

## DISCOURSE IN DIVERSE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

Classroom assessment is a process of collecting and utilizing information on student learning outcomes carried out by teachers. The process of collecting and utilizing this information is used to determine the level of achievement of students towards competency attainment. The results of the assessment can provide an overview of the competence and progress of the students. This study explores the principles of classroom-based assessment carried out by teachers in real classroom settings. The study revealed that teachers employed various assessment techniques due to their various understanding of classroom assessment. Teachers had different views on how the implementation of classroom assessment and methods of assessments. Several forms of assessment conducted by teachers include a collection of a portfolio, product, project, performance, and written tests. However, some teachers still conducted those forms of assessment inappropriately. This study implies that further educational training on classroom assessment should be developed by educational stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Discourse, Assessment Techniques, Language Teachers

### I. Introduction

Assessment is used to know the extent of students' learning competence accomplishments. It is not solely intended to measure students' achievement; however, it additionally includes learning process enhancement. It is important to note down that every learning activity perpetually includes assessment practices (Alkharusi, 2015). Assessment is not exclusively conducted once completing a lesson, it is yet conducted in any respect throughout the implementation of a learning unit. It ought to be an integral part of teaching and learning and becomes an obligatory action to be done by teachers.

The most recent recommendations from the 2013 curriculum advised that assessment should be conducted to measure students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills. To assess these three

domains, the 2013 curriculum recommends five assessment characteristics: mastery learning, authentic assessment, using preset assessment criteria, and exploitation of numerous assessment techniques. The results of the attainment of competence for a certain learning unit is not only used to show students' achievement but it can be used as a reference for the teachers to improve their teaching strategies (Yamtim, & Wongwanich, 2014). Thus, teachers should develop certain strategies to assess their students. Moreover, the assessment strategies developed by the teachers should be based on the minimum completeness criteria that have been designed previously by curriculum designers. In learning processes, a teacher should comprehend the distinction in assessing the students' competence. It should be noted that within the method of assessing student learning outcomes, strategies or techniques and instruments are ought to be thought-about to properly assess the students' learning competence accomplishment. Therefore, teachers should carefully plan and properly conduct the assessment (Box, Skoog, & Dabbs, 2015).

Learning outcome assessment techniques and instruments that are developed by teachers can be in various forms (Gan, He, & Liu, 2019). The forms could be in the form of test-type assessments, non-tests, classroom-based assessments, performance assessments, and portfolio assessments. As teachers, they were required not only to be able to make instruments for assessing student learning outcomes but it is also intended to have the ability to use the assessment instruments properly. It is; however, some teachers still carry out assessments that cannot measure students' real abilities. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the assessment techniques utilized by teachers in assessing the language skills of their students. This is because the assessment is incredibly important in learning. After all, it provides a chance for teachers to supply effective instruction (Karimi, & Shafiee, 2014).

In the Indonesian education context, assessment is intended to elevate students' learning outcomes through understanding students' mastery for each basic learning competence (Mantra, Suwandi, Sukanadi, Astuti, & Indrawati, 2019). Completeness of basic learning competence is the minimum achievement of the competence of each subject matter that must be mastered by students within a certain learning period. Moreover, in line with the curriculum domain, the completeness of the attitude aspect is shown by the good behavior of students (Mantra, Widiastuti, 2019). If the behavior of students has not shown good criteria, then giving feedback and coaching attitudes directly and continuously conducted so that students show good behavior.

Completeness of learning aspects of knowledge and skills are determined by the achievement of the learning unit which is indicated by several learning objectives and learning indicators (Mantra, Astawa, & Handayani, 2019). Students who have not achieved learning completeness are given the opportunity for improvement through remedial programs, and students are not allowed to continue learning for the next competency before the competency is completed. The criteria for completeness are used as a reference by teachers to find out what competencies students have or have not mastered. Through this method, teachers know as early

as possible the students' difficulties in achieving the optimal competencies can be corrected immediately (Mantra, Widiastuti, 2019). Therefore, teachers are expected to always teach using innovative learning strategies and appropriately assess their students (Mantra, Suwandi, Sukanadi, Astuti, & Indrawati, 2019).

