

Student Preferences in Integrated Assessment with Learning Activities in General English Courses for Non-English Study Program Students



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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to describe student preferences toward the application of integrating assessment with learning activities. There were 125 non-English study program students of Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika taken as subject of this study. A survey research design was applied in this study since it studied student preferences in integrated assessment with learning activities. The integrated assessment with learning activities, namely listening integrated with speaking, listening integrated with writing, listening integrated with speaking and writing, and reading integrated with writing and speaking. Questionnaires was instrument of the study. The questionnaires used in this study consisted of four choices. The respondents are asked to choose one of the choices, namely like very much, like, less like, or dislike. Then all of the responses were analyzed using percentage to find out which items get the most preference and the least preference from the respondents. In fact, reading integrated with writing and speaking is the most assessment model preferred by the students among the four-integrating assessment with learning activities. There were 58.4% students like very much the assessment model. In other words, this model of integrated assessment with learning activities should be viewed as a holistic method that is adapted to the General English Courses objectives at Non-English Study Program.

KEYWORDS: Integrated Assessment, General English Courses, Communicative Competence

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has put English in a very strategic position as a global or international language. As a result of its international status, many countries emphasis on English as subject in order to get more opportunities for its people on a global market, and as a consequence everyone is required to master it. One of the requirements for people to participate in this global era is competence in English. When graduates are competent in science and technology but they do not master English they may get difficulty to perform in international level (Rokhyati, 2013).

To facilitate their students to achieve English competence, one of the concrete steps taken by the Indonesian government is the inclusion of English in the curriculum. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language and students start learning English formally from junior high school (Pustaka & Wiedarti, 2019, p. 75). In higher education, English Language Teaching (ELT) is classified into two types, namely, as compulsory subject and general subject. English as compulsory subject is taught in English study program while English as general subject is taught at non-English study program and it is commonly called Mata Kuliah Umum (MKU) Bahasa Inggris. The implementation of General English course depends on the needs of each university because the university has its own curriculum to be developed. These differences affect teaching material, learning process, number of credits, and assessment as well. Although each university/college different in developing the curriculum, but it needs to be noted that in Guidebook for the implementation of the 21st Century Curriculum underlined one of the purposes of teaching learning process is communication skills not limited to just one language, however multi-language possibility. (Kemendikbud, 2017).

Implementation of the Decree and Guidebook has not shown the expected results in order that learners have communication skills in English. There are several reasons namely, large classes, not all students attend the English class are motivated, and less English learning hours (Sulistiyo, 2016). Anxiety is the most frequently observed problems in relation to language learning process (Çağatay, 2015). In addition, teaching English has own unique challenges and problems in which they are related to the students, the teachers, and the facilities. (Mumary Songbatumis, 2017, p. 57). Besides, it is inevitable that many non-English students cannot express themselves freely and effectively in English language (Shen, 2012, p. 74). Lack of vocabularies, grammar knowledge and fear of making mistakes are the primary causes for students that make them afraid to speak English (Mahanani, 2017, p. 549). On the other hand, the objective of teaching English based on the Decree of the Minister of education and Culture No. 060/U/1993 and the 1989 Constitution on the System of National Education that the final goal of the

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English subject is to enable the students to be proficient in English in the globalization era (Rachmajanti, 2008). Meanwhile, Nurkamto (2013) emphasizes that the purposes of teaching English is to promote students communication skills.

In case of using English, English learners need to train their communication skills with more practice until they feel confident in speaking or writing English (Faradilla & Rukmini, 2019). Practice is important for them because the purpose of learning English is to be able to communicate using English. For many English learners, especially non-English study program students, to reach the goal in learning English which is to be able using English is quite difficult. Communicating using written or spoken English takes a lot of effort. Pronunciation of words, proficiency in grammar rules. A major obstacle is when students do not have the courage to try or practice their English skills. Continuous practice will help students become better at using English. So far teaching English in non-English study program emphasizes on reading skill than other skills, whereas the ability to communicate in English is supported by the ability of four language skills and language components. Therefore, to change the paradigm that English is difficult needs some strategies not only strategy of teaching but also strategy for assessing English in non-English study program.

