

THE USE OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH WRITING SKILL TO THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract

This research aimed at finding out the types, the ways, and the problems of the use of authentic assessment in English writing skill to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah. It was based on the problem that authentic assessment is the obligatory teaching component in this era. It employed qualitative research design. The subjects of this research consisted of three English teachers and seven students. They were chosen by using purposive sampling technique. Furthermore, the data were collected by using non-test instruments: interview and documentation. From 41 times of assessment, common types of authentic assessment used by teachers are performance assessment for 44% and teacher observation for 44%. Meanwhile, the teachers do not do portfolio assessment perfectly with the percentages 7%. For self-assessment, they do not do it properly with the percentages 5%. In addition, there are some problems in the use of authentic assessment. It can be concluded that the use of authentic assessment to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah needs improvement. It is because only two of four types of authentic assessment are used properly and there are some problems in the use of authentic assessment.

Keywords: Use; Authentic Assessment; Writing Skill

INTRODUCTION

In many cases, English language teaching is often out of student's need. There is no connection between student's learning and lives. As the result, students get difficulties to apply their knowledge into real-life situations. Therefore, ELT should be relevant to the use of language in the student's real-life. Teachers have to design instructional materials that the student really need. Richards (2001) states that student's need is the correlation between what students do in language learning, and what they should do in their real-life. If learning is relevant to the student's need, it will help students to learn and to apply their knowledge into the real-life situation.

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The use of language in real situation refers to authentic material. It is because authentic material focuses on the use of language into the student's real-life. Authentic material is an important teaching component and needs to be applied in ELT. It is a solution for the use of textbook material that often being out of student's need. Authentic materials contain authentic language, reflect real-world uses of language, and become a solution of the use of textbook materials (Richards, 2001).

Since the students use authentic material as a tool of learning, they need some tasks to give them deeper understanding of what they have learnt. It is because the learning is more effective by performing or practicing activity. To perform the real-life tasks refers to authentic assessment. The use of authentic assessment is the process of student's learning and teacher's assessment that requires the students to perform real-life tasks. Wiggins (1990) explains that authentic assessment is the process of learning which directly examines student's performance on worthy intellectual tasks. Authentic material and authentic assessment are the integral teaching components that cannot be separated each other. It is clear that the authentic assessment is an important teaching component that is relevant to the use of authentic material and the requirement of student's need.

In Indonesia, authentic assessment is the requirement of curriculum. Curriculum 2013 requires teachers to use authentic assessment. An assessment should reflect student's real-life and not only measure what students know but also measure what students can do or perform (Kemendikbud, 2013). The curriculum obviously explains about the importance of authentic assessment.

There are some types of authentic assessment. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) and Brown (2004) mention some types of authentic assessment. They are performance assessment, portfolio assessment, self-assessment, journal, conference and interview, and teacher observation. However, the researcher concludes them into four main types; they are performance assessment, portfolio assessment, self-assessment, and teacher observation. Nevertheless, teachers can choose assessment based on themselves by considering the condition of student's real-life.

Authenticity of assessment is decided by several parameters. All parameters must be considered in using authentic assessment. Gulikers (2006) points out that the authenticity of assessment involves authentic task, physical context, social context, assessment result, and assessment criteria. Authentic tasks are the tasks that reflect professional activities. The tasks must be relevant to the student's need that reflects professional activities. Physical context refers to the time and condition. The assessment

should be conducted in appropriate time in order to improve students's ability in using their knowledge in the real-life situation. Social context refers to assessment that considers the culture and community where the students live. It means that assessment has to be suited to the culture and community of the students. Assessment result is product or outcome of student's work in the assessment process. The assessment result should be real and useful for the student's life. Assessment criteria are the characteristic of student's performance. It is used to score the students's performance in order to stimulate them to learn.

Designing authentic assessment must be planned well. It must follow some systematic steps. According to Mueller (2005), the steps of designing authentic assessment are to determine standard, to choose authentic task, to determine criteria of student's performance, and to make scoring rubric. Teachers must follow those systematic processes. They must choose the authentic task based on the standard of what student should know and be able to do, then make criteria of student's performance in authentic task, and finally make the scoring rubric based on the criteria of student's performance.