Assessment is carried out to measure the holistic achievement of learning competencies (Widiastuti, Mukminatien, Prayogo, & Irawati, 2020). Attitudes, knowledge, and skills were assessed simultaneously according to real conditions. Assessment is conducted to determine the achievement of students' competencies associated with real situations. Therefore, in conducting the assessment various forms and techniques of assessment are used. An authentic assessment does not only measure what students know, but it emphasizes on measuring what students can perform in their real life. Continuous assessment is intended to be carried out during learning to get a complete picture of the development of student learning outcomes, monitor the process, progress, and improve students' achievement continuously by utilizing various forms of assessment.

Assessment of attitudes, knowledge, and skills are assessed using various assessment techniques under the characteristics of the competence to be measured or assessed. Various assessment methods or techniques can be used, such as written tests, oral tests, assignments, performance assessment, project-based assessments, portfolios, and observations. Moreover, students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills are assessed using reference criteria. The ability of students is not compared to the group but compared to the predetermined completeness criteria. The completeness criteria are set by the education unit by considering the characteristics of students, the characteristics of the subjects, and the conditions of the educational unit.

Attitude assessment is intended as an assessment of the behavior of students which includes spiritual and social attitudes. Attitude assessment has different characteristics from the assessment of knowledge and skills, so the assessment techniques used are also different. The assessment techniques used include observation, interviews, anecdotal records, incidental records as the main assessment elements, while self-assessment techniques and peer-to-peer assessments can be carried out in the framework of coaching and shaping the character of students so that the results can be used as one of the confirmation tools of the results of the attitude assessment by teachers. The primary assessment is carried out by the teacher through observation during a certain period and attitude assessment is not carried out on every basic competency (Widiastuti, & Saukah, 2017). Assessment of spiritual and social attitudes is reported to parents and the reports are based on the notes of teachers from the deliberations of class teachers, subject matter teachers, and extracurricular coaches.

The assessment of knowledge is carried out by measuring the students 'mastery which includes factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge at various levels of thought processes (Widiastuti, 2018). Assessment in the learning process serves as a tool to detect learning

difficulties and as a tool to measure achievement in the learning process (Yahiji, Otaya, & Anwar, 2019). Through this assessment, students are expected to be able to master the expected competencies. For this reason, various assessment techniques are used according to the competencies to be assessed, namely written, oral, and assignment tests. The knowledge assessment procedure starts with planning preparation, developing assessment instruments, implementing the assessment, processing, and reporting, and utilizing the results of the assessment (Mantra, Astawa, & Handayani, 2019). Moreover, skill assessment is carried out by identifying basic competency characteristics of skills aspects to determine appropriate assessment techniques. Assessment of skills is intended to determine that students' mastery of knowledge which can be used to identify and solve problems in real life.

The previous studies were mainly explored the importance of assessment to know students' learning improvement. However, this study intended to deeply reveal the assessment techniques employed by the teachers to assess and improve the quality of teaching and learning. The findings of this study provide some essential information regarding classroom assessment.

## **II. Methods**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to investigate the assessment techniques used by teachers in assessing students' language skills. The study was conducted on several certified junior high school English teachers who have worked for more than 10 years. The participants were carefully selected to meet the criteria of research participants to ensure that the data were collected from well-trusted sources.

The data used in this study were the results of interviews conducted with the research subject. Informal interviews were conducted to obtain information about assessment techniques performed by English teachers. Informal interviews were conducted to obtain real information about English assessment techniques and the obstacles faced by teachers in carrying out language assessments in class. This study made use of a qualitative procedure with descriptive analysis. Qualitative research with descriptive analysis is merely intended to analyze the existing phenomena of the data by describing carefully and deeply in detail. Qualitative data analysis is usually based on interpretative philosophy to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data by analyzing the interview data in-depth analysis through the description.

## **III. Findings and Discussion**

Based on the interviews conducted with the three junior high school English teachers, it was found that the English teachers in this study conducted many kinds of assessment techniques. The teachers in this study have a significantly clear understanding of the importance of administrating assessment. Most of them stated that the assessments were conducted

according to the assessment instructions stated in the curriculum. Teachers in this study clearly understand the purpose of conducting classroom assessment.

### **Test assessment techniques**

Based on the results of interviews conducted with teachers, it is known that there are several techniques and assessment tools used by teachers in assessing students' abilities to obtain information about students' learning conditions.