In terms of assessment, assessment on English course there are still teachers who applied old style for example in assessment portion, there are more language forms than language functions. Assigned assessment tasks tends to be in the context of the class, it should be everyday world context in which the target language many used. Learning activities and assessment tends to be separate so assessment done in a formal manner. Learning activity does not show the integration of language skills that have an impact anyway on the assessment of language skills as well stand-alone. When teachers use activities specifically designed to integrate different language skills (such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing) they help their students grow and develop well in all areas of language learning at the same time (Sadiku, 2015). Whereas, in the Decree number 66/2013 states that planning assessment of students in accordance with the competencies to be achieved. This can be achieved not only by focusing only in one language skill but also students' practical knowledge and communication skills. Assessment is conducted have influence to students' achievement because of language factor in assessment (Abigail Ayiglo Kuwornu, 2017).

It has been mentioned above that every study program can develop its curriculum. For example, in the curriculum of Program Studi Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika stated that there are 8 competencies of Public Health experts, one of them is communication skill. There are some courses are taught to reach this objective and one of them is General English course. Some efforts to improve students' ability in English have been carried out through teaching methods and material development, but has not shown result indicating that students have good ability in English. So far improvement efforts have focused on teaching only, there have been no efforts through innovative assessment. Assessment is carried out separately according to skills and language components. Assessment of the ability of two or three language skills can be done through one language skill. Furthermore, innovative assessments are implemented by integrating one or two language skills. Innovative assessment here means, integration of one or two language skills. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out research on student preferences for integrated assessment which has been applied in the assessment of students learning outcomes. Based on the background and problem of study, this study aimed to describe student preferences in integrated assessment with learning activities in General English courses for Non-English Study Program.

Assessment in Language Learning

Assessment is a crucial process. It is a process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information concerning process and students' learning outcomes in achieving learning objectives. It means that the assessment must be planned, gradual, and ongoing process to obtain an overview of students' development (Zuhriyah & Pratolo, 2020). Assessment is regarded as the most important part of instruction, so that the success of a learning program as commonly determined by the result of assessment (Apsari & Haryudin, 2017). In order to provide important information to the teachers, assessment must be an ongoing and integral part of the teaching/learning process (Meidasari, 2017, p. 228). Reflective learning, individualized and cooperative learning, responsibility, and so on can be developed throughout assessment (Lee, 2017). Assessment is inherently related to teaching and learning, it is not something that happens at the end of a series of lessons (Panizzon, 2020).

In relationship to language learning, Tosuncuoglu (2018, p. 166) says that assessment is very important for the students to learn a language and it can provide both teachers and students about the level of knowledge, skills, difficulties in foreign language learning. English language assessment should pay attention to the context and purpose of applying English (Jenkins & Leung, 2016). From the above statements, it can be said that assessment is viewed as one of pedagogical practices to both teaching and learning. It is used to determine what students have learned, the way they learned the teaching material, their approach to learn before, during or after the course. Assessment is the process of knowing about how students are progressing in their learning to make the right decision in designing and planning classroom instruction. In collecting students' data analyzing evidence and improving teaching are assessment steps that teachers can use to improve learning outcome. The purpose of assessment is to maximize and improve the learning process by providing learners with a wealth of opportunities to discover their weaknesses and improve their learning.

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Teachers and students are very aware of the need to change the classroom especially in the field of assessment to keep up with the demands of the technological age (Benettayeb-Ouahiani, 2016). Comparing traditional forms of foreign language assessment that focus on language, teacher-centered and isolated skills with current form of assessment in educational practice, linguist Richards & Renandya (2002) emphasized that in new paradigm assessment focus on communication, learner-centered, and integrated skills.

