

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS OF SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:The objectives of this study were to find out whether or not there was (1) a significant correlation between linguistic competence (LC) and speaking performance (SP), and (2) a contribution of linguistic competence to speaking performance. The method of the study was a correlational study. The population was the fourth, sixth, and the eighth semester students of English Education Study Program, Sriwijaya University in academic year of 2013/2014. The total number of the sample was 100 students. In this study, the students were given two kinds of tests, that is, linguistic competence test and speaking test used to measure the two main variables (LC and SP). The data obtained from the tests were analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment Coefficient on SPSS program for windows. The findings showed that there was a significant correlation between students' linguistic competence and their speaking performance. The correlation coefficient between linguistic competence and speaking performance was 0.315 and the correlation was low or weak. Furthermore, it was found that the influence of linguistic competence on speaking performance was 9.9 %. It is concluded that linguistic competence gave contribution to students' speaking performance.

Key words:*linguistic competence, correlation, speaking performance*

Talking about language as means of communication, it is necessary to consider the importance of language itself in our life. The importance of language in general had attracted the attention of scholars. Osisanwo (2003, p. 1, as cited in Adekunle & Aina, 2012, p. 1) sees language as "Human vocal noise or the arbitrary graphic presentation of this noise, used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for purposes of communication". Fromkin and Rodman (1993, p. 5) define language as a system

by which sounds and meanings are related. In addition, Kola (2008) defines language as "a complex and dynamic system of conventional symbols that are used in various modes for thought and communication" (p. 12).

The scientific study of human language that refers to linguistics has close relationship with language itself. Taha and Reishaan (2008, p. 35) argues that linguistics is concerned with the study of competence, and does not restrict itself to performance. The statement indicates that there is a

difference between competence and performance. Moreover, Chomsky (1965, as quoted in Finch, 2003, p. 16) distinguishes competence and performance as two types of linguistic ability. In linguistics, as cited by Hamerka (2009, p. 14), the term competence is used to describe the learner's capacity to produce a language. Another term, performance, denotes the production of actual utterances as a result of certain psychological processes (de Kort and Leerdam, as cited in Scha, 1990, p. 5).

Similarly, Fromkin and Rodman (1993) differentiate competence and performance as follows, "it is a difference between what you *know*, which is your linguistic competence and how you *use* this knowledge in actual speech production and comprehension, which is your linguistic performance" (pp. 11-12).

Based on Chomsky's theory, our linguistic competence is our unconscious knowledge of languages and the organizing principles of a language. Then, what we actually produce as utterances is called linguistic performance (Denham & Lobeck, 2013, p. 21). Furthermore, O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Aronoff, (1989) state, "...speakers of language know a system that enables them to create and understand novel utterances. This unconscious knowledge is often labeled linguistic competence" (p. 4).

Linguistic competence includes the rules of word formation and vocabulary (lexicon), pronunciation (phonology), and sentence formation (syntax). This knowledge of the language code is framed in terms of understanding the literal meaning of the utterance (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 1992, pp.164-166, as cited by Pillar, 2012, p. 6). Fromkin and Rodman (1993, p. 12) describe linguistic competence as "the linguistic system that includes the sounds, structures, meaning, words, and rules for putting

them all together". Furthermore, linguistic knowledge as represented in the speaker's mind is called a grammar. Fromkin (2000, p.7) defines grammar as follows :

A grammar includes everything one knows about the structure of one's language— its *lexicon* (the words or vocabulary in the mental dictionary), its *morphology* (the structure of words), its *syntax* (the structure of phrases and sentences and the constraints on well-formedness of sentences), its *semantics* (the meaning of words and sentences) and its *phonetics and phonology* (the sounds and the sound system or patterns)

Therefore, linguistic competence refers to the knowledge and ability of individuals for appropriate language use in the communicative events in which they find themselves in any particular speech community.

In attempting to describe linguistic competence, linguists construct a grammar, which is an explicit system of elements and rules that are needed to form and interpret sentences (O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, & Aronoff, 1989, p.4). Widdowson (1983, p. 1) state, "someone knowing a language knows more than how to understand, speak, read, and write sentences. He also knows how sentences are used to communicate effect". When a speaker of any language, no matter if the language is their first, or second, speaks the language, their performance results from their competence (Hamerka, 2009, p. 15).

According to Widdowson (1983, p. 1), the aims of a language teaching course are very often defined with reference to the four language skills: understanding speech (listening), speaking, reading, and writing. These aims relate to the kind of activity which the learners are to perform. Speaking is one of two productive skills in a language teaching.

