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Assessment Literacy of EFL Teachers and Its Implementation in Assessing Students' Language Performance

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Abstract

Assessment during the process of learning is important to gain information about the students' as well as the teachers' performance. Teachers do assessment as one of the activities in the teaching and learning process. Assessment literacy is a requirement for teachers in order to get accurate information about the students' progress or achievement during the learning process. The accurate information about the students' progress in learning will help the teachers to decide what to do in the next step of teaching. Therefore, every language teacher should have assessment literacy. Assessment literacy covers several aspects including knowledge, skills, and principles of assessment. This article explains the teachers' assessment literacy and the implementation of assessment principles they use in assessing the students. Data were collected through distributing questionnaires and interviewing English language teachers. The respondents filling in the questionnaires about assessment literacy are 18 lecturers. The data gained were analyzed in a quantitative way by calculating the percentage. While the data from the interview were analyzed qualitatively. The findings show that teachers possess very high level of assessment literacy knowledge in six aspects and high level in one aspect. No teachers have low or poor knowledge of assessment literacy level. Based on the result of interview to five teachers, they have implemented the assessment principles well.

Keywords: Assessment, literacy, implementation, EFL teachers.

1. Introduction

Assessment is an important activity in the teaching and learning process. Every teacher does it to measure and know the result of what they have done in the teaching and learning activity. Based on the result of assessment, information that helps improve teaching and learning will be gained. Teachers will be informed about the students' performance, their learning problems, and how they teach their students as well. Utilizing that information, teachers can take steps of what to do to be successful in the teaching and learning process.

To make assessment yields those kinds of information, a teacher must do assessment correctly and appropriately. Knowledge of assessment, how to design assessment instrument, how to assess students, how to analyze the assessment result are among other requirements needed. In other words, every teacher must be literate of assessment in order that the assessment is useful and meaningful.

Knowing assessment literacy of English teachers is important to help gaining success in the teaching and learning process. The assessment literate teachers will contribute to the students' success in learning. Therefore, data related to the assessment literacy of teachers are needed so that the institution can take action of what to do to improve the success of teaching and learning. However, research of English teacher assessment literacy in this research setting has not been done before. Therefore, this research is conducted with the purpose of knowing the level of English teachers' assessment literacy and how they implement the principles of assessment when assessing the students.

2. Literature Review

Assessment cannot be separated from the teaching and learning activity. It can be done

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during the instructional program or at the end of the program. When it is done during the program it is usually called formative assessment. Meanwhile, if it is done after the program, it is summative assessment. The aim of formative assessment is to help students continue growing their competence. Different from formative assessment, summative assessment is done to measure or draw a conclusion of what the students have comprehended (Brown, 2004). Classroom assessment comprises of several aspects: starting from collecting, interpreting, and using the information to help teacher decide how to improve student learning. Millan (2018) explained that in the classroom context, classroom assessment includes gathering, interpreting, and using proof of student learning to support teacher decision making in a variety of ways.

It is important to note that to be able to do the assessment, teachers must be assessment literate. It means that assessment literacy is needed to be possessed by teacher.

According to White (2009) assessment literate educators have skills related to the quality of assessment practices. To summarize, the skills encompass the followings,

1. How to define learning goals
2. How to make use of a variety of assessment methods
3. How to analyze achievement data
4. How to provide appropriate feedback
5. How to make appropriate instructional modification
6. How to involve students in the assessment process
7. How to engineer an effective classroom assessment

In addition, White states that assessment literacy possessed by a teacher has a straight influence on the student learning and the achievement of the course.

Studies on assessment literacy have been conducted by different researchers. Yamtim and Wongwanich studied teachers' assessment literacy in Thailand and found that most of the teachers had classroom assessment literacy at the low level (2014). Meanwhile, Gaikwad et al. when conducted research of assessment literacy to some teachers found that mostly (79%) of higher education teachers had a moderate level of assessment literacy, 16% of the teacher showed low levels and the high level of literacy assessment is only 5% (2023). Al-Bahlani and Ecke in their research revealed that teachers in Oman believed that they were assessment literate but less in digital literate (2023).