Communicative Competence

In general, communicative competence means having a competence to communicate. This competence can be in the form of oral, written or nonverbal. Language is a means of communication and it consists of four skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. When someone acquires the language skills and use them appropriately according to the context, we can say that he has achieved communicative competence. Sabri (2019) defines the terms communicative competence as knowledge of both linguistics and non-linguistics rules of communication and the ability to use that knowledge effectively in real-life situations and achieve communication goals. Effective communication is essential in every language situation. When effective communication fails to be realized, the intended message may be misunderstood. As a result, communication is interrupted.

Communication is the main to the success of people to convey the message to someone or a group of people. It is fact that communication is deal with the process of understanding and being understood through ideas, facts, thought, and emotions (V. Akilandeswari, A. Dinesh Kumar, A. Philomin Freeda, 2015). According to Faradilla & Rukmini (2019) communicative competence is the functional knowledge to indicate the successful communication ability of the participants in order to reach the goal of being communicative. They emphasize that if the participants in the process of communication cannot use their communicative skills, then they cannot understand the information exchange in the communication process.

Communicative competence is an important aspect of learning English, so that students must have a good knowledge of oral and written communication in order to be successful academically (Moyi & Galadima, 2020). Consequently, the goal of teaching English as a foreign language is not limited to teaching simple language skills exemplifying English practice or emphasizing memorization (Jeong, 2018). Instead, teachers try to develop learners' communication skills by helping them understand the importance meaningful of social interaction in English learning process (Mandasari & Oktaviani, 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied quantitative method. The method is applied because it explained phenomena by collecting numerical data. Quantitative method has some kinds of research design that can be employed in various studies such as experimental, correlation, and survey design (Cresswell, J.C & Guetterman, 2018). The research design in this study was survey research design.

A survey research design was adopted in this study to achieve the objective of the study. Survey research is a useful and legitimate approach to research that has clear benefits in helping to describe and explore variables and constructs of interest (Ponto, 2015). Therefore, survey research was considered the most appropriate design for this research, since it studied students preferred on integrating assessment with learning activities. Survey research is a toll for collecting the information about the characteristics, responses or opinion of a large group of people.

The researchers created the questionnaires as the instrument of this study. The questionnaires were adapted from assessment model which were used in teaching and testing General English Courses at Non-English study Program. The questionnaires were distributed to 125 non-English study program students as subjects of this study. The questionnaires used in this study consisted of four choices. The respondents are asked to choose one of the choices namely, like very much, like, less like, or dislike. Then all of the responses were analyzed to find out which items get the most preference and the least preference from the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Various ways can be done to collect information about students' learning progress, both related to learning process and learning outcomes. The way used for this objective of course based on competence that must be achieved by the leaners. In learning activities, the four language skills should be integrated, may integrate two or more skills. The cohesiveness language skills very important in language learning. Therefore, in assessing communication competence should integrate two or more language skills as applied to the learning process.

This section presents finding and discussion regarding student preferences in the application of assessment in General English Course for non-English study program students. In this study, the integration of two or more language skills is a model of language competency assessment. The assessment activities such as listening integrated with speaking, listening integrated with writing, listening integrated with speaking and writing, and reading integrated with writing and speaking are assessment model applied in this study.

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1. Listening integrated with Speaking

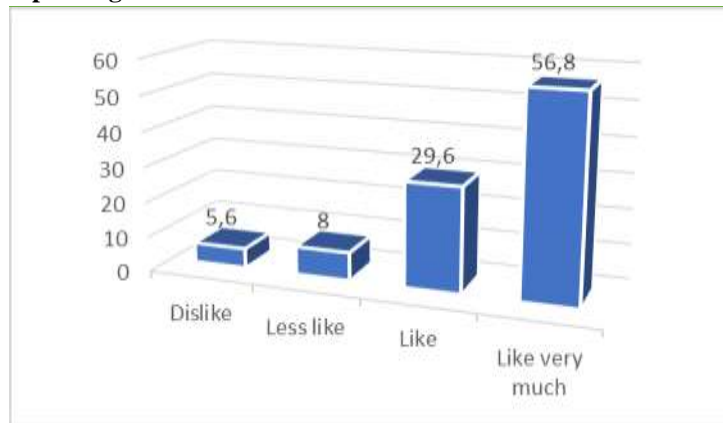


Figure 1. Students Preferences in Listening integrated with Speaking

There are several tasks to assess spoken skills or listening skill and speaking in an integrated manner.

