



Integration or Segregation? (Lecturers' Perception on the Use of Whole Language Method in Integrating the Teaching of the All Four Language Skills in Universities around West Java)

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Abstract

The research is aimed at finding out the perception of English Education Study Program lecturers on the teaching and assessment of language skills whether they need to be taught in segregation or integration. There have been many research results stating that the teaching of the all four language skills is proven to be more successful when it is done in integration. However, in Indonesia, mostly the teaching is still in segregation. The respondents of the research were 68 lecturers of English Education Study programs united at APSPBI, an association of English Education Study Program. The research employed descriptive method with the instruments of online questionnaires, interview, and documentation. The online questionnaires consisted of six questions and they were spread out through social media. The interview was conducted to five lecturers of different universities and the documents analyzed were books on speaking, reading, listening and writing skills used at the universities where the respondents teach. The result shows that 80% of the respondents still teach the English skills separately. However, 64% from the total number agree that the skill should be taught in integration. 50% of books used by the lecturers are integrated. Even though mostly the lecturers agree to the skills integration, in fact some of them still find themselves focusing on one skill to be emphasized in one meeting. Mostly the lecturers prefer the assessment to be conducted in integration yet most of the books still separate the assessment based on the skills.

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INTRODUCTION

The dispute over the integration or segregation of teaching English skills has been going on for decades. Those who believe that English skills should be taught

per skill base the idea on focusing the teaching. When the teacher is about to improve the students' speaking skill, then the activity in the classroom needs to be all requiring students to speak. It is also assumed that teaching English skills in isolation follows the way native speaker teachers teach (Kecira and Shllaku, 2014). On the other hand, some teachers and lecturers convert themselves to hold the belief that English skills cannot be taught in isolation. The basis of this belief is what happens in daily life. When somebody is writing, usually he or she can write well because he or she has read. Somebody speaks after listening to others' opinion. Harmer (1999) adds that speaking and listening usually happen simultaneously and people may well read and write at the same time when they make notes or write something based on what they are reading.

The first linguist who encourages the integration of language skills was Widdowson (1978). The followers of Widdowson argue that people might read news and react to the news in so many different ways such as talking and writing about it. Byrne (1990) states that integrating the language skills in the classroom provide the students with the natural setting of communication.

In the real communication, people cannot respond well when they do not listen carefully. However, there is an assumption that to train students to respond (by speaking or writing), they have to be taught how to write and how to speak. However, according to the questionnaire distributed by the writer to some English lecturers, especially in West Java, Indonesia, they still isolate the teaching of one skill from the others. If the teacher of reading, for example, only asks the students to read a text and then answer the questions below the text, then they will do it, and after doing the task, the text is ignored. If this is what happens, where does communication take place? Hersan Z.M (1998) states that today, the most important purpose of learning a language is being able to communicate. Therefore, in a so called reading class, the teacher probably gives a text which is in a form of a letter. After reading the letter, the students are asked to compose the reply of the letter. This activity is communicating.

Another example of task that makes the students communicate is stated by Byrne (1990). He says that the teacher could ask the students to read an advertisement and to react to it such as calling a friend or chatting with someone about the job. One of the syllabuses using this pattern is found in India made by the government of Tamilnadu, in the year of 2008. When the skills are not taught

together, the teaching learning process will not be meaningful because it is the language that is the focus, not the communication. This is what is called as language for language's sake (Oxford, 2001). In the classroom where one skill is emphasized, usually the teacher teaches strategies like reading strategies: guessing meaning from context, predicting, etc. The teacher will also say that to be successful readers, the students should implement those strategies which are actually can also be used in other skills (Peregoy and Boyle, 2001). Nonetheless, some experts such as Richards and Rodgers (2001) think that segregated skill teaching is not meaningful.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Integrated language instruction that makes the students communicate meaningfully can help them reach their learning objective and it can be done in various models, with many teaching materials, and techniques (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Actually, according to Hinkel (2001), teaching reading can be connected to instruction on writing and vocabulary, teaching writing can be easily bond to reading and grammar, and speaking skill is associated to teaching listening, pronunciation, and cross-cultural pragmatics. The integration of language skills is also in accordance with what is provided by *The Common European Framework of Languages* stating that:

