



Thought Processes in Producing Casual Speech

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the thought processes involve in the production of casual speech. Casual speech production is characterized by the existence of low power and distance among language users; therefore, the speakers find it cognitively easier to produce. The design of the research was qualitative. Ten EFL pre-service teachers were recruited as the research participants. The participants were requested to act out some scenarios of roleplay in the format of casual speech, namely, (1) self-introduction, (2) talking about hobbies, (3) talking about memorable memories, (4) commenting the viral issues on social media, (5) commenting about hopes for the next president of Indonesia. The participants were told to reveal all thought processes that they could observe in their mental during each speech production of the scenarios immediately. The participants' verbal reports were recorded via writing. The results of the interview were transcribed and analyzed to find the patterns of thought processes in producing casual speech for each scenario. The findings showed that self-introduction and telling hobbies happened relatively fast as all the speakers did not involve in much thinking preparation in term of conceptual, grammatical and phonological speech planning. However, for other speech situations, the difficulty were inline with the individuals' language

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INTRODUCTION

Efforts to improve our understanding of EFL learners' communicative competence could be attempted by understanding the thinking processes behind the speech performance. Previous researchers argue that if we want to understand why the EFL learners do what they do, we need to know what they think (i.e., Nunan and Bailey, 2009). In other words, we need to investigate what considerations which actually lead them to say what they have said (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993; Cohen, 1996). Cohen (1996) stresses that we need to better understand how and on what basis the L2 learners make their sociocultural choices and select sociolinguistic forms that underlie their interlanguage performance. Cohen argues that by knowing the thought processes of EFL learners, we can trace down their ways to construct speech plan, how they construct grammatical sentence, how they produce the segmental and the supra segmental features, as well as the monitoring stages.

To date, thought processes of L2 speech production is little research because of the nature of the study which cannot be directly observed (Segalowitz, 2010, Cohen & Olshtain, 1993, Suh, 1999). On the other hand, the instruments to investigate the cognitive processes

are regarded still doubtful (Robinson, 1991). Therefore, Robinson conducted an investigation about the reliability of thinking-aloud protocol in collecting the cognitive data. He, furthermore, argues that thinking-aloud protocol is reliable to collect data on L2 learners' mental processes in producing L2.

The protocol analysis has been applied in some prior studies (Robinson, 1991, Cohen and Olshtain, 1993, Suh, 1999). Cohen and Olshtain (1993) studied the cognitive processes involved in requests, apologies, and complaints, meanwhile Suh (1999) studied the cognitive processes of requests. Both of them involved small numbers of participants. Cohen & Olshtain (1993) used 15 participants and Suh (1999) used 30 participants. The research instruments were DCTs and thinking-aloud protocol. These researchers were convinced that thinking-aloud protocol is instrumental to collect data of thought processes. As recommendations, they urge more studies to investigate how the L2 learners cognitively produce the speech so that more information could be provided on what is going on on the mind of the learners when they speak in L2.

Some research reports also recommend that there are some similarities and differences between L2 and L1 knowledge in our mind (Van Patten and Benatu, 2010, Bialystok, 1993, Kasper, 1997). For example, Bialystok (1993) argue that children's main problem in L1 acquisition is on developing their linguistic knowledge; meanwhile, L2 adult learners, have to develop new knowledge of L2 as well as to control the knowledge of L1. However, the existence of L1 and L2 knowledge is never equal because L2 knowledge is rarely complete as compared to the L1 knowledge (Kormos, 2006: xxiv).

Segalowitzs (2010) found that speech production of L2 is more challenging than of the L1. On the other hand, through some studies, he proposes that the model of speech production of L2 is similar to speech production of L1 developed by Levelt (1999). The main difference is that L2 speech production easily encounters dysfluency. Segalowitzs argues that there are seven points which contribute to a slow L2 speech production, namely, problems in microplanning, grammatical encoding, accessing mental lexicon, morphophonological encoding, phonetic encoding, articulation, and monitoring. In his opinion, the problems can be solved through doing a lot of speaking practice, thus, the speed of production can be improved.

