

## **ENGLISH ACQUISITION OF PEDICAB DRIVERS IN MALIOBORO STREET**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to find out the informal strategy used by the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street and the implementation of English. The type of this study is a descriptive qualitative in which the data are taken from in-depth interview. This study finds that the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street commonly use the strategies of informal learning to learn English such as learning independently, memorization and repetition method, and learning everytime and everywhere. There are several factors affecting the success of pedicab drivers in acquiring English such as age, educational background, and motivation. The pedicab drivers use English to communicate with foreign tourist and some of them implement their English not only at the work place but

also at home for joke with their family.

**Keywords:** acquisition, pedicab drivers, informal learning, Malioboro Street

## **A. Introduction**

Learning a second language cannot be separated from the education system; there are formal, non-formal education, and informal learning. Informal learning takes place outside the curriculum provided by formal and non-formal educational institutions and programs.

Informal learning can occur individually or in a group situation. Informal learning can take place in any space, such as the workplace, the family, a religion, institution, and the community. Like formal and non-formal learning, informal learning can occur at any age, from birth to death (Schugurensky, 2000: 5). Pedicab drivers who speak English fluently in Malioboro Street are assumed to be an example of language informal learning (Adelin, 2005). The pedicab drivers speaking English fluently is very unique to discuss. That phenomenon becomes the appeal of pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street and their appeal is much stronger than the pedicab drivers in other tourism objects. Malioboro Street is the most popular street in Yogyakarta to visit, attracts the attention of domestic or foreign tourists coming to this city. Along the way of Malioboro Street, there are rows of pedicab drivers becoming a unique view that makes tourist visits this street.

Pedicab driver is a profession carried out by men around 40 to 60 years old. The profession of pedicab driver is not just a simple profession; it is not only about taking passengers to the destination, but also providing safety, comfort and pleasure to the passengers. Pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street are

unique; besides taking the passengers to the destination, they have to be able to use English to communicate with the passengers from overseas. They also provide information about anything such as giving information about Malioboro Street, the hotel near Malioboro Street, etc. To give more information to their foreign passengers, they must have the ability to communicate and speak English well.

The ability of speaking English which is owned by the pedicab drivers is unique to learn, regarding to their low educational background. Many of them are elementary or junior high school graduates. With that limitation, in fact, they can speak English well, even better than those studying in higher education. In term of age, they are adult and in their middle age but they are able to obtain the language well. From the explanation, the writers are eager to find out the process of second language acquisition of pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street and the implementation of the obtained English for their goal.

## **B. Literature Review**

Some theories reviewed here discuss about second language acquisition, language informal learning, and the benefits of using English.

### **1. Second Language Acquisition**

Krashen (1981: 5) says that language acquisition is similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second language. Based on Saville-Troike (2006: 4), second language is typically an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes. That is often acquired by minority group members or immigrants who speak another language natively.

According to Saville-Troike (2006: 2),

second language acquisition is the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language, even though it may actually be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired is called a target language refers to any language that is the aim or goal of learning.

## 2. Language Informal Learning

Livingstone (2001: 4) states that informal learning is any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria. Schugurensky (2000: 1) adds that the category of informal learning includes all learning that occurs outside the curriculum of formal and non formal educational instructions and programs, and something that takes place outside formal education and non formal education, a few words about these two concepts are needed.

Learning in informal language learning does not takes place in a formal setting, learning can happen any time, and in any place. Those leading are more likely to be close the learner (e.g. grandparent, parent, sibling, caregiver or friend) and type of informal language learning is often overlooked as valid learning. It is the most difficult to quantify or track, but is essential to a young person's cognitive development (Eaton, 2010:13).

## 3. The Benefits of Learning English as Second Language

English has been common language of the world for decades and impossible to find a country where learning English has not become a norm. According to Petruta (2012: 374), the benefit of learning and mastering English goes beyond four

corners. English is the most spoken language around the world. In the other words, English is a global language. In the world wherever we go, we may have the chance to use English or its means to communicate will be English.

Learning English allows us to fully appreciate the culture and its context of the country, it widens our understanding. By understanding a person's culture, for example, we can avoid situations which can cause misunderstanding; we can bridge the gap between cultures and also increase our understanding about English's culture. Petruta (2012: 375); Akcay, et al (2015: 62) state that speaking English is a tremendous asset for our professional career. This is all about future plans and having a better lifestandard.

