

PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT IN THE ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS: WASHBACK AND BARRIERS

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Abstract

In the context of assessment, performance-based assessment is one of the authentic assessments to be applied in the English classroom as the completion of the newest curriculum demands. Thus, teachers are suggested to implement this assessment in the English teaching and learning process. Concerning that fact, this current study aims at investigating the washback of the use of performance-based assessment in the English class and the barriers faced by the teachers in implementing performance-based assessment in the English learning process. This study applied a qualitative research design. Using purposive sampling, there were two teachers and 72 students who participated in this study. An open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview were carried out in collecting the data. The result showed that performance-based assessment affected positively to the teachers. They could identify the students' real competence, improve their teaching quality, and assess students objectively. Further, it gives positive effects for the EFL learners in matters such as learning enthusiasm and self-confidence, boredom reduction, and skill improvement. In conclusion, the use of performance-based assessment is good at improving some teaching aspects both on teachers and students. This findings prove the importance of performance-based assessment to boost the teaching and learning quality.

Keywords: Performance-Based Assessment, English Learning, Washback, Barrier

INTRODUCTION

One of the notable components in Curriculum 2013 applied in Indonesia is the standard of assessment. Teachers should take into consideration how they are supposed to assess their students' ability in a learning process so that the goals of education in a certain subject is achieved (Fachraini & Sartika, 2019; Mardjuki, 2018; Safitri et al., 2018). In the process of English teaching and learning, assessment is done to know the students' progress in their English learning. Teachers will collect some data as information as to what extend their students have been into the subject materials. Further, an assessment is one of the teaching processes which is compliable and has diverse meaning (Aisyah & Yuliasri, 2019; Wiyaka et al., 2020). In line with that, Brown (2004) said that assessment is a process that is done continuously and covers a wide range of aspects. Whenever a student answers a question, create some comments, or make efforts of attempting new words or structure

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sentences a teacher mindfully assesses students' performances. Assessment results can be used as a reference for teaching evaluation which is helpful for the teachers in improving their teaching quality. In the process of assessment, a wide range of activities and tasks are used to evaluate students' learning progress and growth on a daily basis. For example, a result of assessments can reveal teaching and learning progress such as the quality of teaching media and techniques used by the teacher. A teacher may use formative assessment in evaluating the teaching and learning progress so that the teacher can adjust their way of teaching to improve students' learning achievement. Teachers, thus, find themselves demanded to be more creative in developing tools and procedures to monitor, record, and assess students' advancement of learning English systematically. Moreover, assessment meaningfully encourages students to improve their ability during the process of learning English (Wiyaka & Prastikawati, 2019)

In addition, the Indonesian Curriculum, as asserted in Permendikbud No 66 2013, demands teachers to apply authentic assessment in their classroom. In this assessment process, students will be able to perform their real abilities in authentic ways. This is in line with Mueller (2016) that authentic assessment is a kind of assessment that invokes students to perform real-world tasks that show the application of vitally necessary knowledge and skills meaningfully. One of the alternative forms of authentic assessment that can be applied in classroom assessment is performance-based assessment.

Implementing performance-based assessment is purposed to know how well students have made a progress on their learning through practical activities. These practical activities are such as when the students are required to demonstrate some tasks orally or in writing (Hussain et al., 2018; Saefurrohman & Balinas, 2016). This implies that in the process of assessing students in this way, students should be able to apply what they have learned and mastered the materials taught in the class. According to Griffith & Lim (2012), performance-based assessment is defined as activities that reflect some strategies in applying students' knowledge and skills and can engage students. In addition, in the process of assessing, teachers may obtain the students' responses to the tasks by observing them during the instructional or non-instructional classroom settings or in the context of formal or informal assessment.

O'Malley & Pierce (1996) asserted that performance-based assessment has some characteristics. First, this form of assessment will construct some responses. Students have to be able to create responses, build up responses, and produce some products. The second, performance-based assessment requires students to use their higher-order thinking skills.

They have to be able to respond to the open-ended questions given by the teachers critically. Then, this assessment is regarded as an authentic assessment. The process and the result of the assessment are meaningfully able to represent students' real competencies (Gallardo, 2020; Hamidah, 2013). Further, it is integrative. When the teachers assess the students, some content areas and skills are integrated such as listening and writing (Narathakoon et al., 2020). In the implementation of this assessment, what has assessed not only the products but also the process. The last, performance-based assessment is depth versus breadth. It is able to provide deep information about students' skills. Activities such as oral interview, story retelling, writing samples, projects or exhibitions, experiments, demonstrations, and constructed-response items are categorized into performance-based assessment (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Rose & Syrbe, 2018).

