

Using self-assessment to assess rural young learners' writing skills in English foreign language classroom

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Abstract – Authentic assessment is a process of collecting, reporting and using information about student learning outcomes in the teaching-learning process. There are four forms of authentic assessment like project assessment, performance assessment, portfolio assessment, and self-assessment. In this research, the researcher focuses on investigate students in self-assessment. Self-assessment is an assessment where students can assess their self or identify strengths and weaknesses in their own work. It is also to realize the goals of student-centered learning. Self-assessment aims to help students to be independent learners. Self-assessment is considered important to the development of lifelong language learning skills and the development of more comprehensive assessment practices. One of Senior High School students from twelve grade in a rural school in Denpasar participated in this research. The research is based on the theory that metacognitive skills such as self-regulation and self-monitoring are important for the development of autonomous learning skills. Data were collected by observing them during the English class and at the end of the series of observations, and an interview session was conducted with each of them for triangulation. This research is also revealed that using self-assessment to assess young learners' writing skills is beneficial and effective in helping them to write in the English language classroom. The expected finding in this research is self-assessment had a positive impact or helping students and teachers in the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: self-assessment, autonomous learning, writing skill, young learners', EFL classroom

1. Introduction

Writing is very essential to be mastered because writing is one of the productive language skills. Productive skill is speaking and writing. Both of them are crucial as it gives students the opportunity to practice real-life activities in the classroom. Ontario, (2005:12) states that writing is a powerful instrument for students to use in order to express their thoughts, feelings, and judgments about what they have read, seen, or experienced. Writing is one skill that is very difficult to master because in writing we must focus on developing ideas. Brannan (2010:14) states that good writing is difficult. The writing process challenges us to dig deeper into the theme or idea that we will make.

Oshima et al. (2007:15) state that there are four steps in writing. In the first step is called prewriting. Prewriting is a way to get ideas. In this step, a writer has to collect ideas to develop the topic. The second step is organizing. In this step, a writer has to arrange an idea into a simple draft. The third step is writing. In this step, a writer writes a rough draft using your outline as guidance. Write your draft while thinking about grammar, spelling or punctuation. Just get your ideas down on paper. You will fix the errors later. And the final step is called polishing. In this step, a writer polishes what you have written. In polishing the writer have to follow some steps. First, making revisions and then editing it.

The written work produced by a language learner can be divided into two types of composition, namely spontaneous production (free writing composition) and controlled production (guided composition). Raimes (2010) state that when free-write, you let one idea lead to another in the free association without concern for correctness. In addition, Oshima et al. (2007:34) state that free-writing is a technique in which write without stopping a topic for a specific amount of time. The main goal in free-writing is to keep your pencil moving across the paper. In writing, guided writing is useful for students. The goal of guided writing is giving motivation when writing and also to increase their independence. Wendy Baker cited in Wardhana & Widhiastuty (2018) showing that the reviewer or corrector giving feedback got more help for the improvement of academic writing.

Writing is an important thing in our daily life. Not only speaking, but writing also can be good communication when we express an idea, feeling, etc. Kane (2000:3) states that writing is worth learning. It is important in any job or career. Because there are some jobs that ask us can write. Taylor (2009:2) state that if we are to write well, we need to know what we are talking about. We need to push ourselves to uncover everything that we know about a subject that becomes our focus; it often needful to reach every gap in our understanding of a problem that ourselves' thought fairly sure of.

As a language teacher, we always tell ourselves that it is difficult to get our students to write. To resolving this problem, we are as a teacher have to prepare our students well in the national exam. Writing is one of skill that challenging to teach. Indeed, writing is a productive skill that demands effort and attentiveness, even for those who are professional writers. Writing is a process. Miller cited in Noor, Yusoff, & Noor (2016) claims that young children teach themselves to write by directed trial and error. The children were having difficulty to make sentences because they have a little bit of vocabulary. This is a common problem among senior high school students.

For students, students' difficulties in writing come from the weakness in finding ideas; they did not have ideas what to write first. Secondly, the students had difficulty in making the writing that related to the topic. The students also had difficulty in choosing the word because they have the limit vocabulary. In this case, to stimulate students to participate in the class especially in writing, the teachers have to be creative and understand what the students' want, so the students will show high motivation in the class. One of them by using an interesting technique or strategy in teaching especially in writing.

