled him to trust those individuals. By then, he would

initiate and embrace more conversations in English that contributed to his oral fluency. To Cath, expanding networks by building international connections with those living abroad gave her bigger chances to know and learn new words that would encourage her to look up their meanings in the dictionary. Moreover, talking with the foreigners, particularly with the native speakers of English, enabled her to know the right pronunciation of English words.

c) The ways principles on the importance of living in English-speaking countries work

Cath stated that if she lived in English-speaking countries, she would be surrounded by English words, phrases, and expressions every single moment. By that, her listening skill would definitely be sharpened and enhanced, resulting in the significant improvements of her oral fluency. The more intense Cath listened to English sounds, the better her speaking proficiency in that language would be.

Discussion

The results of this study show that both successful EFL learners had a number of beliefs on various matters in their oral fluency. More importantly, they also relied on and applied varied principles and practices, showing that they were engaged in executing real actions for the sake of their speaking performance (Munby, 1983). Concerning the main topic of this study, there are 25 principles held by both participants – Ben and Cath. Those 25 principles are categorized into 14 similar matters, in which 11 out of them are owned by Ben and Cath, while the rest of them are owned by Cath only. Those 14 categories are grouped into three main themes similar to a study once executed by Tanaka and Ellis (2003), namely 1) principles about self; 2) principles about analytic learning; and 3) principles about experiential learning. There are seven categories belong to the first theme; they are principles on learners' English speaking proficiency, principles on having motivation, principles on having confidence, principles on the balance of innate knowledge and hard work, principles on having positive mindset, principles on the existence of challenges and obstacles in learning, and principles on having beliefs in learning. For the second theme, there are four categories belong to it. They are principles on the easiness of English, principles on the mastery of grammar and vocabulary, principles on the familiarity of English, and principles on the roles of teachers' competence. For the third theme, there are three categories belong to it. They are principles on the long process of English mastery, principles on the roles of social interactions, and principles on the importance of living in English-speaking countries. Evidently, both

participants in this study executed some principles which matters are similar to the ones held by those who participated in the previous studies with linear fields and topics (Cotterall, 1999; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2008; Mercer, 2011; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2012; Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013). Referring to the last two research questions, Ben and Cath have unlike, personal reasons on why they held each principle on those 14 matters. Besides, each principle works differently on the developments of both participants' oral fluency.

Between the three themes underlying all principles held by Ben and Cath, the first dominating theme covers the principles about self. Both participants have more principles on the roles of themselves in their oral fluency than on the latter two themes. It indicates that the two successful EFL learners realize their significant roles and responsibilities in the improvements of their speaking performance. They understand that what they do and how they place themselves toward their learning highly contribute to the developments of their oral fluency. Concerning this theme, Ben's and Cath's principles are 1) always embracing the given chances to keep working on their oral fluency; 2) maintaining enthusiasm and focusing themselves on their goals in learning English; 3) having the courage and confidence to speak using the target language; 4) keep working hard for the sake of their fluency improvements; 5) constantly executing growth mindsets; 6) responding to any existing challenges and obstacles in learning with positive attitudes; and 7) having definite beliefs to guide them in learning English. Though Ben and Cath have different reasons for each principle, all of their reasons refer to one major thing, namely their awareness of the fact that those principles greatly contribute to their oral fluency in English. Those principles arouse the two successful EFL learners' consciousness, reminding them that they are highly in charge and leading them to executing actions for their goals in their oral fluency. The more Ben and Cath rely on those principles, the closer they are to their expected outcomes in learning English in which one of them is to be able to speak using the target language with ease.

The fact that the principles about self dominate the ones about analytic and experiential learning does not correspond to a former study carried out by Tanaka and Ellis (2003). In their study, the leading principles held by the participants are the ones about analytic learning. In contrast, the ones about self rank the last. However, this might happen as the amount and the historical background of the participants between both studies are hugely different. While this study works with only two learners whose speaking performances are considered better than the other learners at their schools, Tanaka and Ellis' (2003) study worked with 166 learners with various

language proficiencies. In respect to Ben's and Cath's principles on this matter, a number of previous studies (e.g., Peacock, 1999; Gurler, 2005; Ellis, 2008; Sriram, 2014) support their reliance. There were positive correlations between relying on those principles and high academic achievements, including the improvements of oral fluency. Moreover, Ben's and Cath's underlying reasons on how they perceive themselves and their roles indicate that they have positive self-concepts in language learning. This is important as having realistic, positive self-concepts greatly contribute to one's academic success (Mercer, 2011). Though at first both participants doubted their speaking performances, it does not have much to do with the principles that they relied on. They keep executing optimistic principles on that matter in which contradicts the statement once asserted by Hapsari (2016).

The second most dominating theme covers the principles about analytic learning. They are the ones on how the two successful EFL learners perceive English as the target language and their learning strategies that refer to their first major learning style. The results show that both learners perform best by receiving and analysing information about the target language in well-ordered ways. They need to understand small concepts prior to making sense of them as a whole. Concerning this theme, Ben's and Cath's principles are 1) keep exploring the target language despite finding difficulties and doing it starting from the easiest parts and 2) providing more time to learn grammar and vocabulary. In addition to them, Cath held two more principles, namely 1) executing actions that draw her to be more familiar with English and 2) always cherishing and being actively involved in all activities in EFL classroom. One primary reason underlying their reliance on those principles is their recognition of learning strategies and approaches that work best for them in the process of mastering oral fluency. To Ben and Cath personally, carrying out such actions is helpful. It immensely boosts their speaking performance since those ways are the fastest and the easiest ones to acquire the target language and master its oral skills, including fluency. The more they find out and apply the most effective ways in language learning, the sooner their fluency will meet their goals.