“Mmm... in my opinion, assessment techniques are a way to measure students' abilities. Yes... the use of various techniques and tools must be adjusted according to the purpose of the assessment, the time available, the nature of the assignments performed by students, and the amount of subject matter that has been delivered. I usually use the test "(Teacher A)

Assessment technique huh? Oh yes ... yes the method or strategy used by the teacher in determining how to assess students "(teacher B)

According to teacher A, the assessment technique is a method or method of assessment that the teacher can use to obtain information about the learning situation and student achievement. Teacher A uses test techniques to measure student learning abilities. A test is a technique or method used by teachers in carrying out measurement activities, in which there are a series of questions or exercises or other tools used to measure skills, knowledge, intelligence, abilities, or talents possessed by someone or group. Teachers A and B used a written test. The types of written tests used by teachers, in general, can be grouped into two, namely: (1) Restricted Response Items, (3) Extended Response Items.

"I use the essay test to organize learning activities that are difficult to measure by the objective form because students are expected to be able to describe, organize and express answers in words" (Teacher A)

According to teacher A, she gave a limited essay test to assess students' abilities with the aim of giving students the opportunity to say certain things freely and in a variety of ways but still within the limits of the expected answers. In this case, even though the sentences of the students' answers vary, there must still be important points contained in the answer systematics in accordance with the boundaries that have been determined and desired in the problem. On the other hand, teacher A also provides an assessment of the form of description to the students. This assessment is carried out to measure students' ability to express their knowledge briefly.

“I usually give free essay assessments to my students. In this case, students are free to answer questions in their own way and systematics. Students are free to express opinions according to their abilities ”(Teacher A).

According to teachers B and C, free description form assessments are given to measure students' learning abilities. They give students the freedom to express their abilities in a different systematic manner. To make it easier for teachers to provide an assessment of student answers. However, the teacher still has certain references or benchmarks for correcting students' answers.

"I make questions using clear and easy to understand instructions and formulas where the question instruments can be: explaining, studying, describing, comparing, expressing criticism, solving problems, and so on" (teacher C)

In addition to giving students the freedom to answer questions, assessment with limited and free descriptions has advantages and disadvantages. According to teacher B, the preparation of description questions is relatively easy and gives students the freedom to express their responses. They can also organize thoughts so that they can reduce the factor of guessing the answer. In addition to the advantages of the description assessment, this assessment also has weaknesses, including the correction process that takes a relatively long time, there is a tendency for teachers to be subjective and teachers are often fooled in giving grades, because of the beauty of their sentences and writing.

"Yes, sometimes the description of the description also makes us have to spend a lot of time correcting students' answers. Sometimes time and conditions make me feel not objective in assessing students' abilities "(teacher B).

Another form of test used by the teacher in measuring student ability is an objective test or a dichotomously scored item. Teachers in this study usually use true-false or yes-no tests. One of the functions of true-false questions is to measure the ability of students to distinguish between facts and opinions. This form of the question is more widely used to measure the ability to identify information based on simple relationships. Teacher B usually provides multiple-choice tests to measure students' learning abilities. Multiple choice form test questions can be used to measure learning outcomes that are more complex and are related to aspects of memory, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The answer choices consist of the correct or the most correct answer, hereinafter referred to as the answer key, and the possible wrong answer which is called a distractor.

"I use multiple-choice tests because they can be used easily, and can be done repeatedly" (teacher B).

According to the teacher, there are several good things about multiple choice questions, including how the assessment can be done easily, quickly, and objectively, can cover a wide scope of material/material, is able to reveal low to high cognitive levels, and can be used repeatedly. However, this type of test also has several weaknesses, namely, the process of preparing the questions really, takes a long time, gives students the opportunity to guess the answers, and is less able to improve students' reasoning power.

"Look, Mrs ... apart from the test description, I also gave a matching test to measure the learning ability of my students" (Teacher A).

According to teacher A, he also provides matching tests to measure students' learning abilities. The form of questions like this is very good for measuring the ability of students to identify the relationship between two things. Teacher A uses various types of tests in assessing the abilities of his students depending on the type of skill being assessed. Apart from written tests, in assessing students' learning abilities, the teacher in this study also used oral tests, particularly to measure students' speaking abilities. In addition to making it easier for teachers to directly assess students' speaking skills, tests like this also allow for teacher subjectivity and take a long time.

