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Between Knowledge and Implementation: Assessment Literacy of Language Lecturers

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Abstract

Assessment is a crucial point in the teaching and learning process. From the result of assessment, the students' ability or performance can be measured. Teachers can take appropriate action for the sake of students' success in learning based on the assessment score. It can be done by giving reinforcement or remedial teaching, or other actions. Teachers can also do a reflection of what they have done so far, such as the method they use, the material, the media, and other aspects influencing the process of teaching. Furthermore, the result of assessment is influenced by the teachers' assessment literacy. Teachers' knowledge of assessment will affect the way they assess and in turn the result of it. This article explains the knowledge of language teachers' assessment, how they implement their knowledge, and investigate whether or not there is gap between the assessment knowledge and its implementation. To get the data, questionnaires and interview were conducted. The data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed by counting the percentage. Meanwhile the data of interview were analyzed qualitatively. The research finding shows the average knowledge level of assessment literacy is high. From the interview and open-ended questions result, data showed that lecturers have implemented their knowledge in assessing the students. So, a conclusion can be drawn there is no gap between the lecturers' knowledge of assessment and the assessment they did. The assessment carried out was the application of the knowledge they possessed.

Keywords: assessment literacy, gap, implementation

Introduction

Assessment literacy is the knowledge and skills required to design, implement, and interpret various forms of assessment. Being able to design requires teachers to know the principles of good assessment. In addition, method/ways to assess is crucial in conducting the assessment. Teachers must assess the students appropriately. Finally, they must interpret the result of the assessment by giving meaning of the score. So, assessment is not just giving test and score.

Assessment is a very important competency for all teachers, including for language teachers. Assessment literacy comprises knowledge of assessment and how to apply it. However, a significant gap sometimes appears between teachers' theoretical knowledge of assessment literacy and the implementation of the knowledge in the classroom. The teachers' assessment literacy and its implementation can affect the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities. Researches of teachers' assessment literacy have been conducted by different researchers. Research on teachers' literacy knowledge and its application is important to conduct since the information about it will be useful for the institution to make a decision or policy for better teaching and learning result. Although there are many researches of assessment, only few of them studied the assessment knowledge and related it with its application.

This research was conducted to language lecturers aiming at knowing their assessment literacy knowledge and how it is implemented. Therefore, based on the findings a conclusion can be drawn whether or not there is a gap between the knowledge of assessment literacy and its implementation in conducting assessment.

Literature Review

Assessment is part of teaching and learning activities. Therefore, assessment should not be underestimated. Every teacher is obliged to carry it out so that they can find out student

achievements and obtain data that can be used to carry out self-reflection in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning for which they are responsible. Sardareh et al. States that the implementation of assessments occurs in an atmosphere of social and cultural classroom interaction with the aim of providing information and improving student learning to increase their autonomy (2013). Meanwhile, Tontus stated that assessment can be an indication for students about what success they have and have not achieved from the knowledge and skills they have learned (2020). For teachers, assessment also provides information about what students do and how they do it. Basically, the teachers have done this. The question is whether the assessment made meets the proper assessment requirements, whether the teacher has a good level of assessment literacy and applies it when assessing his students.

Richards et al. defining assessment as a systematic approach to collecting data and making conclusions from data about student abilities or the quality or success of learning based on various sources or evidence (2010). Assessments are carried out during the learning process (in one semester). The aim is to see the development of student learning outcomes towards one or several learning objectives. In one semester of study, assessments can be carried out several times. Meanwhile, according to Brown, assessment in the world of education is a process that includes techniques with a wide range of methods (2019). A lecturer who listens to students' answers to their questions, observes them in responding, or pays attention to their activity in class, is actually indirectly assessing the student's performance. An assessment whose aim is to determine whether you pass a course and is carried out at the end (semester), is called an evaluation. Palomba et al (1999) defines assessment as the activity of collecting data, reviewing and using information about learning programs.

Song stated that in the learning process, assessment is a very important activity. Assessment can involve students setting clearer learning goals, reflecting on their progress and learning achievements, and providing useful feedback for further progress (2023). Furthermore, Yambi stated that assessments are also used to identify students' weaknesses and strengths so that teachers can carry out programs that can support good learning (2018). Therefore, teachers have an important role in implementing assessments. In the hands of the teacher the assessment is made. Teachers also determine what kind of assessments will be carried out to assess their students' abilities. Furthermore, what will be done with the results of the assessment is also in the hands of the teacher.

Good assessments will also provide good learning outcomes. Tontus said that assessment influences student learning (2020). This means that for good learning outcomes, teachers must be able to carry out good assessments. Assessment can be carried out well if teachers have good literacy about assessment. Literacy means having good knowledge about assessments and applying this knowledge in carrying out assessments.

