

THE JOURNEY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The phenomenon of students learning English in school who have spent a long time but are not able to communicate well is a problem that has not been extensively investigated. To face the that case, this study aims to explore personal experiences of the journey learning the English language which is approached by autobiography of narrative inquiry as the study that focuses on exploring human experiences and life. The data sources of this study used the autobiographies of my life journey in the learning English language and then the overall stories and experiences will be gathered into a reflective journal as the data collection that will be divided into three different periods. The thematic analysis is employed which has six steps to elaborate the codes and the themes in each experience. The findings show that the first period of the pre-university level found themes such as just memorizing vocabulary and learning grammar-focused. In the second period between pre-university and university when learning Madurese instead of English, there are themes such as contextual vocabulary learning, balancing speaking-listening skills, and repetition practice. The next third period is when applying the result of learning previously to English at the university level. In conclusion, this indicates that the second period is the central point because it is the answer to the first period and it is the inspiration for the third period caused a result of contextual vocabulary learning, balancing speaking and listening skills, and repetition practicing I applied the insight to learning English. Future researchers are expected to explore this field also to enrich this research area.

Kata kunci: Autobiography, English, Journey, Learning

INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language demands the students to master many aspects of skills or abilities of English itself, and communication skills that involve speaking which is seen and considered as a representation of a student's language ability, exactly in the English language (Purwati et al., 2023). According to Namaziandost et al., (2019), the use of language to speak is also the first basic means of expression to convey and transfer information, emotions, feelings, and ideas. Besides speaking skills as tools of communication, there are listening skills that can be separated because they are a natural connection between two crucial macro skills (Woldetsadik et al., 2022).

Despite the crucial aspect of communication skills, learning and teaching English as a communication skill in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL) is a problematic phenomenon (Mahbub et al., 2021). As a basic principle of learning English, Namaziandost et al., (2019) report that in the communication language aspect, English is only studied and learned by students in classes but it is less used and practiced in real life or daily communication. Moreover, to measure whether students are successful or not in mastering a language, it can be observed when students can produce that language anywhere and at any time (Al-Zoubi, 2018). This means that

normal language must be learned and used throughout a student's life, both in formal classes and outside of informal classes.

The phenomenon such as above is confirmed by Akbari (2015), this study states that there are students who have spent almost seven years studying English at school (junior high school to senior high school) but the students have not been able to communicate well. In a similar case, Riadil (2020) reports that college students who have studied English for ten years formally, from junior high school, senior high school, and university, students may get good scores in English based on their rapport, but they cannot speak or communicate well enough to practice their English. Koizumi et al., (2022) find that in the problem of students' usage of English itself, there are cases of uneven skills among students' abilities, such as students who are excellent in their listening skills but they are poor in speaking skills. Another implication is also found by Namaziandost et al., (2019), the problem of students' communication usage of English itself is because there is no input process enough that finally has a negative impact on the output process such as speaking skills.

The learning process of English consists of two aspects, Bahrani et al., (2014) state that informal learning mostly takes place such as in outside the classroom environment, and formal language learning takes place in the classroom environment. Krashen (1976) also states that informal and formal environments provide different aspects of contribution to student competencies, the former influencing the competencies acquired and the latter influencing the competencies learned. Basically, informal learning is part of language acquisition, and it can occur in informal fields and formal fields, such as in real-life environments and classrooms (Al-Zoubi, 2018). Krashen (1982) states that there are two kinds of ways for students to develop their language abilities, those are learning and acquisition. The first is language acquisition, which means that language learners achieve mastery of English through subconscious processes Language acquirers are usually not aware and focused on their acquiring a language but are only aware and focused on their using the language to communicate in real life. The second is language learning places the learner in a state of conscious processing and the learner more focused on grammar, language structure, and the role of language itself which makes the learner more concerned with the language learning process than with its use and practice. Thus, English learning needs to be encouraged and developed in the classroom and outside the classroom through appropriate techniques (Al-Zoubi, 2018).

