



From Need Analysis to Authentic Assessment Development of Writing

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Abstract

Curriculum 2013 for High School in Indonesia emphasizes the importance of using authentic assessment in teaching and learning process, including Teaching English as Foreign Language. However, most English teachers still get confused in designing and implementing authentic assessment in their class. Authentic assessment is the process of gathering information by teachers about students' progress and achievement. It is a comprehensive assessment conducted in respect of the whole activity of learning, including learning processes and products so that the whole effort of learners can be assessed. This article aims to reveal the teachers' needs on authentic assessment to evaluate English writing skills of junior high school students and to develop a model of authentic assessment suitable with teachers' need and characteristics of the learners. This was a research and development study using ADDIE Model. The data of the study were obtained from teachers' responses on the questionnaires regarding the students' needs on the use of authentic assessment for English writing skills. The finding shows (1) the problems faced by teachers regarding the assessment of certain language functions, (2) teachers' needs on the authentic assessment regarding the language functions, activities, and scoring rubrics for writing skills, and (3) the model of authentic assessment suitable with teachers' need related to language function, activities, and scoring rubrics. The appropriate need analysis can be used effectively in developing authentic assessment for writing skills.

Keywords: need analysis, writing skills, teaching English, language function

1. Introduction

Assessment is no longer simply the achievement of learning objectives, but it is an attempt to obtain a variety of information on a regular basis, continuous and thorough process and students' learning outcomes [3,17]. It has the capability to measure knowledge, attitudes, and skills of learning a certain subject matter [1]. As a continuous process, assessment can be used to evaluate students in the process of forming their competencies and skills, and summarizing what a student has grasped [3] that can be obtained from directly examined students' work. It is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. By doing assessment, teachers give students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledges and skills [8]. The goal of assessment in learning process is to enable students to acquire higher-order thinking and competencies instead of factual knowledge and basic skills. This view requires authentic assessments because standardized multiple-choice tests are not suitable for this purpose. Traditional assessment practices fail to account knowledge-building and learning in context. We need to find a new strategy of applying assessments to learners, authentic assessment. It measures not just what students remember but how they think.

Authentic assessment involves multiple forms of performance measurements reflecting the students' learning achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally-relevant activities [10]. Authentic assessment is assessment that occurs continually in the context of a meaningful learning environment and reflects actual and worthwhile learning experiences [13]. In language learning, various forms of authentic assessment are expected to facilitate measuring really precise students' language abilities and skills [2]. With authentic assessments, students' true abilities can be well measured. Authentic assessment always gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill well [8]. Productive skill of a language, such as writing, can be measured accurately by using authentic assessment.

Some studies regarding the use of authentic assessment in language learning process indicated that teachers still have some problems in implementing authentic assessments. Most teachers do not understand and do not implement authentic assessment in language learning in the classroom, even

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though the assessment is the one recommended at school [9]. Therefore, teachers expect the guide books that contain the concept of authentic assessment to measure proficiency, are easy to use, provides examples of the assessment and measures. A study on the implementation of authentic assessment in junior high school found that teachers of English have difficulties in making a proper assessment rubric to assess the oral language skills [14]. Moreover, It was found that teachers still get problems in assessing certain language functions and various forms of authentic assessment for productive language skills [15,16]. These studies reveal that models of authentic assessment for productive skills are needed by English teachers in junior high schools in Indonesia.

Authentic assessment is a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills. An authentic assessment usually includes a task for students to perform and a rubric by which their performance on the task will be evaluated. There are some characteristics of authentic assessment. It measures the knowledge and skills of students, assess performances, use the tasks that are relevant and contextual, assess a variety of ways and from a variety of sources, require the application of knowledge and skills, and measure both process and product [5,6]. Thus, authentic assessment is more comprehensive than standardized tests.

This study will reveal the process of developing authentic assessment of writing in the context of teaching English as a foreign language at junior high schools in Indonesia. The explanation will focus on (1) the problems faced by teachers in implementing authentic assessment of certain language functions, (2) teachers' needs on the authentic assessment and (3) the model of authentic assessment suitable with teachers' need.