Several researchers have conducted research related to assessment literacy. A study in Thailand conducted by Yamtima et al. to a number of teachers found data that their literacy level was still low (2014). Different research results were shown from research conducted by Aria et al (2021). From their research it was found that teachers were literate and very good at understanding concepts and practicing

assessments. Meanwhile, other research related to assessment was carried out by Mellati et al (2018). The results of the research show that statistically assessment literacy influences student learning outcomes. This shows the importance of assessment literacy that teachers must have.

White quotes Popham's statement that literacy in assessment is a good understanding of assessment principles (2009). Furthermore, White quoted the definition made by Webb, namely that assessment is knowledge about how to assess what students know and can do, interpret it, then use the results to improve learning.

Assessment is a vital part of the learning process. In higher education, lecturers play a major role in implementing an assessment. With the correct assessment, accurate data will be obtained about the condition of the students being taught and how the teaching and learning process is taking place so that steps can be taken to improve the quality of learning. In order for the assessment to be carried out correctly, lecturers must have a good literacy level. Therefore, there are several related skills that lecturers must have in order to have good literacy. In their study of language assessment literacy, Coombe et al concluded the need for programs in the form of courses on assessment to be part of the qualifications and requirements for teachers (2020).

Methods

The population in this study included 45 language education lecturers (English and Indonesian). From this population, samples were taken using the Sample Size Calculator technique. Based on calculations from this number, the required sample size is 31. (<https://goodcalculators.com/sample-size-calculator/>).

However, only 25 lecturers gave responses. So, the respondents of this research were 25 lecturers.

Research data were collected by distributing closed questionnaires and conducting interviews. So, this research used quantitative and qualitative data. The design used is descriptive quantitative and qualitative (mixed). Mixed method design is a research design that combines qualitative and quantitative data and then analyzes the data either one by one or simultaneously (Cohen, et al:2018).

Data collected from the results of closed questionnaires were analyzed using central tendency to determine the level of lecturers' knowledge of literacy assessment.

The interview results and the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed qualitatively with the following steps:

- a. Data collection and
- b. Data reading
- c. Data coding and description
- d. Presentations
- e. Data interpretation

The analysis was carried out based on Creswell's theory (2009).

Findings and Discussion

Lecturers' knowledge of assessment literacy

The following table is the frequency distribution of the lecturers who filled in the questionnaires. There are 7 points of statement that indicate someone as assessment literate. There were 4 choices that the participants can choose whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of Language lecturers’ assessment literacy and its mean.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Setting a clear and measurable objectives before teaching	22	3	0	0
2. Using different assessment method	12	12	1	0
3. Analyzing assessment result and making a conclusion.	6	18	1	0
4. Giving feedback to students’ work	15	9	1	0
5. Modifying the teaching and learning activity to make students easier in learning.	18	7	0	0
6. Involving students in self and peer-assessment	14	10	1	0
7. Do activities that make assessment more effective	14	10	1	0

The data above is presented in the following chart.

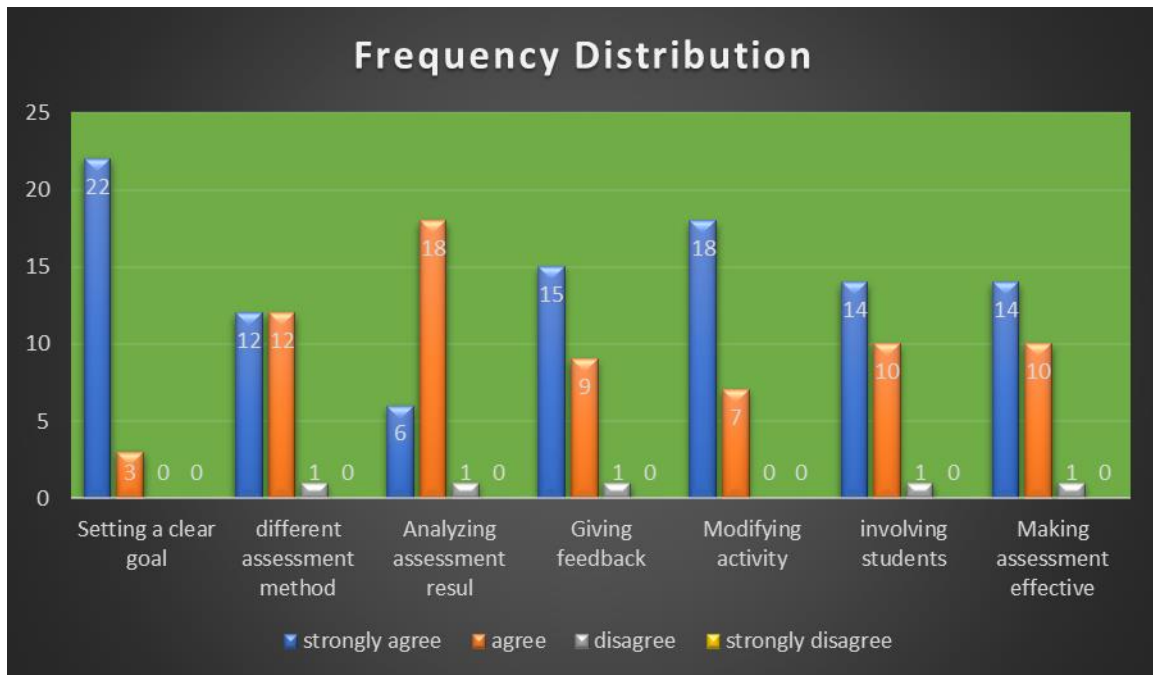


Table 2: Mean Range of Assessment Literacy Scale.