One of so many products and goals the output of learning English in school is communication skills which is a form that language is used and practiced by students to express what they mean in the target language (Zha et al., 2006). According to Yashima et al., (2004), the main purpose of learning English as a foreign language is to facilitate better understanding and communication between individual students with other people to understand each other. Communication skills as tools for exchanging information, feelings, ideas, and opinions that involve receiving a message and producing a message later on (Iksan et al., 2012; Efrizal, 2012; Brown & Lee, 2015; Chaney, 1998). Clark and Delia (1979) state that communication skill is a complicated aspect that requires the mastery of several different types of knowledge or competencies so students can communicate successfully. According to Mart (2020), speaking has become a core and pivotal component in English language proficiency development. Moreover, Purwati et al., (2023) also state that speaking skill is a representative and particular ability of English language. Rivers (1981) also reinforced that the usage of speaking in daily life outside the classroom situation is used twice as much as writing and reading combined.

The learning English experiences, Ubaidillah et al., (2020) explore the topic of one man's past experiences with language learning that were upsetting, but not for his future teaching career. Simbolon (2021) examines the students' perceptions of their learning experience in a blended

method of learning incorporating social media WhatsApp and Google Classroom applications as instruments during the learning process. Citrayasa (2019) revealed that students of senior high school about their lived experiences of learning English using their smartphones anywhere and any time outside their class. Yung (2019) reported the autobiography that was written as a narrative inquiry into learning, teaching, and research in shadow education experiences. Ge et al., (2019) also explore by using ethnographic inquiry to present the lived experiences of Chinese international students while attending a University in Canada. Rahayu (2020) with the research topic of EFL acquisition and learning in informal English education in the Indonesian context was also has been done. Bahrani et al., (2014) investigate the research on second language acquisition in informal settings to consider the role of language input in the development of second language acquisition in an informal setting.

Although many studies have been conducted to investigate and reveal the English language learning experiences aspect, very few studies have explored the researchers themselves as primary data and used narrative inquiry as a method to uncover these problems by explaining the researcher's own experiences, outlook, and perspective. In addition, very few studies concerned and focused on how the formal and informal could collaborate and reinforce each other, especially while learning and studying English for sixteen years of the researcher's own self. Then to fill this lacuna, this research aims to uncover the same case and then try to find a solution based on my own experience which will be written using an autobiography of narrative inquiry method. This research also focused not only on measuring phenomena diagnostically like mostly previous studies but also attempted to find answers as solutions based on the findings and the results in the end. It is also hoped that these findings can provide insight and novelty in the learning English process.

To explore the autobiography of my journey learning the English language experiences, this study aims to answer the following of the main research question regarding "How are my experiences of learning English in the three learning periods"?.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach and autobiography of narrative Inquiry method. The narrative inquiry method is the study or research of the way people tell their experiences and stories to the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This research aimed to reveal the answers and solutions based on cases and problems by exploring my own experiences during three periods of English language learning. The usage of narrative inquiry autobiography was very suitable for finding out the process in more detail and depth. Autobiography is a research method that systematically describes and analyzes personal experiences to understand the meaning behind these experiences (Ellis et al., 2011). Thus, it can be concluded that autobiography is carried out because the researcher has the aim of exploring a story and experience from his life and then trying to obtain the meaning behind the story and experience (Posada-Ortiz & Garzón-Duarte, 2019).

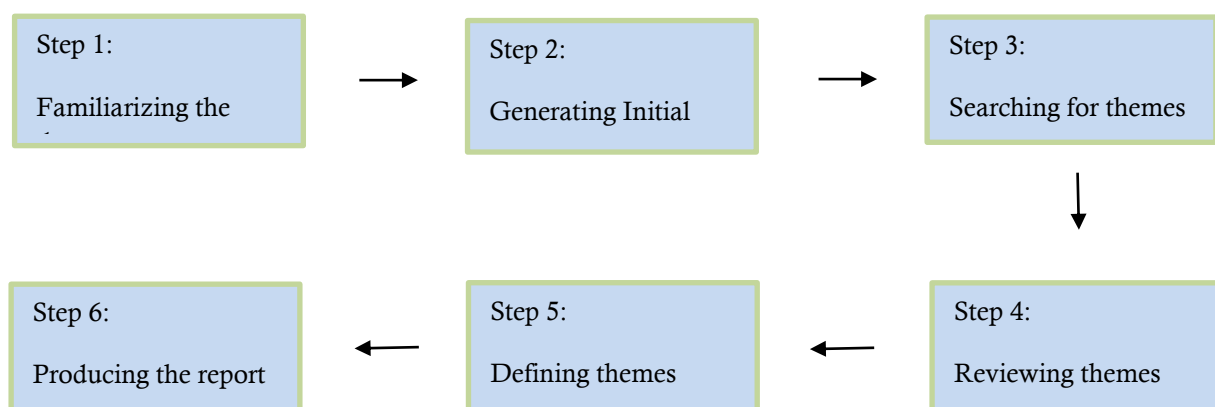
In this research, I used myself as the main participant and then my stories and experiences as the main data source. The experiences were divided into three periods with five different settings places. The first period with the setting places in Kutai Kartanegara Regency of East Kalimantan Province and Lamongan Regency of East Java Province when I studied English in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school for twelve years in two different setting places such as above. As a result of stuck conditions from the overall learning English processes in my studies previously, my journey and story stepped into the second period with the setting place in Situbondo Regency of East Java Province when I learned the informal Madurese language instead