Studies on performance-based assessment have been widely conducted. It is believed that performance-based assessment is the potential to know to what extent the students have authentically mastered the materials and bring good effects. A study conducted by Koné (2015) yielded that performance-based assessment triggers college students' motivation. Using some projects in the process, the students were more active and their motivational and emotional state were good although varied. It depends on the experience that each student gained during their performance, oral presentation, and group works. The same finding was also presented by Sumardi (2017). He tried to investigate the trend of using performance-based assessment in his twelfth-grade classroom of secondary level. It was shown that most of the students were more encouraged and motivated in learning after the performance-based assessment was applied. He also found that students' learning was more successful. This kind of assessment is more accepted by the students. They feel a different way of learning and it is joyful. Students' achievement on the post-test was significantly improved in the term of statistic. This result was taken from a quantitative data presented by Qutaishat et al. (2014).

Pointing out the study findings above, it is indicated that for teachers performance-based assessment is worthwhile to their English classroom both university level and secondary level. In this case, performance-based assessment needs to be investigated on how it is applied by the teachers. Performance-based assessment is crucial to do by the teachers because it also uncover the students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the daily life context that encourage their higher-order thinking skills. Moreover, the teachers felt that their students' engagement in the classroom was getting an increase. Nevertheless, positive perceptions on the implementation of performance-based assessment are not only

needed to know from the teachers' perspective but also students'. Therefore, this study is going to figure out how students perceive this form of assessment for their English learning to fill the gap. Furthermore, it is essential as well to know what barriers which teachers face during the implementation of performance-based assessment. Hence, the following questions are constructed to figure out the washback and the barriers of applying performance-based assessment;

(1) What are the washback of implementing performance-based assessment for teachers and students?

(2) What are the barriers experienced by the English teachers of SMA N 2 Pati in the implementation of performance-based assessment?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to know the quality of the phenomenon (Kothari, 2004). This study was conducted to investigate the implementation of a performance-based assessment concerning its washback and the barriers experienced by the teacher. The population of the study was the English teachers and the tenth-grade students of SMA N 2 Pati. There were 2 English teachers and 72 students from two classes of tenth participating. The sample of the study was taken using purposive sampling because the English teachers observed were applying performance-based assessment. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire that consisted ten questions relating to their teaching experience and how they implemented performance-based assessment as well as the barriers they faced. The open-questionnaire was distributed not only to teachers but also to students to obtain information about their perceptions. It is aimed to figure out the perspectives of teachers and students toward performance-based implementation. Further, a semi-structured interview was conducted to both teachers and students. It was intended to support and seek deeper data on what was gained from open-ended questionnaire. The interview result was recorded, transcribed, and organized. In order to make the analysis easier, the data was coded by reading and grouping the participants' responses at first.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was intended to investigate how performance-based assessment gives washback from teachers' and students' perspective, and the barriers that the English teachers face in its implementation. Based on the study results, it was revealed that both

teachers and students obtained positive washback on the use of performance-based assessment in the English classroom.

1. Washback of performance-based assessment based on teachers' and students' perspective

The open-ended questionnaire distributed to the teachers informs the positive washback on the implementation of performance-based assessment in the English classroom. It was indicated that performance-based assessment helped them know the real ability of their students' English competence. In-depth information on students' achievement was able to be observed easier instead of traditional assessments like a multiple-choice test. They used some forms of performance assessment such as project, writing sample, and text retelling. It was supported by the statement of T1 in the interview. T1 said,

"After applying performance-based assessment, the teacher absolutely knows the real mastery of his/her students. The teacher gets more in-depth information about his/her students' academic needs. The effect for the students is they can demonstrate knowledge and skills realistically because they can apply what they knew"

From the statement above, it is yielded that how well the students have made a progress on their English skills could be truly captured by asking students to perform. The importance of assessing students using real-life-situation-based-performance becomes more essential in students' language ability identification (Ataç, 2012). To know, English subject is different from others in which students are not only demanded to master the learning theories but also the application of it. As stated by Brown (2001) that the benchmark of the successful acquisition of language is almost always the ability to demonstrate what they have known during the study. Gorp & Deygers (2014) defined performance-based assessment as activities that can highlight what learners can do with the target language instead of performing a summary of the learner's ability. It offers possibilities to assess students in using the target language without making the social and the authentic use of the language dismiss.