As explained before about the importance of authentic assessment, SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah should use authentic assessment as their assessment method. The school is the centre of education in Morowali. Preliminary observation conducted by the researcher showed that the school had used authentic assessment. For example, the teachers used performance assessment to assess student's writing and speaking skills. Even though, the preliminary observation cannot be a comprehensive description about the use of authentic assessment in that school. Therefore, the researcher presented the more obvious explanation about the use of authentic assessment at SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah through this research.

In fact, many schools do not use authentic assessment as their assessment method. They only assess the students in traditional ways by giving short answers and multiple choices. This case only conducts assessment of learning. It clearly contradicts with the requirement of education today. Therefore, the research about the use of authentic assessment is important because it involves description and information that can enrich our understanding about the use of authentic assessment in the real context.

Based on some explanations above, it is clear that authentic assessment is an important teaching component in Indonesia. The researcher interested to conduct a qualitative research on the use of authentic assessment in the real context. His research title is *the use of*

authentic assessment in English writing skill to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah, Morowali. He formulated the research questions as follow:

1. *What are the types of authentic assessment used by the teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah?*
2. *How do the teachers use those types of authentic assessment?*
What are the problems faced by teachers and students in the use of authentic assessment?

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this research, the researcher used qualitative design. It contained description and information about the use of authentic assessment to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah. Qualitative research aims to describe the world or the experience of the research subject by understanding phenomena occurred such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc (Moleong, 2014). There are numerous types of qualitative research. This research is categorized as a case study research. Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) state that case study research contains description and explanation about how and why something happened by understanding at the process.

This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah, Morowali. The school is an appropriate place in conducting this research because it is the centre of education in Morowali. This research was conducted for three weeks (from September 15 until October 8). The researcher used the first week to ask permission to conduct research and to arrange the time to all respondents. In the second week, he collected the data. While the researcher collected data, he also conducted data analysis. In the last week, he confirmed his initial findings to all respondents in order to minimize misinterpretation and to avoid manipulation of data.

The researcher used purposive sampling technique in choosing the subject. According to Ary et al. (2010), purposive sampling technique is the use of experience and knowledge to select sample of participants with consideration that the sample can provide the relevant information about the topic or setting. The researcher involved all teachers as subject because they were the people who did the assessment, so they could give the relevant information. The researcher also chose seven students as the subject in order to get confirmation of the use of authentic assessment used by the teachers. The seven students represented each class of the eleventh grade.

In collecting data, the researcher used non-test instrument. They were interview and documentation. Interview was used to collect information from the teachers and students.

Documentation was used to collect the documents about the use of authentic assessment in the teaching and learning process.

In analyzing the data collected, the researcher used qualitative data analysis. Creswell (2012) states that processes of analyzing data in qualitative research are collecting data, preparing for analysis, reading and understanding, and coding text for description and themes in the research report. By reading and understanding data collected from the interview and documentation, the researcher attempted to answer the research questions as the descriptions and themes in this research.

FINDINGS

In this section, the researcher presented the results of the research data. The results were obtained based on the interview and documentation as the research methods. The researcher presented the result of interview, then he presented the result of documentation.

In the interview activities, the researcher interviewed three teachers and seven students. Three teachers consisted of one English teacher at science class of eleventh grade, one English teacher at social class of eleventh grade, and one English teacher of tenth grade at academic year 2013/2014. Meanwhile, seven students that were chosen represented each class in the eleventh grade. The researcher used the anonymity of respondents. Therefore, it is important to know the distribution of respondents, because the researcher put some translated versions of the respondents's opinions, feelings, attitudes, and experiences to support the arguments of these findings. The distribution of respondents is presented in the following table.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents

No.	Respondents	Position
1	Teacher 1 (T1)	Teacher of science class
2	Teacher 2 (T2)	Teacher of social class
3	Teacher 3 (T3)	Teacher of tenth grade student at academic year 2013/2014
4	Student 1 (S1)	Student of XI Science 1
5	Student 2 (S2)	Student of XI Science 2
6	Student 3 (S3)	Student of XI Science 3
7	Student 4 (S4)	Student of XI Science 4
8	Student 5 (S5)	Student of XI Social 1
9	Student 6 (S6)	Student of XI Social 2
10	Student 7 (S7)	Student of XI Social 3

There were four types of authentic assessment used by the teachers. The first was **performance assessment**. The types of performance assessment used by the teachers are presented in the following table.