"Eeehhh ... yes, I usually do the question and answer with students directly to find out the students' speaking ability. But because it takes a long time so it is constrained by the internet quota that students have" (teacher B)

"I use an oral test to make it easier for students with low abilities to ask questions that they do not understand directly .... so, my students can convey the problems they face and the results can be immediately known" (teacher C)

Apart from written tests and oral tests. The teachers in this study also used performance tests to assess all the activities that students undertook. Performance tests are carried out from preparation, carrying out assignments, to the results achieved by students. Non-test assessment techniques. Based on the results of interviews with the three teachers in this study, apart from using test techniques, non-test techniques were also used by the teacher to measure students' language skills. Non-testing techniques focus on the affective and psychomotor domains. One way that the teacher does is by carrying out observations. Observations are made by the teacher

to assess the behavior of students during learning. In addition to test and non-test assessments, the teachers in this study also used classroom assessments as well as formative assessments. This assessment can provide information about student learning outcomes by applying the principles of assessment, continuous implementation with authentic evidence. This assessment is carried out to determine the progress of student learning, the problems it faces and the solutions provided as a follow-up to the assessment carried out.

"Oh yes, Mrs. Dayu ... formative assessment is an assessment that provides information about students' learning abilities. Then focus on events to solve problems faced by students. It's just that time is limited to do it optimally"(Teacher A)".

"Hey, yes, the problem we are facing at the moment is to carry out formative assessments maximally because learning is done online, so the observations are limited and it is difficult to do follow-up actions" (teacher B)

Another assessment conducted by the teacher is the assessment of performance. This assessment is carried out to observe student learning activities. Portfolio assessment is also carried out by teachers, especially during this pandemic, the teacher can collect all student work results. This assessment model which aims to measure the ability of students in building and reflecting on a job/assignment or work through a systematic collection of student work in one semester.

"I usually collect student assignments into 1 file, either in the form of homework, assignments, or written tests to find out the progress of students from time to time. This information is also used to develop strategies for improving learning to improve the quality of learning" (Teacher C).

Class assessment is a teacher activity related to making decisions about the achievement of competencies or learning outcomes of students who follow a certain learning process. For this reason, data is needed as reliable information as a basis for decision making. This decision relates to whether or not students have succeeded in achieving competency. Data obtained by teachers during learning takes place and collected through procedures and assessment tools that are in accordance with the basic competencies or indicators to be assessed. From this process, a profile of the ability of students to achieve competency standards and basic competencies is obtained as formulated in the curriculum. Classroom assessment is a process that is carried out through planning steps, preparing assessment tools, gathering information through a number of pieces of evidence that show the achievement of student learning outcomes. Classroom assessment is carried out through various techniques/methods such as project assessment,

product assessment, assessment through portfolio collections, and assessment of learning outcomes.

In learning, a number of these assessments should be carried out by a teacher. This is because each type or form of assessment has several weaknesses besides advantages. If a teacher only uses one form, it is feared that a teacher will not get comprehensive information regarding competency attainment. In classroom-based assessment, there are two forms of assessment, namely non-test and test assessments. The types of non-test assessments include attitude scales, checklists, questionnaires, case studies, and portfolios. While the assessment of the test form can be in the form of an oral test, a written test, and an action test. The assessment techniques used must be adjusted to the characteristics of the indicators, basic competency standards, and basic competencies taught by the teacher. It does not rule out that one indicator can be measured by several assessment techniques, this is because it contains cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains.

#### IV. Conclusion

Classroom assessment is a teacher activity related to making decisions about the achievement of competencies or learning outcomes of students who take part in the learning process. It is a process that is carried out through planning steps, preparation of assessment tools, gathering information through a number of shreds of evidence that show the achievement of student learning outcomes, processing, and use of information about student learning outcomes. Classroom assessment is carried out through various techniques/methods, such as performance assessment, attitude assessment, written assessment (paper and pencil test), project-based assessment, product assessment, assessment through a collection of student work/work (portfolio), and assessment. self. Assessment of learning outcomes, both formal and informal, is held in a pleasant atmosphere, allowing students to show what they understand and are able to do. The learning outcomes of a student in a certain period of time are compared with the results that these students had previously and are not recommended to be compared with other students. Thus, students do not feel judged by the teacher but are helped to achieve the expected competencies or indicators.

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