

Original Paper

Six-Years Learning of English

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to investigate the students' English proficiency after learning the subject for six years; 3 years at Junior High School and 3 years at Senior High School. This research was conducted at some higher schools in Lampung. The higher schools involved both public and private institutions. The samples were chosen purposefully; students who were taught by the researcher. In overall there were 40 samples involved in this research. At the beginning of the class, before the students were taught by the researcher, they were given a multiple-choice test that measured the students' knowledge of English grammar. The result showed the mean score that the students got was 47.5, which meant very low English proficiency. It indicates that a long-duration learning of English does not guarantee that students will be proficient in that language.

Keywords

English language teaching, English proficiency, higher school students

1. Introduction

English is one of subjects which students learn at junior high schools and senior high schools in Indonesia. It means that the students learn English for 6 years at schools. Through a long-duration of learning English, it is expected that the students will have a sufficient proficiency in English, so they can compete both nationally and internationally. However, the researcher found that most of higher school students whom the researcher taught still had a low proficiency in English though they had learnt the subject at junior high school and senior high school. Evidently, what the researcher found aligns with what other researchers found. In their journal article, Camargo and Vásquez (2018, p. 117) stated all of them describing in detail that students were making writing mistakes when they were given written assignments in class which are close related to lack of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, sentence coherence and word choice. More specifically, Abdulmajeed and Hameed (2017, p. 40) explained, in their paper, the researchers concentrate on the most problematic subject in English

grammar that almost all the students suffer from. It is the “inherent” and “non-inherent” adjectives. In fact, researchers have found various methods and techniques to overcome problems in English language learning. Chubko (2017, p. 29) found that the implementation of the video making technique significantly improved students’ grammar test performance. The importance of this study is in introducing the grammar teaching technique that could enable students to identify the gaps in their understanding of grammar; and through self-study, collaboration, and discovery, students attain better grammar test scores. Equally important, Mabuan and Ebron (2017, pp. 96-97) suggested that students viewed online writing via e-mail as an academic tool that could help them develop their English writing skills in context, a social tool that could provide them opportunities to engage, collaborate, and learn from and with their peers, and a technological tool that could afford them additional means of learning along with in-class learning. Furthermore, Yusri, Ramadloni, and Mantasiah (2017, p. 63) concluded that the intercultural approach in the foreign language, especially language learning can increase students’ motivation. This can be seen from the increase in student motivation from the pretest and posttest conducted.

Time to time, researchers find more methods and techniques which are scientifically proven that they are able to significantly improve students’ English proficiency, yet teachers still find that many students do not have sufficient competence in English. There is not much research that reveals students’ English proficiency after the students go through teaching and learning processes of the subject for a long time. It is necessary to discover the students’ English proficiency to find out the fact if English language teaching has reached its goals or not. Furthermore, conducting this research brings some other benefits. For policy makers, it can give a description of students’ English proficiency after learning the subject for a period of time, so it indirectly helps them in designing future policies. For educators, it can show if they are successful in teaching English or not, so they can enhance their performance in the classroom. For students, it can show their current English proficiency, so they will get more drive to improve their proficiency level if the result is not satisfying. Therefore, this research which is entitled Six-Years Teaching and Learning of English is accordingly conducted.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This research was a quantitative research. The data were collected from higher school students who had studied English for six years; at junior high school and senior high school. The samples were chosen purposefully since this research investigated the students’ English proficiency after learning the subject for a period of time. There was a grammar test given to the students. The test covered topics that the students had ever learnt when they were at junior high school and senior high school. The collected data were statistically analyzed to determine the students’ English mastery.

2.2 Population and Samples

The population in this research covered all higher students in Lampung. However, the samples were taken from higher schools where the researcher taught English. There were 4 higher schools in which the data were collected. The higher schools involved public and private higher schools. From each higher school, 10 samples were chosen. Therefore, the total number of samples in this research was 40 higher school students. Because this research was conducted in the early of 2018, only second semester students were eligible to become the samples. The second semester students were chosen since the longer they studied at campus, the more they were pushed to be proficient in English. It might have driven them to join English classes outside campus which could impact on their proficiency in English. Furthermore, there was no differentiation in gender and age. Both male and female students with different ages could become the samples as long as they were in the second semester when the research was conducted.

2.3 Data Collecting Procedures

There are some procedures that the researcher follows in conducting this research. The procedures are described as follows.

2.3.1 Determining Sample

The samples are determined based on their duration of learning English. Since college students have learnt English for six years; three years and junior high school and three years at senior high school, they are chosen as the samples of the research.

2.3.2 Giving a Test

The test is given to the samples of the research. They are given 10 minutes to answer 20 questions. The test is in the form of multiple choices. It covers topics that the students have ever learnt at junior high school and senior high school, like simple present tense and simple past tense.

2.3.3 Analyzing Data

The collected data are statistically analyzed to determine the students' English proficiency after they have learnt the subject at junior high school and senior high school.