Table 2
Types of Performance Assessment

No.	Tasks	Class	Informants
1	Writing narrative text	XI Science	T1, S1, S2,S3
2	Writing recount text	XI Science	T1, S2, S3
3	Writing expression of suggestion and offer	XI Science	S1, S4
4	Writing self introduction	XI Science	S2
5	Writing a letter	XI Social	T2, S5, S6,
6	Writing the parts of human bodies	XI Social	T2, S5, S6
7	Writing short story	XI Social	T2, S6, S7
8	Writing descriptive text	X (2013/2014)	T3, S1, S3
9	Writing procedure text	X (2013/2014)	T3
10	Writing recount text	X (2013/2014)	T3, S2, S7

According to the teachers, they designed those tasks using four steps. The researcher illustrates the steps into the following figure:

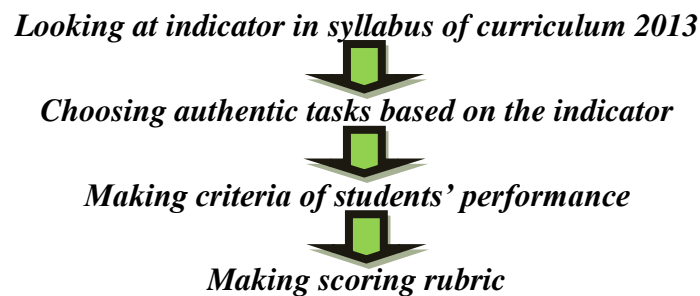


Figure 1
Teachers's View about the Process of Designing Authentic Tasks

In assessing student's performance, the teachers had four principles. The principles were transparent, authentic, contextual, and appreciative. Transparent mean that the teachers always told the criteria of assessment to the students. Authentic mean that teachers had real proof of student's activities in the process of assessment. Contextual mean that the tasks reflected real-life situation. Appreciative mean that the teachers did not only assess student's result, but also assessed student's effort in performing the tasks.

The second type of authentic assessment that the teachers claimed to use was **portfolio assessment**. Teacher 1 explained that he made a document of student's activities during assessment process.

Then, I could account for means that what the students did, I had proofs: their works, their self-assessment. It was portfolio.

Teacher 2 also gave his explanation about portfolio. He stated:

Maybe, I did not use portfolio. However, it has been an obligation in curriculum 2013. Depend on what will happen, it is because at the end of this semester, there is a form that is given by Wakasek of curriculum. If he needs the form, I will give it.

Teacher 3 also explained that he had used portfolio assessment. Definition of portfolio assessment, according to him, was almost similar to the statement of teacher 1.

I documented every sheet of the tasks into a book or an album. Therefore, when the student complains about his score, I can show the proof. This is your result.

The third type of authentic assessment used by the teachers was **self-assessment**.

Teacher 1 and teacher 2 claimed that they used self-assessment as their assessment technique.

Teacher 1 stated:

The types of assessment that were used, beside portfolio, was self-assessment. We took it from their friends. It was the obligation in curriculum 2013 as consideration in assessing affective aspect of student. For self-assessment, we could not assess someone in one time. By the time, they could assess their friends. They could understand the characters of their friends. We could assess it at the beginning or the end of learning, but the processes of seeing and observing were ongoing process.

Teacher 2 confirmed:

Yes of course, students would assess themselves. Therefore, when he got his final score, he would compare it. Then, he compared his friends's score to his score. It means that students did self-assessment.

Teacher 3 did not state that he had used self-assessment. Nevertheless, student 1 and student 3 confirmed the use of self-assessment. They said that they ever checked their friend work. It indicated that they conducted assessment to their friends. Student 1 said:

Yes, I ever checked my friend task. Sometimes, we checked it in groups

The last type of authentic assessment used by the teachers was **teacher observation**.

Teacher 1 did his observation every meeting. He stated:

Yes, I did observation in every meeting such as affective assessment of personality and character. Every day, we assessed it. This was only the example because I did not bring like this in every meeting (while appointing the form), I just checked. The most important point is that there is standard of what should be assessed every day for example this is for personality and this is for character.

Meanwhile, teacher 3 also claimed that he had used teacher observation as his assessment. He stated:

Attitude/affective aspect assessment was assessed through direct observation in the classroom. It was about how he communicated to his friends, how he responded to the tasks, he was honest or not, and whether it was his work or not then it was about his discipline. Everything has the score.

Teacher 2 commented that curriculum 2013 emphasized on character building, so the use of teacher observation became very important. He said:

Yes, it had to be balanced between its knowledge and its character especially in this curriculum 2013. This curriculum today emphasized on; first is character, second is knowledge, and third is skill. Then, the competences in this curriculum consist of four aspects; first is spiritual, second is social, third is knowledge, and fourth is skill. Those competences are aimed to reach in this curriculum.

