



THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INVOLVING SPEAKING AND WRITING TEST IN NATIONAL EXAMINATION FOR SMA GRADUATION

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ABSTRACT

This article is to analyze and observe how far is the contribution of writing and speaking test in National Examination and their implementation in the evaluation process during the process of learning. Based on the analysis it was found that the English subject tested in national examinations is dominantly measure the cognitive competence of the students because the content of the test question is only consist of listening and reading skill. There are six types of speaking: speaking confidently, informal conversation, interviews, in the work place, beauty pageants, general speaking skills, pantomime script, teacher, extemporaneous speaking. In mastering writing skill, students have to own much knowledge of grammar, knowing well about punctuation and sentence structure as well as rich vocabulary, correct spelling and formatting. In other words it could be said that it is very important to involve the speaking and writing test during the learning process to train students to be able to pass the English National Examination. By mastering speaking and writing skill SMA graduation will be able follow some sort of TOEFL or IELTS test to continue their studies abroad, or get a job at the company, it takes skill to speak and write in the interview test.

Keywords: Speaking and Writing Test, National Examination, Students

I. Introduction

National examination is not the end of struggle for the SMA graduation, but the beginning to start a new thing . The new things that will appear can be answered from the following question. " Where are they going after graduating from high school ? " .Do they go to university or work ?.This question that always arises in the minds of many students who have graduated from high school. Many of them are confused about where they were after graduating high school .

Whether to continue studying at a university , or want to find a job , or want to get married. In order to find the job, students should pass the interview and writing

test. The interview and writing test is not an easy step to pass for them whenever they are not well trained during the the process of learning.

The subjects tested in national examinations (Indonesian, Mathematics, Natural Science or Social Science and English) are considered to represent the material required of SMA students to be able to obtain jobs after graduation. In fact many SMA graduation are not able to pass job interview or written test required by the company. This problem arise mostly just because of the missing of language skills, especially English. The English subject is tested in the form of objective test and it is dominantly measure the cognitive competence of the students because the content of the test question is only consist of listening and reading skill.

The language skills which should be mastered by the SMA students after graduations are : Listening, reading, Speaking and writing. These four language skills are integrated in the English learning process. Meanwhile speaking and writing are very important to actualize the competence especially when they are in the job area. Speaking and writing competence will much more help when some one conduct the job especially in the area of products marketing, and to border the discussion of this paper the writer will discuss the contributions of speaking (interview competence) and writing (explanation competence) to the SMA graduation in the products marketing job area.

Many genres of writing as well as the types of speaking could contribute to the SMA graduation . Among others are: a). Writing genres (narrative, descriptive, exposition, explanation, argumentation) b). types of speaking. (speech, dialogue, debate, discussion, interview). When these genres and type are carefully studied and mastered well by the SMA graduation especially the interview competence in speaking and the explanation competence in writing , it is found that all of them will be able to pass the job interview and test after graduation. The problems start from teachers' failure in managing the teaching materials and of course it happens to every subject matter. It should be understood that to every subject a teacher or teachers, students should be trained well. This condition will not be gained if the teachers are not success in managing their materials appropriately based on students' need after graduation. The second is how a teacher or teachers exercise the students by using the suitable form of evaluation during the process of learning.

It is known that the good way to evaluate students' achievement upon the taught materials is by assessing them. However, the quality of assessment – which occurs as questions for students' daily exercises are not so satisfied. It has been mentioned above, that many teachers' made – questions are trivial. It is in line with Wragg (2001: 16) who stated that assessment may concentrate too much on what is easily measured instead of what is important. The word important leads to the more crucial discussion that shows the reality of UN's items. All the english questions available in UN are listening and reading comprehension. While in fact what they need after graduation is that the competence of facing job interview and writing test. What students need is vary based on real condition.