Furthermore, Widdowson (1983, p. 57) states that speaking and writing are said to be active, or productive skills whereas listening and reading are said to be passive, or receptive skills. Speaking plays an important role in learning a foreign language because it is used as a measurement of knowing language. Widdowson (1983) argues, “speaking in the usage sense involves the manifestation either of the phonological system or of the grammatical system of the language or both” (p. 58). Therefore, the learners seem to be well aware of the fact that knowing language means being able to speak.

Speaking is a part of linguistic performance that takes input from linguistic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge is assumed as a theory rather than applied as linguistic performance. In linguistics, such in other science branches, the abstract theory and applied practice have relationship but the theory preceded its applied (Lyons, 1968, p. 70). According to Bygate (1987, p. 3), in order to achieve a communicative goal through speaking, there are two aspects to be considered – knowledge of the language, and skill in using this knowledge (as cited in Vilimec, 2006, p. 10).

In English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, linguistics is taught in the third semester under the subject called ‘Introduction to Linguistics’. In this course, the students are taught about basic components of linguistics including Phonology, Morphology, Pragmatics, Syntax, and Semantics. In the following semesters, those basic components of linguistics are taught in more details. So, those courses can help students to know the language. Fromkin and Rodman (1993) state, “When you know a language, you know the sounds, the words, and the rules for combination” (p. 11). The students can perform their knowledge

of language through four language skills especially speaking. Based on Chomsky’s theory, the knowledge of language is students’ linguistic competence as input in process of knowing language and speaking is output of linguistic performance (as cited by Chidambaram, 2005, p. 9).

Speaking is taught in four semesters, that is, IEC Speaking, Speaking I, Speaking II, and Speaking III. Although the students of English Education Study Program have taken both of the linguistics and speaking courses, some of the students’ speaking performance is not so good yet. When they speak, they often make mistakes in pronunciation and grammar.

However, the data taken from English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University showed 23.4 % of 41 students in year of entrance 2010 got A for IEC Speaking, 41% of 41 students got A for Speaking I, 58.5% of 41 students got A for Speaking II, and 78% of 41 students got A for Speaking III. Although the data showed that there was a progress in students’ speaking achievement, it must be supported by linguistic knowledge to measure the students’ speaking achievement. De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, and Hulstijn (2012, p. 14) found that the linguistic knowledge measures aspects of linguistic processing skills. So, it could be assumed that the students’ English ability in English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University are still not good yet since only 2.4 % of 41 students got A for Introduction to Linguistics and 34% of 41 students got lower than B.

Related to a previous study, students face many problems in speaking. Hamerka (2009, p. 39) in his survey found that there were possible causes the problems of students’ speaking performance. They were not enough opportunities to use English actively for communication (28 %), not enough opportunities to be in an

English-speaking environment (27%), psychical causes (19%), insufficient knowledge of English (10%), not enough opportunities to listen to spoken English (8%), the way of learning English in general (6%) and other causes (2%).

Based on the descriptions above, the students' linguistic competence might support their speaking achievement. Since speaking is very important for the students of English Education Study Program when they become teachers, they need to be aware of knowledge of language; whether it is high (positive) or low (negative) and how their linguistic competence correlates with and influence their speaking achievement. Therefore, the writer was interested in investigating whether or not there was any significant correlation between linguistic competence and speaking performance (total and partial) of English Education Study Program students of Sriwijaya University. If there was, the next purpose was to find out the contribution of linguistic competence (total and partial) to speaking performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used explanatory design which is a correlational design in which the researcher is interested in the extent to which two variables (or more) covary, that is, where changes in one variable are reflected in changes in the other (Creswell, 2012, p.340).

There were two variables in this study, independent variable (x) and dependent variable (y). The independent variable was students' linguistic competence, and the dependent variable was speaking performance of English Education Study Program students of Sriwijaya University.

The population of this study was students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University at

Indralaya in the academic year 2013/2014 that has studied Introduction to Linguistics subject. The writer chose fourth, sixth, and eighth semester students since they had the same characteristics. The total number of the population of the study was 123 students. In this study, the writer used total sampling method.

To collect the data for this study, tests were used. There were two tests in this study: the linguistic competence test and the speaking test. The linguistic competence test was administered to find out the students' linguistic competence. The linguistic competence test consisted of aspects or basic components of linguistics that is Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantic, and Pragmatics. The writer conducted the linguistic competence test based on a book 'An Introduction to Language' that was used by students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University. Then, the writer took some references not only from the book but also from internet for conducting the test. Besides, some items of the test were linguistics theories that related to definitions of each linguistics aspects. In order to measure students' speaking performance, speaking test was given. To do that, the students were given the same topic to talk about in 2-5 minutes which were video-taped recorded by using a digital camera. There were three steps to collect the data:

- Step 1 : The writer gave the topic
What is the unforgettable moment in your life? Why do you think so?
- Step 2: The students were given 5 minutes to think about the topic and their own sentences.
- Step 3: The students were asked one by one to speak and the writer video taped it.

