

The Students' Learning Achievement of the English Productive Skills

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Abstract—The article was dealing with the descriptions of students' achievement in learning the productive skills of English. It aimed to describe the students' learning achievement for both speaking and writing skills and their problems in their learning career. The research participants consisted of 30 students. The speaking and writing tests were successfully used for collecting data. The data were analyzed by using a mean percentage. The variables measured for speaking skills were pronunciation, vocabulary, structure, fluency and self-confidence, while for writing skills were central idea, organization, supporting material, word choice, spelling, grammar and punctuation. The research results indicated that most of the students got achievement of the average category in speaking skills (49.33%), but in writing skills, most of them got achievement of the low category (34.00%). The low learning achievements were affected by the problems faced by the students, such as lacking English vocabulary, structure and inhibition for speaking practice. Those problems had to be overcome for making the students' English productive skills improve. Besides, the research results were significantly useful to design the learning materials for the language skills.

Keywords—*Learning; achievement; writing; speaking; skill*

I. INTRODUCTION

The two classifications of skills in learning English are productive and receptive skills. Productive skills refer to speaking and writing skills, while receptive skills refer to listening and reading skills [1]. Students who are learning English should master the four language skills. As Demirbaş had found that there were differences between the performance of freshmen's productive and receptive skills [2]. Therefore, as a lecturer, it is important to know the achievement of the skills in order that the preparatory materials would be matched with the students' needs. By understanding the achievement of students' skills, the materials can be updated to gain the students' success in teaching and learning process.

Speaking and writing skills are not always easy for the Indonesian speakers. Not everyone is able to do well, especially speaking in official forums, such as seminar, dialogue, debate, and others. Similarly, the ability to write is not everyone who also has it. However, people who learn English, such students, speaking and writing skills are the demands that should be met. According to Kpolovie, academic English achievement of students is the ability of the students to

study and remember facts and being able to communicate their knowledge orally or in written form even in an examination condition [3]. It is important to recognize the students' achievements, because it can help the lecturers reflect on their learning and plan appropriate next steps. Besides, they need to recognize the full range of achievements and help the students understand the skills they have. Therefore, evaluation of learning achievement is necessary to conduct because it provides benefits to both students and lecturers.

For students, by knowing the results of learning, students can assess whether the way of learning is effective to achieve the results and improve it in the future. Learning achievement inform students about the outcomes of learning. High learning achievement will satisfy them and further motivate them to improve for the better. Low learning results will spur students to improve learning outcomes. For the lecturers, by knowing the results of students' learning achievement, they can know the effectiveness of teaching. Learning achievement informs whether or not the learning objectives have been achieved through the learning process. By looking at the evaluation results, the lecturers know the effectiveness of the learning process. In addition, learning outcomes reflect the lecturers' work. They improve their learning process, so that learning outcomes are achieved more optimally. High learning achievement will be satisfying and motivating them to keep the improvement of their teaching and learning process, while low learning achievement encourages them to improve their learning process.

The achievement standards are intended to establish common expectations in speaking and writing among students at private university in South Sulawesi. Therefore, the aim of this study is "How well are students able to speak and write independently by the end of semester. This learning achievement covers the achievement of speaking: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and self-confidence; and the achievement of writing includes: (1) central idea, (2) organization, (3) supporting materials, (4) expression, word choice, and point of view, (5) spelling, grammar, and punctuation [4].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Speaking Skills

In speaking skills, the students need to arrange a correct sentence in their conversation. One of the elements of speaking skills that should be paid attention is about mechanic which refers to pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary [5]. Pronunciation is the way for students to produce the utterances clearly when they are speaking. It deals with understanding the sound patterns of English. Mannel classifies two features of sounds: segmental and suprasegmental [6]. Segmental sounds refer to vowels and consonants, while suprasegmental sounds deal with stress and intonation. There are twelve simple vowels in English. Those are front vowels, central vowels, and back vowels. Four vowels are in the front area, three vowels are in the central area, and five vowels are in the back area. Those are phonemes that can make different meanings if they are pronounced incorrectly. As well as the consonant sounds, there are manners of articulation that should be recognized by the students who learn English, such as friction, stop, nasal, etc. These are the segmental sounds that should be understood by the students in learning speaking skills. Students who learn English speaking should recognize the ways to pronounce the sounds either segmental sounds or suprasegmental sounds. Therefore, pronunciation includes many aspects that are related to articulation of sounds, intonation, and stress.

Furthermore, grammar refers to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units [7]. The utility of grammar is also to learn the correct way in oral and written forms of a language. This is done by a set of rules or principles that can be used to generate all well-formed utterances in English [8]. The usage of ungrammatical sentences in speaking can make the listeners misunderstand what the speakers mean. Therefore, the students need to understand the rules of English in order that they can arrange the correct sentences in their conversation.