To carry out communicative tasks, users have to engage in communicative language activities and operate communication strategies. Many communicative activities, such as conversation and correspondence, are *interactive*, that is to say, the participants alternate as producers and receivers, often with several turns. In other cases, as when speech is recorded or broadcast or written texts are sent out or published, producers are separated from receivers, whom they may not even know and who are unable to respond. In these cases the communicative event can be regarded as *the speaking, writing, listening to or reading* of a text (CRF, 2006 in Kecira 2014).

It can be inferred that the framework suggests educators especially English teachers and instructors to teach the students to make them finally able to communicate. Being able to communicate means that the students can listen and can speak out their response on what they have listened to and they can write as the response of what they have already read, and so on.

Besides many advantages that have been found from integrating the teaching of language skills, students' condition in discrete language classes has to be considered:

"Students tend to get bored when they are just handed a text and told to read and answer the questions that follow. As they do not have enough motivation, they are not actively engaged in the task they are given. Furthermore, when the comprehension questions are done and checked, the text is left out." (Yilmzer, 1997 cited in Baturay, 2014).

From the statement above, it can be inferred that in a class where reading is not connected to the other skills, the class' condition becomes boring and students are not motivated to learn more. They tend to be passive. When the questions that test their comprehension have been answered, they know that the class is going to be over soon. Thus, it is a routine activity that is monotonous.

In a classroom where reading skill is part of the name of the course, the teacher will focus on the strategies to be applied to encounter reading text, give the students embedded questions, discuss the answer and finally the class is over. In listening class, more or less the same activities happen: after listening to an audio, students are given questions related to the recording. Then the teacher and the students discuss the answers and that is all the listening class. If these things happen over and over again, students will feel bored and learning will not take place.

Grellet (1981) in Baturay (2014) states that sometimes people react to something by speaking up their ideas after they read something, not after they listen to something. It means that linking one skill to the other skills is important. Finocchiaro (1973) said that a good educator knows the necessity of integrating language skills in the communicative situations, which is similar to the real life situations in which students will need to use the foreign language. When reading is practiced through other skills 'integratedly' as in real life, it will become more interesting, motivating and effective for the students. By integrating the teaching of the skills, there will be no routine boring English classes since the classes are created with different settings in each meeting.

Another reason for teaching discrete language skills is because the teacher has to teach strategies, such as reading strategies, listening strategies, and so on. To make the students stay focused and practice the strategies that they have just learned, teachers think that the teaching has to be segregated. The thought is not correct. The strategies that can be used for reading comprehension can also be used in listening. Dubin and Olshtain (1987) cited in Baturay (2014) said that listening and reading share a number of features and both are very necessary in

communication. From that statement, we can understand that there are similarities between strategies that can be implemented in both of the receptive skills. Guessing meaning from the context is one of the strategies that is common for both reading and listening. Not only receptive and receptive, the combination of receptive skill and productive skill is also proven to be supporting each other as Tierney, R.J, & Shanahan (1991) said, "developments in reading and writing are closely related." It means that when the lecturer would like to improve students' productive skills, give them enough input by doing many activities related to receptive skills. When receptive skills i.e. reading and listening are combined with productive skills which are speaking and writing, it is expected that the result will be promising.

Two Types of Skill Integration

There are two types of skill-integration. They are content based instruction and task based instruction. In content based instruction, students practice all of the language skills in a highly integrated and communicative way. The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), created by Chamot and O'Malley (1994) shows how language learning strategies can be integrated into the simultaneous learning of content and language (ERIC Transformation Team, 2014).

