Students' and Lecturers' Perspectives of Integrated Course (IC)

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Abtract

Richards (2001:209) mentioned that many things can be done to create a good teaching-learning process, but it is the teachers that determine the success of teaching. Thus, the success teaching-learning process in S-1 degree becomes one of the foundations of national education. Integrated Course (IC) is one of compulsory course in English Department curriculum of University of Kanjuruhan Malang in the first semester. This course is aimed to improve students' fluency in intermediate and pre-intermediate level. The contribution of this research is investigating of lecturers' and students' perspective about the implementation of IC along with the constraints of the course. Both lecturers and students viewed positively this course although listening got the lowest score from students' perspective. Difficulties mostly faced by lecturers, including time constraint, various students' levels of proficiency, and the books.

Keywords: Students Perspective, Lecturers Perspective, Integrated Course

Although English has a dramatic change in Curriculum 2013, the fact that some schools still regard English as a subject to be taught for their students affects English educators, especially teachers. In some respects, teachers have a big responsibility to decide the success or failure of teaching learning process. It cannot be denied that in some schools, teachers are still the main source of language input and act as the role model of English. There are other sources of English, such as television and internet, though. However, Richards (2001:209) claims that although there are many ways in creating learning contexts, teachers hold the authority to decide the success of education.

Thus, Richards (2001) argues that besides practical knowledge, knowledge on how to teach, teachers should be equipped with pedagogic competence, knowledge on what to teach. The same argument is also suggested by Brown (2007:491) by mentioning a list of "a good language teacher". This pedagogic competence is taught when someone is in pre-service training, specifically when he is in undergraduate degree.

Obviously, the success of teaching and learning process in undergraduate degree becomes the foundation of the success of education in a certain country. Thus, it is highly important to create a qualified education.

Although the government has implemented National Exam as one of the requirement of graduation for senior high students which further used by higher education institution, such as universities as the requirement to enroll the entrance test, it cannot be denied that students' English competences are varied. Thus, it becomes a challenge for university with various students' input competences to produce competent graduates.

Integrated Course (IC) is one of compulsory subjects in English Education Department curriculum. It consists of 12

credits which are served in the first semester. This course aims at improving students' proficiency at elementary and pre-intermediate level. During its implementation, this course combines reading, writing, speaking, and listening with not focusing only on a certain skill. Also, it equips students with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice.

A similar course has been implemented by other universities, such as State University of Malang although with different name. Djiwandono (2008) asserts that as a part of curriculum for secondary school pre-service teacher training, the success of implementation of Intensive Course becomes imperative. Further, he explains that it should cover the total credits of the course which determine the number of meetings in a week, the purpose, materials design, human resources, test and evaluation.

South Korea is another example of country which also implements Integrated Course. Lim (2012) investigated how English Intensive Course using Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) to improve English skills and affective factor. She found students' absentee rates on IC program when it was conducted after school was high. However, when IC program became a curriculum, the absentee rate was zero. It was proven from students' motivation and interest on IC class. Similar findings were reported by Peng (2007). He adds that motivation is a major factor that persuades students to communicate in English.

In her report, Lim (2012) also stated that students' English competences, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening were significantly improved. Further, she formulates that students were able to discard their anxiety in learning English. Thus, students were confident to use the language.

This study differs with previous studies in two aspects. First, Lim (2012) investigated the implementation of IC for secondary school students, meanwhile the subjects of this study were higher education students. The fact that there was no screening test before enrolling to the university creates a wider space for discussion of the course. Second, Lim (2012) focused her study on investigating whether IC

program affected students' English proficiency and its affective factors. Meanwhile, this study not only focused on investigating students' and lecturers' perspective on IC but also wanted to draw lecturers' difficulties in running the program. Based on what Lim (2012) mentioned that although teachers found some difficulties in running the program, they felt it was fine. However, Lim (2012) did not mention the problems specifically. This study intended to identify lectures' problems in running IC program.

Research Problems

Based on background information above, the problems can be formulated as:
1. What are students' and lecturers' perspectives on the implementation of Integrated Course (IC)?
2. What are difficulties faced by lecturers in running IC?

Methodology

This study employed qualitative approach to explore verbal data on students' and lecturers' perspective of IC as well as the difficulties faced by the lecturers. There were two subjects in this study, both students and lecturers. The students were English Education Department students enrolling their first year in academic year 2014/2015. The researchers used random sampling technique from population. There were 27 students voluntarily involved in this study. Meanwhile, there were five lecturers who taught in five classes. However, only three lecturers were taken as subjects because the other two were the researchers in this study.