Evaluation should be able to answer all of the information about the level of achievement of predetermined objectives . Education is geared to deliver power

that is able to work smart and intelligent work force can not be measured simply by the periodic test (Soedijarto , 1993a : 17) . For the evaluation of intelligence should be able to answer learners' ability to work simultaneously . The objective test form will make learners pursuing cognitive abilities and can even be achieved by memorizing only. This means that students who pass the examination in the form of objective test is not smart especially in skilled work , it simply said that eventhough a student does not understand about the test completely but he/she can do the test. Consequently, the evaluation system must be developed that can answer all the skills learned and acquired during the process or learning. It must be done comprehensively or thoroughly with various forms and carried out continuous and sustained (Soedijarto , 1993 p :27 - 29) .

Based on the explanation above the writer found how the contributions of the involving speaking and writing test in National examination (UN) for SMA graduation and how it is implemented in the evaluation process during the process of learning so that they are able to face the job interview they applied.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Speaking

There are a lot of definitions of the word “speaking” that have been suggested by the researchers in language learning. In Webster New World Dictionary, speaking is to say words orally, to communicate as by talking, to make a request, and to make a speech (Nunan, 1995). According to Chaney (1998), speaking is the process of making and sharing meaning by using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) defined speaking as an interactive process of making meaning that includes producing, receiving, and processing information.

Bygate (1987) defined speaking as the production of auditory signals to produce different verbal responses in listeners. It is regarded as combining sounds systematically to form meaningful sentences. Eckard and Kearny (1981), Florez (1999), Howarth (2001), and Abd El Fattah Torky (2006) defined speaking as a two-way process including a true communication of opinions, information, or emotions. This top-down view regards the spoken texts as the collaboration between two or more persons in the shared time and the shared context.

2.1.1 The Importance of Speaking

Humans are programmed to speak before they learn to read and write. In any given, human beings spend much more time interacting orally with language rather than using it in its written form. Speaking is the most important skill because it is one of the abilities that is needed to perform a conversation. English speaking is not an easy task because speakers should know many significant components like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Learners should have enough English speaking ability in order to communicate easily and effectively with other people. Rivers (1981) studied the use of language outside the classroom situation and understood that speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing combined. According to Brown (1994), listening and speaking are learners' language tools.

Efrizal (2012) Pourhose in Gilakjani (2016) expressed that speaking is of great significance for the people interaction where they speak everywhere and every day. Speaking is the way of communicating ideas and messages orally. If

we want to encourage students to communicate in English, we should use the language in real communication and ask them to do the same process.

2.2 Definition of Writing

According to Heaton (1975: 127) writing is a task which involves students to make grammatically correct sentences by manipulating words in the form of a piece of continuous writing with successfully communicates the writers' ideas on a certain topic. The statement shows that the main purpose writing is to express ideas, thoughts, and writing clearly in a written language. From the definition above the writer can conclude that by using writing, we can share our idea, feeling or anything that exist in our mind. Writing is one way of making meaning experience.

2.2.1 Whether writing tests improve students' writing competence and knowledge in curriculum?

Richards and Renandya (2001), the authors of *Methodology in Language Teaching*, stated, "If we test directly the skills that we are interested in fostering, then practice for the test represents practice in those skills. If we want people to learn how to write compositions, we should get them to write compositions in the test" (p.54). Because the act of writing involves the production of a written piece, actual writing samples, or direct measures of writing, now are viewed as a more appropriate means for assessing writing performance because they more nearly approximate real discourse (Carlson, Bridgeman, Camp & Waanders, 1985).

2.2.2 Strengths of Writing Test

One of the qualities of the essay test is that it allows students to think outside the box. Students have an opportunity to discuss and express their feelings and viewpoints as well as sharing their life experiences. This is related to what Jacobs (2010) describes the *Strengths of Essay Items* as followed:

- i) Essay items are an effective way to measure higher level cognitive objectives. They are unique in measuring students' ability to select content, organize and integrate it, and present it in logical prose.
- ii) They are less time-consuming to construct.
- iii) They have a good effect on students' learning. Students do not memorize facts but try to get a broad understanding of complex ideas to see relationships, etc.
- iv) They present a more realistic task to the student. In real life, questions will not be presented in a multiple-choice format but will require students to organize and communicate their thoughts.