Raffas conducted assessment literacy of 20 Algerian University teachers. The findings revealed that teachers can

be considered assessment literate but not to a far extent because their knowledge of assessment is somewhat theoretical and superficial (2023). Another study was conducted by Aria et al. Their study revealed that teachers appeared to be literate and excellent in understanding the concept and using it in practice. In addition to study of assessment literacy, Ying Liu conducted a study of 28 EFL teachers. The data analysis revealed EFL teachers has a relatively insufficient assessment literacy. There are three main factors that hinder the assessment literacy namely the teachers, the students, and the discipline.

3. Method

Research respondents

The respondents in this research were 18 English higher education teachers who returned the distributed questionnaires. They taught English skills and knowledge. They consist of male and female with different teaching experiences; however, they have been teaching English more than 10 years. Even, some have been teaching more than 20 years.

Research instrument

Two instruments were used to collect data of this research: closed-ended questionnaires with Likert scale and interview guide. The questionnaires consist of 14 questions for measuring the literacy knowledge. It was developed based on the seven skills that assessment-literate educator must possess according to White (2009). It covers these components: defining clear learning goals, making use of a variety of assessment methods, analyzing achievement data and making good inferences of the data, providing appropriate feedback to students, making appropriate instructional modification to help students learn, involving students in the assessment process (self and peer assessment), and engineering an effective classroom assessment environment. The data from the questionnaires were used to analyze the teachers' assessment literacy from the knowledge aspect. The interview conducted through voice notes were taken from five teachers who were willing to be interviewed. The interview consists of questions to know the assessment literacy from the aspect of implementation.

The closed-ended questionnaires have a set of 14 questions. The aims were to measure the teachers' assessment literacy. It can be seen in the following figure.

Table 1: Questionnaires for Assessment Literacy knowledge.

No.	Assessment literacy skills	No. of questions
1.	How to define learning goals	2
2.	How to make use of a variety of assessment methods	2
3.	How to analyze achievement data	2
4.	How to provide appropriate feedback	2
5.	How to make appropriate instructional modification	2
6.	How to involve students in the assessment process	2
7.	How to engineer an effective classroom assessment	2

The interview guide used the same questions to know deeper how the teachers implement their knowledge of assessment literacy when assessing the students.

Data analysis

The data gained from the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively by calculating the central tendency. While a qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data from interview. The data from the questionnaires were used to

analyze the teachers' assessment literacy from the knowledge aspect.

The interview consists questions to know the assessment literacy from the aspect of implementation. The data were analyzed qualitatively through collecting, grouping, and interpreting.

4. Result and discussion

A. The teachers' knowledge of assessment literacy

The findings of teachers' knowledge of assessment literacy are presented in the following table.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of Teachers' assessment literacy knowledge.

Skills of assessment literacy	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Somewhat agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1. Defining clear learning goals	88.85	11.15	0	0
2. Making use of a variety of assessment methods	41.7	52.8	5.6	0
3. Analyzing achievement data and making good inferences of the data	41.7	52.8	5.6	0
4. Providing appropriate feedback to students	63.90	36.10	2.8	0
5. Making appropriate instructional modification to help students learn	16.7	77.8	0	0
6. Involving students in the assessment process (self and peer-assessment)	41.7	55.55	2.8	0
7. Engineering an effective classroom assessment environment	50	44.45	5.55	0

Table 2 shows almost all respondents (88.85%) quite know that assessment should be started by defining clear learning goals. Concerning the use of various methods in assessing students, the highest percentage is 52.8% the same as the one for analysis of achievement data. So, teachers know that various methods must be used in assessing students' performance and inferences must be made based on the gained data. Next, 63.90% teachers really understand that teachers should provide appropriate feedback to students. This is important because without giving any feedback, assessment will be useless. Feedback will inform the students what their weaknesses and strengths are. Students need it to improve their performance. The next knowledge is

how to make instructional modification that can help students learn. In this aspect, 77.8% teachers know the need of instruction modification. This is an important knowledge because teachers should understand their students' competence. So, sometimes teachers need to modify instruction in accordance with the condition of students. In addition, teachers know (55.55%) the importance of involving students in the assessment process. The last knowledge is about engineering classroom assessment environment. Half number of teachers really agree classroom environment should be designed so that assessment can be done effectively.

Table 3: The score of the assessment literacy knowledge is shown in the following table.