The other benefit is we can make life-time friendship. Studying English and all the opportunities it can bring will definitely increase the number of people on globe who we can meet and communicate with them. English is also for everyday life and makes better relationships with foreigners (Petruta, 2012: 375; Akcay, et al, 2015: 60).

### **C. Method of Investigation**

The writers use descriptive qualitative method. The data are obtained from participants or people as informants. To choose the informant as the data source, technique of simple random sampling is used in this study. The source of data here is Pedicab Drivers in Malioboro Street who are able to speak English fluently without formal education. There are 10 pedicab drivers participating as data source.

The setting in this study is Malioboro Street,

Yogyakarta. The technique of data collection in this study is in-depth interview. In this study the writers use three steps of analyzing the data; they are data reduction, data display, and data conclusion.

## **D. Findings and Discussion**

The discussion here is divided into two parts: findings and interpretation.

### **1. Findings**

It comprises the factors affecting the second language acquisition of pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street, the strategy of learning English through informal learning English by pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street, the implementation of English by pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street, and the benefits of using English.

#### **a. The Factors Affecting the Second Language Acquisition of Pedicab Drivers in Malioboro Street.**

Many factors have been found by the writers based on the data obtained in the field such as age, educational background, and motivation.

##### **1) Age and Educational Background**

From the data, the writers find that all of the English learners in Malioboro Street are adult as seen in table 2; one person of early adulthood (24 – 34), six persons of middle adulthood (34 – 60), three persons of later adulthood (60 – 75), and no one in very old age (75+).

Age of English learners (pedicab drivers) in Malioboro Street above proves that adult also can be good learners in second language although they are not equipped with qualified educational background. The

writers find that the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street do not have enough provision in learning English; many of them have low educational background. Most of the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street are only elementary school graduate and junior high graduate, and some of them do not have educational background at all.

However, it does not diminish their learning spirit of who mostly start studying in their 20s and continue until now through the informal learning, monitor approach and second language experiences that they got before.

## 2) Motivation

The pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street have big motivation to master English as seen in table 2, such as to communicate with foreign tourist, to increase the economy life, to help the foreign tourists, to meet job demand, to help the other people while communicating with foreign tourists, to compete with other pedicab drivers, and to know more about English. However, the most motivation to learn English arises from the pedicab drivers is to communicate with foreign tourists and to increase the economy life.

## b. The Strategy of Learning English through informal Learning English by Pedicab Drivers in Malioboro Street.

Many difficulties experienced by learners during learning second language, therefore they should use appropriate strategy or way to learn it well as informal learning to get various skills.

### 1) The Learning Process

The writers find that most of the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street learn English independently without teachers, instructors, or facilitators. Most of them learn English directly speaking with friends (the pedicab drivers' fellows), tour guides and foreign tourists and the pedicab drivers admit that the presence of them mostly help them in learning English. Moreover, some of them also learn English by using English book like grammar book or guide book as their media to learn English.

Further, the writers find that the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street have problem in managing time; they are difficult to manage the time because they should work first. Most of the pedicab drivers do not have schedule to learn English and learnt English if they have spare time such as before taking a bath, sleeping, while watching television and even while they are waiting for the passengers. It means that they cannot ensure the intensity of their learning process.

Memorization and repetition method are also a part of informal strategy used by the pedicab drivers to remember all of the vocabulary of English. They only count on their memorization ability to remember all of the materials (in form of words or sentences) from the result of learning directly together with friends, tour guide or foreign tourists as well as from the book.

For some pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street, however, memorization method is less helpful because they have problem in age. At their old age, they often forget about what



they have learnt. Thus, to resolve that problem, they use repetition method to strengthen their memories.

## 2) The English Skill Gained by the Pedicab Drivers in Malioboro Street

The writers find three competencies gained by pedicab drivers through informal learning, which are speaking, vocabulary and grammar competence. The first skill gained by pedicab drivers after learning English is speaking skill. As we know that to communicate with foreign tourists, speaking skill is used to establish good communication and make foreign tourists interested to use their services. The pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street are excellent in speaking skill better than other skill like listening, writing and reading. The reason is the only required speaking skill to communicate well. Unfortunately, their ability to speak and communicate well is not supported by good pronunciation.