III. Research Method

The design of method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method. The purpose of this study is to investigate how far is the influence of speaking and writing test to the national Examination for SMA graduations. According to this research goal, this study is eager to answer the research question. Therefore, in order to correspond with the research goals and research questions, the method of this study include four major parts: subjects, observation, procedures and data analysis.

3.1 Data Collection

Data was collected from interviews of English teachers and students at

some schools in Binjai. Five English teachers out of nine and ten students out of thirty-five were chosen for these interviews. Survey questions were: (a) Do you think the speaking and writing test during the process of learning can help students in answering National examination? Why? (b) Do Speaking and Writing test can help students in facing job interview after they graduate from SMA? Why? and (c) can speaking and writing test give contribution to the National Examination for SMA raduation ?. How?

IV. Discussion

In order to overcome the problems – as stated above – and to increase students' learning result and in turn to enable them passing the job interview and writing test they apply and at last be able to complete on the field work for their future life, the alternative way out will be presented in the discussion below.

4.1. Encourage the students' interest in mastering speaking and writing skill

Mastering speaking and writing skill needs long learning process. The learning process should be started from the early education. The models of learning should be adjusted well to the students. The materials and evaluation are applied becomes a serious consideration. All those things can be formulated by teachers. Teachers play very important role to achieve the stakeholders' expectations. While many teachers are still poor in conducting the speaking and writing activity in learning process, it will leads students' poorness in speaking and writing. As Mc Keachie (2006: 33) says that students' study methods and learning are influenced by the sort of test questions they expect. Students will be able to speak and write thoughtfully through deeper understanding and thinking tests.

4.2 Providing attractive speaking and writing test and evaluation in learning process

Speaking and Writing tests and evaluations are reliable assessments to increase students' ability to speak and write in English in the workplace and an important tool we can use to prepare them for success in a competitive global market. The competitive global market is followed by the competitive job reseacher which require good skills and competence especially in english communication and writing as well.

Some advantages for those having good compmpetence in english communication and writing are :

- Ready to compete in the competitive global workforce.
- succeed in school and in business.

When speaking and writing tests are taken together , they will provide a reliable measurement of all four English language communication skills.By providing Speaking and Writing tests, we can help our students to communicate successfully across borders and cultures, build the students' reputation as a trusted resource for skilled, qualified job applicants and attract more high-achieving students who will be recruited by top companies.

English is the language of global opportunity. In the increasingly competitive global marketplace, employers need a workforce that can speak and write effectively across borders and cultures.In today's global workplace:

- Speaking skills are important for effective presentations, face-to-face communication, meetings, videoconferencing, teleconferencing and telephone conversations.
- Writing skills are necessary for clear, persuasive email and other types of business correspondence.

In further explanation it can be said that speaking and writing tests offer a common standard of measurement for comparing the language skills of current and potential employees. They enable us to:

- Recruit, train and promote the most qualified candidates
- Save time and resources by knowing immediately who has the skills to communicate effectively in the international workplace
- Hire and develop individuals who can interact effectively with colleagues and clients around the world

4.3 Involving the speaking and writing tes in Nasional Examination

English is one of the subject tested in national examination and students have to get the target mark as it is required by the minimum standard mark. The minimum average of all subjects tested in national examination should be more than or similar with 5,50, then the students will be passed and graduated. All the subjects questions are in multiple choice form and mostly are at the level of observation, questioning and experimenting. The English subject questions are divided in to two categories, they are listening and reading comprehension while speaking and writing are not tested yet.

Speaking and writing competence of students graduation is really needed by them in facing the interview and writing test before they get their applied job. So it is really recommended to have speaking and writing test in the national examination because writing means uncovering various meaning (interpersonal, opinions, textbooks) in a variety of written texts that have a communicative purpose, text structure, and certain linguistic, while speaking means revealing various meaning (interpersonal, opinions, textbooks) through a variety of oral texts have communicative purposes, text structure, and certain linguistic. Communicate orally and in writing using a variety of language fluently and accurately is a target of learning English (Depdiknas, 2003: 16).

