

Assessment Strategy to Rectify EFL Students' Performance: A Need Analysis

¹Nirwanto Maruf*, ²Adimawati Helingo

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik

²IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo

***Corresponding Authors**

Email: nirwanto.maruf@umg.ac.id

Abstract

The objective of this research is to investigate the assessment strategies that required to be implemented, and are favorable for the learners in order to rectify EFL students' performance regards to their language performance. This study conducted based on the presumption that teachers merely consider students' preference on how they want to be assessed. A need analysis is administered to meet the objective of the research. The result indicates that learners mostly prefer to have corrective feedback from the teacher during the teaching and learning activities, meanwhile performance task and quiz assessment are preferred by learners as their assessment strategies instead of summative assessment. Nevertheless in spite of that, KWL assessment strategy is also recommended for the teaching and learning of English.

Keywords: *Assessment strategy, Students' language performance, needs analysis*

INTRODUCTION

One of the important aspects regards to teaching and learning activities in EFL/ESL context is assessment. There are many common strategies that can be used in doing assessment such as conducting tests, quizzes, or giving homework and since the teaching of English is integrated thus the assessment process should cover four skills of English (Irons & Elkington, 2021; Zlatović et al., 2015). Generally, known as the purpose of designing an assessment is to support and thus enhance learning. It can be said that the purpose of assessment itself is to evaluate to what extent the students' understanding of the knowledge is and that the data gained from classroom assessment becomes the indicator for teachers to determine the suitable methods in their teaching and learning activities.

In classroom, where English teaching as well as learning activities takes place normally, teacher the one who in charge to give assessment. Mostly, teachers give assignment and evaluate the test by themselves and they ignore to give any feedback that causes the students not really aware of their lack of the language and it is harder for them to improve and to be better (Kahle & Boone, 2000). However, as time goes by, students are also given chance to participate in evaluating each other, what so called peer-rating strategy or peer feedback. This type of peer assessment will enhance students' ability to give contribution in teaching and learning activities and contributes to provide information for the teacher to assess the students' mastery of knowledge given to them.

Nevertheless, in the case where teacher assess the students' mastery of knowledge, the most common result shows what students have learned are not exactly the same with what the teacher thought he has transferred to them and this is what happens in reality. Thus, the teacher needs to find out appropriate

assessment strategy in order to see how much information the students possessed from the teaching and learning process.

A successful learning process is a process of transferring information in which both students and teacher can get advantage. For example, students can learn how to study and are able to demonstrate the knowledge they have learned. They can also improve their ability in English from the way they are assessed. While teacher can find out appropriate assessment strategy to conduct teaching and learning activities that can enhance learners' performance in English.

To find out the appropriate assessment strategy in teaching and learning that is required by learners so that to enhance their performance in class, the researchers conducted this study at English Department, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. English Department has 39 active lecturers and 2 of them are in charge in Semantic subject in the class that the researcher took as object of the needs analysis. Lecturers in English Department apply classroom-based research in teaching and learning process and implement various learning method such as discovery model, collaborative and cooperative learning.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

1. Assessment

A teacher may feel unhappy in teaching and learning process when he discovers, or during process of grading final exam, what his students have learned is not all what he thought he was teaching. It is necessary to ensure learners' comprehension on course material that teachers brought to the class. In addition to that matter, faculty members need effective ways of monitoring throughout the semester. To monitor the students' comprehension of the course material an assessment is needed. The word assessment brings various perspectives to teachers and students from as what it is defined. Ketabi & Ketabi, (2014) state that assessment might be thought as the pressure of final exam for students and it usually makes learners fell down, while teachers fell exhausted in preparing and examine the results of assessment. Hence, the state of assessment and test are two different things.

Arber & Hopkin, (2003) define an assessment is continual action in which covers wider range. It aims to choose learners, put them into proper course, making instructions, divine future accomplishment the learners', determine educational agenda (formative as well as summative determination), to define new research problems, and to alter the understanding of certain language occurrence.

For classroom domain, when learners react to a question, gives comments, or attempt to give a new word or structure during the process of teaching and learning, subconsciously the teacher also makes assessment of the learners' performance. As Ketabi & Ketabi, (2014) pointed out assessment is procedure aims to assess learners (such as tests, quizzes, interviews, observation, and self-assessments). Thus, it can be said that teachers are expected to assess their students in each stage of learning.