2. Methodology

This study was a research and development (R & D) study using ADDIE Model (Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluation). The data of the study were obtained from teachers' responses on the questionnaire regarding the students' needs on the use of authentic assessment for English writing skills. 40 grade 8 high school EFL teachers from 20 junior high schools in West Sumatra Province, were randomly selected as the participants of this study. They had taught English subject for more than 5 years. A questionnaire was developed based on a small-scale survey of junior high school teachers' needs to ensure the relevance and meaningfulness of the gap between the frequency of use, the problems, and the level of needs dealing with three main factors in assessing writing skills, namely types of writing activities, language functions, and types of texts. Based on the result of the need analysis, the model of authentic assessment suitable with teachers' needs were developed.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 The problems faced by teachers in implementing authentic assessment

There are three aspects that were examined regarding the current implementation of authentic assessment: assessment activities, language function, and types of texts. The average gained scores were between 1,00 (the lowest) and 5,00 (the highest). Among 14 assessment activities of authentic assessment, teachers got problems in 8 assessment activities, they are using picture description (3,85), writing prompt (3,80), writing with purposes (3,73), narrating sequences (3,68), integrated language assessment (3,58), project/exhibition (3,43), daily journal (3,43), and writing summary (3,15). Regarding language function, from 15 language functions, teachers got difficulties in 6 language functions, they are describing persons/objects/places (4,10), writing experiences (4,05), procedures (3,98), short messages (3,90), and notice (3,88). While for types of texts, teachers got problems in assessing descriptive text (4,05), procedure text (4,05), recount text (3,90), notice (3,80), narrative text (3,78), and short messages (3,78).

3.2 Teachers' needs on authentic assessment

Teachers' needs on the authentic assessment regarding the assessment activities, language functions, and type of text that need major concern in developing authentic assessment are those that are in the High category. There are eight types of assessment activities, ten language functions, and eight types of text highly needed by teachers and need to be developed. The eight assessment activities needed are writing prompts, writing with purpose, integrated language assessment, writing summary, project/exhibition, picture description, narrating sequencing, and daily journal. The ten language functions needed are writing short messages, announcement/notice, story about animal, message in song, events or incidents, personal invitation, greeting card, procedure of making food/drinks, description of person/animal/object/place, and experience or activity. The eight types of text are short message, notice, narrative, recount, descriptive, procedure, song, and greeting card.



Regarding scoring rubrics, there are two types of scoring rubrics, holistic scoring rubrics and analytic scoring rubrics. Holistic scoring rubrics score the overall process without judging the component parts separately. Analytic scoring rubrics describe explicitly what constitutes performance on each criterion. The sets of scoring rubrics for writing propose by some expert are content, organization, vocabulary, syntax, mechanics, composing, style, sentence formation, usage, organization, logical development of ideas, grammar, punctuation, and spelling [3,7,10]. Both types of scoring rubrics were needed by the teachers since there are many types of text that need to be assessed holistically and some others need to be assessed analytically.

3.3 The model of authentic assessment suitable with teachers' need

The model of authentic assessment suitable with teachers' need is the authentic assessment that give students the opportunity to apply what they have learned to an actual task. Writing skill is one of the productive skills that have to be mastered by students in learning English that the achievement can be seen in students' actual tasks. The goal of teaching writing is to improve students' communicative skill in writing, to deliver the meaning to readers. Language learners need to recognize that writing involves four areas of knowledge: (1) knowledge of the content, prior knowledge and experience; (2) procedural knowledge to organize the content, to group ideas and to sequence the idea to match the purpose of writing; (3) knowledge of convention of writing, such as discourse structures, syntactic forms, and formatting and mechanics; and (4) procedural knowledge for integrating all the other types of knowledge. Students need opportunity to combine all four types of knowledge when they compose a writing for particular audience [10]. The design of authentic assessment suitable with the need of teachers related to language function, activities can be seen below.

