
THE COMMON ASSESSMENT USED FOR ENGLISH TEACHING IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: A NATURALISTIC STUDY

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Abstract: Assessment is used by a teacher in order to measure students' ability in learning process. There are many kinds of assessment which can be employed to assess students in the classroom. The objective of this research is to describe assessment used for English teaching in high school. The design of this research was a naturalistic study. Object of this research was one state junior high school located in Surakarta. Based on the research data, assessment used by the English teachers consist of (1) formative assessment, (2) middle test, and (3) summative assessment. It can be concluded that the English teachers combine those assessment model in order to measure students' ability in learning English at the school based on the 2006 curriculum where assessment are equipped by meaningful activities. In addition, those assessments seem complete if it is created constructively where assessments used are more focused on the students' success than failure in learning.

Keywords: *assessment model, instructional design, junior high school, Surakarta*

1 INTRODUCTION

In teaching and learning process, a teacher has a way to measure students by giving a test in the middle or in the end of the class. It is called assessment and aims to know whether students' mastery in taught materials is success or not. It can be in the form fort-polio, presentation, multiple choice, essay, true or false, and etc.

Assessment is needed in language teaching. It aims to know students' achievement in mastering materials which have been taught by their teachers. Brown (2003: 4) defines that assessment is an on-going process that encompasses a much wider domain. Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance.

In line with Brown, Harris and McCann (1994: 4) add that assessment must be done constructively, focusing on achievement rather than on failure. It should allow students to demonstrate what they know, rather than trying to catch them out. As classroom teachers, they are assessing their learners' progress and most of their students should be able to pass. If this is not the case, they have to take another look at what has gone on during the course.

In addition, assessment is always representational and interpretive because it

involves representing children's development. Assessment practices shape the ways we see children, how they see themselves, and how the engage in future learning. (NCTE, 2010: 9)

Talking about requirements of an assessment, Sukardi (2012: 8) also explains that there are eight requirements which should include in assessment or evaluation before being employed to assess students, namely: (1) valid, (2) reliable, (3) objective, (4) balance, (5) different, (6) norm, (7) fair, and (8) practical.

From those explanations, it can be concluded that assessment is a process to assess students' development in learning at the classroom. The students are given opportunities to present what they know in learning. Assessment should be created variously and constructively by teachers without ignoring the requirements of a good assessment.

In fact, assessment used by teachers in the classroom is very different in each school. They tend to employ common assessment without conducting observation classroom condition at the first time. Moreover, there is a government regulation which manages on how assessing students' mastery in the classroom. Therefore, way of assessing students can be an interesting topic to be discussed and analyzed.

In order to know the case, one state junior high school located in Surakarta was chosen as the research object. There are two reasons why the school is chosen as the study object,

namely (1) English language is taught at the school, and (2) the school implements the 2006 curriculum, so the way of assessing students at the school is based on the government regulation Number 20 year 2007 about education assessment standard.

In the 2006 curriculum, instruments of assessment used by teacher are test, observation, individual or group task, and another assessment based on the competence characteristic and level of students' development (Minister of National Education Regulation Number 20 year 2007).

In this research, the author just scopes discussion in the common assessment used for English teaching and its strengths and weaknesses in one state junior high school.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the author considered to employ a naturalistic study. Moleong (2012: 05) argues that naturalistic is based on naturalistic approach and is aimed to investigate and to get deep understanding about natural phenomena in an entity context. In addition, Lincoln and Guba (1985: 39-40) write some elements of operational naturalistic. The elements are: (1) natural setting, (2) human instrument, (3) utilization of tacit knowledge, (4) purposive sampling, and (5) inductive data analysis.

This research was conducted in one state junior high school in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The total number of students at the school is 671 students which consist of 366 boys and 305 girls and is divided into 21 classes. Each class consists of 30 students. The seventh grade has seven classrooms, the eighth grade has seven classrooms, and the ninth grade has seven classrooms.

In this research, the author considered data of this research related to assessment used for English teaching at the school. Those data was gained from data sources, namely: (1) the activities/events, (2) informants, and (3) document analysis which are explained as follows:

a. The Activities/Events

This attended activity was all kinds of activities in teaching and learning process in the classroom. The classroom activities

observed were (a) two classes in seventh grade, namely: Class VII-F and VII-G and (b) two classes in the eighth grade, namely: Class VIII-C and VIII-D.

b. Informants

In this research, informants were students in the chosen classes and two English teachers in applying their instructional design in teaching English at the seventh and the eighth grade. They are teacher #1 and teacher #2.

c. Documents

In this research, documents were also considered as data sources and related to instructional design and its implementation for the teaching of English, namely: syllabus, lesson plan, and the other documents related to this research.

In analyzing the data, the author employed qualitative descriptive method. Miles and Huberman model was considered to analyze it. The activities in analyzing qualitative data are conducted interactively and continuously. The steps of analyzing qualitative data consist of (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion (Sugiyono, 2012: 338). The three steps of analyzing data were showed in figure 1.