Studies on L2 casual speech production is not much research to date (Tucker & Ernestus, 2016). It was assumed that casual speech was not much different from careful speech, but the experts (i.e., Mehta & Culter, 1988) later argue that casual speech use a rather different phonological system.

The present study aims to conduct research on thought processes in casual speech by following the Levelt's (1999) model of speech production. In Indonesian education context, information on thought processes is not much known. Having reviewed the background of the study, the present study intends to fill the gap as suggested by the previous studies by formulating a research question "What thought processes are involved during casual speech production?".

Literature review

Model of speech production

a. Levelt's (1999) model of speech production

First research on speech production was conducted on L1 (Kormos, 2006:12-15). Based on a review by Kormos, the early methods to study speech production were from three means: observational, experimental, and neuroimaging. The observational techniques were used in the 1950s by the psycholinguists, meanwhile, experimental techniques were employed in

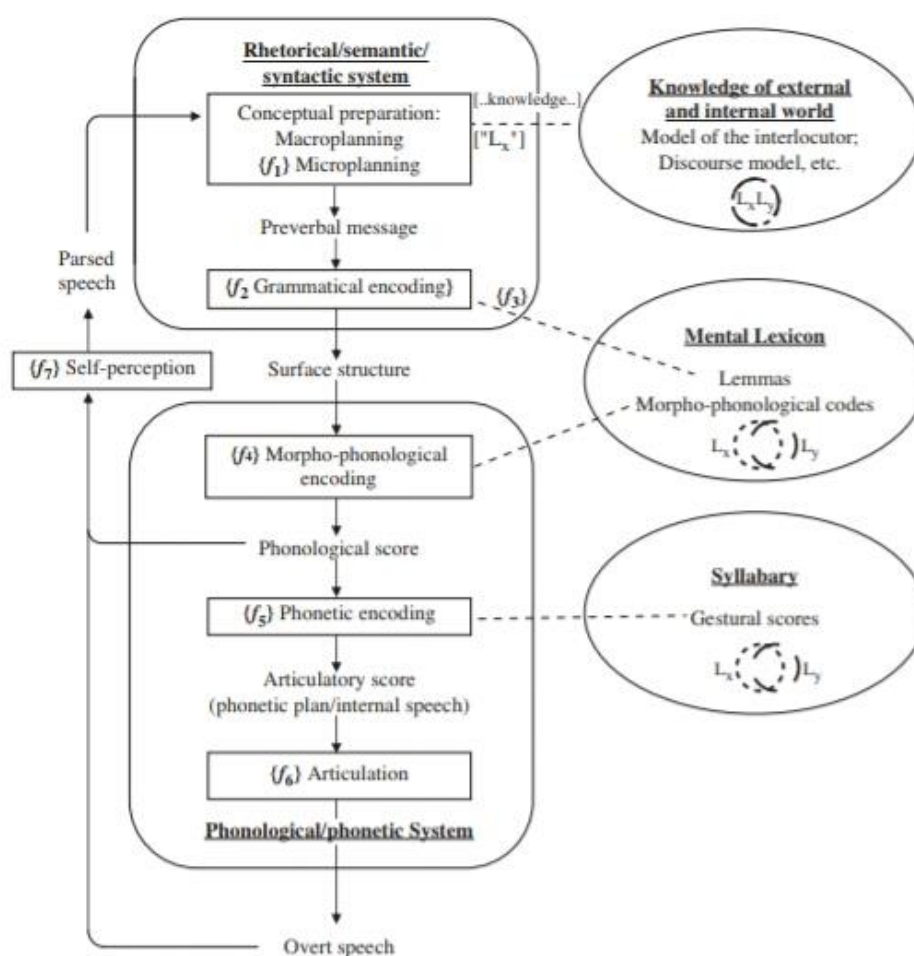
b. Segalowitz's model of L2 speech production

Segalowitz argues that L2 speech production is not much different from L1 speech production. In his opinion, L2 fluency (speech performance) are constructed by interaction of extremely complex elements, which is greater than one language system. Thus, he concludes that L2 utterance fluency interacts with one another, creating a system that is continuously changing and adapting over time as a dynamical system (p. 164). These four influencing elements he refers to are cognitive perceptual processing system (cognitive fluency), motivation to communicate (i.e., self-agencies), interactive communicative (social) context (act of communicating), and fluency-relevant perceptual and cognitive experiences.