a. Converse by asking questions

Ability to converse and ask questions in English can be assessed using a variety of media, such as picture, situation, and map. Activities can be carried out with the role play instruction or by model discussion provided by the teacher. For example, asking about hobby, daily activities, etc. This method can be used for summative assessment which purpose is to summarize the result of study at a certain period or at the end of the program. In assessing this task, the teacher can use observation format containing students' names and the aspect to be observed, such as: the use of vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and pronunciation correctly and fluently.

b. Retelling

Retelling is a task to assess the ability of retelling orally or in writing with the language itself from a text that be listened to the students. In this case students must be able to identify the essence of the text, principal ideas, purposes, supporting idea, or conclusion indicating that they understand the whole text. When it is done verbally, to record the results of the assessment can use observation format used for conversing, with adding aspect of the completeness of the idea.

As displayed in the Figure. 1, there were 56.8% students responded listening with speaking was like very much and 29.6% stated like, while students who chose either less like and dislike were 8% and 5.6%.

2. Listening integrated with writing

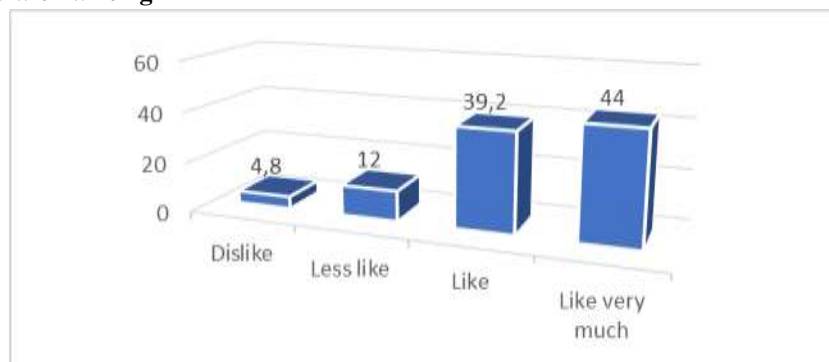


Figure 2. Students Preferences in Listening integrated with Writing

Assessment on listening integrated with writing can be done by asking students to make note taking and information transfer. In note taking, students are asked to make notes from short speech/discourse. In information transfer, teacher read the text then students are asked to fill in the table with data according to the information obtained from the text read by the teacher. The teacher can fill one or some parts in the charts as the example of filling the chart.

According to the result which is shown in Figure.2, there were 44% of students like very much the integrating assessment with learning activities, while 39.2% stated like, 12% stated less like and 4.8% chose dislike the model of assessment by integrating listening with writing.

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3. Listening integrated with Speaking and Writing

In this assessment activity, students listen to a story that they chose then retell the story to their friends. Task ends by creating a synopsis of the story.