of learning English to look for a new experience to understand what the meaning of language it was. Finally, the result of learning Madurese so motivated and inspired me, made my journey and my story step into the third period when I decided to join and study at University and took the English department as my major with the setting places in Jember Regency of East Java Province, and then moved to a university in Malang in the fourth semester, located in Malang Regency of East Java Province.

Meanwhile, autobiographical writing is narrative research that studies the researcher's personal experiences as data. Instruments for writing both biographies and autobiographies can be interviews, journal notes, and storytelling (Ellis et al., 2011). In this study, the researcher collected and rewrote the reflective journal from the diary and remembered the stories and experiences to gather into one paper. To process the data collection, this research used the sequence of the following steps. Firstly, I read and observe my experiences in my diary thoroughly as a reflective journal. Then I selected the relevant data needed for this research, three periods to be precise. After that, I pondered the data organization and lastly, I drew a mind map and wrote it into a narrative.

The data were analyzed by using six procedures adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis. The first step was to familiarize myself with the data, such as transcribing the data then reading many times of the data, and writing down initial ideas. The second step was to generate the common initial codes, such as systematically coding interesting features of the data across the data set, and organizing the data relevant to each code. The third step was to search for themes that are possibly found, such as organizing codes into potential themes and collecting overall data relevant to each potential theme. The fourth step was to reread and review the themes, such as checking whether they function about the coded extracts and then the entire data set, and producing a thematic 'map' of the analysis. The fifth step was defining and naming the themes, such as ongoing analysis to refine each theme specifically, then telling the overall story the analysis tells, and coming up with a clear definition of the name for each theme. The last step was to create a report for the last and final opportunity to analyze. Selection of examples of clear and interesting extracts, final analysis of the selected extracts, connecting the analysis with research questions and literature, and producing a scientific report from the analysis.

Figure 1. The flowchart of thematic analysis



The result of the six procedures of thematic analysis, the researcher finds three periods of my autobiography, the overall results as below:

Table 1. The report of thematic analysis

No	Open coding	Axial coding	Selective coding
1	Force Memorize Vocabulary Learning Focuses Grammar	1. Being forced to memorize the vocabulary 2. The learning process which too focuses on grammar	The First period: Learning English at the elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school
2	Getting Contextual Vocabulary Balancing Speaking Listening Repetition practicing	1. Getting the contextual vocabulary learning 2. Getting the balance between speaking and listening skills 3. Getting the repetition of practicing	The Second period: Learning the informal Madurese language
3	Applying Contextual Vocabulary Balancing Speaking Listening Repetition Practicing	1. Applying contextual vocabulary learning 2. Applying the balance between speaking and listening skills 3. Applying the Repetition of practicing	The third period: Learning English at the university level

FINDINGS

The first period: Learning English at the elementary school to senior high school levels

The first period started my journey at the elementary school level in 2006 and it was the first time also I knew about the English language. In my elementary school, English was a compulsory subject that was taught by our teacher in every degree of the classes. Thus, at this level, I studied English in formal education for six years in Kutai Kartanegara Regency, East Kalimantan Province. The next level in this first period was the experiences of my journey when I graduated from elementary school and then continued my studies at junior high school at the Islamic boarding school, located in Lamongan Regency, east Java in 2012. This stage denoted that I continued to learn English formally in junior high school for three years after graduating from Elementary school. Thus, this level would retell and explain my stories and experiences of learning English as my journey emphasized some points that were important to describe in this findings such as the learning process that just focused on memorizing vocabulary and lack of practice. The quote below explains learning English in junior high school that just focused on memorizing the vocabulary.

