

FORMS OF LEARNING SUPPORT PROVIDED BY IMPLEMENTING ON-GOING ASSESSMENT IN AN EYL CLASS

Amy Kustina*
amykustina@gmail.com

*Graduated in January 2014 from English Education Study Program of Indonesia University of Education

Abstract: This paper reports the presence of learning support provided by on-going assessment in an EYL class. This study involved 31 of third grade students in an elementary school in Bandung. Moreover, this study employed Classroom Action Research and conducted observation and document analysis in the process of collecting the data. The results showed that on-going assessment provided learning supports in the forms of the use of models of language use, building students' motivation (intrinsically and extrinsically) and building student' autonomy and responsibility for their further learning. In this case, selecting varied materials and forms of assessments that suit to young learners was the main aspects to consider in implementing on-going assessment in an EYL class.

Keywords: *on-going assessment, English for Young Learners (EYL)*

Introduction

The government of Indonesia is processing the change of curriculum in its educational system. The latest curriculum, School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) which has been implemented since 2006, is informed to be replaced by Curriculum 2013. The shifting process happens in the level of elementary school, junior high school and senior high school. However, the issue about Curriculum 2013 in this study is focused on the elementary level since there are some significant changes in terms of its assessment process.

Referring to a previous study conducted by Masitoh (2008), it was

found that the technique used to measure students' capabilities in the elementary school level during KTSP used traditional assessment which was implemented through the paper-pencil test and administered in the end of a chapter or a semester. Paper-pencil test is widely used since it is very practical and easy to conduct. However, it cannot assess wide range of activities that can be explored in primary EFL classroom (Smith, 1995). The preliminary observation revealed the same fact that paper-pencil test was also administered in the school where the study took place.

Those facts gave opportunity to implement OA in the classroom in order

to provide a more detailed way in assessing students' ability. A previous study, like Fan-Jiang (Chuang, 2010), revealed that OA seemed to enhance students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English.

Literature Review

Assessing students' ability is a continuous process (Brown, 2000). OA itself is defined as a tool for making reflection towards teaching-learning process in seeking the efficacy of an instructional approach and seeing its impact to the students, showing enquiry about learners themselves or diagnosing learners' problems.

OA is a child friendly assessment since it is "*compatible with the activities used everyday in their classroom*" (Pinter, 2006, p. 133). Moreover, Tunstall and Gipps (1995) suggest the use of picture-cued description, information exchange, matching activity and written product tasks as the forms of assessment as they represent what students do in their daily activities.

Previous research towards the implementation of on-going assessment mentions some positive results. Chuang (2010) writes that OA seemed to enhance students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English. This is in line with

Cameron's framework (2001) of benefits of assessments for young learners that "*assessment can motivate learners*" (p.166).

Moreover, Nunan (2011) states that motivation is divided into two types in educational psychologist. Those are intrinsic motivation/integrative and extrinsic motivation/instrumental. Students who have *intrinsic motivation* will persist their attempts to finish their planned goals since the force come from their internal endorsement (Dornyei, 2012). On the other hand, *extrinsic motivation* means carrying out an action/performance to achieve some instrumental end, such as earning a reward (i.e. good grades) or avoiding a punishment (Vallerand, 1997). A simple example that indicates the presence of motivation states by Dornyei (2012) is that the presence of participation since the participation itself leads to motivation building.

Cameron (2001) states that the benefit of assessment for young learners is giving supports for their further learning. In this case, support provided for students' further learning by administering assessment activities can enhance student's autonomy (Brown, 2000). The autonomy itself is seen as one of learning processes (Moon, 2000)

where students raise their ability in working and thinking independently. She adds another learning skill ability increased by assessment activity is learners' responsibilities. This skill will help them to select and carry out own work activities.

Model of language use in implementing OA to young learners are provided through the opportunities given to the students to repeat the material given by the teacher and the opportunities to say the words taught (Cameron, 2001). Both repetition and opportunity to say the words give meaningful input for the students (Pinter, 2006).