Respondent	Defining clear goals	Making use of a variety of assessment methods	Analyzing achievement data and making good inferences of the data	Providing appropriate feedback to students	Making appropriate instructional modification	Involving students in the assessment process	Engineering an effective classroom assessment environment
1	4	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	4
2	3.5	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	4	2.5	2	3.5	3	3	4
4	4	3.5	3	3.5	4	3	4
5	4	3.5	3	3	4	3.5	3
6	4	3.5	3	3.5	4	3.5	3.5
7	4	3	3	3.5	3	3	3
8	4	3	3	3.5	3	3.5	2.5
9	4	3	3	4	3.5	3	3
10	4	3	3	4	4	4	3.5
11	3.5	4	4	3.5	4	3	3.5
12	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
13	4	4	3	3.5	4	4	4
14	4	3.5	3	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
15	4	3	3	3.5	3	3	3
16	4	4	3	3.5	4	4	4
17	3.5	3	3	3	3	3	3
18	3.5	4	4	3.5	4	2.5	2.5
Total	70	61	56	63.5	65	60.5	61
Average	3.88	3.38	3.11	3.52	3.61	3.36	3.38

Notes

4= strongly agree

3= agree

2= somewhat agree

1= disagree

Table 4: Categorization of Score

Score	Categorization
>3.3-4.0	Very high
>2.7-3.3	High
>2.1-2.7	Fair
>1.8-2.1	Low
1.0-1.8	Poor

Table 5: Mean score and level of Assessment literacy knowledge

Assessment category	Mean score	Category
Defining clear learning goals	3.88	Very high
Making use of a variety of assessment methods	3.38	Very high
Analyzing achievement data and making good inferences of the data	3.11	High
Providing appropriate feedback to students	3.52	Very high
Making appropriate instructional modification to help students learn	3.61	Very high
Involving students in the assessment process (self and peer-assessment)	3.36	Very high
Engineering an effective classroom assessment environment	3.38	Very high

Table 5 shows clearly that the level of teachers' assessment literacy from the aspect of knowledge is very high. Only one aspect falls in high category, that is analyzing achievement data and making good inference of the data. The finding of this research is similar to the one conducted by Aria et.al (2021) that found teachers appeared to be literate and excellent in understanding the concept and using it in practice. It is different from the one conducted by Yamtim & Wongwanich that found the teachers assessment literacy at low level and another research by Ying Liu (2023) that found a relatively insufficient assessment literacy of the EFL teachers in China.

B. The implementation

Based on the interview to 5 teachers in their implementation of assessment literacy, the findings are described below.

1. Defining clear goals before teaching
Almost all respondents answered yes when asked whether or not they define clear goals before teaching or not. They used goals as the base to design the assessment. They share the goals and the target of learning at the beginning of the goals that are stated in the lesson plan as the reference
2. Making use of a variety of a variety of assessment methods
The methods used cover sharing opinion, presentation, test, portfolio, performance, and essay methods. Teachers used various methods of assessment in assessing the students. The choice of methods depends on the learning materials and activities and the characteristics of the subject being learnt.
3. Analyzing achievement data and making good inferences of the data
Teachers analyze the students' performance by identifying and paying more attention on the above and below average score to make learning improvement.
4. Providing appropriate feedback to students
Feedbacks were done by giving suggestion, oral and written feedback, and classical feedback. Feedback was given based on the students' performance so that students know their weaknesses and strengths. It helps them to perform better next.
5. Making appropriate instructional modification to help students learn
To make students learn easier and better teachers simplify, reduce the level of difficulty, explain more, based on the class competences.

6. Involving students in the assessment process (self and peer-assessment)
To involve students in the assessment process, teachers ask students to give feedback to their friends' presentation, learn more about their answer/feedback given, and introduce scoring rubric.
7. Engineering an effective classroom assessment environment
This was done by giving clearer instruction, changing class regulation, and considering students' capacity.

The findings show that teachers have implemented the knowledge of assessment in assessing the students by doing the seven skills above.

5. Conclusion

The assessment literacy knowledge of the teachers is very good. It is proved by the findings that show their level of assessment literacy knowledge, that is in very high category. This is supported by data of assessment implementation which shows that teachers implement their knowledge of assessment in assessing the students' performance.

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