“My English learning process in the elementary school of course could not be separated from memorizing vocabulary activity. The vocabulary itself was taught by the teacher in a contextual theme that correlated with our lives. The themes such as vocabulary in the class, in the house, in the office, animals, flowers, fruits, etc. Furthermore, about my activity that had to memorize vocabulary in the class English subject, I also did to remember the vocabulary at home in my environment childhood together with my friend to catch up with the target of vocabulary. The junior and senior high schools were also rather similar to normal English classes, students learned about vocabulary first by memorizing some vocabulary in every meeting. Basically, the vocabulary that students learned from the book was divided into some chapters, and each chapter mostly with contextual theme. When I was in a position where I had to memorize vocabulary in every meeting, I felt so hated the English language, because I thought that was a force to memorize a lot of vocabulary. I thought that at the time I was so difficult and had a poor ability to memorize, and I realized that it was my weakness.”

The next level of the first period was my journey when I continued my studies in senior high school in the same institution the Islamic Boarding School located in Lamongan Regency, East Java Province in 2015. This level was also the stage where I started to realize the problems of English learning such as just focusing on the grammatical learning and lack of practice and using English itself and then there was an imbalance of skills between input and output processes.

“Another obstacle that I got at the time was teachers just taught about the grammar or structure of English such as the formulation of tenses and also another lesson in grammatical English then made students have to memorize anymore. Lesson on tenses I could not understand because it was difficult to memorize patterns and formulate tenses that were so complicated. Finally, because of the problem that just focused on memorizing vocabulary, learning grammatical, and lack of practicing and using, I was back to being stuck anymore to learning English, but there were still feelings and expectations to master at English language.”

The second period: Learning the informal Madurese language instead of learning English

After I graduated from my senior high school, there was an obligation to serve in the Islamic boarding school institute for two years, and I got an assignment to stand in the Islamic boarding school's branch located in Situbondo Regency, east Java. Finally, the first time after I stayed at the branch I had difficulty speaking and communicating with societies around us because there was a different language. The difficulties and shock culture also made me learn so well about the new language and as a result I got overlook, knowledge, and also experiences. Moreover, because of my agenda of teaching a grandmother who is a local person and I often visit her house almost every day, I learn a lot about the Madurese language itself. The first experience that I got from learning the informal Madurese language was regarding knowledge and lessons in vocabulary. The reflective journal of my autobiography showed and retold it.

“From the vocabulary that I got from the grandmother's utterance, I wrote down it and I asked my friend what the meaning was. Almost every day, I got ten new vocabularies that I heard from her utterances, and then I translated them by asking my friend about the meaning. Meanwhile, I attempted to more speak and communicate using the little vocabulary that I already had, which consisted of vocabulary that I heard from her utterances or vocabulary that I had prepared before to complete what I wanted to say to her tomorrow. Thus, this way made it easier to get new vocabulary and remain caused by appropriate with daily needs and real life.”

The second experience that I got from learning the informal Madurese language was regarding balancing between the learning and practicing process which meant that receptive skills and productive skills must to equal also. Thoroughly as often as possible communicating and interacting with the grandmother made me sharpen my skill of speaking and also listening skills. Based on the reflective journal of my autobiography.

“In brief in this process, I always trained my listening skills by listening to her utterances and I trained my speaking skills by practicing and using my vocabulary to speak or talk with the grandmother. to sharpen and reinforce my ability of communication skills, I had an agenda to visit all societies’ houses or we called it a friendship mission. One month after the visiting agenda, I added an agenda and started to conduct an Islamic study after praying Jumat to explain and give a lesson about religion.”

The last experience that I got from learning the informal Madurese language was regarding repetition of learning and practicing. The repetition meant that the learning and practicing process must to done as often as possible. Considered that repetition was the main key to reinforcing and emphasizing both experiences such as above, either vocabulary and also speaking-listening skills. the following is a quote from the journal of my autobiography.