Teachers and students expressed some **problems** in the use of authentic assessment. Teacher 1 got difficulty to conduct assessment in the beginning of semester. He was late to receive the handbook and syllabus of curriculum 2013 and he did not really understand about assessment in curriculum 2013. He said:

For curriculum 2013, we had a problem to conduct teaching and learning especially to conduct assessment because the distribution of handbook and syllabus were late.

Then, he continued:

Actually, I never joined the education and training about curriculum 2013. Every teacher should follow it, but for me I never got a call for this program. I just ever joined the general socialization, but for English I did not. Therefore, I did not really understand in conducting assessment in this curriculum. So far, I just suited my assessment to the previous assessment because I think that it still has connection.

Teacher 2 had one problem in using authentic assessment. The main problem that he faced was about student's learning interest. He explained:

Still many students had no interest in learning English. As the example, most of the students did not have the dictionary.

The main problem faced by teacher 3 in using authentic assessment was the school infrastructure. He explained:

The infrastructure such as internet was an obstacle in using authentic assessment. The internet was difficult, so the learning source for students was limited. Teacher had to prepare more sources to the students. Therefore, teaching and learning process here was still teacher-centered learning.

The students mentioned some problems that they faced in performing the tasks. Student 1, student 3, student 4, student 6 and student 7 said that main problem in doing the tasks was the limitation of vocabulary. Meanwhile student 2 and student 5 said that the problem was how to arrange the word into the sentence (grammar).

After finishing interview activity with all respondents, the researcher conducted documentation. He conducted documentation in order to get the real proof about the use of authentic assessment in this school. Some documents that he got were the assessment form used by the teachers, example of scoring rubric, student's and teacher's handbook, and syllabus of curriculum 2013.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this research, it is clear that types of authentic assessment used by the teachers consisting of performance assessment, portfolio assessment, self-assessment, and teacher observation. The teachers used those types of authentic assessment because those types were the requirement of curriculum 2013. In the syllabus and handbook of curriculum 2013, the teachers were required to use those types of authentic assessment. Those types of authentic assessment used by the teachers are relevant to O'Malley's and Pierce's (1996) and Brown's (2004) opinion that authentic assessment consist of performance assessment, portfolio assessment, self-assessment, and teacher observation.

The most dominant types of authentic assessment used by the teachers were performance assessment and teacher observation. In 18 meetings of the first semester, the teachers used 41 times of assessment. They used performance assessment for 18 times, teacher observation for 18 times, portfolio assessment for three times and self-assessment for two times. The percentages of the use of authentic assessment can be seen in the following figure:

■ Performance assessment ■ Portfolio assessment ■ Self assessment ■ Teacher observation

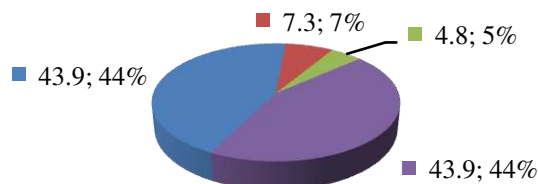


Figure 2
Percentages of Authentic Assessment

The teachers used **performance assessment** to assess student's writing skill. In using performance assessment, they asked the students to perform some writing tasks. They had done performance assessment well. They designed the tasks using four steps as presented in the figure 1. It is relevant to Mueller's (2005) opinion that the steps of designing authentic assessment are determining standard, choosing authentic task, determining criteria, and making a rubric. The teachers also had four principles in assessing student's performance. Those principles reflect the authenticity of assessment. Gulikers (2006) points out that the authenticity of assessment consists of *authentic task, physical context, social context, assessment result, and assessment criteria*. Therefore, the use of performance assessment is categorized as good.

The teachers had used **portfolio** as their assessment. They used portfolio assessment as a tool to prove the assessment activity to others. Portfolio that was used by the teachers was not conducted perfectly. It was because the teachers only recorded student's scores, but they did not record the real form or result of student's activities in teaching and learning process, whereas Arifin (2012) states that portfolio assessment is used to collect student's works and learning experiences such as cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects that are used as a reflection of student's learning improvement. However, the purpose of assessment has been achieved because the teachers can assess students by using portfolio assessment.