Different from assessment, testing is perceived as a kind of assessment in which technically correlated to certain timing and defined instructions (Gregory & Lodge, 2015). In another words, when a teacher conducts a test the instrumental

questions must be designed carefully and it is administered in certain period of time, mostly at the end course program to assess the students' competence of the material.

a. Formal and Informal Assessment

Based on its classification, assessment is divided into informal and formal assessment, as well as summative and formative assessment. Ketabi & Ketabi, (2014) state that formal assessment is a kind of assessment that calculated and meant to provide information regards to students' accomplishment on prearranged times. Brown (2004, p.6) defined formal assessments as drills or series of actions in which determined to resurrect the current knowledge or skill of learners. Further, it is stated all tests are included in formal assessments. For instance learners' journal or learners' portfolio of material is defined as a formal assessment in which known as the achievement on particular course goals, but it is difficult to appoint these two procedures as "test" (Pombo et al., 2010; Struyven et al., 2005). Otherwise, informal assessment is possible to have a number of forms which includes incidental unplanned remarks and replies, as well as coaching and unprepared response to the students (Brown 2004:5), such as giving compliment to students performance. Bottge et al., (2021) mention the principal objective of informal assessment is not only to accumulate learners' scores, but rather then to collect information regards to learners' present knowledge. It can be inferred that during the informal assessment the students feel no pressure or discomfort, contradictory when they are facing formal assessment or test. As a matter of fact, reliable source for getting information about students' competence is not only gained from formal tests, but information from every day observation in class with less pressure condition can also provide reliable insight to assess students' performance.

b. Summative and Formative Assessment

Another classification of assessment is summative assessment which evaluates what the students have learned during a course. As its name suggests, this summative assessment normally conducted at the final semester. This assessment aims to provide information regards to course objectives that have been achieved by learners, still this assessment lacks of feedback or any counsel uses to enhance learners' performance (Brown, 2004). Besides, this kind of assessment sometimes makes students stressful that they have to learn and memorize all the material of the whole semester.

Another assessment calls formative assessment is considered as ongoing process of evaluation and feedback within the classroom situation which eventually will aim at helping a better learning. This so called ongoing assessment is perceived as a good way to help students because teacher can identify the students' lacks and weak points and can immediately provide correct feedback during their interaction (Irons & Elkington, 2021). That way, students can directly analyze their lacks and learn from the correction given by the teacher. In other words, the aim of formative assessment is to modify teaching activities with the obvious intention to improve learning process and results.

c. Assessment Strategies

Various assessment strategies that possibly used in classroom setting adopted from online teaching resources (Santos & Semana, 2015), they are: (1) Classroom Presentation. A classroom presentation involves learners' abilities to

express their ideas, choose and deliver their knowledge and/or things they have learned; (2) Essays. An essay is learners' writing abilities in developing responses to questions, topics, or concise expressions, and providing arguments. In essay teachers are enabled to evaluate learners' comprehension in analyzing as well as in synthesizing particular facts or information. (3) Observation. An observation is systematic procedures which aim to viewing and recording learners' actions, so teachers or instructors are possible to assemble programming and instruction conclusion. This observation gives evidences or information on learners' weakness and strengths, attitude, interest, and learning styles. (4) Performance Tasks. In this teaching resources, learners are allowed to make, to carry out, or to provide works concern with real world problems or situation. It can be utilized to evaluate learners' competence, and give information and students outcomes; (5) Question and Answers. In this approach, the teacher delivers some questions, and learners or students are expected to respond orally/verbally. This approach assists teacher to provide information whether learners comprehended the materials that are being, or have been delivered, and it also assists learners to expand their thinking, raise ideas, and resolve ideas or problems. (6) Quizzes, tests, and examinations. These kind of assessments need learners' responds (verbally or in writing) to perform their current knowledge or their skills.

These strategies of assessment vary on its implementation based on what course subject is taught and what language skills are being evaluated.

2. Needs Analysis

The term needs are refer to intends, requires, requests, expectation, barriers, and deficiencies (Brindley, 1984 in Richards 2001). It implies that needs have objective to be identified, analyzed, and fulfilled. In foreign language leaning, particularly English in this case, needs may refer to language skills which are necessary for students to master in order to engage in English community (Maruf et al., 2021).