Further competence gained by the pedicab drivers is vocabulary competence. The pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street have provision vocabularies which are enough to communicate with the foreign tourists such as greeting, offering services or bargaining. Although the provision of vocabulary is enough to support communicating with foreigners, but they still need to expand their knowledge about the other vocabulary not only transactions with the aim to fulfill their needs but also to help foreigners such as giving information about place, giving direction a place, retelling the history, and

soon.

The last competence gained by the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street is grammar competence. The pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street are able to communicate and use their vocabulary well, but in fact, only several pedicab drivers understand the grammar.

### 3) The Difficulties in Learning and Communicating with Foreign Tourist

This study finds several difficulties in learning English and communicating with foreign tourists experienced by the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street.

#### a) The Difficulties in Learning English

The writers find that the pedicab drivers have problem in time management. Some of them say that they should manage time to work and learn English. Another difficulty faced by the pedicab drivers is lack of English provision. Some of the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street argue that they do not have enough provision and skill in learning English; it is because many of them are only elementary or junior high school graduates, even, some of them do not have educational background at all.

Further, pronunciation is a difficulty faced by the pedicab drivers. The writers find that the process of imitating English sounds is hard for the pedicab drivers. That problem arises while they are listening to foreign tourists who speak English too fast. It affects their success in

learning English because they cannot catch the words or sentences well, thus they misimitate and mispronounce the spoken words.

Next difficulty experienced by the pedicab drivers is illiteracy. The writers find that this problem happens on one of the pedicab driver in Malioboro Street who cannot read at all and is difficult to learn English. The last difficulty is forgetfulness. Most of the pedicab drivers who can speak English are in early to later. At their old age, it is not easy to remember what they have learnt, because the strength of their long-term memory is not as strong as while they are young.

b) The Difficulties in Communicating with Foreign Tourists

The writers find that at least 80% of the interviewees admit that the difficulty in communicating with foreign tourists is lack of vocabulary. It is because the most of the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street learn limited vocabulary for instance greeting, offering service and bargaining.

The second difficulty experienced by pedicab drivers in communicating with foreign tourists is not all of the foreign passengers are coming from English-speaking country, so they do not speak English. Misunderstanding between the pedicab drivers and the foreigners is also one of the difficulties experienced by the

pedicab drivers; the lack of vocabulary, meaning, and grammatical competence trigger the problem. The last difficulty experienced by pedicab driver in communicating with foreign tourists is the foreigners usually speak too fast. Thus, they cannot catch and understood the message.

c. The Implementation of English by Pedicab Drivers in Malioboro Street

The writers find that the implementation of English by pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street is commonly to communicate with foreign tourist. For the pedicab drivers who want to take foreigners passengers from overseas, good English skill to communicate is required. The writers see that few years ago, the pedicab drivers are able to communicate with foreign tourists more than 5 times in a day or week even more than that, and it depends on the number of foreign tourists who comes to Malioboro Street, but now, unfortunately the number of foreign tourists visiting this place is lessen by the time. Some foreign tourists rarely use their service because they do not trust the pedicab drivers anymore and prefer to use public transportation such as taxi. Besides to communicate with the foreign tourists, they also use English to joke with their family and friends.

d. The Benefits of Using English

The writers find several benefits of using English by pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street. The first benefit is to make a friendship. Some of the pedicab drivers do not only use English to communicate with foreign tourists, but also to

make good friendship with the foreigners such as from Australia, Japan and France. Next benefit is easy to get passenger from overseas. It is as a predominance of pedicab drivers who are able to speak English when considering that not all of the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street can speak English and take passengers from overseas.

The third benefit gained by the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street is their income increases. It is related to the second benefit, when the pedicab drivers can take foreigners passengers and is able to communicate with them, it is chance for the foreigners to pay higher than domestic tourists; even if they feel very satisfied with the services provided by pedicab drivers, they can pay very high. Next benefit gained by pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street after mastering English is getting broad knowledge and experience. Not all of people or pedicab drivers get the experience to communicate with foreign tourists, but through learning and mastering English they get many experience and knowledge about English.