Those four assessment tools mentioned by Tunstall and Gipps (1995) (picture-cued description, information exchange, matching activity and written product) are better occupied by the presence of a set of practices, drilling of some phrases and repetitive exercises in order to provide students opportunity to use the language in the classroom. In listening-speaking context, for example, model of language use is served by giving students plentiful opportunities for repeated listening and to say the word or phrases. Reading-writing context, however, still can be given to young learners "would have to be well within

current level of literacy development of the learners" (Cameron, 2001, p. 67).

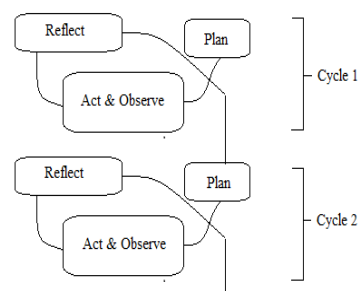
Then, in terms of the reliability and validity of OA for young learners, Nunan (2011) gives his point of view towards the process of selecting the scoring method that is likely to be used.

In this present study, the purpose was intended to seek out learning supports generated from assessments for young learners that are provided in an on-going assessment for young learners.

Methodology

Classroom Action Research was used in this study for exploring solution for a particular problem (Hien, 2009). The practice involves some cyclical steps which offer researchers to see how successful the efforts and try the steps again if the expected results have not been achieved (McNiff, 2002). Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, in Koshy, 2005) give a visualization of those cyclical steps which are formulated into a chart.

The Action Research Spiral



There were two cycles in this study. Each cycle had four meetings in which it implemented the cyclical steps in CAR; planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Planning was initially implemented to design forms of assessment to use, followed by the acting and observing process and the last step was making reflection to conduct the second cycle.

Both of the cycles utilized information exchange and picture-cued description to assess listening and speaking skills. While reading and writing skills were assessed through matching activities and written production (Tunstall and Gipps, 1995). Each meeting only used one form of assessment.

This study involved 31 of third grade students in an elementary school in Bandung. 16 of them were female and the rest 15 students were male.

The data in this study was collected through observation and document analysis (Alwasilah, 2012). Participatory observation was taken in this study since the researcher also played a role as the teacher (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2011). The observation processes in this

study were occupied by the presence video-recording in order to recall the activities that were conducted in the classroom and complement another data of assessment that might be unnoted by direct observation (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990). In document analysis, the instruments used were observation sheet to record students' abilities and field notes to see the teacher and students' obstacles in implementing OA. Furthermore, the findings presented in this paper were derived during C1 and C2.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Based on the data collection, it was found that on-going assessment benefited students in terms of supports that are provided for their learning as explained below.

- **Giving Models of Language Learning**

As one of supports provided by implementing OA, model of language learning was shown by the presence of students' opportunities in repeating the language feature taught and saying the words in Cycle 1 (C1) and Cycle 2 (C2).

Table 1 Model of Language Use

Assessment form	Srepetition (n)		Ssayword (n)	
	C1	C2	C1	C2
Picture-cued description	14	13	36	26
Information exchange	26	29	43	59
Matching activity	5	8	8	13
Written products	18	2	25	5

From the table above, it can be seen that the assessment forms which focused on listening and speaking skills provided more opportunities to repeat and say the words in order to facilitate the presence of model of language use during the lesson (Cameron, 2001).

The opportunities for repeating and saying the words or phrases were mostly found in speaking tasks (picture-cued description and information exchange). This process of practicing was needed in order to develop learner's speaking fluency in their spoken language. However, although the frequency was not as much as in oral production assessment, the occurrence of model of language use was also important in reading-writing skills to provide them to practice the language features before they were assessed.

- **Building Students' Responsibility and Self-Autonomy**

Beside model of language use, OA also gave long-term effect on students' learning in which enables them to build their responsibility (ability to carry out

their own work and decide how to accomplish it) and self-autonomy (ability to learn independently).

Take an example of students' responsibility in Meeting 1 where the students were given some freedom to accomplish their own task. They were asked to make their own media to be presented during the assessment process. Here's the example taken from the video-transcript.

