

THE USE OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR UNDERGRADATE STUDENTS

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Abstract *In recent years, there are more choices to assess students' abilities and understanding in language skill. As assessment plays an important role as the measurement in checking all steps and the results of language learning, this article describes a study that examine the use of alternative assessment for Indonesian undergraduate school students applied by English lectures from two different universities. This study uses surveys and interviews to examine (a) the process of alternative assessment for undergraduate students, (b) the students' response using alternative assessment, (c) students' result after being assessed by alternative assessment. So that, the conceptual frameworks taken from this study are: (a) alternative assessment's process, (b) alternative assessment's benefits, and (c) responsive pedagogy. This study also explores the impact of alternative assessment in assessing students in the classroom. The results of the survey revealed the majority of teachers felt that the alternative assessment helped them in assessing the students, as well as evaluating their beliefs and biases, thereby supporting the idea of incorporating more exercises and activities into English classes. The findings show that alternative assessment is necessary to be applied in teaching and learning since by applying this kind of assessment, the students be able to understand and can practice it in their daily activity. Alternative assessment also has positive response from students since it is understandable to be practiced.*

Keywords: *Assessment, Assessment in the Classroom, Alternative Assessment*

Abstrak: Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, ada lebih banyak pilihan untuk menilai kemampuan dan pemahaman siswa dalam keterampilan bahasa. Karena asesmen memegang peranan penting sebagai ukuran dalam memeriksa semua langkah dan hasil pembelajaran bahasa, maka artikel ini memaparkan penelitian yang mengkaji penggunaan asesmen alternatif bagi mahasiswa S1 Bahasa Indonesia yang diterapkan oleh dosen bahasa Inggris dari dua universitas yang berbeda. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode survei dan wawancara untuk mengkaji (a) proses penilaian alternatif bagi mahasiswa program sarjana, (b) respon mahasiswa dengan penilaian alternatif, (c) hasil penilaian mahasiswa setelah dilakukan penilaian alternatif. Sehingga kerangka konseptual yang diambil dari penelitian ini adalah: (a) proses penilaian alternatif, (b) manfaat penilaian alternatif, dan (c) pedagogi responsif. Penelitian ini juga mengeksplorasi dampak penilaian alternatif dalam menilai siswa di kelas. Hasil survei mengungkapkan sebagian besar guru merasa bahwa penilaian alternatif membantu mereka dalam menilai siswa, serta mengevaluasi keyakinan dan bias mereka, sehingga mendukung gagasan untuk memasukkan lebih banyak latihan dan kegiatan ke dalam kelas bahasa Inggris. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa penilaian alternatif perlu diterapkan dalam proses belajar mengajar karena dengan menerapkan penilaian semacam ini, siswa dapat memahami dan dapat mempraktikkannya dalam aktivitas sehari-hari. Asesmen alternatif juga mendapat respon positif dari siswa karena dapat dipahami untuk dipraktikkan.

Kata Kunci: Penilaian, Penilaian di Kelas, Penilaian Alternatif

Introduction

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language starting from junior high school till university according to its newest 2013 Curriculum guide. The basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing are taught. The most fundamental problem in teaching and learning English are the various abilities of the students. In terms of covering the standard of teaching and learning English, factually government already had their own policy but the one who knows the students' ability is the teacher, so the categories of those students' abilities in to their own standard should be known and understood by the teachers in order to solve the gap among the students.

There are some ways for a teacher to measure the students' abilities and understanding about English. One of them is an assessment and a test. Essays, exams and dissertations according to (Deignan and Brown, 2015:1) "are commonly used as assessment methods in higher education, however the commentators has questioned their suitability, and calls made for the wider use of more diverse methods". Zacharris (2010) in (Deignan and Brown, 2015:1) argues that "changes in assessment are necessary to improve students' learning. These calls for more diversity in methods of assessment have come against a background of changes to the funding of universities, debate on the role of higher education, increased student fees, and a greater focus on students' expectations regarding employability".

