Conversation diary in EFL class: A perspective, problem and solution

Syafryadin Syafryadin*

Universitas Bengkulu, Indonesia

Conversation needs two people or more to be conducted. In doing conversation, diary is needed to help students to speak during conversation. Therefore, this study aimed to know the students' perception on conversation diary, problems and solution. A mixed method was employed to achieve the research objectives. Thirty six students of English Education Study Program were the sample of this research. The instruments used were questionnaire and interview. The data were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed by the researcher. The quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics with calculating mean scores and percentage, while the qualitative one used several stages namely reduction, displaying, and concluding the data. The results showed that majority students had a positive perspective on using diary in conversation class because based on the questionnaire, many students opted strongly agree and agree to all items. However, students faced several barriers namely speaking and psychological factors. In speaking skill, several students were lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, while the psychological factors covered anxiety, self-confidence and motivation. Another finding displayed that improving motivation and joining public speaking can be alternative ways to deal with those barriers. In conclusion, conversation diary had benefits for students to support them in speaking.

Keywords: Conversation diary; perspective, problem; solution

INTRODUCTION

Conversation is a speaking activity that requires interaction between speaker and listener. The interaction can involve two or more people to communicate for achieving the goal of conversation itself (Kpogo & brefa, 2017). According to Harmer (2019), the reasons why two individuals are conversing are that they are interested in the communicative goals of what is being said, they want to listen to something, and they choose the communication from their language bank. The majority of communicative events fall under these generalizations, and they are especially important for language acquisition and instruction. Conversation had been implemented by the teachers and lecturers from elementary school until university level. In primary and secondary school, conversation is integrated in English lesson. However, in university level, especially in English Education Department of University of Bengkulu, conversation is a course that must be taken by students in the first semester.

Based on the preliminary observation in the middle of August 2022, the students had problems in terms of conversation, such as poor grammar, inadequate vocabulary, Indonesian use in conversation, poor pronunciation, being nervous, and facial expression. Moreover, the students did not have enough time to practice their conversation in the classroom. Then, they did conversation not as natural as possible. Thus, several students were awkward in doing conversation. Regarding this issue, there must be alternative way to deal with those problems.

One of them is a conversation diary. Conversation diary is a diary that can be used by the students to take notes all the things that they want to talk during conversation. Conversation diary is also useful for asking the student to reflect and write about their concept in a conversation diary is one technique to ensure that the learner is ready. They will speak more freely as a result with a diary. Writing about the experiences or ideas of the pupils is a form of media. Students can describe their ongoing language acquisition in their diaries (Harmer, 2019). The student can prepare for speaking by writing a diary that includes their grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students can become more conscious of their tactics at any given time and over time by keeping a language learning journal (Harmer, 2019). Nakatani (2005) also talked about how using diaries might help kids become ready for oral communication. Oral Communication Technique (OCS) is a strategy that focuses on the process of speaking behavior between the speaker and the person they are speaking to, according to a study titled The Effects of Awareness-Raising Training on Oral Communication Strategy Use (Nakatani, 2005). The results of this study showed that pupils' pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary were all greatly improved.

Some researchers conducted research on conversation diary. The first, several studies focused on the effect of conversation diary to improve students' speaking skill. It could enhance students' speaking ability because it covers activities that students can use to speak. It also decreased the students' anxiety. However, it has research limitation in terms of time because the English teachers implemented only several meetings (Fadilah, 2020); Prasanti, Muzammil, Widiastuti, 2020; Intan, Muthalib, Samad, 2021). The second, some previous studies emphasized on language diaries in general. It means that the language diaries for all skills, not in specific skill. They found that diaries could be as proof for students' experiences in learning a foreign language and it can significantly influence their attitudes and motivation for learning a foreign language. Furthermore, it can have major pedagogical and practical implications for the outcomes of foreign language learning. Then, diary can be used to learn vocabulary. Vocabulary is important to support other skills (Nešić & Stojković, 2018; Hardiwatiningsih, 2019). The third, a journal or diary were also studied by other researchers for writing and speaking skill. They found that listening journal could improve students' writing and speaking ability (Saputra & Aqib, 2020; Syarifah, 2020; Sari, 2020). In short, the previous research focused on the effect of conversation diary on students' speaking achievement. Besides, diary conversation was also used for writing skill. Even, diaries can be useful for all language skills. The studies about conversation diary were rare to be conducted by the researchers. Thus, the current research highlighted the perspectives, problems and solution on using conversation diary in conversation class. In line with it, the research questions of this study were (1) what are students' perspective on using conversation diary?; (2) what is the problem in speaking by using conversation diary?; (3) how do the lecturer solve the problem on it?.

The significance of the research can be useful for teachers and students. For teachers or lecturers, it can be as one of the alternative ways to teach speaking, especially conversation, while for students, it can be beneficial for learning speaking.

METHODS

The research employed a mixed method design by combining quantitative and qualitative design. Creswell (2017) stated that mixed method design is a design which not only measuring a quantitative, but also qualitative. The type of mixed method of this research was explanatory mixed method design, where the quantitative analysis first, then the qualitative analysis. This method was suitable because the first research question was quantitatively analyzed, while the second and third research questions were qualitatively analyzed by researcher.