Moreover, this assessment brings effect on the teachers about the objectivity of assessing students. On that occasion, they may be able to give some feedback to students based on their real ability. It is distinguished when using traditional assessments such as multiple choice. They do not know whether the scores genuinely reflects the students' competence or not because some students very often to cheat their friends' answers during the paper-based test. Cheating has been a wide issue with high-stakes summative

assessments (Chirumamilla et al., 2020). It can reduce students' doing cheating. Cheating grows more complex but this activity can be minimized whilst the teachers take a greater focus on the process which leads to the result (Daumiller & Janke, 2019). As confirmed by the T2 that;

"The teacher will be more objective to assess their students. The teacher does not only measure the result of the study by the test, but also the progress, skill, and the students' achievement in the learning process."

The statement also confirms that the objectivity of the assessment result is due to the teachers' evaluation which was done not only at the end but also in the process. It proves that performance-based assessment is a measurement of students' achievement that is done not only to know the students' outcome but also the students' process to gain more meaningful results (Abualrob & Al-Saadi, 2019; Atmowardoyo, 2017). Kimura et al. (2017) asserted that an effective classroom assessment is done not at the end of the unit but from the beginning to determine students' prior knowledge.

For the teacher, the way they are teaching was also affected. The results of evaluating students' process rises their willingness to make some innovation of the teaching strategies and methods. They use the assessment data to improve their English teaching so that the teaching and learning goals are closely achieved. As stated by T1;

"By PBA, the teachers can make some evaluations on the teaching method and strategies. The weakness of the students also will be known by the teacher, so the teacher can make an improvement in the teaching method to follow up."

Performance-based assessment is involved in a formative assessment, an assessment for learning in which the purpose of it is not for an evaluation but for a reference in improving teachers' teaching and students' learning (Afrianto, 2017; Chang et al., 2020). Formative assessment promotes better learning and it is designed to assist the student's learning process by providing feedback as an evaluation result for teachers and highlight areas of students and teachers that need to be further reconstructed and improved (McAlpine & Higgison, 2001). Thus, it implies that performance-based assessment is an assessment that is appropriate and suitable for today's curriculum (Prastikawati et al., 2020).

The last, it was displayed that based on students' perspective, they were getting more enthusiastic in learning, braver in performing, and less bored. The performance-based assessment also makes them able to improve their English performance. Their enthusiasm was getting increase owing to the decrease of boring activities. It was revealed that this activity brought about different learning situations from the common one (traditional assessment) in which students are regularly asked to do a worksheet and daily test. The new

way of reflecting ability makes them practice more in front of the class and they are gradually motivated (Gallardo, 2020) and getting more confidence in their English.

"Increase the ability and courage to speak English in front of many people, reduce boredom in the learning process." (S1)

"Dare to appear, the ability to speak English is better, stimulating enthusiasm in the learning process." (S2)

"Get motivation to be able to master English materials well. Feel enthusiasm in the learning process because the class is not boring." (S5)

"Explore my knowledge in a real task, increase self-confidence to speak English in front of the class, get the motivation to be able to write or compose texts better." (S8)

According to Kirmizi & Komec (2016), a performance-based assessment offers more occasions to apply students' knowledge and makes them participate more. Students are affected to be aware that a language is crucially communicated in performance as well rather than only theoretically studied. This finding is in line with the previous studies that performance tasks were useful to improve students' productive skills. The tasks provide opportunities to learners in using English communicatively. As long as the teachers give particular interesting topics to students, students will be able to be more motivated and engage more in learning (Coşkun et al., 2009; Yılmaz & Benli, 2011). Moreover, Stiggings (2001) asserted that in the process of students' learning, performance-based assessment is involved to emphasize the process and achievement, not failure and defeat, so that their confidence and motivation to learn are increased.

2. Teachers' barriers in performance-based assessment implementation

The second finding is about the barriers that the teachers faced during their implementation of performance-based assessments. The results of the study were taken from the questionnaire supported by interview. The following is the presented table of the challenges faced by the English teachers in running performance-based assessments.