As alternative assessment become famous in some institution, the researcher is interested in investigating the use of alternative assessment for undergraduate students since the researcher only teach in high school so

she does not have the chance to teach in undergraduate school. Therefore, this study will focus on the process of alternative assessment, the respond from the students after assessment and the result of students's assessment.

There are a lot of previous studies related with alternative assessment. First, (Willam, 2014:565) found that "Alternative assessment methods can show greater formative and motivational value for students but are not well suited to the demands of course certification. The widespread use of virtual learning environments and electronic portfolios generates substantial learner activity data to enable new ways of monitoring and assessing students through *Learning Analytics*. These emerging practices have the potential to square the circle by generating objective, summative reports for course certification while at the same time providing formative assessment to personalise the student experience". Means that, there is still problem that can not be answered yet in this study.

Second, (Deignan and Brown, 2015:1) the findings from their study revealed that "alternative assessment methods are having advantages over traditional methods in, for example, encouraging student motivation and improving equality of opportunity, although training for academic staff in such methods was seen as necessary. Differences between the five viewpoints related to, for example, whether improving assessment methods requires a shift in how learning is viewed, and the importance of institutional support in encouraging assessment innovation." This study is illustrating the impact of using alternative assessment instead of traditional assessment like essay, exams, dissertations, etc. However, there

is still unsolved problem for stakeholder viewpoints and values in terms of improving collaboration across interacting networks.

Third, (Adam and Mabusela, 2014:372) they confidently submit that “this form of assessment had a positive effect in student learning in that it made them to be creator of knowledge and active participants in the teaching and learning situation. It also encouraged cooperation among students and resulted to an appropriate learning activity. It creates a real school situation where students will come across learners with diverse need. This type of assessment is authentic in that students are expected to perform realistic tasks to demonstrate mastery”. Meanwhile, there is still a contrary view from few respondents of the study.

As stated above, there are various benefits rose up in assessing students using alternative assessment. There are many methods that are offered in previous study however there are few unsolved problems left from the study. Therefore, this research will discuss and provide an investigation on how the alternative assessment advantage the students while they are getting their assessment. We specifically crafted the following research questions :

- 1) How is the process of alternative assessment for undergraduate students?
- 2) How is the students’ response using alternative assessment?
- 3) How is the students’ result after being assessed by alternative assessment?

Based on the problem statements, the objectives of this study are to describe:

- 1) The process of alternative assessment for undergraduate

students

- 2) The students’ response using alternative assessment
- 3) The students’ result after being assessed by alternative assessment

English has become the first foreign language which is taught from elementary level up to university. English is also intensively used in international communication, in written as well as in spoken communication. In addition, many books of science and technology, art, and other published issues are written in English. As teachers, they should know the abilities of their students’, how well the students know about English, what aspect are the students predominant at English and teacher also should understand about the way to teach English for their students. (Douglas, 2014:1) stated that Language teachers spend a lot of time with their students, both in the classroom during teaching and learning activities, and outside during, for example, office hour visits or field trips. Automatically, the teachers will fully understand the students’ needs.

Therefore, teachers must be able to organize learning-teaching activities. They have to master the materials, methods, technique or strategy to make the students understand and apply the material in a practice and also know how to assess the students using a good technique. A good technique can help the students in comprehending and mastering the lesson. One of the teaching failures sometimes is caused by an unsuitable method or technique in teaching learning process, so that a professional teacher who knows how to manage all aspects in terms of teaching and learning including of giving assessment will surely give a good impact for both teacher and students.

The single most influential

factor in student learning is awarded to assessment that has complex and contested activities on it. (Willam, 2014:566) argues that “the concepts of validity and reliability reflect positivist assumptions that it is possible to arrive at a unitary measurement of what is being tested as if it were a physical property such as length”; York (2019) in (Willam, 2014:566) refers to this “as the measurement fallacy”.