To ensure that the instrument that the writer used was accurate, content validity was applied. The writer tried

out 50 questions of linguistic competence test to 30 students of English Education Study Program in Palembang as non sample students. The result of the analysis showed that 16 items of 50 items of the linguistics competence test were not valid because the correlation was below 0.361, but the writer only used 30 items to be administered to the sample that covered the aspects of linguistics in the same total number. To measure the reliability of the linguistic competence test, the writer used internal-consistency reliability. Cresswell (2012, p. 161) defines "the coefficient alpha is used to test for internal consistency". The writer analyzed the reliability of the instrument Cronbach's Alpha Method. To find the reliability the writer used SPSS version 21. It was found that Alpha obtained was 0.754. According to Wallen and Fraenkel (1991, p. 99), for research purposes, a rule thumb is that reliability should be at least 0.70 or preferably. Consequently, the result of the try out showed that the instrument was reliable.

The speaking test was validated by matching the test item with the objectives of the test. The objectives are to find out whether (1) the students are able to apply their knowledge of language in their speaking performance, (2) the students are able to speak using the content as rubric presents, they are: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and gesture. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of a speaking tests attention needs to be paid the quality of the speaking performance along with scoring that is based on the specific criteria to the particular testing context (Kim, 2006, p. 2). The students' speaking performance scored by two raters based on a rubric that consists of six criteria.

To find out whether or not there was a significant correlation between linguistic competence and speaking

performance of English Education Study Program students of Sriwijaya University, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) type 21. In addition, regression analysis was applied to test whether independent variable (Linguistic competence) significantly determined the dependent variable (students' speaking performance). Regression analysis was used to support the correlation coefficient analysis and to find out how much the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable.

FINDINGS

The Result of the Linguistic Competence Test

Based on Table 1, it was found that the highest score of linguistic competence test was 28 and the lowest score was 9. The mean score was 19.27 and the standard deviation was 3.604. From the table, it can be seen that 2 (2%) students were categorized as very good, 39 (39%) students were categorized as good, 35 (35%) students were categorized as fair, 12 (12%) were categorized as poor, and 2 (2%) students were categorized as very poor.

Furthermore, having divided the students by the semester, the writer found that in semester IV there were 10 (28.6%) students categorized having good linguistic competence, 17 (48.6%) students categorized having fair linguistic competence, 7 (20%) students categorized having poor linguistic competence, and 1 (2.9%) students categorized having very poor linguistic competence. In semester VI, there were 22 (59.5%) students categorized having good linguistic competence, 9 (25.7%) students categorized having fair linguistic competence, 5 (14.3%) students categorized having poor linguistic competence, and 1 (2.9%) students categorized having very poor

linguistic competence. In semester VIII, there were 2 (7.1%) students categorized having very good, 7 (25%) students categorized having good linguistic competence, and 19 (67.9) students categorized having fair linguistic competence.

Table 1
Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Linguistic Competence (N=100)

Variable	No of Student			N total
	IV	VI	VIII	
Linguistic Competence				
Very Good	0	0	2	2
Good	10	22	7	39
Fair	17	9	19	35
Poor	7	5	0	12
Very Poor	1	1	0	2
Total	35	37	28	100

The Result of Speaking Test

The result of the students speaking test showed that the highest point was 24 and the lowest score was 10 with 18.37 for the mean and 2.269 for the standard deviation. In Table 4.2 below, it can be seen that from total, there was none (0%) student categorized as excellent, 11 (11%) students were categorized as good, 71 (71%) students were categorized as average, 17 (17%) students were categorized as poor, and 1 (1%) student was categorized as very poor in speaking performance.

From Table 2, it can also be seen that in semester IV none of the students was excellent, 2 students were good, 21 were average, 11 students were poor, and 1 student was very poor in speaking performance. In semester VI, there was no student categorized as excellent, 2 students were categorized as good, 30 students were categorized as average, 5 students were categorized as poor, and no student categorized as very poor in speaking performance. In semester VIII, there was no student categorized as

excellent, 7 students were categorized as good, 20 students were categorized as average, 1 student was categorized as poor, and no student was categorized as very poor in speaking performance

Table 2
Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Test (N=100)

Variable	No of Student			N total
	IV	VI	VIII	
Speaking Performance				
Excellent	0	0	0	0
Good	2	2	7	11
Average	21	30	20	71
Poor	11	5	1	17
Very Poor	1	0	0	1
Total	35	37	28	100

The Correlation and Linear Regression Analysis (Total)

In order to find out whether or not there was a significant correlation between students' linguistic competence and their speaking performance, the writer used the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula which was done by using SPSS version 21 for windows. The following table shows the correlation between two variables.