Need analysis (also calls needs assessment) has an important role in designing and executing any course of language. It contains instructions or procedures to gather all information regard to students needs for their course. This needs analysis was first implemented in teaching and learning language by means of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), then it is also implemented in general English courses (Handayani & Lestari, 2019). Iwai et al (1999) defines the term of needs analysis mostly appoint to activities of collecting information which will be used as the principle for constructing a syllabus or curriculum with aim to fulfill the needs of a particular groups or students.

Further, (Zoller, 2012) defines needs analysis as a systematic strategies to find out the current knowledge, competency, readability, or manner of particular individual or group participating in a certain subject. It is designed to gain prominent issues or problems encounter by any individual or group in order to construct successful educational system. A need analysis offers a method to encounter things have been learn as well as the possible learning gaps remain. It can be simplified in other words that needs analysis means an information gained from students about what they need to fill the gap between their current state and

some desired state. From that information the teachers can plan better and appropriate actions to improve students' language performance.

An effective language program is developed by identifying the students' needs and interests (Maruf et al., 2021). It is imperative that a needs analysis is carried out as soon as possible at the beginning of a course in order to ease the teachers determine what can be done regarding the students' desires. Many aspects of language learning can be analyzed through needs analysis such as course material, preferred skills, method of teaching, and assessment.

Language programs carry out need analysis for the same goals. The need analysis is established so learners have changes to examine their level of knowledge, skills, readability, ideas, learning habits, and their preference (Bottge et al., 2021; Chou et al., 2017). With the need analysis in hand, the teacher may be able to examine and portray the existing situation, elucidate how the program will meet the learners' needs, and depict the expected effects of the program. Thus, with needs analysis, teachers aware whether they are successfully managed the class with the expected results or not. It also can determine the next steps needed for the class.

McCawley (2009, p.4) mentions that even the objectives of needs assessment are alike, but the aims of needs analysis are differs, thus it will effects the approach of how the project conducted. Richards (2001) mention several aims of needs analysis in language teaching such as; (a) to determine the needs of language skill on student needs, in order to carry out a certain role, like sales manager, tour guide, or university students; (b) to assist on determining the current course sufficiently meet the needs of potential students; (c) to specify learners needs that mostly require in learning of certain language skills; (d) to recognize the shift of direction that individuals in a reference group sense is important; (e) to recognize the gap between what learners are capable to do and what they necessary to do; (f) to gather information regards the students' experiencing on particular issues.

Needs analysis create to establish a better knowledge in order to make better instruction. A need analysis generally organizes for specific group, institution, or business to rectify the effectiveness or productivity of the individual or cluster associate with its mission. At time when a need analysis is established in the name of groups of people (not for a specific group of people), the aims then tend to focus on what are necessities to enhance the situation for the individual by switching the knowledge, attitudes, and also situation (McCawley, 2009, p.5). the purpose of a needs analysis is required for the target population, not simply based on the information regards to their existing knowledge, or skills, however it also demand an investigation onto group's perceived accomplishment, priorities and their alternatives.

Procedures for collecting information during a need analysis possibly provided from interview, self-rating, observations, questionnaires, meeting, the samples of learner languages, assignment analysis, case studies, and any analysis of available information.

RESULT

The first session in questionnaire is aimed to gain brief information about students' background in English and the response shows that among 18 respondents there is only 1 person who took English course outside. Related to students' perception on their English class, 6 questions with yes-no answer are provided and a column of 'frequency' where the respondent can specify their answer with 'always', 'sometimes', 'often', 'seldom', and 'never'. From the questions, 6 of them considered 'sometimes' their class is enjoyable, their teacher is interactive, and they fully understand the material explained by the teacher. Furthermore, 8 of them said that they 'always' like learning English. Among all of the respondents, 5 did not specify their answer on 'frequency' column.