The results above support the studies executed by Cotterall (1999) and Tanaka & Ellis (2003). Both studies highlighted the significant roles of EFL teachers on learners' academic success. The approaches and methods used by teachers in language classes will either motivate or demotivate the students, resulting in their academic achievements. When teachers are able to facilitate learning and help all types of learners acquire the target language effectively, there will be obvious progress on students' performance. Referring to different matter, Mori

in Tanaka and Ellis (2003) claimed that learners who perceive the target language positively, such as believing that language learning is easy, tend to perform better and manifest higher levels of achievements. This is in accordance with how Ben and Cath perceive English and their language learning journeys. Concerning Ben's and Cath's emphases on the mastery of grammar and vocabulary and the importance of being actively involved in EFL classroom activities, Ellis (2008) found huge a reliance of some EFL learners in the previous studies on those two matters. Those participants also believed that having a good mastery of grammar and vocabulary as well as participating actively inside the classroom highly contribute to the improvements of their speaking performance.

The last third most dominating theme covers the principles about experiential learning. It is ranked the last since the principles that guide the two successful EFL learners on this matter are the least among all. Those principles are the ones on how both participants perceive their language learning journeys, indicating their second major learning style, namely learning by having reflections on what they are doing. Those reflections create new concepts on something, which later will be used by learners to try out what they have learned that results in gaining new experiences. Referring to this theme, Ben's and Cath's principles are 1) exploring the target language as early as possible and 2) initiating interactions both with those surrounding them and the ones living in overseas. Another principle held by Cath is keep focusing her mind on her goals in language learning in which one of them is to be able to go abroad and stay there for some time. To sum up, realising that mastering the target language by directly using it on a daily basis immensely improves their fluency is Ben and Cath's main reason underlying their reliance on those principles. They have experienced that learning by doing is effective and it hugely boosts their smoothness in using English verbally. The more Ben and Cath rely on and apply those principles, the more experiences and direct inputs they gain about the language. As they are physically engaged in learning process, they reflect on what they have done and create new concepts about their language learning. In the end, Ben and Cath gain new experiences by implementing those concepts, resulting in the developments of their oral fluency.

Beside Tanaka and Ellis (2003), Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) also support those findings. In terms of the effectiveness of living abroad on learners' oral fluency, they found a robust dependence among language learners and educators in visiting English-speaking countries and staying there for some time. Markedly, the first two researchers mentioned above asserted that living in a

country where the target language is used is the most helpful way of learning English. It was notable that staying abroad increases their participants' self-efficacy and confidence, enabling them speaking in English with ease. For example, a number of universities in Japan, their participants' home country, even created a study-abroad program for those who want to study English or other academic subjects to boost their speaking performance. The next study's findings also revealed that living in English-speaking countries provides natural learning environments, offering thorough exposure of the language being learned. Moreover, it gives learners meaningful opportunities to use the target language in actual communication contexts (Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey in Mora and Valls-Ferrer, 2012). Those two researchers captured significant betterments in their participants' oral fluency, particularly in terms of speech rate and production, pause frequency and duration, and mean length of run. While staying in overseas where English is spoken boosts learners' oral fluency, carrying out interactions with the locals and having formal instructions at home country are more likely to improve the knowledge of grammar, resulting in the developments of another oral skill, namely accuracy. The longer learners live in English-speaking countries and are being surrounded by the native speakers, the more experiences they have in executing interactions with the locals using the target language. By that, they gain more language exposures in which resulting in the enhancements of their oral fluency.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The two successful EFL learners involved in this study relied on various, specific principles that happen to guide them in mastering oral fluency in English. Both of them have personal, particular reasons in holding each principle, showing the uniqueness and complexity of their minds and ways of thinking toward language learning. Learners perceive their language learning journeys in different, many possible ways. Therefore, as Mercer (2011) stated, there is no such 'one-size-fits-all' way of acquiring the target language. However, relying on a clear and definite set of principles in language learning is proven helpful when it comes to mastering oral fluency. By that, one's actions and deeds will be guided and led toward his goals and expected results in learning in which also contributing to the occurrence of communicative atmosphere in EFL classrooms.

Suggestions

As learners' principles affect their actions and choices of strategies in language learning, teachers' principles also

significantly determine the way they arrange the interactions in EFL classrooms between them, learners, and particular materials (Breen et al., 2001). Therefore, it is highly suggested that each EFL teacher makes explicit of his and his students' principles in language learning. If possible, both parties might make agreements on the principles they should rely on and execute throughout EFL meetings so that they know where to go and what to execute to achieve learning objectives.

Besides, due to the complexity of a study on one's thinking and cognition and the inseparability of one's beliefs, principles, and practices, it is greatly suggested that those who long to conduct investigations with linear fields and issues provide more comprehensive data and discussion on those matters. The next researchers might also enlarge the amount of the participants so that the data might be more representing. In addition to that, they might perfect the findings of this study by executing observations to ensure that what the participants say concordant with the actions they carry out in EFL classrooms and daily lives. In other words, the observations might be conducted to add supplementary answers for the latter two research questions.

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