“The process such as getting new vocabulary and also balancing by practicing speaking and listening I did for four months continuously almost every day to learn Madurese. As a result, at first time I did not understand the Madurese language, but after I had learned it for four months I could speak and communicate well with her and also other societies. Furthermore, four months later on, I could communicate and speak using the formal Madura itself to conduct the Islamic study after praying Jumat, and once a week to explain and give a speech about Islamic lessons.”

The third period: Learning English at the university level

This period explained my journey after I had stayed at Situbondo for two years (2018-2020) and then decided to join a University at Jember Regency, east Java. The decision to join the University of course was a result of my learning the Madurese process for two years previously because I believed that there was still an opportunity, chance, and new expectations to master English. Thus the result of the second period inspires and motivates me to take the English department as my major. The first experience that I applied from the learning language previously into learning English was regarding knowledge and lessons of vocabulary, it meant that I found the proper and better way how to get and collect new vocabulary every day according to my passion. Moreover, this way included two places of different universities, because, in the fifth semester, I moved to one university in Malang. The reflective journal of my autobiography showed and retold about it.

“In my first semester when I studied at one university in Jember, I joined a shadow school to catch up on my late English skills by learning English twice a week. The learning process was also applied in a similar way when I learned the Madurese language previously. In every meeting, I collected twenty new vocabulary when I listened to him when he spoke English, and I collected new vocabulary when I was home about what I wanted to say and discuss with him in the next meeting. In the first of fifth semesters, when I just moved to the one university in Malang, I still realized that learning in class was not enough to provide the place and change to balance between input and

output skills. To face the case, I with several of my friends create a circle to make a place and change to practicing our English. In every class that we have finished, we attempted to explain and resume the material again in our circle. These activities enriched the vocabulary that I collected every day and increased my communication skills to use English each other.”

The second experience that I applied from learning language previously was regarding balancing between speaking and listening skills which meant that receptive skills and productive skills must to equal. Thoroughly as often as possible communicating and interacting with my friends or my circle made me sharpen my skill of speaking and also listening skills. Furthermore, to broaden my chances and opportunities to practice and use English, I joined the English debate community and then Joined also in a certain competition as a debater. Based on the reflective journal of my autobiography.

“Besides my communication skills were sharpened by joining the shadow school at the university previously, in the new university, I joined to English debate community to look for a broader place and a chance to improve my English and as an addition to my English environment in my circle and my friends. Besides this community provided a training workshop with invited expert speakers about English debate, this community also conducted the training section every week. The training section included our team in our community or training section with another University. In every training section, there was a motion or topic that was the debatable thing and then we were divided into two cons side and pro side. Each side had to explain and present the argument either to reinforce one side’s argument or against the other side’s argument. In 2024 I joined the NUDC (National University Debate Competition) with two other students else as representative debaters from my university in Malang City.”

The last experience that I applied from learning the language previously to learning English was regarding repetition of learning and practicing. The repetition meant that the learning and practicing process must to done as often as possible. Considered that repetition was the main key to reinforcing and emphasizing both experiences such as above, either vocabulary and also speaking-listening skills. the following is a quote from the journal of my autobiography.

“When I joined the shadow school in the first semester that consisted of two meetings a week, in every meeting, I collected twenty new vocabulary when I listened to him when he spoke English, and I collected new vocabulary when I was home about what I wanted to say and discuss with him in the next meeting. When I moved into the University in Malang also I with my friends created a conducive area to speak English and in every class that we finished, we attempted to explain and resume the material again in our circle almost every day. When I joined the Debate community, this community also conducted the training section every week.”

The last experience was when I applied learning language previously to learning English and then applied it again to teaching practicum. This assignment of teaching practicum would involve and unite three experiences above such as vocabulary, speaking-listening, and also repetition. Moreover, the teaching practicum in a certain school where involved four students as a

field and participated in my English house agenda to attempt to apply my experiences of learning English. This is shown by the reflective journal of my autobiography.

‘‘In the learning and training processes in the English house this was followed by four students, I made some rules about collecting vocabulary, speaking, and also listening aspects. Thus, this agenda was conducted three times a week for two months to teach students about contextual vocabulary, balancing speaking-listening skills, and repetition practicing.’’

