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Assessment of Oral Language and the Mastery of Discourse Analysis Subject for University Students

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Bio-profile:

Hery Yufrizal finished his undergraduate study at Universitas Lampung. He got Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language and Masters Degree from Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand. He earned his Ph.D from La Trobe University Australia in 2001. He has been teaching some subjects, such as Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, and Developing Oral Language Skills.

Abstract

The mastery of Discourse Analysis as subject taught at tertiary level of educatioan is influenced by both the students' level of English proficeincy and the mastery of the subject matter. Learning Discourse Analysis requires both language language skills and content knowledge.This research attempts to investigate how students learn Discourse Analysis and the factors that significantly influence the mastery of Discourse Analysis subject taught through Challenge Based Learning at the institution. The most important finding from this study is that from 5 values of students' assessment on the oral performance: quality of presentation, responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject; only quality of presentation has significant effect on learning. Another result of the study concerned with the correlation between the application of challenge-based learning and the students' assessment of oral capability. There is a

positive significant correlation between the application of challenge based learning and students' assessment of oral capability.

Introduction

The study attempts to find out whether there is any significant correlation between the students' oral capability assessment in English and their achievements in the mastery of discourse analysis subject. The students' oral capability assessment deals with five oral learning traits: quality of presentation (QP), responding to questions (RQ), language use (LU), media use (MU), and mastery of subject (MS) (Universitas Lampung, 2019) The five oral presentation traits become the basic reasons for evaluating the students' mastery of Discourse Analyses subject taught at the institution. Discourse Analysis subject was taught through a time series design (Gall and Borg, 2007) where the subject was divided into three teaching blocks. Each block consists of four meetings and a test for each block. The blocks are named RWP (read, write, and present), RRP (read, relate, present) and RIPA (read, illustrate, present, and argue). A comparison was made among the students' achievements in each block. The students are evaluated on the basis of their mastery of discourse analysis in each block. The idea of comparing students, oral capability assessment and the mastery of discourse analysis subject is comparable to the study of interaction and input-output relations in second language acquisition studies. From the studies on comprehensible output (Ellis, 1994; Swain and Lapkin, 1995; and Foster, 1998 and Yufrizal, 2000), it was found that output indeed has an influence on the performance of second/foreign language learners, but how far the output influences language acquisition in general is still a matter of question. Students, in this study are those who learn discourse analysis subject through a series of learning sessions involving the reading of the subject followed by a series of oral presentations and discussions. They receive inputs in discourse analysis subject by reading resource books and discuss what they read by undertaking a series of learning blocks called project-based language learning.

Theoretical Framework

There are three interrelated concepts addressed by this study. The first is the concept of challange based learning as applied in the study of second/foreign language learning. The second is the concept of oral capability assessment as applied in the students' measures of oral capability (Universitas Lampung, 2019) . The third is the concept of modification out put as applied in the study of second/foreign language learning.

A. The Challenge Based-Learning

Challenge based learning was created by Apple Inc. Company which identified environment design leaning principle for the 21st century (Johnson and Adams, 2011). The Challenge Based Learning comprises three interrelated phases. The phases are: Engage, Investigate and Act. Every phase comprises activities that prepare teachers to move to the next phase. Within each of the phases there are possiblities for mini-investigation cycles and if necessary a return to an earlier phase (Santos,et al. (2015). Complete steps of each phase is:

Step 1 Engage

During the Engage Phase, the Learners move from a big abstract idea to a concrete and actionable challenge using the Essential Questioning process. "The goal is to personally connect with the academic content through identification, development, and ownership of a compelling challenge" (Johnson, and Adams, 2011).

Stage 2. Investigate

During investgate phase, the learners attempt to build learning expereiences that are contexualized, and the same time try to conduct a thorough and wider research. This is done in order to build a strong base for solutios which are applicable and sustainable.

Stage 3 Act.

In the Act Phase, learners develop evidence based solutions which are implemented to authentic audience. The results of the implementation are carefully examined among the team members. In this phase, learners show their willingness to succeed by demonstrating thier mastery of content subject,

B. Oral presentation

There are five elements of oral presentation evaluated in this study. The five oral presentation elements are measures used by the institution to evaluate students' performance in particular subject matter (Universitas Lampung, 2019). The five elements are: a**).** the quality of presentation, b). the ability to respond to questions, c) appropriateness of language use, d). effectiveness of media use, and e). mastery of subject.