Table 1. Teachers' Barriers in Performance-based Assessment Implementation

No	Teacher Difficulties	Respondents	
		T1	T2
1	Assessment Rubric is more complicated.	✓	✓
2	Students are not cooperative.	✓	✓
3	The teacher must prepare a lot of preparations before	✓	✓
4	Time-consuming	✓	✓

Although positive washback effects were experienced by the teachers, nevertheless the implementation of performance-based assessment was not completely perfect. Teachers experienced some complications. Concerning the rubric, it was confirmed that the assessment rubric of performance-based assessment is more complicated rather than the traditional one. They have to assess many aspects of students to get deep information on their ability within a short time given. It is related to the next barrier in which the teachers need more time to assess students.

"The factor is limited time. Applying performance-based assessment needs more some preparations and I don't have enough time to apply it effectively. Measuring score using performance-based assessment is more complex than traditional assessment."

What happened in the process is due to the decrease in time teaching within a week. Based on the regulation applied in Curriculum 2013, English subject is only taught for an hour and a half within a week. Meanwhile, with the number of students in one class, that time allotment is not enough to assess all students. As stated by Espinosa (2015) performance-based assessments are time-consuming because a plenteous amount of time to prepare and perform the tasks is needed by students. Somehow, the teachers were required to design an assessment that included challenging, meaningful, and engaging tasks that combine the English abilities with knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. This is confirmed by Metin (2013) revealed that the problems encountered while assessing the performance task were taking a long time for the assessment and incorrect determination of performance tasks. The teachers needed to be tutored so they could apply performance-based assessments efficiently.

Linked to the complicated assessment rubric and the too much time consumed, the teachers experienced workload as well. They have to prepare a lot of things before coming to class. Aside from the rubric, teachers should provide appropriate materials. They have to make much consideration on which the topics are suitable and certainly close to their real life.

"Applying performance-based assessment needs more some preparations and I don't have enough time to prepare it effectively."

One of the main characteristics of a performance-based assessment is its authenticity. What needs to be authentic is not the way students perform their ability but also the teaching materials shared with the class. In choosing the learning topics, teachers should make sure that their students are familiar and close to their real life. In addition, teaching materials should be interesting. When the materials taught trigger students' attention, the

process of students' learning will be easier. They will be willing to learn by themselves (Koné, 2015). Thus, performance-based assessment needs more effort in the term of preparation. And it makes the teacher get problems on it. This is similar to what was found by Çiftçi (2010) in Kirmizi & Komec (2016) that one of the problems of performance-based assessment implementation faced by the teacher is lack of time for the preparation.

The next barrier faced by the teachers is the students' attitude during the assessment process. Some students were performed not cooperatively even though this form of assessment brings a good effect on the improvement of students' motivation. In fact, this positive effect did not happen to every student.

"Some students might be not cooperative when I applied performance-based assessment in the English learning process, and also the time to apply that assessment is so limited."

The statement above revealed that students' participation take an important role in the process of teaching and learning, including the process of assessment in order to attain the sets of initially determined goals. Students' participation in the process of teaching and learning brings advantages (Abuid, 2014). When students have engaged actively in the process of assessment, they may be able to be motivated and more interested in learning, gives opportunities to trust each other among students, and promotes learning. Their participation also can maintain the dynamic class and they may be able to build more confidence.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Performance-based assessment is considered as one of the effective alternative and authentic assessment for evaluating students' English competence. This study highlighted that the use of performance-based assessment is beneficial for teachers and students. It implies that this assessment form offers positive washback both on teachers and students. From an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviewa, it was figured out that performance-based assessment helps teachers identify the real mastery of students toward the materials taught. They are able to know the students' weaknesses and strengths. Moreover, it helps them to make a better improvement of teaching quality. As stated that performance-based assessment requires students to perform in real-world situations, it gives an opportunity to the teachers to assess the students objectively since what they evaluate is what their students present. The positive effects were also experienced by the students. Their learning experience through performance-based makes them more enthusiastic and motivated. It improves the confidence of their English competence as well. Unfortunately, in

conducting this kind of assessment too much time is consumed and teachers are burdened to prepare many things. Further, the assessment rubric is complicated and sometimes students do not have good cooperation in the assessment process.

Concerning the barriers of the implementation, it is suggested to make a teacher training on how they should use this form of assessment appropriately so that some teachers' burdens may be reduced. Furthermore, this study also presents some limitations such as the small number of participants and the gender issue. Therefore, it is a potential for further studies to address the existing gap by involving larger samples and gender issues on the implementation of performance-based assessment in the context of English learning.

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