The main instrument in this study was the researchers themselves. Questionnaire and interview guide were used as tools to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed to students at the end of semester. The questionnaire was developed in close- and open-ended questions. Close-ended questions tap students' opinions towards learning experience during IC class, their participation in and outside class and further motivation to learn, and personal satisfaction. There were 21

close-ended statements with scale 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for neutral, 1 for disagree, and 0 for strongly disagree. Meanwhile, open-ended questions seek information about learning source availability, variations on learning experience, and skills exploration. There were five open-ended questions. The raw data later was summed up and interpreted. Table 1 was used to interpret the score.

Table 1. Range Score and Interpretation

Raw Score	Interpretation
108 - 82	Strongly Positive
81 - 55	Positive
54 - 28	Negative
< 27	Strongly Negative

The second tool was in-depth interview. It was intended to tap lecturers' perspectives after running IC program. It covers 1) teaching preparation, 2) students' participation, and 3) difficulties in running the program.

Findings

There were three aspects that will be drawn after the subjects running IC program, either as students or lecturers.

1. Students' Perspective towards IC

The first part of the questionnaire aimed at tapping students' opinion about joining IC class. It covers their experiences in teaching and learning process of reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar, and pronunciation. The total score for reading was 93 which was interpreted as strongly positive. Meanwhile, speaking skill and pronunciation got 96 which was interpreted as strongly agree. Next, listening skill got 85 which meant strongly positive. Interestingly, 80% of students viewed listening as the most unfavorable subject. Further, writing skill and grammar got 88 which later was interpreted as strongly positive.

The second part of the questionnaire was students' eagerness for sustained studying on reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar, and pronunciation. Reading had 94 meanwhile

speaking and listening got 90. Further, writing got 94 and grammar got 95. The highest score was achieved by pronunciation with 97. All of them were interpreted as strongly positive. Table 2 described the detailed information about the score.

Table 2 Students' Perspective and Eagerness for Sustained Studying

No	Aspect	Perspective	Eagerness
1.	Reading	93	94
2.	Speaking	96	90
3.	Listening	85	90
4.	Writing	88	94
5.	Grammar	88	95
6.	Pronunciation	96	97

Students' perceptive can also be seen from their attendance rate. All respondents were confidence to say that they were always present in the classroom. None of the respondents disagreed with the statement of "I am always active during teaching and learning process". Further, they scored 83 which meant strongly positive for a statement saying that they always did the homework maximally and actively discussed the materials being taught outside the classroom. In addition, students viewed positively for lecturers' performance by scoring 86 which meant strong positive. They agreed that the lecturers gave sufficient opportunities to ask and share.

The researcher also asked students' personal satisfaction towards IC. They asked to give a score ranged 1 up to 5 in which 5 showed highly satisfied. There were only two students who scored 3 which can be interpreted as moderate and 14 students scored 4 and the rest gave 5.

2. Lecturers' Perspective towards IC

Based on the interview with three lecturers who taught IC class, they viewed positively towards IC. All of the teachers enthusiastically prepared materials before teaching, such as read the IC book, searched other relevant materials, prepared media, and made power point presentation. One lecturer also mentioned that she prepared student activity before the class based on the distribution of topic in the book. Besides, they

did several meetings with other lecturers to discuss about IC, such as they discussed about the materials, quizzes, tests and other aspects of teaching and learning process to improve the quality of the implementation. In addition, two out of three lecturers rated themselves 4 for their teaching ability and the other rated 3.

Further, all of the lecturers agreed that differences in students' proficiencies resulted in different students' participation in the classroom. Low achieving students were seemed to be more passive than other students. Although it was only 20% up to 25% in one classroom, the lecturers did some efforts to compensate this condition. Further, the lecturers gave several tasks for the students to accompany the book both oral and written tasks.

The lecturers' perspective towards IC can also be seen from their efforts to keep the students highly motivated. All of the teachers were encourage all students, including low achievers by varying the class activities, such as individual tasks, pair works, small group discussion, game, presentation, etc.