DISCUSSION

The first period: Unpleasant experiences of learning English process in the schools

The first finding of the first period is memorizing vocabulary which always exists in three different levels of school, from elementary school until senior high school. According to Mansoor et al., (2023) stated that vocabulary is the kernel and the most important aspect of all language skills, it helps students to interact and communicate with another speaker of that language as a basic modal. Besides elementary school, in junior high school and senior high school, there is also memorizing vocabulary just in the classroom environment and it is such a force thing. Another study also reinforces the problem, Afzal (2019) states that vocabulary learning is a challenging matter, especially for non-native speakers of English who face problems such as unfamiliar meanings of new words, spelling errors, pronunciation missing, guessing meanings through the context, etc. This result of forcing memorize vocabulary is not in line with the principle of learning vocabulary, Laufer (1988) stated that vocabulary must be taught in some considerations such as the selection of words or new vocabulary that will be taught, training students' long-term memorization by meaningful tasks, and assessment of from the student's achievement of memorizing vocabulary. This finding is also similar to the previous study, Shah et al., (2022) found the most difficult problems that students face such as short-term memory, spelling mistakes, pronunciation errors, lack of reading practices, length of words itself, and appropriate usage of words are the main factors in learning English vocabulary. Those problems are also reinforced by Sogimin and Wiwoho (2023), there are some factors hindering students from speaking and communicating English well, such as there are not practicing enough, having little vocabulary, and having little interest in learning the language.

The second finding in the first period of learning English experiences is focused on learning grammatical. According to Curtin (2021), language can be illustrated as a big highway, the words are the kinds of transportation, but the grammar is the road signs and markings that tell people to drive well on the track, thus the grammar is the pattern rules and principles of the language itself. The learning process that dominates learning and memorizing the patterns and the formulation of the grammatical English and lack of practice and use in class or real life. As a result, Sorohiti et al., (2024) state that students will face the challenges of learning grammar problems because of their limited exposure to English and lack of motivation. This problem is reinforced by DeKeyser (2005) who stated that there are three difficulties and complexity of learning grammar as complexity of grammar's form, the complexity of grammar's meaning, and also the complexity of grammar's form-meaning relationship that make students so tough to learn about grammar. Another implication such that so difficult to memorize the pattern and formulate grammar and then so easy to forget because there is no balance activity of learning and practicing. This finding is in line with the previous study, Listia and Febriyanti (2020) found four problems in learning grammar such as the learning is not math with real context, caused by first language interference, lack of usage and practice repetition, and students' confidence in using the language itself.

The second period: Getting the new experiences of learning informal language

In the second period, there are three findings during experiences of learning Madurese's language instead of learning English. The first is contextual vocabulary which means the process of getting and collecting the vocabulary is math and appropriate to the needs and the context of real life. According to Rapaport (2003), the term contextual vocabulary acquisition is active such as reasoning from textual clues and prior knowledge including language knowledge and hypotheses developed from prior encounters with the word. Based on the data, the contextual vocabulary has sources either from listening to new words that are still unfamiliar or from speaking way when want to say something and then preparing it first. Similar to the language acquisition principle, Krashen (1982) stated that language acquirers are usually not aware and focused on the fact that they are acquiring a language but are only aware and focused on the fact that they are using the language to communicate in real life, so, the process of language acquisition is not only how to acquire it, but also how to use and practice it in a balanced manner. Another study also reinforces the principle of contextual vocabulary, Bilgin and Tokel (2019) state that in contextualized language learning environments, vocabulary's development happens incidentally, many factors have a significant impact on vocabulary learning itself, and contextual clues play a pivotal role in allowing language learners to guess the meaning of new words correctly. This finding is in line with the previous study, Omolu et al., (2022) revealed that improving vocabulary mastery through contextual teaching and learning strategies toward students effectively improved the vocabulary mastery of students in senior high school.