L2 cognitive fluency in the framework in figure 2 as follows refers to the working efficiency of the L2 cognitive processing of speech production. Here, Segalowitz takes after Levelt's (1999) blueprint model as Segalowitz supports de Bot's (1992) ideas that L1 cognitive model can be applied into L2 speech production with minor revision. Segalowitz also supports Kormos' ideas on cognitive processes of L2 speech production, but disagrees on her proposal that there is a separate declarative memory stores L2. He is in agreement with Paradis's (2004) proposal and argues L1 and L2 have specific tags which can be taken as different registers of L1 (represented by dashed L_x and L_y).

In order to work efficiently, potential problems of L2 processing should be well-overcome. Segalowitz furthermore argues that L2 speaker might encounter, at least, seven points of dysfluencies problems $\{f_1 - f_7\}$ (see fig 2), namely, dysfluencies on (1) microplanning, (2) grammatical encoding, (3) accessing mental lexicon, (4) morpho-phonological encoding, (5) phonetic encoding, (6) articulation, and (7) self-perception. Beginning L2 speaker may have problems in places, meanwhile, the advance speakers may have been able to overcome those problems.

Figure 2 Potential fluency vulnerability spots of bilingual cognitive process



Note.

L_x and L_y refer to information that tags language specific identity (i.e this piece of knowledge is linked in some way to language X or Y).

{f} Symbols (for fluency vulnerability points) refer to potentially critical points where underlying processing difficulties could be associated with L2 speech dysfluencies.

METHOD

The design of the study was qualitative research. Qualitative research is appropriate considering the nature of the study which seeks to answer why things happen the way they do. The number of participants were ten preservice teachers in the fifth semester. The selection was done purposively, meaning the researcher collected data from a number of students but later selected some participants' answers among the pool that were regarded have the intended data that the researcher sought. The technique of data collection was retrospective verbal report. Retrospective verbal report is one of the thinking aloud techniques which is commonly used to report one's thinking experiences. In order to be able to accurately observe thinking processes during speech production, the participants were asked to firstly conduct some roleplays of different scenarios of casual monologue, namely, (1) self-introduction, (2) talking about hobbies, (3) talking about memorable memories, (4) commenting the viral issues on social media, (5) commenting about hopes for the next president of Indonesia; then after each roleplay they were asked to tell the thought processes they experienced through writing out whatever reflection they had. To get a more specific information from the research participants, they were told that, theoretically, speech

production involves some major stages of thinking, namely, conceptual preparation, grammatical encoding, morphophonological encoding, phonetic encoding, articulation, and monitoring (Levelt, 1999). The participants were asked to observe their own thinking and reveal what they actually did based on their real-time experiences, meaning the speech production model by Levelt was used as a guidance alone. In other words, their own thought processes were not necessarily match the theory. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed qualitatively to find the patterns of thought processes of casual speech production.

FINDING

The Results

In the speech production of casual speech, data of the research showed that the reported thought processes for five scenarios of casual speech production matched the model of speech production by Levelt (1999), namely, conceptual preparation, grammatical encoding, morphophonological encoding, phonetic encoding, articulation, and monitoring. The thought processes were reported went very fast for scenarios which were frequently done as the participants knew already what to utter. On the other hand, for scenarios which were less practiced, the thought processes took more time as the participants could not immediately figured out a speech plan. In other words, amount of practice determines the level of effort taken in producing particular speech. In what follows, the thought processes reported by the participants in each stage are exemplified.