The population of this study were one hundred and thirty eight students that divided into three classes namely class A, B, and C. Each class comprises thirty six students. The sample of this study were thirty six students of English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Bengkulu. The students were the first semester taking conversation class that consisting of twenty female and fifteen male students. The sampling technique was a random sampling because they had the same total number of the students. Besides, their abilities in doing conversation were almost the same for each class. Then, there was only one lecturer who taught the class. The lecturer was certified and qualified lecturer for teaching conversation.

The instruments of this study were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was used to answer the first research question namely finding out the students' perspective on conversation diary, while the interview guideline was useful for knowing the problems and the solution. The questionnaire indicator was in relation to the advantages of conversation itself in speaking class or conversation class. The number of items in questionnaire was 10 items. The questionnaire used likert scale in four categories namely strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Then, there would be interpretation for negative and positive perspective from students. The questionnaire was distributed to thirty six students. Furthermore, the interview guideline was regarding problem and solution during and after the implementation of conversation diary in conversation class. The researcher interviewed thirty six students and one lecturer regarding the second and the third research questions.

The data were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed by researcher. The quantitative data were analyzed by using SPSS software program to find out the mean score and percentage from questionnaire for knowing students' perspective whether it is positive or negative. Moreover, the qualitative data were analyzed by several steps from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The first, reducing the interview transcript by coding and highlight the important

one for answering the problems and solution of speaking in conversation class. The second, displaying the data into text because the interview data that has been reduced by researcher in previous stage can be seen in a text as proof of interview itself. The third, drawing conclusion as the last stage to show the brief summary of the fixed data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Perspective on Conversation Diary

To gain the students' perspective on conversation diary, the researcher used questionnaire. The detail information can be seen in table 1.

TABLE 1 | The questionnaire result of students' perspective on conversation diary

Items	Statements	Scale			
		SA	A	D	SD
1	A conversation diary helps me to speak	22	12	1	0%
		69.2%	34.2%	2.9%	
2	A Conversation diary improves my vocabulary	19	16	0%	0%
		54.3%	45.7%		
3	A Conversation diary assists me to understand speaking material	15	19	1	0%
		42.9%	54.3%	2.9%	
4	A conversation diary could help me to write the ideas of speaking	14	20	1	0%
		40%	57.1%	2.9%	
5	A conversation diary could help me to implement grammar in speaking	11	23	1	0%
		31.4%	65.7%	2.9%	
6	A conversation diary could help me to practice my pronunciation	19	14	2	0%
		54.3%	40%	5.7%	
7	A conversation diary helps me to remember what I want to talk	11	22	2	0%
		31.4%	62.9%	5.7%	
8	A conversation diary gives me a clue about conversation	14	19	2	0%
		40%	54.3%	5.7%	
9	A conversation diary helps me to prepare in doing conversations or speaking	19	14	2	0%
		54.3%	40%	5.7%	
10	A conversation diary increases my self-confidence in speaking	13	21	1	0%
		37.1%	60%	2.9%	
	Mean Score	45.49%	51.42%	3.09%	0%

Table 1 shows that majority of the students had positive perception on conversation diary implementation in speaking class. It can be proved by looking at the mean scores. Students chose 45.9% strongly agree, 51.42% agree, 3.09% disagree and 0% for strongly disagree. Even though, there were one or two students opted disagree for each item, but it was not significant. Most of students elected strongly agree and agree.

Problem in Speaking By Using Conversation Diary

The researcher interviewed thirty six students. However, the researcher just provided several part of interview because several students had the same respond to question. The problems of speaking by using conversation diary can be seen in table 2.

TABLE 2 | The result of interview

Sample	Transcript	Explanation
1	*I can't say few words quickly, and it's hard to think about English words during speaking (S1 and S2)*	Sample 1 displays that those students were hard to remember the English words. Then, it seems that they do not know what they want to say for several words.
2	*I have a problem in terms of pronunciation (S7, S8, S10, S12, S14, S15, S16, S17, S19, S20, S21, S23, S24, S25, S26, S27)*	Sample 2 shows that majority studens had a problem in terms of pronunciation. They did not know how to pronounce it. They always mispronounced English words.
3	*I often forget new vocabulary (S28 & S30)* *I am difficult to remember the new vocabulary in my diary (S33)*	Sample 3 indicates that some students had poor vocabulary and could remind several unfamiliar words in conversation diary.
4	*I am afraid of making mistakes in doing conversation (S11 and S31)*	Sample 4 shows that some students were fear of doing mistakes during conversation. The mistakes may be English skills itself.
5	*I had grammar error in speaking (S35, S34)*	Sample 5 shows that those two students got problems in terms of grammar in speaking, thus it influences their speaking.

| 6 | *I am nervous in speaking. Then, I do not have courage to speak in front of many people (S3, S4, S6)* | Sample 6 shows that some students were nervous in doing speaking. Then, they were fear to speak in front of their friends. |
| 7 | *I do not have good confidence to speak in front of my friends (S29, S3)* | Sample 7 displays that several students did not have good confidence to speak or doing conversation. It will cause their ability in speaking. |

The Solutions for Students' Problems in Speaking by Using Conversation Diary

Based on the interview to the lecturer, some solutions offered to overcome students' problems in speaking. The proof of transcriptions can be seen in sample 8.