Writing skill is an important part of communication. Good writing skill allows us to communicate our messages with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. When we are in job area we might be called upon to write a report, plan or strategy; write a grant application letter or press release within a volunteering role; or maybe we will communicate our ideas online via a blog. And, of course, a well written Curriculum vitae if we want to get a new job.

Teaching English as a foreign language in secondary schools is a provision that would connect them with the knowledge they are learning well and after they graduate. The success of teaching will be measured by the test before the students leave school and the success of gaining the intended job after leaving school. The success or learning english is not only only determined by the

value of listening and reading but how the students can actualize their ideas and competence to other people by communicating and writing.

4.4 Why Should we involve Speaking and Writing test in National Examination (UN)

English is a foreign language in Indonesia. It is taught starting from the elementary school up to the university. As a foreign language it not so interested by the students especially for those who have lower learning motivation. Students who have lower learning motivation can not show an optimal gain of competence in English likes listening, speaking, reading, writing after learning about three or four years in junior and plus three or four years in high school. Other Factors contributing cause of the lack of writing and speaking in the national examination is due to low student interest in doing the test, the students are not active in the during the learning process in the classroom. Students' initiative is very low as well as creative thinking of students to solve problems because they only find the correct answer and appropriate.

It is found that SMA graduation can not communicate in English both orally and in writing well. The factors are the weakness of students' interest and motivation to learn English and limited knowledge of English teachers to manage the process of teaching and learning English as well as conducting the test and evaluation. If this problem will lead the SMA graduation finding their difficulties to communicate in English in the era of globalization and bringing them to the fail in getting that intended jobs.

There are many advantages by involving writing and speaking test in National Examination for SMA graduation, one of them is when these students want to follow some sort of TOEFL or IELTS test to continue their studies abroad, they will be used to do the test because of their experiences in conducting the test before. Secondly the experiences of conducting the speaking and writing test will be very importance for those who want to apply for a job at the company after graduating from school, it takes skill to speak and write in the interview test.

Based on the discussion above, the writer strongly recommend to involve the speaking and writing test in National Examination. The assessment form can be designed as simple and effective as possible. Speaking assessment can be conducted by a team of teacher in the form of monologue, dialogue, conversation, debate, discussion, interview etc. While writing assessment should be conducted by two or more teachers, as it is called inter raters, in order to maintain the validity of the assessment.

By involving speaking and writing test in National Examination, it is hoped that all the expectations can be fulfilled whether it is from the governments, stakeholders especially the SMA Graduation who want to gain the intended job.

5. Conclusion

Passing from National examination is not a guarantee that the SMA graduations can successfully continue their study to the intended university or get a job. To the intended job they should pass the interview and writing test. The interview and writing test is not an easy step to pass for them whenever they are not welltrained during the the process of learning and used to conduct the test after learning. The English subject tested in national examinations is dominantly measure the cognitive competence of the students because the content of the test question is only consist of listening and reading skill.

In mastering speaking competence is not easy, we have to get strong self confident to speak in English. There are six types of speaking: speaking confidently, informal conversation, interviews, in the work place, beauty pageants, general speaking skills, pantomime script, teacher, extemporaneous speaking.

It will more difficul in mastering writing skill, students have to own much knowledge of grammar, knowing well about punctuation and sentence structure as well as rich vocabulary, correct spelling and formatting. By mastering speaking and writing skill SMA graduation will be able follow some sort of TOEFL or IELTS test to continue their studies abroad, or get a job at the company, it takes skill to speak and write in the interview test.

Finally but not the end the writer suggest and recommend to involve the speaking and writing test to the National Examination in order to encourage the student interest and motivation in mastering speaking and writing skill before or after graduation. It is hope that after mastering speaking and writing well SMA graduation can successfully follow the test of TOEFL or IELTS before continue their studies abroad, pass the interview and writing test at the companies they apply and face the globalization era smartly, Hopefully.

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