Other experts have established an approach whose principle is an integration of the four skills with grammar and pronunciation. The approach is called as Whole Language. Whole Language principles, which I view to be similar with the integration of teaching language skills offer more holistic view of language teaching since it is based on relevant sciences like sociology and psychology (Ling, 2012). Whole Language might be old, but recently it is widely used again because it is considered effective to solve teaching learning problems.

Ling (2012) writes that Whole Language approach or the integration of language teaching skills can solve at least the following problems: 1) Problems of the teachers. What it means by problems of the teachers are among all grammar and vocabulary oriented. Many teachers are found to put grammar and vocabulary as their focus of teaching practices. In fact what students need to be able to use English do not depend only on grammar and vocabulary. By integrating the language skills, students will be involved in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Grammar and pronunciation can be included in the

discussion even though they are not the main focus of the teaching; 2) the problems of the students. The problems include: slow reading, vocalizing, mental translating, and being too dependent on dictionaries. By having whole language approach or integrating the language skill teaching, those problems can be solved since the four language skills especially reading are done regularly. Many studies have shown that when reading or listening is done quite frequently, students' vocabulary can be improved.

Similar to the principles of language skills integration, Whole Language has characteristics such as: integrated learning, thematic, authentic, contextual, and collaborative (Dian, 2016). Because of the good characteristics, many experts believe that Whole Language is strongly connected to progressive education. Meyer, one of the experts interviewed by Giles (2006) said that progressive education means teacher reflection, locally grown curriculum, child centeredness, teacher research, a view of children as fundamentally good and curious, a view of learning as social and cultural and the importance of ongoing teacher conversation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

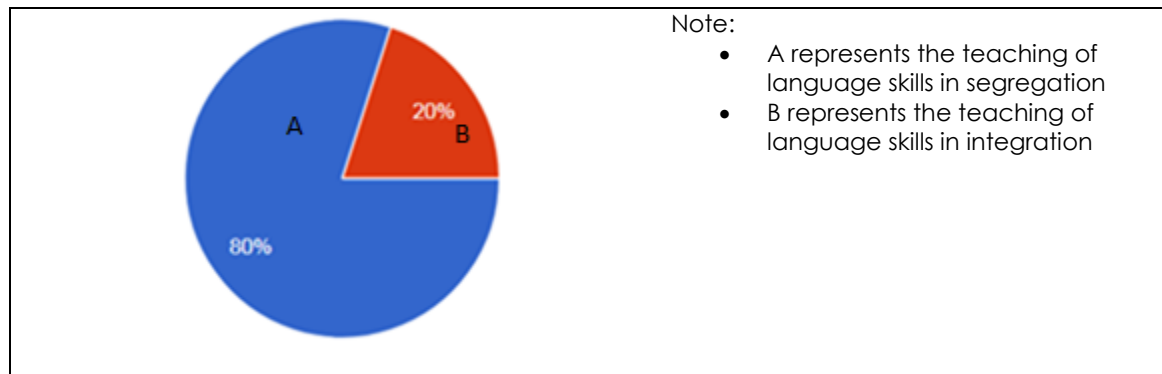
The research employed descriptive method using three kinds of instruments i.e. online questionnaire, interview questions, and documentation. The respondents were chosen using purposive sampling method. They were chosen because they are members of association of English Education Study Program who are gathered in an association namely APSPBI (an association of English study programs containing 68 lecturers of English subject) in West Java, Indonesia. The online questionnaire is composed using google forms and passed on through social media and filled out by the respondents. They only need to click the URL available in the group and answer the questions. The responses are then automatically recorded in the researcher's google drive. Besides using questionnaire, the research also digs deeper information from interview questions.

The interview was conducted to five lecturers of English from the same group but work in different universities. Finally the data is also gained from analyzing some documents. The documents used are books from various publishers and some are used in the universities where the interviewed lecturers work and some other books are sold for public at bookstore.