a). The quality of presentation

The ability of oral presentations is a vital part in education. It can show the students' ability to master particular subject at school. Oral presentation can be adapted to various speaking situations, for example speaking to a group, directing a meeting or giving explanation to a group. According to McBride (2017), there are some features of oral presentation, such as preparation, delivery, audience, and visual. The scorings of the quality of presentation are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

b). Responding to questions

Responding to questions is essential for both students and teacher in order to be succeed in their tasks. For students one of the difficultes of responding to questions is their accuracy to understand the main objective of question and at the same time provide appropriate answers to the questions.Some questions might be misinterpreted and automatically produced wrong answeres from the students. The scorings of tesponding to questions are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

c). Language Use

Language use refers to the appropriateness of the language used to communicate intended meaning of a speaker. This is comparable to usage (the rules for language making) and the use of structure for making it (Anwar, et al.2020). The scorings of media used are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. Outstanding.

d). Media use

Media usage, also called media consumption or media diet, is defined as "the sum of information and entertainment media taken in by an individual or group" (source:

Wikipedia). The scorings of media used are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

e). Mastery of subject.

The mastery of subject matter is the foundation upon which the education of a teacher is based. The teacher requires, among other things, the skill of mastering the subject matter and being able to establish the interrelationships between different subjects (Ngugi and Thiguri, 2014). The scorings of mastery of subjett are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

C. Output Hypothesis

Study in second language acquisition has produced many theories of how language is acquired effectively. One of theories in is the Comprehensible Output (CO) hypothesis. The comprehensible output hypothesis postulates that learning takes place when learners encounter a gap in their linguistic knowledge of the second language (Swain, 1985). Learners will be able to notice the gap and modify their output by noticing this gap. This will make the students aware on the gap between their knowledge and the language they learn.

The output (saying or writing something in the target language) has a threefold function: - it is an opportunity for language learners to notice gaps in their knowledge of the L2 that needs to be filled; it enables them to test the output hypotheses about the structure of the L2, and also to reflect consciously upon the structure of the L2; it enables the language teacher to design tasks that get students to produce language and the reflect upon its structure, and this, in turn will cause them to modify their output structurally.(see Syarifudin, 2019; Foster, 1998; Shehadeh, 1999; Doughty and Williams, 1998; Oliver, 2000; Mackey, 1999).

Research Procedures

The study implemented quasi experimental research design. Quasi-experimental research designs, like experimental designs, test causal hypotheses. In both experimental (i.e., randomized controlled trials or RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs, the programme or policy is viewed as an "intervention' in which a treatment – comprising

the elements of the programme/policy being evaluated – is tested for how well it achieves its objectives, as measured by a prespecified set of indicators" (White and Sabarwal 2014; Altun and Sabah, 2020).

In this case, the subjects of the research are students who are enrolled as participants at 'Discourse Analysis' subject at the University of Lampung, The students are both as the population and sample of the research. The subjects are students of the third year majoring in teaching English as second/foreign language. These students sit on Discourse Analysis subject wuth 3 credit load. The subjects were 25 students of the English Study program, consisting of 17 female and 8 male students. The subjects were the sixth semester students enrolled at Discourse Analysis with ages of 19-21 years old..

Following Gall and Borg, 2009, the main steps of the research are: Students attend the session which will be divided into three big sessions: session 1 will consist of three meetings. The technique applied for session 1 was lockstep technique: Lecturer explains, students listen and take note Session 1 ended with test 1. Session 2 was the application of Challenge based learning where students were divided into presenter group and audience group. The presenter groups were assigned to write and present paper. The listener groups are assigned to ask questions. Session 2 ended up with test for the block. Session 3 was the application of challenge based learning with seminar session and challenge from audience. Session 3 ended up with test 3. The blocks were named RWP (read, write, and present), RRP (read, relate, present) and RIPA (read, illustrate, present, and argue).

Results and Discussion

The followings are the results of the research

    a. Students' Performances

Students' performances were measured in five performance evaluation:quality of the presentation, responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject. The followings are the results of students' performances.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of students' performances in five measures

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
QP	25	2.00	5.00	3.0800	1.22202
RQ	25	2.00	5.00	2.8400	.89815
LU	25	2.00	5.00	2.5600	.86987
MU	25	2.00	5.00	4.1200	1.05357
MS	25	2.00	5.00	3.2800	.84261
Valid N (listwise)	25				

The descriptive statistics on students' performances in five measures: quality of presentation, responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject show the following results for the quality of performances, the mean was 3.47, (sd = 1.19. For the measure on how the students respond to questions, the mean score was 3.28 with a standard deviation of 0.97. For the measures of language use, the mean score was 2.88 with a standard deviation of 0.78. For the measure of media uses, the mean score was 3.28 and standard deviation of 0.89. While for the measure of mastery of the subject, the mean score was 3.28 and standard deviation of 1.05.