1. Conceptual preparation

Conceptual preparation is the preparation of ideas that will be uttered. This stage consists of two sub-processes, macroplanning and microplanning. Each is explained as follows.

(1) Macroplanning

Macroplanning is the first stage of thought processes. In general, a speaker initially thinks about what speech plan he/she wishes to deliver in a particular speech event. However, he/she does not only think about the speech plan itself as he also examines several consequences of the choice, for example, that he/she could execute this speech plan successfully. Different people have different thought processes in their mind. Out of ten participants, only two participants found the macroplanning brainstorming as relatively fast for all scenarios. The other eight participants took some time to brainstorming ideas for scenario 3 (telling about memorable memories), 4 (giving opinions about viral issues on social media), and 5 (giving opinion about next president) due to lack of familiarity with topics.

For scenario 1 and 2, all participants expressed that those topics were not difficult and had commonly spoken in their daily conversation. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

I was thinking about the things I need to say during self-introduction (P4).

I didn't need to think hard because I have done self-introduction numerous times (P1).

I was considering about items which I should mention and skip in an introduction (P2).

Meanwhile, for scenario 3, 4, and 5, they needed more time for brainstorming ideas which they could express well in English.

I was thinking for a while to reminiscence about past experiences (P1).

I was thinking about viral issues which I can talk about (P2).

I have to think about this topic first, because I am not often talking about expectation toward next president (P5).

(2) Microplanning

Microplanning is the next stage of thought processes. After deciding a speech plan, the speaker selects some vocabulary that match the speech plan. This process could be fast and slow depends on the availability of the vocabulary. Sometimes, the intended vocabulary is not available immediately thus the speaker has to substitute it with its synonym or even change the speech plan with a new one.

As in macroplanning, for scenario 1 and 2, all participants expressed that vocabulary were not difficult and had commonly spoken in their daily conversation. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

At this point, I do not to think about vocabulary which I have used in a regular basis, unless for new vocabulary which I have to consider well how to use it appropriately (P5).

For scenario 2, I don't have any difficulty with the vocabulary because for me it is still easy (P3).

I directly say without thinking about vocabulary (P4).

However, for scenario 3, 4, and 5, they needed more time for determine the vocabulary which they could express their speech plan well. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

For scenarios about viral issue and expectation for next president, I need time to think about the vocabulary to avoid errors in delivery (P6).

I am quite confused to select the vocabulary and there some which I cannot express well (P7).

I still face some difficulty to determine appropriate vocabulary for the context (P8).

Out of ten participants, there was one participant who revealed that she did not think much about finding vocabulary. The participant expressed her thoughts as follows.

I don't think much to find the right vocabulary, even though, probably, I may end up using less appropriate vocabulary (P1).

Another participant showed that she was more careful to select the appropriate vocabulary in the given context. The participant expressed her thoughts as follows.

In almost all conversation, I consider whether my vocabulary is suitable with the context given (P2).

2. Grammatical encoding

The third stage of thought processes is grammatical encoding. The vocabulary is furthermore arranged in its own slot based on the grammar rules. The more formal the situation is the more careful the grammatical encoding is done to produce an accurate sentence. In casual speech, grammatical accuracy is probably not strictly followed.

As in macroplanning and microplanning, for scenario 1 and 2, all participants expressed that grammatical encoding were not difficult and had come out automatically in their speech. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

I can arrange the grammar for this scenario (1) (P8).

Without thinking further, I knew the grammar rules (P9).

I don't need to think longer about grammar because I am confident that the grammar is already correct (P3).

For scenario 3, 4, and 5, the participants found grammatical encoding was more challenging. The causes centered around the issue that they were not familiar the type of context. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

I need time to determine the grammar rules correctly (P9).

I am still in dilemma how to arrange the grammar (P8).

The context is quite unfamiliar for me,;thus I need time to think (P7).

There were two participants who revealed that they did not think much about grammatical encoding. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

I almost never think about grammar, even though it turns out that my grammar is not always perfect (P2).

Only for context I rarely speak about, I think about grammar a bit (P1).

