

EFL Teachers' Difficulties in Implementing Authentic Assessment in Reading at SMAN in Padang Panjang

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Abstract: *The present study is aimed to describe the EFL teachers' difficulties in implementing authentic assessment in reading. This is a descriptive qualitative research. Thus, there were 6 English teachers who participated in this research. Technique data collection is interview. Research finding shows that EFL teachers had difficulty in choosing the text to be used in appropriate topic. And then, they was also difficult in simplifying the texts which could be understood by the students. Thus, they had difficulty to design a rubric. Furthermore, the difficulty came from the lack of vocabularies on the students in conveying their ideas from the text. Meanwhile, the teachers mentioned difficulty, but the teachers can implemented the types because they try to overcome their difficulties. And the students can involved in the activity well.*

Keywords: authentic assessment, authentic reading assessment

1. Introduction

Authentic assessment is an assessment that connects the students to the real-world activities. This types of assessment required the teachers to give their students opportunities for authentic learning and monitor the students progress on the learning process. Assessment on students' reading comprehension, it requires all students to exercise their critical thinking through the process of reading comprehension based on specific intentions and purposes. Therefore, authentic reading activities should be included in teaching and learning process in order to engage the students in conveying their comprehension accurately. In addition, to know the students' reading comprehension level, teachers should assess the students by applying authentic assessment regularly for each basic competence.. It is suggested with what has been stipulated in 2013 curriculum due to the minister regulation number 23 issued in 2016 about the standard of assessment is conducted by the teachers. The assessment should be authentic, it means that is based on data reflecting the measured ability. Assessment categorized as authentic when learners are asked to present a real task or situation demonstrating meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills. The assessment and learning process is an integral or integrated activity, so the assessment in line with the learning process.

Previous research results explain that authentic assessment in reading is important to see the students progress in learning. First, the authentic assessment helped most of the students enjoy reading (Ardianti and Mauludin, 2017). Second, teachers have to feel adequately prepared and mastered in assessing their students by using an authentic assessment (Ekawati, 2017). These previous research results enable researcher to link her study with some credible findings.

In implementing the authentic assessment on reading, the teachers should create activities that can improve the students' reading comprehension. O' Malley and Pierce

(1996) suggest seven instructional activities on teaching reading that can be used for authentic assessment. Those include; retelling, reading logs, literature response logs/journal, literature discussion groups, cloze tests, text with comprehension questions, and reciprocal teaching. The activities can be applied in interesting, helpful, and fun in order to make the students enjoy the process of learning in the classroom.

Based on the preliminary interview, teachers said that they were having difficulties in doing the authentic assessment. For example, in designing and scoring the rubric. Some teachers admitted that it was quite difficult to build the criteria in the rubric and some others are having difficulties in determining the range of score due to the criterias they made. When they used the ready-made rubric from internet, the rubrics were not quite appropriate with the type of the assessment they want to apply. Thus, they told that mostly in their practices, they just applied the simple assessment tasks like multiple choice, true/false statement, and matching task to check students' knowledge toward the sentence structure, vocabulary mastery, stated and unstated information, stated and unstated main ideas, etc.

Finally, the aim of this research is find out the EFL teachers difficulties in implementing authentic reading assessment. The researcher coded the interview transcripts to highlight in which assessment type(s) or in which part of the assessment the teacher(s) had difficulties on. Then, based on the transcripts of the interview all difficulties found by teachers in implementing the authentic assessment were exposed and discuss clearly.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Authentic Assessment

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Authentic assessment is to assess real students' ability as closely as their real life experience in a subject. It is a comprehensive assessment of all instructional activities covering both process and product of learning so that all kinds of learners' learning efforts are assessed. An authentic assessment requires the learner to perform something in a real and meaningful situation. In broader concepts, authentic assessment requires the students to show their real ability.

Moreover, Schuur (2002:1) claims authentic assessment is a type of students' assessment that attempts to make assessing process more realistic and relevant. This concept tells that assessment for students must match and meet to students' real life experience as well as students' knowledge level. The assessment should be realistic and relevant to their skills during teaching-learning process in class. In addition, Falak (2014: 2) define authentic assessment is used in the new curriculum since it is an integrative way to assess students' attitudes, knowledge, and skill aspects. Based on his statement, it can be said that the purpose of using authentic assessment is appropriate since this curriculum examines both process and products acquired by students after finishing the learning processes.

Meanwhile, Callison (1998:4) defines that authentic assessment is an assessment that consists of various forms of performance measurements reflecting the students' learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally-relevant activities. To evaluate the students, teachers need not only a single form of assessment but also multiple forms to be conducted. Those forms of performance cover three domains namely cognitive, psychomotor, and affective in similar portion. An authentic assessment requires the learner to perform something in a real and meaningful situation.