Moreover, Schmitt states that languages contain numbers of words [9]. One cannot communicate or express the ideas either in oral or written forms if they have limited vocabulary [10]. Therefore, the teachers should know how to organize the classroom in order that the students can get a great success in learning English vocabulary. Thornbury states the importance in learning the English vocabulary [11]. He says that without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. The same idea is also expressed by Stahl and Nagy [12]. They explain that a person who knows more words can speak, and even think, more precisely about the world. A person who knows the terms scarlet and crimson and azure and indigo can think about colors in a different way than a person who is limited to red and blue. A person who can label someone as pusillanimous or a recreant can better describe a person's cowardly behavior. Both explain the importance of vocabulary by comparing the differences between people who understand vocabulary and those who do not understand vocabulary.

The other element of English speaking skill is fluency [13]. It is defined as the ability to speak or to express oral language. Brown states that speaking fluency is indicated if the speaker does not have to spend a lot of time searching for the language items needed to express the message [14]. The fluency of

speaking can be useful in many special ways in daily activities. On the other words, if a person does not have a smooth speaking, he will have difficulty interacting face-to-face. In addition, the fluency of speaking can increase the level of self-confidence and self-esteem. We all know that the good level of self-confidence and self-esteem will increase a better chance of life. On the other hand, someone who cannot speak fluently is often unsure about how to respond while conducting conversation. This case often causes confusion and misunderstanding, so that listeners can be disturbed. Therefore, a teacher must provide solutions in improving the students' speaking skills. One way is to design materials that match the initial ability level of the students being taught.

B. Writing Skills

Writing means conveying thoughts or feelings through written form of a language that consists of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and discourses. The thoughts conveyed to others must be expressed in words that support the meaning precisely and in accordance with what one wishes to express. The words should be arranged regularly in phrases and sentences, so that people can grasp what they want to say. Furthermore, the sentences are combined into discourse that produce complete meaning. In this case, the rules of English sentence patterns should be understood, because the more regular the language is used, the easier the one understands the thoughts we express. Besides, the elements of writing skills are also important to consider in writing a good essay.

Wilbers proposes five elements of good writing [15]: (1) central idea, (2) organisation, (3) supporting materials, (4) expression, word choice, and point of view, and (5) spelling, grammar and punctuation. The same ideas are stated by Imhoof and Hudson, that every paragraph in writing essays is generally composed of introducers, developers, and terminators, while the optional part is modulators which are sentences that provide a smooth transition between different sets of ideas [16].

The central idea is the subject of paragraph development. The main idea is in the main sentence or the topic sentence. In one paragraph there is only one main idea. The main sentence is a sentence in which the main idea of the paragraph is present. This main sentence is explained by other sentences in the paragraph, called the explanatory sentence. Furthermore, the organization of writing is concerned with the interrelated components of each component covering aspects of the form and content. Aspects of forms relate to structure and format, while the content aspect relates to the arrangement of ideas or messages. Explanatory sentences are made in more details to reinforce and describe the subject matter, so that it is easier to catch by the reader. The other elements of writing are word choice, expression and point of view.

The choice of words is commonly called diction that is essentially the attempt to choose a particular word to be used in a sentence or in a paragraph. Word selection includes words which can be used to express an idea in a particular situation. The ability to choose the words in writing is certainly supported by the ability to understand the vocabulary. A broad understanding of vocabulary makes someone easy to choose the right word both in writing and in conversation. Similarly,

the uses of spelling and punctuation are also very important to note especially in writing activities. If someone has poor understanding of the uses of punctuation make difficult for the reader to understand what we have written. In connection with the uses of spelling and punctuation, their uses in words, sentences and essay should be paid attention. Therefore, knowing the achievement of students' skills in all elements of writing skills will be easy for lecturers in designing appropriate teaching materials to be developed.

III. METHOD

A. Participants and Instruments

This research used a descriptive method that aimed to describe the students' learning achievement at the end of semester. Therefore, the participants were 30 students from the fourth semester students who had attended the speaking and writing subjects. The research used a test as an instrument, being divided into two sections: speaking and writing tests. Every participant selected one of 5 provided titles, then she/he spoke in front of the class. Similarly, she/he also wrote down an essay based on the given title. Besides, the participants also stated the problems faced in teaching and learning process of the English productive skills.

B. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the score range from 1 to 5. Score 5 was indicated as excellence, 4 as good, 3 as average, 2 as low, and 1 as very low achievement. The speaking variables measured were (1) pronunciation, (2) vocabulary, (3) structure, (4) fluency, and (5) self-confidence, while the writing variables were the (1) central idea, (2) organization, (3) supporting materials, (4) word choices, and (5) spelling, grammar and punctuation. Similarly, the problems faced by the students were identified using Likert scale (5, 4, 3, 2, 1). Those dealt with the inhibition of speaking and writing, nothing to say when learning speaking and writing, low participant in classroom, lack of vocabulary, lack of structure, and misunderstanding some people when they are speaking. The responses from the students were analyzed using percentage technique: $P = \frac{fx}{N} \times 100$.

IV. FINDINGS

A. The Results of Students' Learning Achievement for Speaking Skill

TABLE I. LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT FOR SPEAKING SKILLS

Variables	Excellent	Good	Average	Low	Very Low
Pronunciation	0.00	33.33	53.34	13.33	0.00
Vocabulary	0.00	10.00	53.34	36.66	0.00
Structure	0.00	16.67	60.00	23.33	0.00
Fluency	0.00	16.67	30.00	53.33	0.00
Self-Confidence	0.00	30.00	50.00	20.00	0.00
Mean	0.00	21.34	49.33	29.33	0.00

There are five aspects which are used as the research variables; they are pronunciation, vocabulary, structure,

fluency, and self-confidence. Table 1 shows that none of the students who gets excellent and none who gets very low scores. The table also shows that most of the students get the average scores (49.33 per cent). However, the fluency aspect is still in the low score category (53.33 per cent). The two aspects which might be categorized as better than the other three are pronunciation (33.33 per cent) and self-confidence (30.00 per cent). The percentages are put in a good category. The other three aspects are in a low category. They are vocabulary (36.66 per cent), structure (23.33 per cent), and fluency (53.33 per cent). Among these three aspects, fluency is the main problem faced by the students in speaking.

TABLE II. MEAN SCORE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR SPEAKING SKILL

Variables	Mean	Classification
Pronunciation	64.00	Good
Vocabulary	54.67	Average
Structure	58.67	Average
Fluency	52.67	Average
Self-Confidence	62.67	Good
Mean	58.54	Average

Based on table 2, the mean score of achievement can be stated that pronunciation and self-confidence are better than the other three variables. Pronunciation and self-confidence are classified as good, but the others are average. Vocabulary is a list of words; the word is the core of language. The words are organized in accordance with the structural system of a language. In speaking, fluency is also important in order that the receivers will feel convenient. Thus, the five variables which are used for measuring the students' achievement are essentially crucial.

B. The Results of Students Learning Achievement for Writing Skills

TABLE III. LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT FOR WRITING SKILLS

Variables	Excellent	Good	Average	Low	Very Low
Central Idea	16.67	23.33	20.00	33.33	6.67
Organisation	03.33	16.67	26.66	36.67	16.67
Supporting Material	03.33	13.33	36.67	30.00	16.67
Word Choice	06.67	10.00	30.00	33.33	20.00
Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation	00.00	00.00	20.00	36.67	43.33
Mean (%)	06.00	12.66	26.67	34.00	20.67

Table 3 indicates categories of the learning achievement for the English writing skills. The variables which are investigated for this learning achievement are central idea, organisation, supporting materials, word choices, and spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The data in the above table indicate that spelling, grammar, and punctuation are categorized as the main problem that the students get in the English writing skills. Most of the students get the very low achievement (43.33 per cent). The achievement of central idea is the best of all because the excellent category is greater than the very low one (16.67 per cent) > 6.67 per cent).

TABLE IV. MEAN SCORE OF THE ACHIEVEMENT FOR WRITING SKILLS

Variables	Mean	Classification
Central Idea	62.67	Good
Organisation	51.33	Average
Supporting Materials	54.67	Average
Word Choices	50.67	Average
Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation	36.00	Good

Table 4 indicates that only central idea has a good classification of students' achievement (62.67 per cent). Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are classified as the critical issues that should be overcome immediately. The other three aspects as the variables in writing are organization, supporting materials, and word choices. These aspects are classified as average, meaning that the students' achievement for these aspects should also be improved. It is necessary for the lecturers to select the learning materials in which the problematic issues are included in the topics of discussion.

TABLE V. LEARNING PROBLEMS OF THE ENGLISH PRODUCTIVE SKILLS

Problems	F	%	Classification
Inhibition for speaking practice	99	66.00	High
Nothing to say	93	62.00	High
Low participation in TLP	89	59.33	Average
Mother tongue usage	86	57.33	Average
Lack of vocabulary	107	71.33	High
Lack of Structure	99	66.00	High
Misunderstanding someone	102	68.00	High

The productive skills discussed in this study include speaking and writing skills. There are seven problems which have been identified, but the main problems are inhibition for speaking practice, nothing to say, lack of vocabulary, lack of structure, and misunderstanding someone. These five problems are in high classification. However, lack of vocabulary is the highest problem (71.33 per cent).