The second finding of this period is balancing between receptive skills and productive skills. According to Woldetsadik et al., (2022), receptive and productive skills such as speaking and listening in learning English one part that cannot be separated because they are a natural connection between two crucial macro skills. Based on the data, the learning process of collecting new words from listening to other people and from the preparation to speak is one activity that makes two skills correlate with each other. The correlation between speaking and listening skills has been the concern of many studies, Doff (1988) states that if students want to improve their speaking skills, they have to develop their listening skills also because both as one part to reinforce each other. Thus, the input process must to balanced with the output process and the learning process must to balanced also with the practicing process (Shakibaei et al., 2019). Considering that the case of imbalance or uneven skill has been examined in the previous study and also this study indicated that this finding is an exception from the previous study's case, Koizumi et al., (2022) revealed that uneven skill profiles exist such as the students' listening skills are excellent but their speaking is poor, thus this phenomenon makes them get difficult to use English itself. The reasons behind this phenomenon of uneven skills include lack of practice and use of English.

The last finding in the second period is repetition which has a big role in the findings previously such as contextual vocabulary and also balancing between receptive skill and productive skill. According to Kuliahana and Marzuki (2020), the repetition technique offers more chances and opportunities for students to use and practice the language more frequently. Based on the data, the keyword and the most important part of sharpening skills in the language is caused by the repetition that is almost done every day. Furthermore, Pholen and Londe (1998) stated that the repetition of practicing the skills language will perfect the skills because they are used as often as possible. Musfeld et al., (2023) also state that when students learn from repetition, the more they practice the more they get the better ability. It is similar to the principle when the students learn to ride a bike through repeated practice; in learning English also they learn new skills by studying them over and over again. This finding is also in line with the previous study, according to Harmon and Kapatsinski (2021), repetition helps the speaker to solve the problem while taking vocabulary to produce it into utterance or speech or helps to anticipate as the preparation to arrange the next

words else later on and the words that have repeated will be as prediction sign in the next words that make students used to.

The third period experiences: Applying the new experiences of learning the informal language to learning the English language

This period of study at the university level has found three findings, including the setting place that was taken in the two different universities, the University in Jember Regency and the University in Malang. The first finding is the application of contextual vocabulary which is inspired and adapted from the previous learning language. This usage of strategy contextual vocabulary is also confirmed by Al-Awaid (2020), the strategies of vocabulary learning can be implemented by the fully-contextual vocabulary that integrates four skills, de-contextual learning monolingual dictionary or wordlists, and semi-contextual that combines the implicit and explicit meaning of vocabulary. Furthermore, regarding the purpose of vocabulary learning, Asyiah (2017) also stated that the purpose of students' memorization of vocabulary is not only just memorize and collect new words but also to improve students' cognitive skills relating to how students remember, understand, and to apply and use the vocabulary in daily communication and real life. This finding is also in line with the previous study, Hasegawa (2021) reported that higher proficiency students indicated the use of contextual imagery vocabulary as a strategy as well as meaning or spelling. Contextual imagery means the process of obtaining the new vocabulary used and applying students' mental images of the meaning that can be correlated with prior knowledge, and then this process indicates that student learning vocabulary not only memorize directly but also must be there a process to organize it. Moreover, as a result, Ghonivita et al., (2021) state that the richer students' vocabulary, they will get the better skill that can be reached in using language itself.

The second finding is applying the balance between listening skills and speaking skills. This process points out that the usage of English as a communication skill occurs and then involves either receptive skills such as listening or productive skills such as speaking integrally (Sabina, 2018). Based on the data the activity and the learning process of balancing and integrating both skills is done in the classroom or outside of the classroom, such as in the class environment, friendship environment, and English debate activity. The usage of listening and speaking skills as one part and integrated is to sharpen the communication skills of English, either listening or speaking must be trained at the same time and in the integrating process (Pavlovskaya et al., 2022). According to Hinkel (2005), the integration of listening and speaking skills as one part can enhance learning and increase learners' opportunities for production practice in the communication aspect. The incorporation of speaking and listening skills can facilitate students' metacognition development, metacognitive means knowledge that involves thinking about the language learning process, and then learners can regulate and direct based on their own learning (Mart, 2020). Furthermore, Murphy (1991) also stated that in the English learning process, speaking, listening, and pronunciation must be placed within the broader context of oral communication and not just limited to the classroom area. This finding is confirmed by the previous study, Pardede (2020) reports that integrated skills learning such as balancing speaking and listening is the most effective environment for promoting and increasing student communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking aspects.