Move to the information on how they need to be given correction, it is shown in following table:

Table 1. How students need to be corrected

Parameters	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I prefer teacher correct me during the teaching-learning process.	11%	78%	11%	-
2. I prefer teacher correct me at the end of the meeting.	27%	56%	11%	6%
3. Use feedback from teacher to improve your work.	50%	50%	-	-
4. Use feedback from pair to improve your work.	33%	56%	11%	-

From the answered questionnaire, 14 respondents agree and 2 *strongly agree* that correction from teacher during the teaching and learning process is needed, while 2 respondents *disagree*. Compared to the other parameter which stated that teacher's correction at the end of meeting is preferred, 10 respondents *agree* and another 5 *strongly agree*. On the other hand, 2 respondents *disagree* and only 1 of them claimed himself *strongly disagree*. In relation to the teacher's feedback or correction to the improvement of students' work, 9 respondents are *agree* and 9 others are *strongly agree* to implement teacher's feedback to enhance their work. While in the term of using feedback from pair or friend to improve students' work, there were 10 respondents who *agree*, 6 are *strongly agree*, and 2 *disagree*. The percentage is gained from the number of answered divided the total number of respondents and multiply a hundred percent.

Another question provided is aimed at finding out type of test and question in each skill they prefer to have in order to assess what they have learned in material given. See table below:

Table 2. Types of tests students prefer

Types of tests	Yes	No
1. End-of-chapter test	22%	78%
2. Quiz	44%	56%
3. Homework	34%	66%

From the questionnaire distributed, 9 respondents prefer ‘end-of-chapter test’, 18 of them chose ‘quiz’, and 14 of the respondents prefer ‘homework’. In addition, the researcher asked them to choose types of question they prefer to have in each of English skills. Most of them prefer to have ‘objective test’ for listening and reading skill, ‘essay test’ for writing skill, ‘true-false’ and ‘matching’ for listening and reading skill, and ‘performance test’ both in group or individual, ‘classroom discussion’, and ‘role playing’ for speaking skill. It represented in below table.

Table 3. Types of question preferred in each skill

Types of question	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
1. Objective	45%	-	75%	9%
2. Essay	13%	13%	29%	85%
3. True False	57%	-	48%	9%
4. Matching	35%	-	63%	13%
5. Performance (presentation)				
o Group	10%	93%	11%	11%
o Individual	17%	36%	16%	22%
6. Classroom discussion	10%	68%	5%	11%
7. Role playing	12%	87%	16%	5%

Other than the checklist question above, objective question is addressed to them also associate with the teacher’s feedback. The question and the percentage are shown in table below.

Table 4. Question and percentage

Question	Yes, fully	Yes, partly	No	Sometimes
Are your tasks discussed with you?	57%	33%	4%	4%

The result shows that 10 respondents claimed their tasks are fully discussed with them, 6 respondents said their tasks are partly discussed with them, and 1 respondent said that his tasks are not discussed with him. Other related questions are indicated in below table.

Table 5. Question and percentage

Question	Yes	No
Does your teacher give feedback on your task?	85%	15%
Is the question helpful?	92%	8%

From the question in the table above, 15 of the respondents claimed that the teacher gives feedback on their task and 17 of them confirmed that the feedback is helpful. However, there were two respondents who said that the teacher does not give feedback but they said the feedback is useful.

Still related to the previous questions, the students are asked to elaborate in what way the teacher's feedback help them. Their answers are varied. Some of the respondents said that the teacher's feedback gives them solution and suggestion. Their mistakes are being corrected with the right answer and followed by more clear explanation so that they are able to understand their mistake and they can improve their performance to be much better for the next task, for example they can improve their grammar or pronunciation. Furthermore, they can get addition information of the knowledge. However, there were three respondents who did not give answer at all, and 5 of them only said 'yes' which is not the answer that I expected.

The last session provided to the students is open questions related to the follow-up activity in teaching and learning process. Most of them claimed that at the end of the meeting, teacher always requests whether they understand the material or not. And they confessed sometimes they get confused with the material when the teacher does not give feedback once they bewildered. They need teacher to help them by giving more clear examples and of course the feedback itself, and some of them prefer to have face-to-face consultation.

Last but not the least, the students are given review questions about the questionnaire distributed to them which was adopted from Richards (2001, p.72-73). The students are asked to answer part 'The types of information asked for' and 'how the question are worded' and the answer of the questions will be elaborate more in the analysis session below.