3. Morphophonological encoding

Morphophonological encoding is the process to encode the speech structure into a stream of sounds. For familiar vocabulary this process could run without thinking. However, for unfamiliar vocabulary, the non-native speaker may have difficulty to determine the correct pronunciation.

Similarly, as in macroplanning, microplanning, and grammatical encoding, all participants expressed that phonological encoding for scenario 1 was not difficult at all and pronunciation had come out automatically in their speech. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

I don't need to think about pronunciation because I am familiar with them (P7).

For the context, I have no difficulty because all vocabulary is easy for me pronounce (P3).

I directly can say it (P4).

For scenario 2, 3, 4, and 5, the participants revealed that they were in doubt about the correct pronunciation. It seems that pronunciation is something they were not quite sure how to utter correctly, even though from the recording, their pronunciation is quite clear. Probably, they feel inferior about pronunciation. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

In the beginning I did not think much about pronunciation, but the more I think about this, I became not sure if I have pronounced everything correctly (P5).

I think about the right way to pronounce it (P4).

In phonological encoding, I was not as someone who obsessed with perfectionism, but when I was wrong I tried to fix it (P10).

As in previous stages, there were two participants who revealed that they did not think much about phonological encoding. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

I don't think about pronunciation when I speak up (P2).

I think about clarity of my speech during talking (P1).

4. Phonetic encoding

Phonetic encoding is the process to move the speech apparatus based on the phonological score. However, in this study no data were reported concerning phonetic encoding.

5. Articulation

Articulation is not a part of thought processes thus its discussion is beyond the scope of current discussion.

6. Monitoring

Monitoring is the process of evaluating the speech. A speaker may evaluate the speech plan before uttering the speech, while uttering the speech, and after uttering the speech. The participants of the research expressed that in general, they tried to monitor their speech to minimize errors. For scenario 1, some participants did not do monitoring at all, however, for some others, they managed to monitor their speech including for

scenario 1. Monitoring actually takes time and is done on situation which the speaker considers as necessary. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

Sometimes I monitor my speech (P4).

I do monitoring on my speech while I was talking. If found errors, I correct my self (P10).

Sometimes I do monitoring if I could, like, before taking, in the middle of talking, or after talking (P8)

Participant 1 who had better language proficiency than other revealed that she only conducted monitoring after she is done talking. The participant expressed her thoughts as follows.

Usually, I monitor my speech only after I finish talking (P1).

Patterns of thought processes in the production of casual speech

In the following table, the patterns of thought processes by the participants with different pace of thought processes are presented. Some thought processes were found as always present and some others were optionally present. Thought processes which always present were indicated by *without-brackets* symbol, on other hand, the thought processes which were optionally present were indicated by *with-brackets* symbol. In the table, two participants were identified as the faster ones than the rest eight participants. Those with faster speed thought processes did less thinking during microplanning, grammatical encoding, and especially during morphophonological stage. All participants conducted macroplanning and articulation at all time. As can be seen in the table the faster-paced group pattern is **mac[^](mic)[^](gram)[^](morpho)[^]art[^]mon**. This group was faster in the thought process and put priority on detecting speech errors. Meanwhile, the slower-paced group pattern is **mac[^](mic)[^](gram)[^](morpho)[^]art[^](mon)**. This group were slower in the thought process and did not always check for speech errors.

Table 1 Patterns of thought processes in the production of casual speech with different pace of thought processes

Types of learners	Cognitive processes of L2 complaints						
	Rhetorical/semantic/syntactic system			Phonological/pho netic system		Articulation (f6)	Monitoring (f7)
	Conceptual preparation		Grammat ical encoding (f3)	Morpho phonol ogical encodin g (f4)	Phonetic encoding (f5)		
	Macropl anning (f1)	Micropl anning (f2)					
Faster tho p.	V 100%	(V) 60%	(V) 60%	(V) 30%	0 %	V 100%	V 100%
Slower tho p.	V 100	(V) 75%	(V) 77,5%	(V) 80%	0%	V 100%	(V) 85%

Notes:

() = not always occurring

Without () = always occurring

DISCUSSION

A number of research have investigated the thought processes involved in the production of speech by non-native speakers, even though the number of studies is still little researched (Nunan & Bailey, 1996, Cohen & Olshtain, 1993). By investigating the thought processes, the second language speech production can be better understood, including kinds of problems that are encountered.