The last finding is applying the repetition of learning and practicing. This finding is focused on the frequency that has the biggest role in reinforcing from two findings above such as contextual vocabulary and balancing speaking-listening skills. According to Saville (2011), repetition is of pivotal element in the learning process because the repetition technique creates more chances and opportunities for students to practice and use the English language itself and it tends to allow

students to learn and interact freely. Kartikasari et al., (2020) also stated that repetition drills enhance students' awareness of linking among forms, meanings, using of language, and also help students to memorize easily among new words or phrases. Moreover, Hidayati (2016) also reported that using the repetition drill gives and provides a lot of benefits in practice, such as students can produce correct pronunciation, students can be motivated to be active and engage in English learning, and students can remember the new words with long-term memory. This finding is also confirmed by the previous study, Mendrofa and Wijaya (2022) report that drilling and repetition techniques can overcome the problem of communication skills. This technique also helps students to stimulate hearing, speaking, and memorization of long-term memory. Drilling and repetition provide more significant benefits for students such as self-confidence because of the intensive hearing and speaking in the learning and practicing process. Moreover regarding repetition of usage English, (Gunawan, 2020) states that oral repetition is mostly useful for students and also has significant effect of the result of learning English itself.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This research explores and reveals my journey of learning English as an autobiography of the narrative inquiry that consists of three different periods, starting from studying English at elementary school until studying English at the university of nowadays. Based on the previous chapter that presents my autobiography in the three periods of a long enough journey, it can be seen that in the first period found the problem such as there was no significant result of learning English over twelve years because themes such as young learner stage, memorizing vocabulary, and learning grammar focused. The second period of my journey can be an answer and a solution because I get a new understanding and experiences of learning the informal Madurese language, there are themes such as contextual vocabulary learning, balancing speaking-listening skills, and repetition practicing. The last of the third period is a time when I apply the result of learning the informal Madurese language to learning the English language, there are themes that I apply such as contextual vocabulary, balancing between speaking-listening skills, and repetition practicing.

Moreover, the role of the second period is a central point because it is the solution for the first period and as the motivation and inspiration for the third period has some reasons for the better of learning language. The first result is contextual vocabulary, which means that collecting the new vocabulary must be appropriate to students' needs and be appropriate to real life because it makes students easy to remember and durable. Considering that vocabulary is a basic modal to learn a certain language, therefore the results can be the answer to students' problem who learning English for a long time but are not able to practice and communicate well because there is no appropriate input to contextualize or memorize vocabulary.

The second result is balancing between speaking and listening skills. This point can prevent students from having uneven skills that will be unsuccessful when doing communication skills. Speaking which is seen as the representative of a certain language must be considered and focused that this skill is the main target of learning English. In cases such as students who have learned and studied English for a long time but there is no significant result and they are not able to communicate well, those caused English just learned and studied in the classroom and lack of use and practice of English itself. Moreover, the main purpose to be mastery of the English language is used and practice it in real conditions, not only merely learned and there is no action after it. Speaking and listening skills particularly things of usage and practicing the English language in the communication field must to more focused and concerned rather than just satisfied and feel enough when just learning and studying English. This result also stated that just depending on learning and studying English in the classroom is not enough to achieve the main goal to be mastering English.

Thus, practically English is not only learned and studied in the classroom or formal field, but also must be practiced and used in real conditions either in the classroom or outside.

The last result is repetition practicing, which means learning English in an intensive and frequent time. Moreover, that depends on learning and studying English in the classroom is not enough, because of the limitation of time length and the limitation of frequent the meeting. To sharpen language skills is not enough when just merely learning, but also must train in the frequent time to as often as possible and it occurs in the classroom and outside. Repetition has a big role in reinforcing the results previously such as contextual vocabulary and balancing speaking and listening skills because if both are just done by the student low frequently or seldom, their skills will not be sharpened. Therefore, repetition is an important part of sharpening skills in English, especially communication skills. The researcher has suggestions for future research that will conduct a study about learning English for the next time. Besides using the thematic analysis, future research can adapt different kinds of method analysis to make various of processing the data either from autobiography or biography as data sources to enrich this research area regarding finding new perspectives, new experiences, and new outlooks which can be references to students and also teachers. The skill also that will be a concern, the future research can explore other skills besides the speaking skill itself to create insight toward learning English experiences.

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