V. DISCUSSION

The research results have described learning achievement for speaking skills, mean score of achievement for speaking skills, learning achievement for writing skills, mean score of achievement for writing skills, and learning problems of the English productive skills.

Speaking and writing skills are the productive skills [1]; speaking is an oral production and writing is a written production. The other two are the receptive skills. As Demirbaş has found the differences between the performance of productive skills and receptive skills [2]. As a matter of fact, most of the students consider the productive skills are not quite easy to master in learning English. The students' achievement in the English speaking skills is in the average position (49.33 per cent). A number of the students who are in good classification is fewer than those in low classification (21.34 per cent < 29.33 per cent).

Recall that Wilbers has used these aspects to the students' speaking achievement: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and self-confidence [4]. Vocabulary and structure are classified in low position (36.66 per cent and 23.33 per cent), respectively. However, the percentage rate remarks that the low classification of fluency becomes the main problem faced by the students in speaking (53.33 per cent). Kathleen and Lance remind that fluency is also one of the parts of speaking skills [13]. Brown states that fluency is concerned with the smoothness in speaking in which the speaker does not have to spend a lot of time searching for the language items needed to express the message [14]. Thus, fluency practice is obviously recommended to be done in order to overcome the given main problem for the English speaking skills. For the purpose of getting better achievements of the above aspects for the speaking skills, the students should be trained to do the activities for their speaking development. A variety of speaking activities should be done by the students in order to improve their speaking skills.

The scores of the learning achievement for the English writing skills seem quite distributive from the very low to the excellent classifications. However, the students who are in excellent position is only 6.00 per cent. Most of the students are in low position (34.00 per cent). There are a number of aspects which are used as the variables in this study. The variables are central idea, organisation, supporting materials, word choices, and spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Based on the excellent and very low categories, the comparative achievements of the other three aspects as the research variables of the English writing skills are organisation (3.33 per cent < 16.67 per cent), supporting materials (3.33 per cent < 16.67 per cent), and word choices (6.67 per cent < 20.00 per cent). In the above table, the mean percentage shows that most of the students are in the low category (34.00 per cent), meaning that the aspects contained in the learning achievement for the English writing skills should be developed through various kinds of activities. Besides, feedback and correction are also necessary because the students will know their progress and their problems in the English writing skills.

It seems that the word is the basic unit in learning a language. So, for the purpose of developing the students' achievement in speaking and writing skills, the vocabulary aspect should be increased. The students should be trained to increase their vocabulary. It is stated by Schmitt that languages contain numbers of words [9]. A person will get problems to express the ideas either in oral or written forms if they have the lack of vocabulary. Therefore, the lecturers are expected to select the learning materials for speaking and writing skills in which vocabulary aspect is also discussed.

In addition, some problems are also encountered by the students. Inhibition for speaking practice is the impact of using the second language (L2) in daily communication. Students tend to use the national language, so they are not accustomed to using English either in the classroom or outside the classroom. English is still considered as a foreign language, so that they only use it if they are forced. As the results, they are not accustomed to using English as the target language. This is commonly performed by the Indonesian students. They do not

get used to speak English, so that they get problem in learning English.

Nothing to say is the problem faced by students. When they want to speak or write English, they do not know what to say or what to write. This has a close relationship with the lack of the English vocabulary and structure. The students will find difficult to express ideas when they want to talk or write. Having an extensive vocabulary allows one to choose the right vocabulary in context. Similarly, in writing an essay, the mastery of vocabulary can support the ability to write well. Furthermore, English structure is also a problem faced by the students in learning English. It is indicated by the percentage score which is classified as high. It means that the students still face difficulties to use grammatical sentences either in speaking or in writing skills. Therefore, teachers should recognize the level of students' English vocabulary and structure, so they can overcome the students' learning problems.

VI. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that this study describes the aspects which are potentially used for measuring the productive skills. The productive skills include speaking and writing skills. The students' learning achievement for both speaking and writing skills are in low category. Most of the students have achieved the average category in speaking skills (49.33 per cent). In writing skills, most of them have got the low category achievement (34.00 per cent). The principal solution that might be done is to increase the lack of achievement in various aspects, such as vocabulary, structure, fluency, and the other related issues. Based on the results of this study, the lecturers may design the learning materials for the English speaking and writing skills to overcome the students' learning problems.

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