(Brown, 2003:3) defines “a test as a method to measure the person ability, knowledge, or performance in given a domain. Method here means as the instrument or a set of techniques or items that need the performance on the part of the test-taker. While Brown also define assessment as the is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. It means that whenever the students’ give any responds from the teacher question, give any commend to the lesson which delivered and give any suggestion”.

Based on the book *Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices* by Brown (2003) there are various kind of testing, evaluating and assessing, however in this study the researcher demand to focus only on alternative assessment that is used by the lectures for undergraduate students. alternative assessment is known in providing a sharp epistemological and practical contrast to conventional approaches. There are so many resonances between alternative assessment and assessment for learning that the two ideas seem different expressions of the same epistemological stance towards education. As (Brown, 2003:13) in his book *Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices*, there are several differences between traditional and alternative assessment that will be clearly showed in the table below

Table 1. The differences of Assessment

| Traditional Assessment | Alternative Assessment |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| One-shot, standardized exams | Continuous long-term assessment |
| Timed, multiple-choice format | Untimed, free-response format |
| Decontextualized test items | Contextualized communicative tasks |
| Scores suffice for feedback | Individualized feedback and washback |
| Norm-referenced scores | Criterion-referenced scores |
| Focus on the ‘right’ answer | Open-ended, creative answers |
| Summative | Formative |
| Oriented to product | Oriented to process |
| Non-interactive performance | Interactive performance |
| Fosters extrinsic motivation | Fosters intrinsic motivation |

The things that make alternative assessment becomes unsuitable as a direct replacement for conventional practice is its own number of limitations. (Willam, 2014:568) argues about “the framing of appropriate tasks (for example, problems and simulations) is hampered by the difficulty of tuning out non-relevant variables such as generic skills and knowledge and by the difficulty of separating judgements of task outcome from those of student performance. Consistency of marking is hampered by the difficulty of determining optimal assessment criteria and of judging across the variety of complex factors that make up real or simulated situations”.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach to describe the process of how the teachers use alternative assessment to assess their students, how teachers overcome the obstacles encountered during the assessment and how is the use of this kind of assessment. This type of research is an experiment design, which is aimed to test the use of alternative assessment.

In order to conduct the purpose of the present study, 2 teachers were interviewed as the measuring instruments to provide data for this research. The technique of the data

analysis used in this study is descriptive analysis. The structural elements of interview questions were given to 2 female lectures who teach in different university, the initial name of them are Mitha from University of H.A and Arsha from Institute of Economic Science B.T, as for the questionnaire were given to the 20 students of Mrs. Mitha's class and 20 students from Mrs. Arsha's class in the university of each and the collected data will be described and analyzed in detail.

Result and Discussion

In this section, we describe the process of alternative assessment, what problem teacher get when they assess their students using alternative assessment and how the use of alternative assessment for undergraduate students. Below are the interview sheet answered by the lecture who teach in University of H.A., She is Mrs. Mitha. She has been a lecture for 5 years, while the other lecture is Mrs. Arsha who teach in Institute of Economic Science B.T. She has been a lecture for 2 years.

Mitha's Respond

- 1) What kind of assessment do you use to assess students' English ability?
Answer : Summative assessment (quiz, multiple choice, etc)
- 2) How do you conduct your assessment? Answer : Quiz, multiple choice in the form of mid or final test
- 3) What do you know about alternative assessment?
Answer : Assessment which is used as an alternative if the main assessment cant be reached (or as additional)
- 4) Do you use this kind of assessment?
If it is yes, what kind alternative assessment do you use?

Answer : Yes sometimes, Presentation, interview, etc.