3. Difficulties in Running IC

All of the lecturers admitted that they found several difficulties during IC. First, the fact that the students had various levels of proficiency truly affected the teaching and learning process. One of the lecturer mentioned that she had to repeat the explanations and instructions to make all students were able to do the tasks. It caused time and energy consuming. Further, it also affected other students. Second, time limitation had a significant effect for the course. All the lecturers could not deliver all topics from the compulsory books that had been underlined in the syllabus. It was discovered by the fact that lecturers often discussed about topic coverage with other lecturers. This caused the third problem which was the book. One lecturer thought that the books were too abundant that she could not deliver all topics during the available time; meanwhile other lecturer argued that she needed more time to adjust with the book. However, they believed that there was no problem with the content of the books except two books were too many for only one semester.

Discussions

Based on the data being presented above, students have a positive perspective towards IC. This may be resulted from several reasons. First, the lecturers' preparations before the class were good. Ushioda in Dornyei believes that one dimension which motivates a student to learn is the teaching and learning process itself. Its logical interpretation will be when the teachers are able to create an active and fun teaching and learning situation, it will motivate students. A good teaching and learning activity can be gained if the teachers make a good preparation before the class. From the data above, it was concluded that all lecturers made a good preparation before the class began.

Second, students got various learning experiences during IC. It was revealed by the fact that students could mention several teaching and learning activities, such as game, pair-wok, presentation, small group discussion, and others. Although students should attend six meetings in a week, none of the students responded negatively towards personal satisfaction.

One aspect that should be highlighted about students' perspective is listening. All students agreed that they had a good experience in learning reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar, and pronunciation. However, among all aspects, listening got the lowest score although its interpretation was still strongly positive. 80% students viewed listening as the most difficult aspect to be learned due to the vocabulary, authenticity, and speed. This perspective affected students' eagerness to study listening further. The lecturers, however, did not realize this condition since they did not mention listening aspect as one of difficulties in teaching.

Lecturers should be aware of their students' perspective towards teaching and learning process. Gardner in Lightbown and Spada (2001:56) mention that positive attitude

and motivation determine the success or failure of language learning. Gardner and Lambert in Lightbown and Spada (2001:56) classifies motivations into: integrative and instrumental motivation. They argue that integrative motivation tends to be oriented on personal need and cultural enrichment. Ortega in Barbee (2013) believes that this kind of motivation holds an important aspect in language learning. Meanwhile, instrumental motivation aims at practical accomplishment.

Meanwhile, lecturers have their own ways to deal with difficulties in teaching IC. One lecturer mentioned that she tried to match the topics with students' ability and gave enough time for the students to understand the topics. Further, other lecturer suggested Peer Coaching as an alternative way to promote students' participation. This can be done by having one student who will teach and guide other student towards a topic. This gives several benefits both for coach and student who is being coached. Both of them will gain confidence towards learning a second language. Also, the coach will become more understand about a certain topic because s/he is not only trying to make others understand but also at the same time s/he is trying to make her/himself understand. During the coach, s/he will generate rules and develop examples to explain about one thing. Meanwhile, student who is being coached will not feel stress for their talk with their own peer. Thus, it supports Saville-Troike (2006:90) argument that low anxiety and high self-confidence increase student motivation to learn, and make it more likely that they will use the L2 outside of the classroom setting.

It also found out that none of the lecturers finished all topics in the books. Surprisingly, one lecturer said that he sometimes skipped the discussion in the book in order to catch the next topic. He highlighted that this could be done only if the students were already understand about the topic.

Conclusion

Both students and lecturers had positive perspectives towards IC although gave different interpretation towards reading,

speaking, listening, writing, grammar, and pronunciation. Among the six aspects, listening got the lowest score. Although the students viewed strongly positive towards it, they mentioned that listening was the most difficult aspect to be learnt due to the vocabulary, authenticity, and speed. Unfortunately, the lecturers did not recognize this aspect to be troublesome since they did not mention it to be one of difficult matters.

Difficulties mostly faced by the lecturers, including time constraint, students various levels of proficiency, and the book. To compensate these problems, lecturers did various strategies, such as having pair-works, having written take home tasks, doing peer coaching, and others.

Suggestions

Based on the findings and discussion above, the researcher would suggest the lecturers as well as the competent author to look back to their syllabus since the lecturers in the field got difficulty in finishing the books. The researcher further asks whether there was a standard test after the implementation of this course or not. Tracing back to the reason of this course is equipping all students with pre-elementary level of proficiency. Although level of proficiency is a long continuum where someone is placed, still it must be measureable. Ideally, there should be a standard test to measure students' achievement no matter who the lecturers are.

The next researchers can investigate the effectiveness of this course in further study. Also, they can look deeper on students' personality or learning strategies.

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