FINDINGS

The Way the English Skills Are Taught

80% of the respondents answered that in their institution, the English skills are still taught in isolation. Reading, listening, speaking and writing classes are always available from semester one to five and are taught independently. Reading is taught usually by giving the students a text. The text is then discussed together to find put the gist of the reading and difficult vocabulary are deliberated. The next activity, which is always, is the students are asked to answer the embedded questions. Different from reading, listening class is usually conducted at a laboratory.



Picture 1
How English is Taught

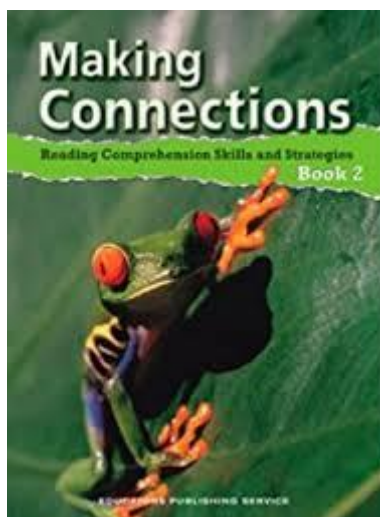
The laboratory of listening provides sets of audio and one big screen that can be seen by everyone in the room. The material is commonly a text with some gaps and the missing words can be found by listening to the recording. There is no activity of speaking unless answering the questions posed by the lecturer. Speaking is taught in the classroom and commonly students take turns to present the material.

Presentation is the most common technique in a speaking class. The teacher mentions the topic and the students take turns to present their material. Real communication does not exist since mostly the students presenting deliver the material and the audience only passively listen. Seldom do the students take a note relating to what the presenters deliver.

The other skill which is writing is usually taught by first explaining to the students how a good writing is like, how it is to construct a paragraph or an essay. The teacher explains the rule before finally asking the students to compose their own writing.

From the interview, all of the lecturers (five people) said that the way skills are taught in their institution is still in separation. The lecturers at the institutions have been grouped in accordance with their expertise and are coordinated by one lecturer. Therefore when one belongs to the group of lecturers of reading, for example, then they will keep teaching reading from year to year. This kind of grouping is expected to make the lecturers become experts on one skill and the materials from one semester to another will not be overlapped since there is a coordinator.

The coordinator also has an authority to choose which book that is going to be used for the whole semester. The books are some integrated and some are separated. However, even though the book is integrated but the teaching is separated. So the speaking part is taught in speaking class, the reading part is taught in reading class, and so on. The following is one of the books used:

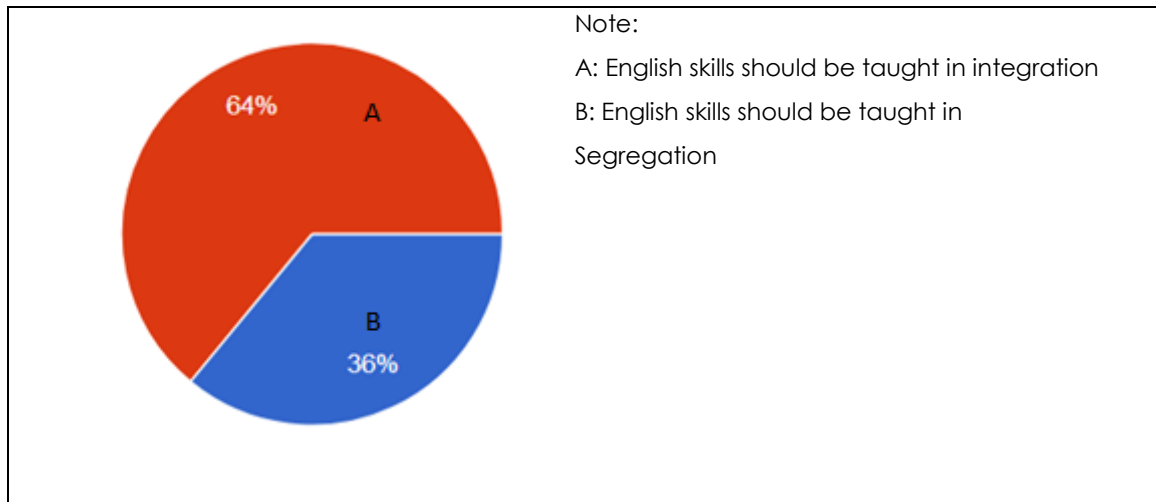


Picture 2

One of the books used

Teachers' Opinion on How the Skills Should Be Taught

The teachers think that English skills should be taught in integration (64%) even though in their institution they still have to teach it in isolation since the naming of the courses is still speaking, listening, reading, and writing.