Excerpt 1, Cycle 1

T Okay, now everybody please draw. Have you all drawn in here? (Speaking in L1) Emmh..have you chosen what you want to be? (Spoken in L1). For example K. K choose to be a pilot .Now please Kelvin draw a pilot in here.

Below is the example of the way OA provided opportunity to build their self-autonomy (ability to learn independently).

Excerpt 2, Cycle 2

T Everybody listen to me (Spoken in L1)

T Everybody listen to me (Spoken in L1)

T The instruction... I haven't told you yet. All the group leaders please come forward. (Spoken in L1)

T (then teacher gives instructions through the leaders of each group)

Ss (the students are doing their worksheet in their groups)

T (the teacher distributes another papers for each group for writing the member of the group)

In this case, the teacher tried to build the students' autonomy by letting them working with their group without any intervention. Instruction was given in the beginning to the leader of the group therefore they could do the exercise without depending to the teacher. This kind of exercise could help the students to build their self-autonomy in order to habituate themselves in finishing their works.

- **Motivating Learners**

The last form of learning support from implementing OA in EYL class is the fact that assessment could motivate learners. This is in line with Cameron's framework of the support given from assessment towards learning that "*assessment can motivate learners*" (2001, p. 166). The motivation itself was shown in a form of students' participation during the lesson in the class. The participation was taken as the indication of the presence of the students' motivation since participation itself leads to motivation (Dornyei, 2012).

During the lesson in Cycle 1, the students did not refuse if they were asked to do the activity. This shows the presence of an extrinsic motivation

(Vallerand, 1997) in which the students had the willingness to accomplish their tasks in order to get some instrumental end, such as earning a reward (e.g. good score) or to avoid a punishment. In this case, earning a grade seemed to be the reason of why they wanted to complete the task since the students will not be scored unless they performed the task demanded. In the meantime, the teacher did not commit to give any punishment for those who did not perform, but it would result in the absence of score from the students. However, all of the students showed their effort in completing the task, even though by the force of grade. This can be seen as the evidence of OA can trigger students' motivation in learning. This kind of example was categorized into extrinsic motivation where students did the action since they expected to be rewarded (Vallerand, 1997).

A new insight was inquired in Cycle 2. If in the previous cycle students only took part by demand of the teacher, things went better in this cycle. The students started to participate voluntarily in this cycle even though they were not praised by the presence of score. Students' willingness in taking part in the activities gave a good signal as the intrinsic motivation (Dornyei, 2012)

where the attempts to do the activities come from their internal endorsement. This kind of motivation was seen to have greater benefit in giving the students support for their further learning since the intrinsic motivation itself will maintain their effort to finish their planned goals (Donyei, 2012).

However, since the opportunities were limited, the teacher had to decide which student to take role since all of the students wanted to participate. And in this case, the teacher focused more to students who needed more help to do the task. This was intended to give praise for the lower level students in order to increase their motivation by raising their precise (Cameron, 2001).

Conclusions

This study aimed at seeking information about learning support provided by the implementation of On-going Assessment (OA) in an EYL class.

The findings showed that OA gave great opportunities for providing support for students' learning especially to young learners. The data gained from the three instruments showed that the all of the assessment forms used in this study (information exchange, picture-cued description, matching activity, and written product) could provide model of

language use in terms of the opportunities for the students to repeat and say the language features taught in each meeting. The chances to repeat and say the language features were practiced by doing drilling during the lesson.

Besides the opportunities of providing the model of language use, OA also offered a great chance to build the students' motivation towards their learning process. The presence of both extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation during the process of learning confirmed that OA provided support for students' learning.

Moreover, by implementing OA the students were benefited from the activities taken during the assessment process to be more independent and more responsible towards their learning. Students' autonomy and responsibility were determined to be important aspect to support them in their further learning.

For further research or the teachers who are interested in implementing on-going assessment in their classes, they are better to choose some topics which are closely related to children and also easy to develop into various activities in the process of assessment. Therefore, the presences of some practices before the students are going to be assessed can help them in giving their best performance. In

this study, the practices given were in a form of drillings. However, another way of practices perhaps can be developed in further research in this field.

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