- 5) How are your procedures in conducting the alternative assessment in the classroom?
Answer : For theoretical material, I divide the class into some groups, then ask them to make a paper, ppt and prepare to present in front
- 6) Why do you use this kind of assessment?
Answer : Because I need to assess them personally, to know their teamwork ability
- 7) What skills do you usually assess using alternative assessment?
Answer : Speaking or theoretical material
- 8) What kinds of alternative assessment do you apply to assess this skill?
Answer : To know their speaking skill, I need to know how well they can present in front of audience
- 9) How do you implement alternative assessments in those certain skills in the classroom? Please give me an example.
Answer : For student who is not really have a high score in the summative assessment, he/she might have high score in presentation (because they can deliver the material well).
- 10) Which one do you think the most used alternative assessment in the classroom? Please give reason.
Answer : Presentation to know their team ability or interview to know their individual capability
- 11) How important do you think students' need to be assessed?
Answer : Very important, as the result of the teaching and learning process.
- 12) What is your big expectation do you have during or after assess

the students?

Answer : I expect them to get my point and they get high score honestly.

Asha's Respond

- 1) What kind of assessment do you use to assess students' English ability?

Answer : I used to check these four elements in learning assessment, they are :

- a) Knowledge b) Task c) Creativity d) Portofolio

- 2) How do you conduct your assessment?

Answer : there are few things I have to explain about how I conduct my assessment:

- a) Knowledge
b) Task
- Structured assignment: doing exercises questions related to the material in
 - Written test: work on questions related to the material in progress
- c) Creativity
d) Portofolio
- Submitting the material and literature related to ongoing material, then it should be compiled, discussed and reflected

- 3) What do you know about alternative assessment?

Answer : Alternative assessment is an assessment that measures the relative ability of students in achieving the objectives of the learning process. Or in other words to make a more meaningful assessment of the learning experience. However, ensuring student mastery is still the main

objective of assessment. Alternative assessments are needed for students to demonstrate skills and knowledge that cannot be assessed using multiple-choice timed or true-false tests so that they invite students to try to express students' critical thinking and evaluation skills because the purpose of this type of assessment asks students to complete open assignments which often takes more than one class period to complete.

- 4) Do you use this kind of assessment? If it is yes, what kind alternative assessment do you use?

Answer : Yes, Surely. When, measuring the ability of problem solving, communication, critical thinking, connections, representation and so forth.

- 5) How are your procedures in conducting the alternative assessment in the classroom?

Answer : As an example of alternative assessment procedures, one of which is performance appraisal, the procedure is as follows:

- a) Identifying important steps that are needed or that will affect the best final output.
b) Make the criteria - ability criteria to be measured not too much so that all of the criteria can be observed as long as students carry out the task.
c) Order the capability - ability criteria to be measured in the order that can be observed.
d) If it is possible, check again and compare with the ability criteria previously made by others in the field.
- 6) Why do you use this kind of assessment?

Answer : I use it to find out what students know and what they are

doing

- 7) What skills do you usually assess using alternative assessment?
Answer : problem solving skills, communication, critical thinking, connections, representation and so on.
- 8) What kinds of alternative assessment do you apply to assess this skill?
Answer : Work assessment, and portofolio
- 9) How do you implement alternative assessments in those certain skills in the classroom? Please give me an example
Answer : Students are given a worksheet, after the students have completed it then we value and adjust it to the criteria to be assessed, for example in the method of painting the angle, the criteria to be assessed how to use tools, paint the angle, accuracy in painting, success in painting, score was obtained.
- 10) Which one do you think the most used alternative assessment in the classroom? Please give reason
Answer : Work assessment, and portofolio
- 11) How important do you think students' need to be assessed?
Answer : It is very important to see students' understanding and students' skills in solving and understanding problems, even though each student produces different ways of solving the problems.
- 12) What is your big expectation do you have during or after assess the students?
Answer : Students know their abilities and will be one of the motivations for students to become better.