Sample 8

I think the solution for overcoming the students' problems in speaking namely motivating and engaging them to always speak whether at home and at the classroom. Besides, asking them to practice more and more. The students also can join public speaking training to increase their knowledge and ability in speaking because in public speaking training, the students were trained to know how to speak from the beginning until the end. Moreover, students were taught by the trainer how to deal with their problems in speaking.

Sample 8 displays that the solutions for coping with the students' speaking problem are increasing their motivation, practicing speaking, and following public speaking training.

There are three findings that must be discussed in this part namely students' perspective on using conversation diary, students' problems and solution regarding speaking after using conversation diary. The first finding showed that majority students had positive perspective on using conversation disagree because based on the questionnaire, they mostly chose strongly agree and agree. Besides, the students were very happy to use conversation diary because it helped them to speak. In the item of the questionnaire, especially in item (conversation diary helps me to speak), 69.2% and 34.2% of students chose strongly agree and agree. It is the highest percentage that students choose from all items. It strengthened that conversation diary were being beneficial for students. It is same as Intan, Muthalib, Samad (2021) used English conversation Journal (ECJ) to teach speaking. They found that students enhanced their speaking ability because ECJ is like a diary of students to write their activities and talk about it. Consequently, they were usual to speak.

Fadilah (2020) analyzed the use of conversation diary to improve students' speaking ability. The result showed that conversation diary could improve students' speaking ability and decrease anxiety. Those previous studies showed that the benefits of conversation diary for students and it is in relation to the result of this research that indicated that students had good responses to the implementation of conversation diary in speaking. Thus, by looking at the result of the first finding, most of students gave good responses on the use of conversation diary because it assisted them in speaking. Even though, there are one or two students who disagree about the statements in the questionnaire. It could be followed by the researcher and lecturer of the speaking class.

The second finding showed that several problems faced by students during the implementation of conversation diary in speaking. Those were language skill and psychological problems. In language skill, some students had hindrances about pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. In this case, several students did mistakes in pronouncing English words, especially unfamiliar words. It is same as vocabulary, few students did not have adequate vocabulary to speak, thus, those students did not know how to say it and cause them pausing in speaking. In terms of grammar, some students got mistakes in grammar when speaking especially, they forgot to put to be and auxiliary verb when speaking. It can be said that they had problems with tenses. Ur (2021) stated that the problems of students in speaking can be poor fluency and accuracy that comprise vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, pausing, filler and flow of the speech. In psychological problems, some students were poor self-confident because they do not how to speak English in good way. Besides, some students were anxiety because they were afraid of getting evaluation from others and fear of making mistakes in speaking. It is almost similar with Syafryadin (2017) stated that anxiety was one of the problems encountered by student in speaking because they were not brave to face their friend and shy to get negative feedback from their friends.

Those problems may be caused by lacking of practice English, poor knowledge of English (Speaking), less exposure of English, negative previous experience of English, less training, and seldom to join public speaking seminar.

The third finding showed that several points that should be considered to overcome the students' problems in speaking. The lecturer must improve the students' motivation in speaking English because motivation can trigger the students to be enthusiastic in speaking in front of their friends. Sari (2021), Restiana (2019), Agnes & Marlina (2021) showed that motivation could be as one of indicators for students to be successful in speaking. Besides, with high motivation, students could help students to achieve their goal in speaking English. Other researchers who had the same finding were Nešić & Stojković (2018). They found that diaries could be as proof for students' experiences in learning a foreign language can significantly influence their attitudes and motivation for learning a foreign language.

Moreover, the lecturer asked them to more practice speaking or joining public speaking training because in public speaking training, the students were not only learning how to open the speaking, deliver, and close the speaking, but also they studied how to overcome their problems, such as self-confidence, anxiety and other factors that obstacles their speaking. This is in line with Osborn and Osborn (2017) who conveyed that public speaking training is one of alternative ways to train students in doing speech and also

solve their problems in speaking. In speech training, students can consult with the trainer and get treatment to improve their speaking ability. Varderber, Sellnow, and Varderber (2012) added that in speech training, other psychological factors that can be barriers in speaking, such as anxiety in doing speaking and low self-confidence could be minimized and solved.

CONCLUSION

Based on results of this study, it can be concluded that students had good response towards the implementation of conversation diary in speaking class. Although, majority students had positive view on it, several students still faced problems, such as lack of speaking skill and psychological factors. However, lecturer provided strategies to deal with those problems namely improving their motivation and suggested to practice and join public speaking training. Furthermore, researcher realized that this study has limitation. The limitations of this research were the sample of this research only one class and the instruments were limited to the questionnaire and interview. Besides, the research just emphasized on the perspeception, problems and solution. Therefore, other researchers could continue this research by looking at the implementation this conversation diary in the classroom, adding observation and notes for the instruments and sample of the research whether students or lecturers.

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