Table 2: Statistical Analysis from students' oral performances in three tests

Statistics

		RWP	RRP	RIPA
N	Valid	25	25	25
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		74.8000	60.8000	74.4800
Std. Deviation		6.11010	6.13732	6.83813
Sum		1870.00	1520.00	1862.00

From the table, it can be summarized that the students' mean score in the first round was 74.8 with a standard deviation (sd) of 6.11. In the second round of the activities, the mean score was 60.8 with an SD of 6.13, and the third block of presentation, the students' mean score was 74.48 and standard deviation of 6.83.

b. Analyses of measure

Table 3 below summarized the t-tests of the five measures

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
QP	17.170	24	.000	3.88000	3.4136	4.3464
RQ	11.947	24	.000	2.92000	2.4156	3.4244
LU	14.715	24	.000	2.56000	2.2009	2.9191
MU	19.553	24	.000	4.12000	3.6851	4.5549
MS	14.462	24	.000	2.32000	1.9889	2.6511

The table reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' responses to quality of presentation with a t-value of 17.17 and mean difference of 3.88. There is also a significant difference in the students' ability to respond to questions with a t value of 11.97 and mean difference of 2.92. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' language use with a t-value of 14.71 and mean difference of 2.56. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in media use with a t-value of 4.12 and mean difference of 19.55. Finally, the table also reveals that there is significant difference in the mastery of subject with a t-value of 14.46 and mean difference of 2.32.

Table 4: ANOVA of students' performances in challenge 1 activities

ANOVA Table

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
QP * WRP	Between Groups	34.173	17	2.010	8.443	.004
	Within Groups	1.667	7	.238		
	Total	35.840	24			
RQ * WRP	Between Groups	20.673	17	1.216	1.648	.258
	Within Groups	5.167	7	.738		
	Total	25.840	24			
LU * WRP	Between Groups	8.500	17	.500	.636	.789
	Within Groups	5.500	7	.786		
	Total	14.000	24			
MU * WRP	Between Groups	13.640	17	.802	.432	.925
	Within Groups	13.000	7	1.857		
	Total	26.640	24			
MS * WRP	Between Groups	11.373	17	.669	.826	.650
	Within Groups	5.667	7	.810		
	Total	17.040	24			

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant influence of quality of presentation on the students' performance in challenge 1 activities with an F value of 8.44. The table also reveals that there is no significant influence among factors of responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject in challenge 1 activities.

Table 5 below shows the ANOVA of students' performances in challenge 2 activities

Table 5 ANOVA Table in Challenge 2 activities.

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
N challenge QP * RRP	Between Groups	13.798	5	2.760	2.379	.078
	Within Groups	22.042	19	1.160		
	Total	35.840	24			
RQ * RRP	Between Groups	8.965	5	1.793	2.019	.122
	Within Groups	16.875	19	.888		
	Total	25.840	24			
LU * RRP	Between Groups	3.042	5	.608	1.055	.415
	Within Groups	10.958	19	.577		
	Total	14.000	24			
MU * RRP	Between Groups	6.598	5	1.320	1.251	.325
	Within Groups	20.042	19	1.055		
	Total	26.640	24			
MS * RRP	Between Groups	1.540	5	.308	.378	.858
	Within Groups	15.500	19	.816		
	Total	17.040	24			

The table shows that relatively there is an influence of quality of presentation (QP) and Responding to questions (RQ) on the students' performance in challenge 2 activities with an F value of) 0.072 and 0.122 on students' mastery of challenge based learning activity no.2. The table also reveals that there are no significant influences among factors of language use, media use and mastery of the subject in challenge 2 activities.

Table 6 below shows the ANOVA of students' performances in challenge 3 activities.

Table 6 ANOVA Table in Challenge 3 activities.

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
QP * RIPA	Between Groups	31.673	13	2.436	6.432	.002
	Within Groups	4.167	11	.379		
	Total	35.840	24			
RQ * RIPA	Between Groups	18.757	13	1.443	2.241	.094
	Within Groups	7.083	11	.644		
	Total	25.840	24			
LU * RIPA	Between Groups	7.167	13	.551	.887	.586
	Within Groups	6.833	11	.621		
	Total	14.000	24			
MU * RIPA	Between Groups	14.557	13	1.120	1.019	.494
	Within Groups	12.083	11	1.098		
	Total	26.640	24			
MS * RIPA	Between Groups	6.207	13	.477	.485	.892
	Within Groups	10.833	11	.985		
	Total	17.040	24			

Table 6 reveals students' performances in challenge 3 activities. The table shows that there is a significant influence of quality of presentation on the students' performance in challenge 3 activities with an F value of 6.4. The table also shows that relatively there is an influence of Responding to questions (RQ) to students' performances in challenge 3 activities. There is no significant effect of language use, media use and mastery of the subject in challenge 3 activities.