The fifth benefit the pedicab drivers get is English as a tremendous asset for professional career. The pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street cantake advantage of their English skill for a better future or better job such as to be tour guide. Last benefit the pedicab drivers gained is they can help foreign tourists and other people while communicating with foreign tourists. For foreign tourists, they can understand what the foreign tourists want and takethem to the destination. Moreover, by mastering English, the pedicab drivers sometimes can help pedicab

drivers' fellows or other traditional transportation like *andong* drivers who cannot speak English in bargaining with foreign tourists.

## 2. Interpretation

The interpretation consists of the writer's description based on the findings. It discusses the strategy of learning English through informal learning and the implementation of English by pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street.

### a. The Strategy of Learning English through Informal Learning

Strategy has important role in the success of learning English as second language. Beside formal education, learning English can be experienced by informal learning. Informal learning is a practical and simple way of learning because it can be done every time and everywhere in various ways. Based on this analysis, the writers find several strategy of informal learning used by the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street to learn English such as leaning independently, using memorization and repetition methods, and learning every time and everywhere.

Learning independently happens to the pedicab drivers because they do not have educator such as teachers, instructors or facilitators to help them learn English. They learn English with friends, tour guides and foreign tourist directly and sometimes they make a speech community inviting the pedicab drivers' fellow and tour guides to learn English together and share the knowledge about English. Even they learn English directly from the foreign tourists by communicating and listening

to foreigners saying.

Based on the findings, the writers conclude that their existence is as a resource person to the pedicab drivers who do not regard themselves as an educator both intentional and conscious but it is very helpful to support the learning process. Thus, the pedicab drivers teach English independently which means that they learn English by informal way.

The result from studying together of the pedicab drivers with friends, tour guides and foreign tourists save in their short and long term memories because they only count on their memorization ability to remember all of the material (English). To strengthen their memories about English, they use repetition method since they have problem in age and easy to forget what they have learnt. Herewith to the finding, learning process through memorization and repetition method belong to strategy of informal learning used by the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street.

Further, the pedicab drivers learn English not bound by the time and place. They can learn English every time and everywhere, such as before taking a bath, sleeping, while watching television, even while waiting for passengers. It means that for the pedicab drivers who have a lot of activities, learning does not always have to use fixed schedule because in fact learning English can be done every time and everywhere such as at workplace or at home.

Basically, learning occurs either consciously or unconsciously as the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street do. Based on the finding, most of them admit that they learn

English from foreign tourists directly by communicating and listening to foreign tourists saying. It means that sometimes they are not aware that they have learnt something without plan or intention and this kind of learning happens everytime during everyday life.

Actually, based on the data in findings, the success of the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street in learning English through the strategies above is affected by the several factors such as age, educational background, and motivation. Age is one of the factors affecting second language acquisition. Learning English as second language can be learnt by people without age restrictions. The pedicab drivers who are able to speak English are adult, but they prove that adult can be good learners although they learn independently and use memorization or repetition method like children to learn English. It is because the pedicab drivers' thinking habit has become mature, it makes them able to solve the problem particularly about language form and contents easily even though most of them have low educational background.

In spite of low educated-person, the pedicab drivers learn English as well as people who have qualified educational background. They have definite learning goals, great and various study motivation, rich knowledge experiences, better comprehension and short-term and long-term memories which facilitate the process of learning second language to cover their educational background. It proves that educational background do not always determine someone's ability in learning English, although in learning process and application it is



not as optimal as those qualified educated person.

Through using the strategy of informal learning, the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street can prove that they are good learners in learning English and it can be seen from the outcome of their learning process for instance speaking skill, vocabulary and grammar competence. Speaking skill is their predominant, even if it is compared to people who learn English formally or use non-formal education. Unfortunately, their ability to speak and communicate well is not supported by good pronunciation and grammatical competence even though the pronunciation and grammatical competence are needed to avoid misunderstanding between the pedicab drivers and foreigners, but in fact, only several pedicab drivers understand the grammar. Good speaking skill also should be supported by vocabulary insight. When people are facilitated with good vocabulary it will be easier for them to speak English fluently.