2.2 Authentic Reading Assessment

O'Malley and Pierce (1996) divide instructional activities on teaching reading that can be used for authentic assessment. These include; retelling, reading logs, literature response logs/journal, literature discussion groups, cloze tests, text with comprehension questions, and reciprocal teaching. Each of them can be more discussed as follows:

1) Retelling

The students can be asked to retell a story or text they have read or that has been read to them. Teacher can use story maps, checklist, or rating scales to evaluate students as they retell the story. Furthermore O'Malley and Pierce (1996:106) note that retelling is a more powerful tool for assessing reading comprehension. It means that retelling is better activities for teachers to assess the students' reading comprehension. Moreover, retelling is among the more popular elements of reading comprehension assessment (Reed and Vaughn, 2012: 188).

2) Reading logs

Students are given a chart for entering a story or book's author and title, the date completed, perhaps the number of pages read, and brief impression or critique of the reading. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996:111) students can

use their reading log to graph the quantity of their reading over time. A reading log is a place to take risks, speculate, ask questions, express opinions, and build knowledge, giving students the ability to grow as strategic readers and independent learner (Lyutaya, 2011). Students use reading logs to maintain a written record of their personal reactions to the text on several levels.

3) Literature response logs/journals

Reading literature is an excellent way for students to make progress in English language learning; it exposes them to exciting plots, interesting characters, and authentic dialogues as they learn the language in context (Lyutaya, 2011). In here, students can respond in writing to materials they have read. O'Malley and Pierce (1996:111) define literature response logs, like dialogue journals, can be reviewed on a staggered basis, a few each a week. It means some guiding questions for literature response logs that might be asked of students for self-assessment purposes.

4) Literature discussion groups

All students can be asked to read a single book or story. Students use teacher-or student-made questions from their literature response logs to begin the discussion. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) state that several types of assessment can be used in literature discussion groups. A literature discussion group involves independent reading. When choosing a high-quality book, many factors need to be taken into consideration (Raphael, Pardo, & Highfield in Tugman, 2010:10). The book should provoke the students to discuss and form opinions about the content. The discussion group should have the basic reading skills required for reading the book.

5) Cloze tests

Cloze tests are reading passages with blank representing words that have been deleted from the original text; the blanks are to be filled in by the reader (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). Teachers can create cloze test from instructional materials they currently use; this is more authentic than using commercially-produced cloze texts.

6) Texts with comprehension questions

Most teachers are familiar with asking questions to determine comprehension of reading passages/text. According to Brown (2010: 247) a reading passage or text is presented, and the test-taker reads questions that must be answered, usually in written form, in a sentence or two. It means that the teachers give a text/ passage with comprehension questions and the students have to answer it. The teacher makes a copy of one page from a short reading passage or story students have been asked to read (O'Malley and Pierce 1996). When the teacher knows the relative difficulty level of specific texts.

7) Reciprocal teaching

Reciprocal is an instructional approach designed to increase reading comprehension by encouraging students to reading strategies. When students became the teacher and interacted with their peers, this too enhanced their comprehension. (Todd and Tracey, 2006:5). In small groups of four to five, students begin by all reading the first paragraph or passage

of the same text silently. Based on the teacher's modeling, one student begins the session by summarizing the paragraph in his or her own words. Then, she/he asks the group one question about the content and identifies comprehension problem about the passage. Finally, students predict what will come in the next paragraph or section. Reading comprehension strategies typically used in reciprocal teaching include summarizing, questioning, and predicting (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996:119).

Dealing with types of reading skill on language assessment activities suggesting by O'Malley and Pierce above, it can be predicted that retelling and text with comprehension questions are dominant used by teachers in the instructional activities in this new curriculum.

3. Methodology

This is a descriptive research. A descriptive study determines and describes the way things are. Then, the researcher used qualitative approach to explain and describe the phenomena in the field. According to Gay and Airasian (2011: 395) emphasize that descriptive research is intensely to collect information of a phenomenon in order to describe existed condition in the field. This theory supported the researcher to gain information and describe about phenomenon in existed condition in the field. The researcher describes the EFL teachers difficulties in implementing authentic assessment in reading at SMAN in Padang Panjang academic year 2018/2019.

The sources of data were the English teachers who taught grade X of SMAN 1 Padang Panjang, SMAN 2 Padang Panjang, and SMAN 3 Padang Panjang. Each school has two English teachers who taught at grade X. Thus, there were 6 English teachers who participated in this research.

Instruments are the tools that are required to be used to get the data of the research. In this research, the instrument were English teachers' response towards interview. The instruments help researcher in getting the data in order to explain the findings. The data are collected through interview. The type of the interview was semi structured interview. The researcher did not only prepare some questions, but also prepared direct question based on the participant's answer on the first question (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2012: 386). In doing the interview, the researcher used tape recorder as the tool that helped the researcher to collect the data accurately.

The steps of data analysis of implementation of authentic assessment in assessing students' reading comprehension at SMAN in Padang Panjang; first, the researcher transcribed the data from interview into written data. Then, it was coded by the researcher to highlight in which assessment type(s) or in which part of the assessment the teacher(s) had difficulties on. Then, based on the transcripts of the interview all difficulties found by teachers in implementing the authentic assessment were exposed and discuss clearly. The last step in analyzing data was drawing conclusion. The researcher drew conclusion based on the finding of this research.