In challenge 3 activities, the students were given the opportunity to challenge the presenter' idea by asking questions, request for clarification, add and illustrate presenters' explanation. Table 6 shows that there is a significant effect of students' performance in quality of presentation and test 3 performance.

Discussion of findings

The most important finding from this study came in the form of 5 values of learning: quality of presentation (QP), responding to questions (RQ), language use (LU), media use (MU) and mastery of subject MS). Table 8 of the result report reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' responses to quality of presentation with a t-value of 17.17 and mean difference of 3.88. There is also a significant difference in the students' ability to respond to questions with a t value of 11.97 and mean difference of 2.92. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' language use with a t-value of 14.71 and mean difference of 2.56. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in media use with a t-value of 4.12 and mean difference of 19.55. Finally, the table also reveals that there is significant difference in the mastery of subject with a t-value of 14.46 and mean difference of 2.32. The result of these calculations also reveals interesting research phenomena, particularly in the ability of advanced students' ability to process information while learning language is still the main focus. Five measures on the quality of students' presentation capability show the students' capacity of mastering the subject matter and their oral presentation capability.

For the first criteria of students' quality of presentation (QP) on the criteria to evaluate this is based on the measure from the definition. There are ten indicators for the quality of presentation. They are: 1. Show your Passion and Connect with your Audience 2. Focus on your Audience's Needs, 3. Keep it Simple: Concentrate on your Core

Message, 4. Smile and Make Eye Contact with your Audience, 5. Start Strongly, 6. Remember the 10-20-30 Rule for Slideshows, 7. Tell Stories, 8. Use your Voice Effectively, 9. Use your Body Too, 10. Relax, Breathe and Enjoy.

The second trait in students' oral performances was the ability to respond to questions (RQ). This ability is important because one of the main problems with question and answer sessions is that the presenter's nerves frequently force an inappropriate response. This could be caused by misinterpretation of questions asked or that only key words from the question have been heard rather than the full content. The subjects of the research showed that there is a significant effect the ability to respond questions on the mastery of the subject. This shows that the subjects of the research were able to respond to questions appropriately.

The third trait in the students' oral performance was language use (LU) trait. In this aspect the students' performance was judged based on the appropriateness of the language they use. "Language use refers to the communicative meaning of the language."

The fourth trait in the students' ability is media use. Media used was defined as "the sum of information and entertainment media taken in by an individual or group". Table 7 revealed that there is a significant difference in media use with a t-value of 4.12 and mean difference of 19.55.

The fifth trait in the students' oral performance was mastery of the subject (MS). The result of the calculation reveals that there is a significant difference in mastery of the subject with a t-value of 14.46 and mean difference of 2.32.

Another most important finding is the effect of gender on the students' performance. Data from the study showed that in RWP challenge there is a significant correlation between the students' performance and gender with n F value of 11.32 and there is significant correlation in RIPA challenge and gender with F value of 0.063.

Conclusions and paedagogical Implications

Some conclusions can be drawn from the results of the research. Among others are:

1) In terms of five measures of oral presentation, there are significant differences in the students' responses to quality of presentation (QP), responding to questions (RQ),

language use (LU), media use (MU) and mastery of the subject MS). Five measures on the quality of students' presentation capability show the students' capacity of mastering the subject matter and their oral presentation capability.

2) In terms of the application of Challenge based learning, there is a positive correlation between the students' performance in the challenge and the quality of presentation. The quality of presentation correlates significantly with RWP challenge, RRP challenge, and RIPA challenge. Comparisons among the three challenges showed that in RWP challenge there is a significant correlation between the students' performance and gender with an F value of 11.32 and there is significant correlation in RIPA challenge.

5.2 Some pedagogical implications that can be drawned from the study are:

1) The teaching of discourse analysis as a subject at higher education level can have multiple effects on the teaching of English as students' major of study. Students involved in this study are those whose major is English, studying English in order to be English teachers upon the completion of their study. Specific approaches need to be implemented to assist them reach their learning goal. A quasi experimental study implemented in this study represents an approah to study the research paradigm im second/foreign language teaching.

2). Challenge based approach as a strategy of learning showed that students attempt their utmost capability to solve learning challenges designed. The results of the study showed that challenge based learning is applicable in some learning situations (Nunn et al, 2016 and Nurhajati. 2018).

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