The findings of presents study lend support to previous literature that there are different thoughts going on in the non-native speaker learners (Hardacre & Guvendir, 2018; Suh, 1999, Cohen & Olshtain, 1993). It can be seen during macroplanning, microplanning, grammatical encoding, morphophonological encoding, and monitoring stages. Due to lack of practice, the thinking process in each phase was reported as effortful, though a few students could do some faster thinking process because they had developed some familiarity with the speech topic.

In another hand, the findings seem to also support the role of language exposure to build speech automaticity. In previous studies, the speakers' thought processes seem to be related with their assessment of the social variables before they could decide their speech plans. This is in line with Brown's & Levinson's theory (1978/1987). Those findings were reported by Suh (1999), Murphy & Neu (2009), Kreishan (2018), Onalan & Cakir (2018), Laforest (2002, 2020), Dlali (2003), and Kaharuddin & Hasyim (2020). In this research, the participants could not express themselves well due to limited resources to express their wishes.

The difficulty caused by lack of language proficiency and familiarity were actually found during the microplanning and rest stages as exemplified in the results. When the participants encountered a difficulty during microplanning, the difficulty continued in the grammatical encoding, morphophonological encoding, and monitoring. On the other hand, when the participant found microplanning was relatively easy to conduct, it continued as well till monitoring stage. This finding lends support to Segalowitz's proposal (2010) that L2 speech production encounters many points of dysfluency. It seems that if we want to help the non-native speakers to speak fluently, we have to trace down their first source of difficulty, namely, vocabulary. Put differently, the source of trouble found by the participants was in selecting appropriate vocabulary for different speech contexts. Previous findings confirm that many of non-native speakers lack of speaking experience in diverse communication contexts (i.e., Abrar, Mukminin, Asyraf & Marzulina, 2018; Gan, 2013).

In addition, the patterns of thought processes exemplified in table 1 seem to indicate that slower-paced of thinking process happened from thinking too much during speech production and the faster-paced of thinking process resulted from thinking less during speech production. Different thinking time influenced their ability to monitor their own speech errors. In the first case, the participants did not have time to monitor their speech, meanwhile, in the second case, the participants had some opportunity to monitor their speech. The less time required to think in during the speech production, allowed the speakers to focus their mind observe their own speech.

Unlike the reports from previous studies in casual speech, the participants of the research did not have any differences in term of phonological system. It seems those non-native speakers used similar phonological system for all situation of speech contexts. This is probably caused by their learning of English which probably happens in the classroom (Lasan, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The research findings demonstrated that different participants developed different thought processes during speech production. The differences were caused by vocabulary knowledge and processing-automaticity. It is likely that among all thought processes, one factor which contributed the most to a fluent L2 speech production was the familiarity with the speech discourse. When the participants knew what and how to speak well in certain speech situations, they could quickly retrieve linguistic expressions. The patterns of thought processes involved were different between those who thought faster and slower. The pattern of thought processes by the faster-paced is represented by **mac[^](mic)[^](gram)[^](morpho)[^]art[^]mon**. In other words, the pattern of thought processes is always macroplanning, optional microplanning, optional grammatical encoding, optional morphophonological, always articulation, and always monitoring. Meanwhile, the slower-paced group pattern is **mac[^](mic)[^](gram)[^](morpho)[^]art[^](mon)**. In other words, the thought processes are always macroplanning, optional microplanning, optional grammatical encoding, optional morphophonological encoding, always articulation, and optional monitoring. These patterns seem to support previous literature that fewer thought processes are advantageous that it allows more room for speakers to be able to monitor their speech better.

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