The outcomes of their English learning process are not obtained easily. Based on the analysis in finding, the pedicab drivers face several difficulties while learning and applying their English. For the difficulties in learning English, first difficulty is limitation of time; they are difficult to manage the time for working and learning English. The second difficulty is the lack of English provision; it is because of many of them are only elementary or junior high school graduates and some of them do not have educational background at all.

Difficult to follow the pronunciation is the next difficulty that problem cause because they

are not familiar with English sound so that they are difficult to imitate it. The fourth difficulty is illiteracy. This problem commonly happens in the elderly people who have assumption that education is less important so that literacy awareness is still lack as happened on one of the pedicab drivers. The last difficulty in learning English is forgetfulness, most of the pedicab drivers are adult and they are easy to forget what they have learnt, because the strength of their long-term memory is not as strong as while they are young.

Meanwhile, the difficulties while communicating with foreign tourists are coming from lack of vocabulary; not all of the foreign passengers come from English speaking country, often misunderstanding between the pedicab drivers and foreigners, and the foreigners usually speak too fast.

b. The Implementation of English by the Pedicab Drivers in Malioboro Street

Based on the analysis, the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street commonly use their English skill to communicate with foreign tourist. However, the writers see that there is a shift in time and situations that cause the lack of foreign passengers using their services and prefer to use other public transportation such as taxi or using another service like tour guides.

That situation affects the intensity of learning and usage of English by pedicab drivers because most of them learn English directly speaking with foreign tourists and it will reduce the communication frequency with the foreigners. English is also used as joke with their family and friends; it means that they can

practice, share knowledge about English and motivate themselves or their friends to always learn and improve their ability.

The implementation of English brings a lot of benefits for the pedicab drivers in Malioboro. Based on the finding, this study shows several benefits gained by the pedicab drivers. First benefit gained by the pedicab drivers is making a friendship. The ability to communicate with foreign passengers can increase the number of pedicab drivers' friends not only from country but all over the world. The second benefit is easy to get passengers from overseas. By mastering English, that will be easier for them to get the passengers both domestic and foreign passengers.

The income increase is the next benefit gained by the pedicab drivers. It means that by mastering English and taking the foreign passengers; it will help them to increase their income since the foreigners are able to pay higher than the domestic passengers. The fourth benefit obtained by the pedicab drivers is getting broad knowledge and experience about English. Through learning and mastering English, they get a lot of knowledge and experience about English. Thus, they can share their knowledge and experience to the others and motivate them to learn English.

The fifth benefit is English as tremendous asset for professional career. English will bring them to the better future. Through English ability, they can change their future or get better job like a tour guide. The last benefit obtained by the pedicab drivers is they are able to help the foreigners and other people while

communicating with foreigners. Through mastering English, the pedicab drivers are able to understand what the foreigners want and help other people such as the pedicab drivers' fellows or other public transportation who cannot speak English in bargaining with foreign passengers.

## **E. Conclusion**

The pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street commonly use informal learning to learn English. The strategies of informal learning which pedicab drivers use are the method of learning independently, memorization and repetition. The setting of their learning is at every time and everywhere.

There are several factors affecting the success of the pedicab drivers in Malioboro Street in acquiring second language through informal learning such as age, educational background, and motivation. After the pedicab drivers learn and master English through informal learning, speaking skill is their dominant English skill. They also master various vocabularies such as greeting, offering services, bargaining, etc. Unfortunately, their good speaking skill and vocabulary competence are not supported by the grammar competence.

However, during the process of learning English, there are some difficulties experienced by the pedicab drivers both in learning and communicating with foreign tourists. The difficulties in learning English arise because of time limitation, lack of English provision, pronunciation, illiteracy, and forgetfulness, difficulty to follow the pronunciation of the words or sentences, and short term memory. Meanwhile the difficulties in communicating with foreign tourists are caused by lack of vocabulary, non English natives'

foreign tourists, misunderstanding between the pedicab drivers and the foreign tourists, and fast speaking foreign tourists.

Regarded to the English implementation, the pedicab drivers use English not only at the workplace but they also use it at home for instance to joke with their family. English brings several benefits for them such as increasing income, making friendship with foreign tourists, English as a tremendous asset for professional career such as being a tour guide in the future, broad knowledge and experience, and the last is they can help the foreigners and other people who cannot speak English.

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