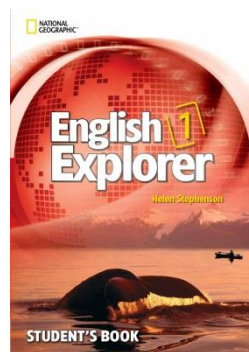
Picture 3

Teachers' opinion on how the skills should be taught

Based on the interview answer, one of the teachers admitted that she integrated the skills within courses whose names are still skill based, yet she assessed the students according to the name of the course. For example, in a speaking class, she distributed a text to be read and discussed in pairs. After discussing, the students are asked to either write or present their understanding in front of the class. In a so called 'speaking' course, the assessment taken is the students' speaking ability.

However another respondent said that it would be hard to teach in an integrated skills class since each lecturer has his or her own expertise. In his opinion, if the skills were integrated in a class, a lecturer who is used to teach listening would dominate the class activities with listening activities.

Even though the book used has been integrated, but the use of the book in the classroom is still separated. The lecturer who teaches speaking class will only take the speaking part and the lecturer who teaches listening will do the same thing. The following is one of the books:



Picture 4

One of the books used in the classrooms

The Teachers' Reasons behind the Integration or the Segregation of Teaching Skills

Various answers appeared when the respondents were asked the question. Those supporting the idea of segregation mention several reasons such as: a) the lack of time; b) being focused in teaching; c) the ease of assessing.

| |
|--|
| Bahasa Inggris sebaiknya diajarkan secara terintegrasi supaya stimulasinya lebih maksimal (2) |
| Karena sebagai manusia, dalam menguasai bahasa untuk pertama kali pun secara bertahap. |
| Dg terintegrasi maka tujuan pembelajaran bs disamakan |
| In real world we use communicative skills simultaneously. Not only do we listen, but also talk. It's impossible to converse without listening to our counterpart. How would we respond accordingly? In many cases, we also write to reply or to respond to what we have read. In addition, receptive skills and productive skills support each other in developing and shaping the language learned. |
| Bahasa tidak hanya terdiri atas empat keterampilan, melainkan juga melibatkan penguasaan kosa kata dan penguasaan tata bahasa. Selain itu, terdapat perihal paralinguistik lain seperti sosiolinguistik dan antropinguistik. Dengan demikian, pengajaran bahasa yang melibatkan semua aspek tersebut di atas harus dilakukan secara terintegrasi. |
| supaya mhs bisa belajar berinteraksi langsung dg bhs Inggris |
| Terpisah agar peserta didik lebih fokus |
| Matkul B Inggris di institusi kami merupakan matkul umum, yg hanya dipelajari 2 smt, tampak blm memungkinkan diajarkan scra terpisah. |

Picture 5

The Teachers' Reasons behind the Integration or the Segregation of Teaching Skills

Respondents who do not upkeep the segregation of teaching skills also have several reasons such as: 1) approaching real life situation; 2) one can react with different skills toward something; 3) it is impossible to isolate one skill from the others. The respondents' answers through interview also represent what they write on the questionnaire.