Score	Mean Range	Degree	Interpretation
4	4.00-3.00	Strongly Agree	High
3	2.99-2.00	Agree	Average
2	1.99-1.00	Disagree	Fair
1	1.00-0.99	Strongly Disagree	Poor

Table 3: Mean of language lecturers’ assessment literacy.

Assessment knowledge	Score	Mean	Interpretation
Setting clear and measurable objectives before teaching	97	3.88	High
Using different assessment method	86	3.44	High
Analyzing assessment result and making a conclusion	80	3.20	High
Providing appropriate feedback to students	89	3.56	High
Making appropriate instructional modification to help students learn	93	3.72	High
Involving students in the assessment process (self and peer-assessment)	88	3.52	High
Engineering an effective classroom assessment environment	88	3.52	High

The findings show the lecturers’ knowledge of assessment is high. The highest level with the mean score 3.88 was the knowledge to set clear and measurable objectives before teaching. The next level (M=3.72) is modifying the instruction when they found the students got difficulty known from the result of the assessment. The third high level is providing appropriate feedback to students (M=3.56). Involving students in the assessment process and engineering effective classroom assessment environment are in the same level of literacy knowledge, both with mean score 3.52. The knowledge of using different assessment

method is also in high level although the mean score is 3.44. The least high-level knowledge is in analyzing the assessment result and drawing a conclusion from the result of analysis (mean=3.20). The language lecturers’ knowledge of assessment literacy is proven to be high. They know how to assess the students based on seven skills that assessment-literate educator must possess according to White (2009). The next objective of the study is the implementation of the literacy knowledge. The following is the finding of how they implement their knowledge to assess the students.

Implementation of assessment literacy knowledge

The data of the implementation were collected through interview and open-ended questionnaires. It revealed that lecturers implement their knowledge of literacy assessment in assessing the students.

In term of setting objectives, respondents did it before starting to teach. Objectives were set before teaching and shared to the students at the first meeting of the course. One respondent said the objectives have been provided in the lesson plan, so he/she refers to it. However, there was a respondent who said he did not prepare the objectives. In terms of how to design the assessment, all said that they design the assessment based on the learning objectives.

The assessment methods they used show variation. They assessed by conducting authentic assessment, demonstration, giving multiple choice and essay test, using project-based and problem-based learning. Oral and written tests were also variation of assessment methods. Besides, sharing opinion, giving exercises, and portfolio, were also found as the variation of method. The lecturer varied the method depending on the learning materials.

The result of the assessment was then analyzed. Most respondent did the analysis although not yet in detail or comprehensively. Only one respondent said honestly he did not do the analysis. A conclusion then was drawn based on the result of the analysis. The conclusion was used as consideration to choose the material, methods, and improving students' achievement.

The assessment literacy dealing with giving feedback was also implemented. The feedback was in the form of giving constructive suggestions, comment and response to students' work, checking students' work, discussion with students of parts that have not met the target, and guide the students when they faced difficulty. Feedback was also given simply by giving score to the students' work.

Modifying the teaching activity to make students learn easier was done by all respondents. The modification was done in many ways comprising applying different learning model and using ice breaking activity, combining problem and project-based learning with joyful learning, using media, and making innovation. The modification was also done by reducing the load of learning material and giving additional time for explaining.

Conducting peer and self-assessment by students were also applied in the class although self-assessment is less often. If the assessment was in an essay form, the lecturer himself will do assessing. The involvement of students in peer or self-assessment was successful in high level class. However, in other class sometimes it was not fully successful due to the unfamiliarity in analysing the work.

The last finding revealed lecturers did some activities in order that the assessment ran effectively. The activities done encompassed giving clear instructions, reviewing the assessment process, informing about assessment at the beginning and discussing at the end, and introducing scoring rubric as well as demonstrating how to use it in scoring.

Based on the explanation of the findings above, it can be said that lecturers have implemented their knowledge of assessment in assessing the students. Starting from setting the goals, using different assessment method, analyzing assessment result, providing feedback, making appropriate teaching modification, involving students in the assessment process, and engineering effective classroom environment for assessment were all done, except by a lecturer in some of the seven aspects.

Conclusion

Language teachers that became respondents in this research show high level of assessment literacy knowledge. It indicates that they were assessment literate. In addition, most of them applied their knowledge in assessing the students. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that there was no gap between teachers' literacy knowledge and its implementation.

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