Self- assessment is one of the strategies that can be used by teachers in writing. Self-assessment has become a goal of education that centered on students. It will make students become independent learners. According to Dickinson (1987) self-assessment is a process of collecting information about students' own learning to see their knowledge development. Harris and McCann cited in Ketabi & Ketabi (2014) describe the concept of self-assessment as "useful information about students' expectations and needs, their problems and worries, how they feel about their own (learning) process, their respond to the materials and methods used, and what they think about it in general".

According to Oscarson (2009) there are six features for self-assessment; the first one is its support of learning, the second one is that it enhances learners and teachers' conscious of the learners' abilities, the third is that by getting knowledgeable about learning objectives, learner's motivation is increased, participating of learners in their own evaluation make them more knowledgeable in assessment, the fifth is that learners participation in the assessment process reduce the teacher's responsibility, and the last important is that it has a lot of advantages during the time and make the learners more autonomous so that they can evaluate their own learning improvement.

There are some categories of self-assessment like metacognitive assessment, socio-affective assessment, student self- generated test and etc. But here, the researcher only focus on metacognitive assessment. Metacognitive assessment not only as a tool to see the performance or competencies already possessed but also to plan the learning objectives of subsequent learners and monitor their progress to achieve their goals.

Using authentic assessment can make a better learning environment in the classroom. They motivate themselves personally. This self- assessment can motivate and formulates their own forms of writing. These experiences and the characteristics of individual children to determine the level of literacy skills a child ultimately achieves. If it fails to teach them in reading in early school, it will make their motivation is lost. On the other hand, Students learning will become successful if they directly involved in their learning. In ELT classroom, learners can become more successful in acquiring the necessary skill if they take more part in their language learning process that their teacher or textbook. This makes students be more independent or autonomous learners. The high level of control over their learning outside the classroom in addition to what they practice in the classroom enables students to be self-accessed or autonomous learners. Autonomous learning also makes students to evaluate or assess their language performance.

English Language Teaching (ELT) has experienced a paradigm shift from teacher to student-centered teaching. Unlike in traditional classroom practice, now learners are positioned as the central figure of teaching and learning process. Harris cited in Purwanti (2015) states that the effectiveness of teaching and learning should depend on learners' perceptions of the learning process and of themselves as language

learners. Hunt, Gow, and Barnes cited in Purwanti (2015) assert that successful language teaching must start from the learners rather than the teachers so language learners must be made aware that they are the most important element in the learning process. Consequently, teachers should be able to facilitate learners with the opportunities to develop their self-awareness of their needs, goals, and learning process.

Self-assessment is going to be used in EFL writing in a wide range, although, writing and assessment as essential parts of language learning. Most of the studies considered writing as a product and just pay attention Self-assessment is going to be used in EFL writing in a wide range, although, writing and assessment as essential parts of language learning. Some studies assume writing as a product and only focus on the grammatical aspect of writing. So the main point of this research is the students' progress in writing skill by considering writing as a process and the stages which learners are going through them during the period of writing class. It also considers assessment as a process which has a crucial role in the instructional setting. Since writing and evaluation related to each other, so self-assessment is one of the tools that useful for the goal of education.

2. Method

2.1 Research design

The research adopted the qualitative descriptive approach to facilitate information and data to assist in achieving research objectives.

2.2 Participants

The participants are the twelve grade teachers and students of a senior high school in Denpasar.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected by observing them during the English Language lessons and at the end of the series of observations, questionnaires and an interview session were conducted with each of them for triangulation. Preliminary observations are the first step to collect data in this research. The observation is to obtain information about the assessment strategy that the teacher use to assess the students' writing ability. The second step was by questionnaires to obtain information about the students' perceptions about the use of self-assessment to assess their writing ability. The interview was conducted to obtain more information related to the use of self-assessment to assess their writing ability.

2.4 Data Analysis

In this research, the researcher uses interactive analysis technique. Miles & Huberman (cited in Loren, Andayani, & Setiawan, 2017:5) argued that the activity in qualitative data analysis is done interactively and continuously to complete, so the data was saturated. Activities in data analysis are data reduction, display data, and conclusion drawing/ verification.

3. Results and Discussion

Self-assessment practices are important to the development of our language learning skills and the development of more comprehensive assessment practices. Modern communicative language learning involves both group interaction between students and individual work appropriate to the goals which want to achieve. This research explores

and discusses upper secondary school students' self-assessments of their writing on a group as well as an individual level.