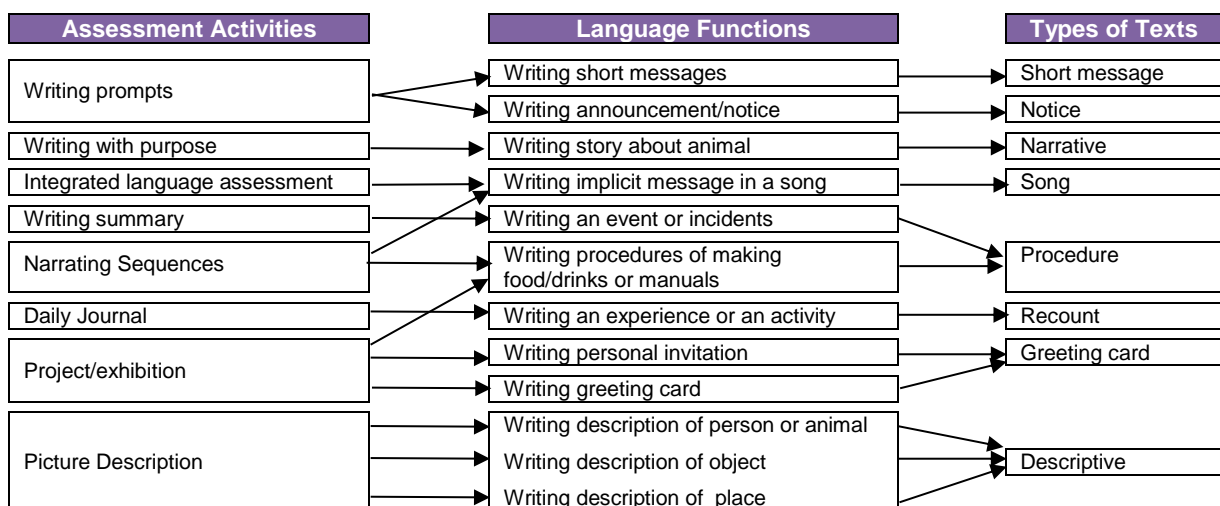


Figure 1: Design of authentic assessment based on assessment activities, language functions, and types of texts

Two important components in the authentic assessment of writing are the nature of the task (assessment activities) and the scoring criteria (scoring rubrics) [10]. Based on the problems faced by teachers in implementing authentic assessment, the need analysis, and the design of authentic assessment above, eight models of authentic assessment for writing skills were developed with its language functions and types of texts in order to activate students' ability to write well, so that teachers can assess the progress and the achievement of the students in the level of ability needed. Each model was accompanied by the scoring rubrics to indicate the level of achievement of the students. The assessment activities can be explained as follows. (1) *Writing Prompts*. Writing prompts provide some questions or statements that help students to develop ideas for writing. Students write a short text based on the prompts given. (2) *Writing with purpose*. There are at least three purposes of writing: informative writing, expressive/narrative writing, and persuasive writing. Informative writing is used to share knowledge and give information, direction, or idea. Expressive/narrative writing is a personal or imaginative expression in which the writer produces stories or essays. Persuasive writing attempts to influence others and initiate action or change. (3) *Integrated language assessment*. Integrated language assessment integrates two or more language skills in a task given to the students, such as reading skill, speaking skill, and writing skill. Students may start to read background materials on a topic, then they discuss the reading in a small group, after that they write it based on the reading



and the discussion. (4) *Writing summary*. A summary is a condensed version of a larger text. A writer uses his own words to express briefly the main idea and relevant details of the text he has read. The purpose of writing a summary is to give basic ideas of the original text. (5) *Projects/Exhibition*. In project/exhibition, students are expected to create a product of writing such as invitation, announcement, or advertisement. (6) *Picture description*. Picture description is an activity to describe a picture. Teachers may use this activity to see students' ability in writing some language functions such as describing a person, an animal, an object, or a place. (7) *Narrating sequences*. Narrating sequences are telling a story or events in chronological order. The generic structures of narrative text are orientation, complication, and resolution. (8) *Daily journal*. Daily journal is a written record of thoughts, feeling, reaction, experiences, ideas, and observation in one day. It can be used as a way to do self-reflection toward lesson. Students can write their interest or attitude toward learning and do not need to worry about mistake in language use. Daily journal can be conducted in five to ten minutes before the class ends or at convenient time during the day.

The models of authentic assessment presented above reveal that authentic assessment presents learning opportunity. By knowing the way how to assess authentically to the learning process, the students will compete to achieve the performance required. Assessment can change the way students learn. Authentic assessment is a type of students' evaluation that attempts to make testing process more realistic and relevant [11]. Authentic assessment gives multiple opportunities for students to perform their performance [4]. This type of assessment is considered as a solution that can accommodate students' progress and achievement in classroom.

4. Conclusion

The appropriate need analysis can be used effectively in developing authentic assessment for speaking skills. The conclusions that can be derived from the findings are (1) the problems faced by teachers regarding the assessment of certain language functions are varied. (2) teachers' needs on the authentic assessment regarding the language functions, activities, and scoring rubrics for speaking skills have been found, (3) the model of authentic assessment suitable with teachers' need related to assessment activities, language function, type of text, and scoring rubrics has been developed.

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