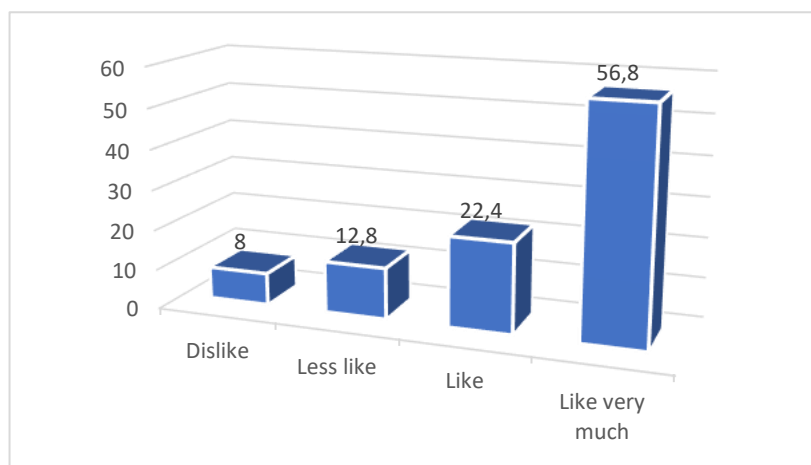


Figure 3. Students Preferences in Listening integrated with Speaking and Writing

According to the result shown in the above figure, most of students chose that listening integrated with speaking and writing. This was evidence that 56.8% of 125 respondents chose like very much, while 22.4% stated like, 12.8% less like and 8% of the respondents chose dislike the assessment model.

4. Reading integrated with Writing and Speaking

In this assessment model, students are asked to read a reading text then write and tell the text based on their words without changing the topic of the reading text. Doing monologues, namely the ability to produce spoken texts, such as, speeches, oral presentations, storytelling, retelling a story, and news events.

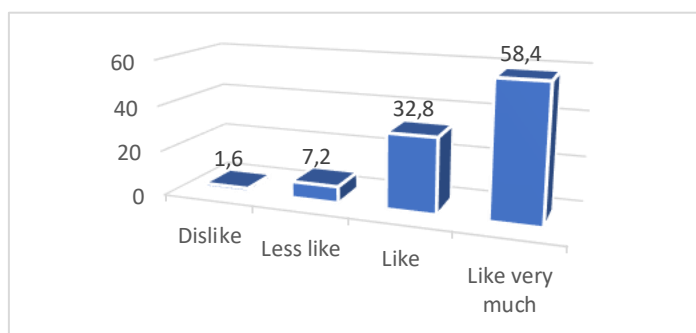


Figure 4. Students Preferences in Reading integrated with Writing and Speaking

Figure. 4. showed that 58.4% of students like very much the model of assessment by integrating writing and speaking with reading, 32.8 % like, 7.2% less like and 1.6% dislike.

Comparing the four model of integrated assessments, the fourth model was the most preferred by the students. Teaching General English course in non-English study program is more emphasis on reading, through reading text, an English teacher can teach the other language skills. One of the reasons because reading is an active process that involves (1) the meaning of written text is given (2) the development and interpretation of meaning and (3) the use of meaning according to the specific purpose of the text and the situation (Board, 2012). Reading comprehension as an essential skill in English language teaching is the important assessment in EFL classroom since it aimed to get a clear view about students' needs (Habib, 2016, p. 140).

According to the findings, the majority of students understand the value of assessment in developing their communication ability in English. As a result, it is beneficial to inquire about their preferences in integrated assessment then apply the model of assessment. Students indicated a preference for continuous classroom activities as appropriate assessment strategies.

CONCLUSION

Assessment aims to maximize and improve the teaching-learning process by offering numerous opportunities for learners to identify and improve their deficiencies and to raise their learning outcomes. This can be reached by linking integrating assessment with learning activities and classroom instruction and by providing constructive activities that truly conform to learners' needs.

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In order to assess students' performance in General English courses which is taught in non-English study program, teacher should use several assessment methods due to no single method can measure students' performance on English. The result of assessment help students to discover their competencies and leads them to seek useful ways to develop their own learning.

This study aimed to describe student preferences in the application of integrating assessment with learning activities. The integrating assessment with learning activities, namely listening integrated with speaking, listening integrated with writing, listening integrated with speaking and writing, and reading integrated with writing and speaking are the integrating assessment with learning activities applied in this study. Based on the result of the study, reading integrated with writing and speaking is the most assessment model preferred by the students among the four-integrating assessment with learning activities models. Therefore, this model should be viewed as a holistic method that is adapted to the classroom instruction's objectives.

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