Asha's Respond

- 1) What kind of assessment do you use to assess students' English ability?
Answer : I used to check these four elements in learning assessment, they are : a) Knowledge b) Task c) Creativity d) Portofolio.
- 2) How do you conduct your assessment?
Answer : there are few things I have to explain about how I conduct my assessment:
 - a) Knowledge
 - b) Task
 - Structured assignment: doing exercises questions related to the material in
 - Written test: work on questions related to the material in progress
 - c) Creativity
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 - Submitting the material and literature related to ongoing material, then it should be compiled, discussed and reflected
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Answer : Yes, Surely. When, measuring the ability of problem solving, communication, critical thinking, connections, representation and so forth.
- 5) How are your procedures in conducting the alternative assessment in the classroom?
Answer : As an example of alternative assessment procedures, one of which is performance appraisal, the procedure is as follows:
- Identifying important steps that are needed or that will affect the best final output.
 - Make the criteria - ability criteria to be measured not too much so that all of the criteria can be observed as long as students carry out the task.
 - Order the capability - ability criteria to be measured in the order that can be observed.
 - If it is possible, check again and compare with the ability criteria previously made by others in the field.
- 6) Why do you use this kind of assessment?
Answer : I use it to find out what students know and what they are doing
- 7) What skills do you usually assess using alternative assessment?
Answer : problem solving skills, communication, critical thinking, connections, representation and so on.
- 8) What kinds of alternative assessment do you apply to assess this skill? Answer : Work assessment, and portfolio
- 9) How do you implement alternative assessments in those certain skills in the classroom? Please give me an example.
Answer : Students are given a worksheet, after the students have completed it then we value and adjust it to the criteria to be assessed, for example in the method of painting the angle, the criteria to be assessed how to use tools, paint the angle, accuracy in painting, success in painting, score was obtained.
- 10) Which one do you think the most used alternative assessment in the classroom? Please give reason
Answer : Work assessment, and portfolio.
- 11) How important do you think students' need to be assessed?
Answer : It is very important to see students' understanding and students' skills in solving and understanding problems, even though each student produces different ways of solving the problems.
- 12) What is your big expectation do you have during or after assess the students?
Answer : Students know their abilities and will be one of the motivations for students to become better.
- That is all about the description of interviewing the teachers, and below is the respond of students' questionnaire:

Table 2. Questionnaires' respond

| No | Questions | Σ Respond | | % Respond | | Criteria |
|---------|---|-----------|-----|-----------|----|-------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 1 | Do you understand the instruction that your teacher give in the test process? | 38 | 2 | 95 | 5 | Very Good |
| 2 | Do you find unfamiliar word(s)? | 20 | 20 | 50 | 50 | Good Enough |
| 3 | Do you know what you have to do in the instruction? | 36 | 4 | 90 | 10 | Very Good |
| 4 | Do you know what you have to do before performing the test? | 38 | 2 | 95 | 5 | Very Good |
| 5 | Is the time allotment enough to do the test? | 30 | 10 | 75 | 25 | Good Enough |
| Average | | 32,4 | 7,6 | 81 | 19 | Very Good |

Note:

Yes=Positive

No= Negative

$0 \leq PR < 20$ =Very Bad (VB)

$20 \leq PR < 40$ = Bad (B)

$40 \leq PR < 60$ = Good Enough (GE)

$61 \leq PR < 80$ = Good (G)

$81 \leq PR < 100$ = Very Good (VG)

PR = Positive Response

Based on table above, about alternative assessment we can get information that the alternative assessment has positive response and understandable to be practiced. It is proved by 81% of students who gave positive responses. It shows that the students understand the instruction given by the teacher s in alternative assessment even some of them find unfamiliar word in the instruction.

Conclusion

The reasons why the writer conducts this research is to know the issues of alternative assessment, the process of doing it, the problem teacher get when they are assessing the students, wether it can be approved or not helping teacher, whether it has bad impact or good impact, whether it has positive motivation or negative

motivation, and whether it has success or unsuccessful in English language teaching learning activities.

From the interview section and the explanation above, we may conclude that the use of alternative assessment has a good impact to the both teachers and students, it also gets the good response from the students because alternative assessment is also referred as performance test or innovative assessment that are used to determine what students can and cannot do, in contrast to what they know or do not know. Authentic or alternative assessment meaning an alternative to standard test and exam, provide a true process of a test. In other words, an alternative assessment measures applied proficiency more than it measures theknowledge.

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