The teachers did not use **self-assessment** properly. There are some reasons why it was happened. First, the teachers should involve all aspects in using self-assessment. In fact, teacher 1 used it only for assessing student's affective aspect. Second, the teacher also should give order to students to do the self-assessment. In fact, teacher 2 did not do that. He thought that the students naturally would do self-assessment by comparing their score to their performance and their friend score. Third, the teachers could not show the document about the use of self-assessment. Therefore, the use of self-assessment is not conducted properly.

Teacher observation was the last type of authentic assessment that is used by the teachers. The teachers used teacher observation to assess student's affective and psychomotor aspect. They used two forms to record their observation in every meeting. The forms were personality and character. Arifin (2012) argues that observation is a natural process of assessment where every teacher always does by seeing, observing, and interpreting student's activities in every meeting. It indicates that the teachers had used teacher observation well.

Performance assessment and teacher observation were categorized good. Performance assessment was categorized as good because the implementation was relevant to the Mueller's (2005) and Gulikers's (2006) opinion about the process of designing authentic tasks and the authenticity of assessment while the implementation of teacher observation is relevant to Arifin's (2012) opinion about the use of teacher observation. The use of performance assessment and teacher observation could also be proved by the documents of assessment form. Meanwhile, the use of portfolio assessment was categorized not perfect because it was not relevant to the theory though there was a document about the use of portfolio assessment. Arifin's (2012) theory states that portfolio is used to record the score and the result or form of student's activities during teaching and learning process. Nevertheless, the teachers used it only for recording student's scores, so the use of portfolio assessment was not relevant to the theory. Self-assessment was not conducted properly. It was because there were

contradictory arguments about the implementation of self-assessment among the participants. In addition, the teachers could not show the document that proved the use of self-assessment.

The researcher concludes some problems in the use of authentic assessment. The first problem is that the teachers did not really understand about assessment in the curriculum 2013. There was only one teacher who ever joined the training of curriculum 2013. Most teachers only continued the assessment that they did before curriculum 2013 was applied. Therefore, portfolio assessment and self-assessment were not done well by the teachers. The second problem is that the teachers were confused to do teaching and assessment in the beginning of semester, because the distributions of handbook and syllabus were late. As the result, in the beginning of semester, the teaching, learning, and assessment were out of the syllabus. The third problem is that the school infrastructure did not support the use of authentic assessment. The school infrastructure did not provide enough learning source for the students when they performed the tasks or learnt English. The teachers must be more active to provide learning source for the students. The fourth problem is that the student's interest in learning English was low. It made the teachers difficult to conduct the assessment. The fifth problem is that the students were difficult to perform the writing tasks. Vocabulary and grammar were the problems that make students difficult to perform the tasks. Actually, this problem could be solved if problem 1 and 3 were solved.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The researcher needed to draw a conclusion based on the discussion on the use of authentic assessment in English writing skill to the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah. The English teachers of the eleventh grade used authentic assessment as their teaching component. Authentic assessment was also used at the tenth grade students in the previous semester of academic year 2013/2014. The common types of authentic assessment used by teachers were performance assessment and teacher observation. Meanwhile, the teachers were not familiar with portfolio assessment and self-assessment. The uses of performance assessment and teacher observation were categorized as good because the implementations were relevant to the Mueller's (2005) opinion about the process of designing authentic tasks, Gulikers's (2006) opinion about the authenticity of assessment, and Arifin's (2012) opinion about the use of teacher observation. The use of performance assessment and teacher observation could also be proved by the documents of assessment form. The use of portfolio assessment was categorized not perfect, because

it was not relevant to the Arifin's (2012) theory about the use of portfolio assessment though there was a document about the use of portfolio assessment. Meanwhile, the use of self-assessment was categorized not properly, because there were contradictory arguments about the use of self-assessment among the participants and the teachers could not show the document about the use of self-assessment. Furthermore, the teachers and students faced some problems in the use of authentic assessment. The problems included the understanding about the use of authentic assessment, the distribution of handbook and syllabus, the school infrastructure and student's interest. Meanwhile, the problem faced by the students was about the difficulty in performing the writing tasks.

From the conclusion above, the researcher suggests that the government needs to improve the quality of curriculum 2013 implementation. They need to give more training to the teachers, so the teachers can understand the assessment in this curriculum. The government and school also need to improve the quality of school infrastructure, so the assessment becomes more effective. Finally, the teachers should increase the quality of authentic assessment especially for portfolio assessment and self-assessment.

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