2.4 Data Analysis

In analyzing the collected data, the researcher uses the following criteria to determine the students' English proficiency level after they have learnt the subject for 6 years; 3 years at junior high school and 3 years at senior high school. The classification of the score criteria is based on common scoring system that the researcher finds as far as the researcher teaches English at higher schools.

Score 90-100	means excellent English proficiency level.
Score 80-89	means very good English proficiency level.
Score 70-78	means good English proficiency level.
Score 60-69	means fair English proficiency level.
Score 50-59	means low English proficiency level.
Score 40-49	means very low English proficiency level.

Score 0-39 means poor English proficiency level.

3. Result

Having analyzed the data, the researcher finds that the students' scores range from 20 to 90. It means that the students' English proficiency level ranges from poor to excellent. The following table shows the distribution of the students' scores.

Table 1. Distribution of the Students' Score

Score	Total Number	Level
90	1	Excellent
85	1	Very Good
80	2	Very Good
70	2	Good
65	2	Fair
60	6	Fair
55	2	Low
50	3	Low
40	7	Very Low
35	4	Poor
30	4	Poor
25	3	Poor
20	3	Poor
Total	40	

The table shows that all proficiency classifications are represented though the total number of each classification is not equal. Excellent English proficiency level gets the least number of students with only 1 person who can achieve it, whereas poor English proficiency level gets the highest number of students with 14 persons who get scores lower than 40. There are 7 students who get very low English proficiency and 5 students who got low English proficiency level. Furthermore, 8 out of 40 students get fair English proficiency level, 2 out of 40 students get good English proficiency level, and 3 out of 40 students get very good English proficiency level. The total number of students who get poor, very low, and low English proficiency level achieves 26 students. It outperforms the total number of students who get good, very good, and excellent English proficiency level.

In overall, the percentage of students who get excellent English proficiency level is 2.5%. The percentage of students who get very good English proficiency level is 7.5%. The percentage of students who get good English proficiency level is 5%. The percentage of students who get fair English

proficiency level is 20%. The percentage of students who get low English proficiency level is 12.5%. The percentage of students who get very low English proficiency level is 17.5%. The percentage of students who get poor English proficiency level is 35%. It is clear that students with poor English proficiency level are dominant compared to students with other English proficiency levels, whereas student with excellent English proficiency level is a minority in the group. The following table shows statistical description of the students' scores.

Table 2. Statistical Description of the Students' Score

		Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
90	40	20.0	90.0	47.500	18.9804
Valid N (listwise)	40				

The table shows that the lowest score that the students get is 20 and the highest score that the students get is 90. Furthermore, the total number of students who join the test is 40 and the mean of the students' scores is 47.5. Based on the proficiency level classification as previously explained, the mean of the students' scores achieves only very low English proficiency.

4. Discussion

The finding of this research shows that although the students have learnt English for six years; three years at junior high schools and three years at senior high schools, most of them do not have sufficient competence in English. It implies that a long duration of English language teaching and learning does not guarantee that the students will have sufficient competence in English. This case can be caused by various factors. One of the factors is a conventional method of teaching. Hussain (2017, p. 144) explained, due to conventional methods of teaching, an anxiety developed in the students and they lost their interest in this subject. Furthermore, the ways teachers teach in the classroom can also influence the success of teaching and learning English. Teachers often forget that the main objective of learning a language is to make someone able to communicate by using the target language. Ibrahim, M. K., and Ibrahim, Y. A. (2017, p. 297) showed dominant practices that teachers do in the classroom: (1) concentration on language form rather than use and appropriateness, (2) a tendency to favor accuracy-focused activities rather than fluency-focused, and (3) an attention to exercises on the language rather than communication tasks to be achieved through the language.

Equally important, foreign language education planning can also influence the success of teaching and learning process of English. Yunus and Taslim (2017, pp. 4-5) found that in the context of English foreign language learning at ABA UMI, students interacted only with their classmates. As known, students who learn English as a foreign language do not use English as a daily means of

communication. The foreign language is not also an official language that is used in formal situations. In other words, they use English only in certain situations, like at schools or when given assignments to speak English. With limited exposure to the target language, it will be very difficult for students to be fluent in English. It is crucial to construct an appropriate foreign language education planning then. Aligning with this statement, Qian (2017, p. 45) found that medium-long term foreign language education planning was critical for the rational development of basic foreign language education which had to be adjusted to the needs of social developments as well as individual rights.

The finding of this research hopefully become a consideration for policy makers in English language teaching and learning, English teachers, and students. For policy makers, it hopefully gives a description of the real situation in the field. Most students who come to higher schools have insufficient competence in English. By knowing this situation, it is expected that educational policies will be made in order to solve problems that both teachers and students face in English language teaching and learning. For English teachers, it hopefully becomes a reflection of how they teach their students. When the students have insufficient competence in English, it implies that there is something wrong in the teaching and learning process. By knowing this situation, it is expected that English teachers do improvements in the way of teaching English, so the objectives of English language teaching and learning can be achieved. For students, it hopefully gives a view of where their English competence currently is. Their current English competence is still far from what is expected. By knowing this situation, it is expected that they become more motivated in improving their English proficiency to cope with globalization era.

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