The Naming of the Integrated Courses

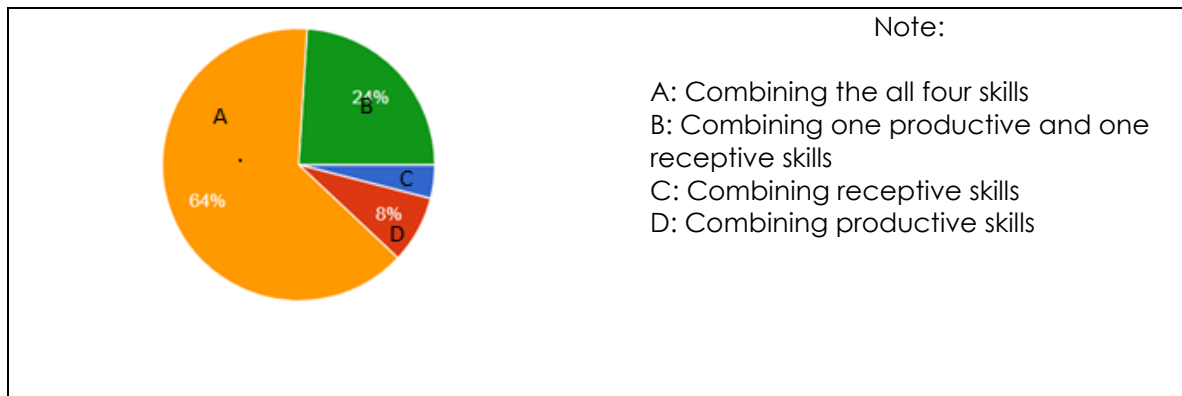
To integrate the teaching of skills, it is also important to consider the name of the course. Hence, the respondents are asked to give a name of the course. Several names are collected. They are: English for Specific Purposes, Integrated Basic Listening – Speaking, Academic Reading and Writing, English for Social Interactions, Reading-Writing Connections, etc.

| |
|--|
| Nama mata kuliahnya bisa berdasarkan tema materi tertentu, misalkan mata kuliah 'Shakespeare', mulai dari membaca/menyimak karya, menuliskan analisa/apresiasi/resume dll, menyimak dan memperagakan/diskusi/debat karya Shakespeare (2) |
| English for Basic Level |
| Integrated reading and writing |
| The name does not have to contain the word 'integrated'. It will depend on the faculty where the English class is given. Whatever purpose of the English given in the respective faculty, the point is that the communicative skills are presented integratedly. |
| Integrated language course |
| ya nama mata kuliahnya juga dlm bhs Inggris |
| Writing Dan speaking, peserta didik bisa membuat pendapat diawali dgn menulis lalu di komunikasikan dgn lisan |
| English 1, English 2, dst |
| Saya tidak setuju terintegrasi. Tapi, seandainya dilakukan, mungkin mata kuliahnya berjudul "Integrated English Competency" ?? |

Picture 6
The Naming of the Integrated Courses

How Integrated is "Integration"?

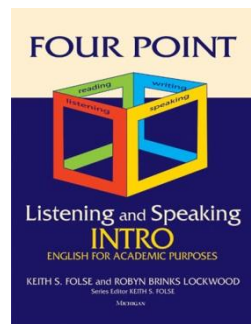
The debate on integration does not stop yet. How integrated is integration? Is it the integration between all productive skills and receptive skills or only one productive and one receptive skills i.e. reading and writing then listening and speaking?



Picture 7
How Integrated is Integration?

64% of the respondents stated that the integration of teaching English skill is supposed to be a combination between one receptive skill and one productive skill, while 24% of them agree to combine the all four of the skills in each meeting.

The same conclusion is also drawn from the interview with the lecturers. Mostly believe that the integration of two skills is more feasible then the integration of all four skills. Mostly books used at classrooms also integrate only two skills which consist of one productive and one receptive skill. The following is the example of the books:

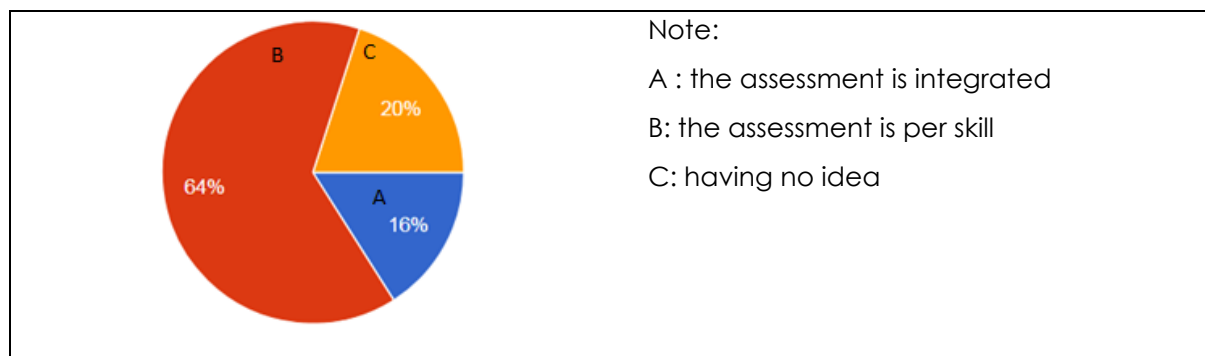


Picture 8

An example of books integrating two skills

The Assessment

Even though skill integration in teaching is seemed to 'win' the discussion, the assessment is still another problem. 20% of the respondents assume that the assessment needs to be separated. The 'end product' still needs to be in the form of speaking, reading, writing, or listening ability. The same thing is found in the English books. The rubrics of assessment from several books are still skill-based. However, in the universities where the teaching of skills has been integrated, the assessment is also integrated and not skill based.



Picture 9

The Assessment

From the interview done with the lecturers, some of them said that class assessment, an assessment which is done in every meeting through seeing students' participation in the teaching learning process without administering formal test is the best way to assess students in an integrated class. Some other teachers believe that using portfolio is the best way.

The books used in the classroom do not indicate clearly about how to assess the students even though some other books also have some exercise to test students' understanding on the materials that have been given.

Discussion

Lecturers perceive that English language skills are better taught in integration instead of in segregation this is in accordance with some experts' statements such as Widdowson (1978). Unfortunately, even though the lecturers have already been aware that the teaching of the skills should be integrated, many institutions still maintain the belief of having segregated classes such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading in each semester. This is due to the confusion of the naming of the integrated classes and the way of assessing the students' achievement. From the questionnaire distributed to the lecturers, there are some ideas of naming the integrated classes such as Basic Skills of English, English for Social Interaction, etc. It means that the confusion of naming the courses probably appear because the integration of language skills teaching has not been familiar. However, when it has been decided to integrate the teaching of language skills, fresh ideas will come up and can be made suitable with the purpose of the courses.

Another problem seemed to be hard to solve is about the assessment. So far, the 'scores' they have in segregated classes are in accordance with the skills taught. For instance, a student might have A in reading class but B in speaking class. When the classes are integrated, there is a big question such as the form of the tests and the final score calculation. Hence, some experts have found several solutions for the problem. The solutions are among others portfolio and classroom assessment.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the findings above, it can be concluded that mostly lecturers agree that the teaching of the four skills need to be integrated. But the integration does not necessarily mean the all four skills. It could be only involving two skills (one receptive and one productive) in each meeting. However, in fact, mostly the institution still names the classes according to the skill being taught such as: Listening, speaking, writing, and reading classes. An interesting fact found in the class is that even though the naming is still skill based, some of the lecturers actually have implemented the integrated skills. For example while teaching in speaking class, he or she brings with him or her reading materials to be discussed and after discussing the materials, the lecturers ask the students to speak out their opinion on

the materials given. That is actually integrated.

The books used in the classes are mostly integrated yet in its practice, the lecturers use the books according to the skill they teach. While talking about the assessment, there are two alternatives of assessments which are classroom assessment and portfolio. It can be inferred that the lecturers involved in this research perceive that the English skills are better taught in integration and it is not a big deal to integrate the teaching of the skills since the books used and the lecturers' understanding are ready to implement it.

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