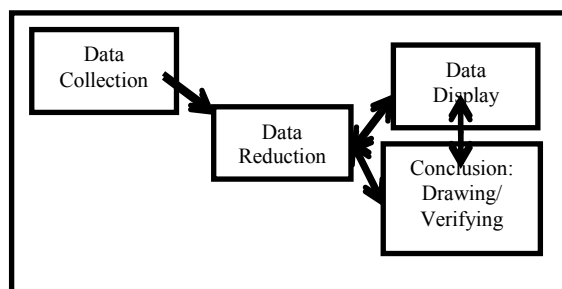


Figure 1 Interactive Model

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Findings

Assessment is a way to measure students' competence in the form of scores. There are many kinds of assessment which can be used to measure students' competence by teachers. It is usually based on teachers' needs in assessing students during teaching and learning process in the classroom. Besides that, assessment used aims to make students do not feel doubt when they are faced on the same

assessment tasks. It can be in the form of multiple choice, daily tasks, and etc.

Based on the interview, teacher #1 usually employs assessment from (1) daily test in the form of multiple choice, (2) homework, (3) individual task, and (4) group task. Meanwhile, teacher #2 employs usual assessment in the teaching and learning process. She gives examples when she teaches about reading; she uses performance assessment to measure students' pronunciation and intonation.

In addition, the author also interviewed two students in the seventh grade and two students in the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 24 Surakarta. In seventh grade, both of S1 and S2 argue that English teachers assess them based on the best score. If there is found low score, students are re-explained more about the materials taught in order to improve their score.

Meanwhile, in the Eighth grade, S1 argues that their English teacher gives score based on the question. In addition, S2 argues that their English teacher gives them score based on they write.

According to observation and document analysis conducted by the author, assessment used for the teaching of English at the school is divided on (a) formative assessment, (b) middle test, and (c) evaluative assessment, as follows:

1) Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is aimed to determine the extent to which the student has already understood the lessons as they follow in the learning process in a certain period of time and improve the quality of learning. At the school, formative assessment is divided on (a) written test and (b) oral test. They are described, as follows:

a) Written Test

Written test is conducted by teachers in order to know students' competence. Students are asked to answer questions in the form of written. At The school, it is classified on (a) multiple choice, (b) short-answer task, (c) make a match, and (d) listening cloze, as follows:

(1) Multiple Choice

Multiple choices give four or five possible answers to answer one question. In this task, the teacher gives several questions about concord to the students and they are asked to choose the correct answer by marking the right choice.

(2) Short-Answer Tasks

This task is used by the English teacher to test students in which the students are asked to write the answer on the answer sheet in the written form and the answer are usually short.

(3) Make a Match

Make a match requires students to match the statements on the right side and the responses on the left side. In this task, students are showed on several pictures. Students are asked to match those pictures with the appropriate sentences which are available after those pictures.

(4) Listening Cloze

Listening cloze tasks require students to listen monologue or conversation text for several times. In this activity, a teacher reads the text or listen it by using video tape to students. Students complete the missing words or phrases in the blanks based on they hear.

b) Oral Test

Oral test is given by teachers to students in the form of question and answer orally. It aims to assess students' competence in expressing something relates to taught materials orally. At the school, it is classified on (1) conversation, (2) reading aloud, (3) question and answer and (4) sentence/completion dialogue, as follows:

(1) Conversations

Conversations are identically students' performance by speaking. Students are taught materials by using conversation. In this task, several students are asked to read one conversation dialogue in front of the class. Usually, the teacher will assess their ability in speaking by their performance in speaking.

(2) Reading Aloud

This requires students to read one text in front of the class. Students must show their best performance in reading, because their teacher will assess them based on the certain criteria. During observation, reading aloud

activity was conducted. It aims to assess students' competence in reading one text.

(3) *Questions and Answer*

This activity consists of one, two or more questions to students. Teachers can vary questions based on the materials. Students are asked orally. One example of question and answer assessment was taken from field notes. Teacher #2 taught in the eighth grade about short messages.

(4) *Sentence/Completion Dialogue*

This assessment is given to students where they have to complete those sentences to be complete sentences and can be understood well. In this task, the teacher read one sentence or dialogue, and students try to respond it by appropriate responses orally.

2) Middle Test

Middle test is usually conducted in the middle of semester. It is conducted in three month first after teaching and learning process. It can be in the form of multiple choice or essay.

Based on the interview, teacher #1 argues that middle test is also conducted in the school. Its score is taken from the real score. In line with teacher #1, teacher #2 argues that middle test is in the form of multiple choice and essay.

From those explanations, it can be said that middle test is also conducted in the school. The test is created in the form of multiple choice and essay questions. Talking about core of middle test, it is taken from real score when student answer questions given in the middle test.

3) Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is usually conducted in the middle or end of semester which covers more than one or several topics, and is aimed to determine the extent of learners pass or not in learning. At The school, it is classified final test. It is usually conducted in the end of semester. This test is aimed to evaluate students after learning during one semester. This test also can be in the form of multiple choice and essay.

Based on the interview, teacher #1 explains that final test score is taken from daily test and final test. In addition, teacher #2

argues that final test is in the form of multiple choice and essay.

From those explanations, it can be concluded that final test in the school is combination of multiple choice and essay questions.

Compared with the available assessments, those assessments have fulfilled requirement in assessing students based on The 2006 Curriculum where assessment are equipped by meaningful activities in order to assess students' progress and performance during teaching and learning process. In addition, those assessments seem complete if it is created constructively where assessments used are more focused on the students' success than failure in learning.

4) Strengths and Weaknesses

a) Strengths

Strengths of assessment for the teaching of English at the school are (1) it is varied based on the teacher's needs in assessing students, (2) it is divided into formative assessment, middle test, and summative assessment, (3) those assessments are referred to the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 20 Year 2007 about assessment education standard, (4) all scoring rubrics on each skill are mentioned in the lesson plan clearly, and (5) remedial test is prepared in order to help students who gain low scores by the English teachers at the school.

b) Weaknesses

Weaknesses of assessment for the teaching of English at the school are (1) students' ability and competence influence in gaining high score. Most of students get still gain low score although English teacher have given ideal assessment and varied test. It happens on daily test, middle test, and final test, and (2) there is no any classification in assessing students from cognitive, affective, and psychomotor specifically.

3.2 Discussions

Assessment is a process to assess students in learning at the classroom. Macalister and Nation (2010: 120) argue that assessment also contributes significantly to the teacher's and learners' sense of achievement in a course and thus is important for motivation.

Still in Macalister and Nation, there are three criteria which can be used in giving good assessment, namely (1) reliability. It gives results are not greatly upset by conditions that are the test is not intended to measure. After allowing for the practice effect, if the same person sat the test twice, they should get near enough to the same result, (2) validity. It measures what it is supposed to measure. A valid achievement test measures what has been learned on the course, and (3) practicality. It is examined by looking at (a) the cost involved in administering and scoring the test, (b) the time taken to administer and sit the test, (c) the time taken to mark the test, (c) the number of people needed to administer and mark the test and (5) the ease in interpreting and applying the results of the test. (Macalister and Nation, 2010: 117-120).

Discussing assessment used for assessing English at the school, it was divided into (a) formative assessment, (b) middle test, and (c) summative assessment. Dick et al. (2009: 7-9) write in their books that formative is purposed to help create and improve instructional process and products. Meanwhile, summative is an evaluation of the absolute or relative value of the instruction and occurs only after the instruction has been formatively evaluated and sufficiently revised to meet the standards of the designer.

In formative assessment, it was classified into (1) written test includes multiple choice, short-answer task, make a match, and listening cloze, (2) oral test includes reading aloud, conversation, question and answer, and sentence/completion dialogue. In middle test, it includes multiple choice and essay. In summative assessment, final test includes multiple choice and essay.

In the author's point of view, kinds of assessment for the teaching of English at the school are varied and classified in the form of formative assessment, middle test and summative assessment. Besides that, it is supported by the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 20 Year 2007 about assessment education standard which declares that assessment of learning result used by educator is test, observation, individual or group task, and others based on the

characteristic of competence and level of students' development. Mulyasa (2013: 209) also adds that in National Education Standard, assessing learning results by educator is conducted continually in order to check process, development, and improvement results in the form of daily test, middle test, final test and final test for increasing grade.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION

4.1 Conclusions

Based on the research finding and discussion, it can be concluded that assessment used by English teachers at the school consists of (a) formative assessment, (b) middle test, and (c) summative assessment. In formative assessment, it is divided to (1) written test includes multiple choice, short-answer task, make a match, and listening cloze, (2) oral test includes reading aloud, conversation, questions and answer and sentence/completion dialogue. In middle test, it includes (1) multiple choice and (2) essay. In summative assessment, it includes final test covering multiple choice and essay. Those assessments have fulfilled requirement in assessing students based on The 2006 Curriculum where assessment are equipped by meaningful activities in order to assess students' progress and performance during teaching and learning process. In addition, those assessments seem complete if it is created constructively where assessments used are more focused on the students' success than failure in learning.

4.2 Implication

There are many language teaching experts introducing assessment models to be used in teaching language. As a language teacher, it should be wise in choosing it based on the needs. In Indonesia, the assessment used is suggested to be adapted and developed more because the ability of assessing students in learning process reflects on how students' progress in mastering language materials taught well. Moreover, there is a necessary to introduce the current assessments which can be used by language teachers in Indonesia in order to support the trend of teaching in the 21st century.

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