Table 3
Correlation between Linguistic Competence and Speaking Performance (N=100)

Model	r	R square	Adjusted R Square	p.value
1	.315 ^a	.099	.090	.001

From the table above, it was found that the correlation coefficient (r) between linguistic competence and speaking performance was .315, which is categorized in low or weak category. Based on the degree of correlation coefficient (see Sugiyono, 2010, p. 245), the range between 0.20-0.40 is low

or weak. It means there was a correlation between two variables.

Furthermore, the table showed that the significant level was less than .05 ($p = .001$). So, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. It can be concluded that there was a significant correlation between linguistic competence and speaking performance of English Education Study Program students of Sriwijaya University Indralaya Campus.

Since there was a significant correlation between linguistic competence and speaking performance (total), the data analysis was continued by using linear regression to find out how much the influence of linguistic competence to speaking performance. The analysis was done by using SPSS version 21 for windows. The contribution of linguistic competence can be seen from R_{square} . The R_{square} is .099, so linguistic competence contributed 9.9 % to the students' speaking performance.

Multiple Regression Analysis (Partial)

There were five aspects (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) of linguistics and six aspects (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and gesture) of speaking performance, the writer tried to find out the contribution of linguistics competence aspects to speaking performance.

The contribution of linguistic competence aspects can be seen from R_{square} . linguistic competence aspects to pronunciation was .086, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 8.6% to students' pronunciation in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to grammar was .110, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 11% to students' grammar in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to vocabulary was .113, so

aspects of linguistic competence contributed 11.3% to students' vocabulary in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to fluency was .118, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 11.8% to students' fluency in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to comprehension was .090, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 9% to students' comprehension in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to gesture was .044, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 4.4% to students' gesture in speaking.

The significant level existed if $sig.(\alpha \text{ value} < .05)$. All aspects of linguistic competence significantly contributed to speaking performance. There were four aspects of speaking performance were influenced by linguistic competence aspects, that is, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The significant level of linguistic competence aspects in grammar was .049 from all aspects of linguistic competence. The significant level linguistic competence aspects in vocabulary was .043 especially from pragmatics was .007. The significant level linguistic competence aspects in fluency was .036 especially from pragmatics was .009. The significant level linguistic competence aspects in comprehension was .016 especially from morphology was .013.

DISCUSSION

The contribution of linguistic competence aspects can be seen from R_{square} . From the table above, the R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to pronunciation was .086, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 8.6% to students' pronunciation in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to grammar was .110, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 11% to students' grammar in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence

aspects to vocabulary was .113, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 11.3% to students' vocabulary in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to fluency was .118, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 11.8% to students' fluency in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to comprehension was .090, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 9% to students' comprehension in speaking. The R_{square} of linguistic competence aspects to gesture was .044, so aspects of linguistic competence contributed 4.4% to students' gesture in speaking.

The significant level existed if $\text{sig.}(\alpha \text{ value} < .05)$. From Table 4.4, it shows that not all aspects of linguistic competence significantly contributed to speaking performance. There were four aspects of speaking performance were influenced by linguistic competence aspects, that is, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The significant level of linguistic competence aspects in grammar was .049 from all aspects of linguistic competence. The significant level linguistic competence aspects in vocabulary was .043 especially from pragmatics was .007.

The significant level linguistic competence aspects in fluency was .036 especially from pragmatics was .009. The significant level linguistic competence aspects in comprehension was .016 especially from morphology was .013.

CONCLUSION

The result of the test showed that there was not so significant correlation between linguistic competence and speaking performance of English Education Study Program students of Sriwijaya University. From the data analysis, it could be seen that there was low influence of linguistic competence in speaking performance. Most of the

students who were in good category of linguistic competence got the same category on speaking performance. Moreover, the students who got poor or very poor category on linguistic competence got same category in speaking performance.

The contribution of linguistic knowledge could be seen from the students' linguistic competence score. The best scores of linguistic competence test showed that the students had enough knowledge of English so that they applied their knowledge to their speaking performance. Consequently, the students' performance was influenced by their linguistic competence.

Two suggestions are offered to the students (student-teacher) and future researchers. First, to the students, keep up practicing because practice makes perfect. They also must balance between possessing knowledge of language and mastering of language skills. When they possess a certain knowledge of language, they should apply the rules in their language skills. Second, to future researchers, it is suggested that they separate the linguistic aspects to correlate a certain skill. In addition, it is better that future researchers give a questionnaire to know the students' interested in linguistics related to certain skill if they would like to correlate knowledge of language to language skills, especially speaking skill.

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