As one of the alternative methods of assessment is self-assessment, self-assessment has many advantages which have been referred to in different researches. By using self-assessment learners can recognize their problems and strong point (Birjandi & Tamjid, 2010). Gardner (2000) self-assessment can be defined as a tool which used to monitor and control each learner in learning activities. In this case, each learner gets the same chance to give feedback and do an evaluation for their work. He also states that this method of assessment help teacher to support learners when needed, because by paying attention to students' reflection, the teacher can find out their weaknesses and make them practice. Self-assessment strategy enhances learners' motivation. According to (Joyce, Spiller, & Twist (2009) when learners know how to develop their learning and practice it in the real world, they will be motivated intrinsically. Self-assessment is also helpful in learners' thinking. Garcia Garrido (2010) states that for growing learners' thinking and giving them the chance to make their work meaningful, the teacher can encourage them to evaluate their own work. According to Lam (2000) self-assessment advantages are "1) building up linguistic awareness, 2) self-assessment as a monitoring tool, 3) improving future writing, and 4) having more practice in writing."

The research explores how senior high school students perceived their own general and specific writing abilities in relation to syllabus goals and whether these perceptions are affected by self-assessment practices. It also explores students' and teachers' experiences to self-assessment into everyday classroom practice. The research is based on the theory that metacognitive skills such as self-regulation and self-monitoring are important for the development of autonomous learning skills. Two teachers and some groups of twelve grade from the different class participated in the research. The result of students self-assessed of two written assignments, namely a classroom writing assignment and a written test task. The researchers analyzed classroom writing assignment linguistically. Two teacher and some students' focus groups were interviewed about their experiences at the end of the research.

The results of the questionnaires and interviews showed that most students who never had a chance to do self-assessment in language learning indicated positive attitudes towards the implementation of self-assessment in this context. They believed that the self-assessment practice could help them when they make mistake in writing. They also believed that it may enhance their awareness of their learning development; therefore, they would use it for their future needs. Although, self-assessment practice useful in learning, but some students did not feel confident in the way they perceived their own work. Some students admitted that they knew they made some mistakes in writing like make a simple paragraph and etc. However, they cannot correct it well. They thought that they were not competent learners, so they did not know whether their language use was appropriate or not.

It showed that at the group level students were well able to assess their general writing results in relation to the criterion (the teachers' grades). The results in the individual were more variable, it also depends on the type of writing activity assessed and on the amount of practice students had had of self-assessment. Students' assessments of their writing ability, in general, showed a stronger relationship with teachers' grades than did students' assessments of their results in a particular classroom

writing the assignment. Students' assessments tended to become more useful with practice.

And the results also showed that the specific writing skills that students at senior high school focused on in their writing are spelling and grammar, rather than other skills such as sentence structure, vocabulary, paragraphing and punctuation skills. Students were critical with these skills and tended to underestimate their performance. Students and teachers combine self-assessment activities in the EFL writing classroom and saw it as a transferable skill that underpins lifelong learning in another subject.

The method used show where the writing process approach was coupled with self-assessment questions and non-corrective feedback from the teacher, it becomes a practical way of helping students become more aware of their language skills and levels. Both teachers and students considered student self-assessments as contributing valuable additional information to tutoring and testing.

The goals that encourage student responsibility and autonomy are viable and realistic, but students need to practice self-assessment, preferably from an early age, to become adept at employing the approach effectively.

4. Conclusion

Writing is one of the skills in learning a foreign language like English. By using writing a learner can show their ability, by the traditional method of teaching most of the learners do not like to participate in writing class. Previously most of the teachers in foreign language classes ignored writing skill or at most, they just paid attention to the final product and marked it, they did not consider the process how they can producing the final writing.

Based on the explanations above it can be concluded that self-assessment as a complementary to a traditional method of assessment influence EFL learners' English writing skill by focusing on writing processes. Using self-assessment is useful for EFL learners and its introduction is helpful for teaching writing skill. The self-assessment could be used as an advantageous tool for assessing and learning writing skill. As can be seen from the results of this research there is a positive relationship between the self-assessment and writing of the learners because using self-assessment improve learners writing skill. It also makes them more motivated to learn English. Using self-assessment strategy makes the class more active and increase the cooperation between the teacher and the learners.

Self-assessment is a way for students to have control over their own work, and by using this strategy of assessment they can reach valuable information about their weak points and they can also think critically. So, by implementing this strategy learners would become more independent and aware of their capabilities.

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