4. Finding and Discussion

Dealing with interview results, it can be concluded that most of the teachers had implemented some of the authentic assessment very well. However, there were some difficulties faced by teacher in implementing the assessments. The teachers' difficulties were related to the types of authentic reading assessment they implemented.

First, retelling activity was one of assessment types used by the English teachers distinctly affected to students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, the difficulties was resulted from the students' lack of vocabularies which led to the students problem in conveying their ideas from the text. In comprehending a text, the students was confused about the unfamiliar vocabulary. This finding is in line with Mahmud (2015) who stated that the dominance of misinformation and omission reveal that the students still find it difficult to apply correct form of verb (process) in retelling past experience. The study also revealed that lack of understanding in applying correct verb (process) form, lack of knowledge in terms of vocabularies, and nervousness due to lack of exercise become the possible causes of the students' difficulties. In addition, the difficulty also in scoring the rubric because this types is performance task. This findings also in a line with Metin (2013) the problems in implementing the authentic assesment encountered while determining the assessment criteria about performance tasks and sub-themes that were created under the main themes. It means that build the criteria in the rubric and some others are having difficulties in determining the range of score due to the criterias they made.

Second, cloze test, this assessment type was used by the English teachers and it affected students' reading comprehension in different ways. The teachers admitted that they got difficulties in choosing the words to be deleted in the text as they had to make sure that the students had learned the deleted words in the previous lesson. They also claimed that difficulties were resulted from the students' limited vocabularies. This finding proved what was stated by Apsari (2016) that most students at any level of education get difficulty in reading English text. In this problem the teachers are looking for clues that their memory tells them are present, and looking for material that may provide a basis for a guess. Thus, a cloze test is an essential teaching technique that fosters reading for meaning and use of context, especially effective for students who fail to read for meaning.

Third, text with comprehension questions was authentic assessment types used by English teachers. In implementing this assessment type English had difficulties as most of the students were having big problems in comprehending the text to answer the questions given in the text due to their limited vocabulary and their reluctance in applying critical thinking to guess the meaning of words based on context. Moreover, they were often difficult in conveying their ideas eventhough they have already understood the questions. The students did not analyze the stated information they found in

the text, they do not use their knowledge about the structure of the text to get the content of the text or to infer the implicit ideas or they did not summarize the text properly. These findings are in a line with Zuhra (2011) who stated that most of the students failed to answer the inference questions correctly because they did not comprehend the questions asked to them and because of their weaknesses in mastering reading comprehension questions types. In addition, as the students were poor in vocabulary mastery, poor in sentence structure, and had no knowledge about reading comprehension question types. The reading comprehension assessment became even harder.

Four, reciprocal teaching was analyzed from the transcripts of interview. The teachers had difficulties in choosing appropriate topic for reciprocal teaching. This finding related to Rahman (2015) as he claimed that we should select reading material with well-formed, interesting passages that are conducive to strategy application. Such material is characterized by some steps which are providing clues that help students predict what they will be learning, having one main idea in a paragraph, and providing context that helps students connect information. Thus, the difficulty also in scoring the rubric because this types is also performance task. This findings also in a line with Metin (2013) the problems in implementing the authentic assesment encountered while determining the assessment criteria about performance tasks and sub-themes that were created under the main themes. It means that build the criteria in the rubric and some others are having difficulties in determining the range of score due to the criteria they made.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

There were some difficulties faced by teachers in assessing students' reading comprehension based on the types used. First, in retelling, the teachers were difficult in simplifying the texts which to be understood easily by the students. Furthermore, the difficulties were resulted from the lack of students' vocabularies so that it was very hard for the students to convey their ideas from the text. Second, in applying cloze test, the teachers had difficulties in choosing the words to be deleted in the text as they had to be careful and she had to make sure the students had learned about the deleted words in the previous lesson or meeting. They also admitted that the difficulties were related to the students themselves. Most of the students had big problem in vocabularies. Third, in maximizing the use of text with comprehension questions, the teachers admitted that the most difficult part was the condition that most of students were difficult in comprehending questions given in the text. Moreover, they were often difficult in conveying their ideas eventhough they have already understood the questions. Fourth, the teachers had difficulties in choosing appropriate topic which can use reciprocal teaching to assess. In addition, for performance activity such retelling and reciprocal teaching, the teachers also have difficulty in designing and scoring the rubric. They admitted that it was

quite difficult to build the criteria in the rubric and some others are having difficulties in determining the range of score due to the criteria they made. Although the teachers found some great difficulties in using authentic reading assessment, they did great effort to implement them. In fact, the English teachers always try to overcome any of their difficulties. Thus, the students could be involved in the activity very well.

5.2 Suggestion

On the basis of the findings, it is suggested to the practioners of education or governments to give training or seminars for the teachers about authentic assessment, especially to give knowledge about the assesment types that can help the students in improving their English reading comprehension and can motivate them to get better English. On the other words, using effective authentic reading assessment types can give good effect to the students in order to get learning goals in learning English. Second, it is suggested to other researcher to do the typical research in wider range and larger respondents. Thus, the other researchers are able to find the new strategies as solution for assessing students' reading assessment.

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