DISCUSSION

From the report above, the first thing to analyze it the first session of the questionnaire. From their answer, it can be pictured that the students like learning English, because if they do not, they would not survive until sixth semester. They claimed that the class is sometimes enjoyable, and so is the material. They have interactive teacher which assumes that it is helpful to them to be motivated in learning English because they are asked to participate in the English teaching and learning activities which is consider as foreign language for them. Since the teacher is not native speaker, there is a tendency of not using English all the time in the classroom. This is also quite helpful for some students who have limited language proficiency.

For the next session of questionnaire, if the respondents' answer is narrowed into 'strongly agree' and 'agree' into one category which is 'agree', it can be said

that 89% of respondents preferred to be corrected by the teacher during the teaching-learning process than to be corrected at the end of the meeting which is only 6% in different. However, 27% of the respondents strongly agree that the teacher give correction at the end of the meeting compared to the previous parameter which is 11%. Here it can be assumed that students need to have correction from the teacher on their English proficiency and performance at the end of every meeting.

Furthermore, the next parameters of the questionnaire which allows respondents to choose teacher's feedback or feedback from pair is preferred, the result shows that 50% of the respondents tends to prefer teacher's feedback instead of the pairs to improve their works which is 33%. Teacher offers feedback to students, at the same time students are promoted and expected to assess the services they gained regard to the quality and appropriateness (Offerdahl & Tomanek, 2011). In this case teacher expects students' engagement throughout teaching and learning activities, and this is the time for teacher to assess on to what extent students have learned the knowledge and use them. Teacher also gives a chance for students to give feedback on each other's works or opinion so that teacher can measure students understanding of the material. And in case there still incomplete opinion from students, it is the teacher's turn to give feedback to the entire class, and from these students can figure out what their lack is and they may improve it.

About the type of test, 94% of the respondents prefer to have quiz compared to end-of-chapter test or homework. This strongly suggests as what formative assessment's objective which is to help a better learning (Ketabi & Ketabi, 2014) because from quizzes students can directly learn from feedbacks given by teachers or their peers and it can minimize stress and pressure of the students as what they feel when they have end-of-chapter tests.

On the parameter of the type of question preferred by the students, it shows that 'objective' is frequently chosen in reading skill, 'essay' is absolutely in writing skill, 'true-false' and 'matching' in reading skill, and the rests which are 'performance', 'classroom discussion', and 'role playing' in speaking skill. Particularly in performance, 94% of the respondents prefer to have group performance. This is suitable with the condition of teaching-learning nowadays which is also stated by (Irons & Elkington, 2021) about metacognition and authentic assessment in which learners are merely memorize inputs, meanwhile teachers' part is to provide thinking skills to learners that needed to learn new concept. Instead of applying traditional assessment which is end-of-unit test as the body of knowledge and skill, teachers tend to use authentic assessment which emphasize on the real context and more practical. It requires students to perform meaningful test in real world.

The answers of the respondents on the open questionnaire give a description that teacher should know what students have learned through the explanation of a material. How teacher can assess accurately and fairly is an important thing in the English teaching and learning strategies. When students' understanding is the main purpose, the process of assessment is more than just evaluation of an end-of-chapter test. That is why, students have to be given chance to demonstrate their capacity of the knowledge and once they get confused, teacher has obligation to bring them to the clarity. Here is also the chance for the teacher to assess the students' knowledge

they already have. This kind of strategy is known as KWL assessment strategy which is assessment used by teacher to assess what students 'know', 'wish to know', and 'have learned' about a particular topic.

CONCLUSION

From the report and analysis above, and related to the purpose of doing needs analysis can be sum up that what learners' needs are to be given opportunity to get active involvement in the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language, such as to participate contributing idea and to give feedback on other students before they get conclusive feedback from the teacher.

Thus, the appropriate assessment strategies which is mostly appropriate with the students are of course performance task assessment and quiz, and KWL assessment strategy which is to assess what students 'know', 'wish to know', and 'have learned' is also recommended. Teacher should set clear criteria for what should students do in each performance so that they know what is regarded as successful work. Those criteria should be known by the all students and rubric assessment is very helpful in this case, because students already have their own picture and they can check list on it.

Once all those assessment strategies applied well in teaching and learning process, students will eventually learn more about the material they are studying from their assessment and will improve themselves to be much better in learning and their performance in English.

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