Pre-service English teachers' perception of authentic assessment practice in speaking classes

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing body of literature examining the significance of authentic assessment in enhancing teachers' assessment literacy. This study set out to investigate pre-service English teachers' perception of authentic assessment in their speaking class. This sequential explanatory study employed a set of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in the data collection. A total of 46 pre-service English teachers at their final year participated in this study. They completed a web-based survey, and four of them who used authentic assessment in their speaking class were selected for an interview. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis while the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that 71.74% of respondents were aware of what authentic evaluation entails as learned from various sources, primarily lecturers and tutors. More than 25% of respondents could not comprehend an authentic assessment, and fewer than a fifth (19.57%) of those surveyed had never taken a course on authentic assessment. The results from the survey and interview also showed that lack of time or the lengthy implementation time of authentic assessment, as well as the class size were reported to be the main challenges of the students in applying authentic assessment. Oral interviews, picture-cued descriptions or stories, information gaps, story/text retelling, role plays/simulations, oral reports, and debates were examples of the authentic assessment tools they normally used. This study implied the need of more authentic assessment trainings and or sessions for these pre-service English teachers in the future.

Keywords: Perception, authentic assessment, speaking

Persepsi calon guru Bahasa Inggris terhadap praktik penilaian autentik dalam kelas berbicara

Abstrak

Terdapat peningkatan jumlah literatur yang memeriksa signifikansi penilaian autentik dalam meningkatkan literasi penilaian guru. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi persepsi calon guru Bahasa Inggris terhadap penilaian autentik dalam kelas berbicara mereka. Penelitian eksplanatori sekuen ini menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dalam pengumpulan data. Sebanyak 46 calon guru Bahasa Inggris yang sedang menjalani tahun terakhir mereka berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Mereka menyelesaikan survei berbasis web, dan empat di antaranya yang menggunakan penilaian autentik dalam kelas berbicara mereka dipilih untuk diwawancarai. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif sementara data kualitatif dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 71,74% responden menyadari apa yang dimaksud dengan evaluasi autentik sebagaimana dipelajari dari berbagai sumber, terutama dosen dan tutor. Lebih dari 25% responden tidak bisa memahami penilaian autentik, dan kurang dari sepertiga (19,57%) dari mereka yang disurvei tidak pernah mengikuti kursus mengenai penilaian autentik. Hasil dari survei dan wawancara juga menunjukkan bahwa kurangnya waktu atau lamanya waktu implementasi penilaian autentik, serta ukuran kelas, dilaporkan menjadi tantangan utama bagi para siswa dalam menerapkan penilaian autentik. Wawancara lisan, deskripsi atau cerita dengan bantuan gambar, kesenjangan informasi, pengulangan cerita/teks, peran/tindakan, laporan lisan, dan debat adalah contoh alat penilaian autentik yang biasa mereka gunakan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan perlunya pelatihan dan sesi lebih lanjut mengenai penilaian autentik bagi calon guru Bahasa Inggris ini di masa depan.

Kata kunci: Persepsi, penilaian autentik, berbicara

INTRODUCTION

A crucial component of the learning process that students engage in is assessment. According to Curriculum 2013, genuine assessment is the primary strategy that teachers in Indonesia should employ to evaluate learning outcomes. Assessment also includes non-authentic assessment (Permendikbud, No. 104 of 2014).

According to Curriculum 2013, the major guidelines for conducting authentic assessment are that it should be based on the many characteristics of students, emphasize the three domains of attitudes, knowledge, and abilities, and reflect the situation in the actual world. This is consistent with the learning objectives, which call for strengthening students' skills in light of their potential, backgrounds, and the context in which they will apply their learning (Darling-Hammond and Snyder, 2000). The non-authentic evaluation methods used up to this point, including multiple-choice, are ineffective at gauging students' range of skills and their application of learned materials in practical settings. Additionally, traditional assessment cannot fully capture all facets of higher order or critical thinking skills, and thus is challenging to utilize as a foundation for future learning planning (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). Authentic assessment, on the other hand, has a favorable impact on students' learning. In actuality, authentic assessment can boost students' autonomy, drive, and metacognition skills (Villarroel et al., 2018).

For the purpose of determining the degree to which English teachers conduct legitimate assessments, a number of prior studies have been carried out (Rukmini and Saputri, 2017; Mardjuki, 2018; Inayah, Komariah and Nasir, 2019). The findings demonstrate that, despite instructors' use of genuine assessments, implementation has not been successful (Rukmini and Saputri, 2017; Mardjuki, 2018; Inayah, Komariah and Nasir, 2019). Teachers and aspiring teachers alike are encouraged to gain knowledge of authentic assessment and how to use it to evaluate student ability. When teachers complete prospective teacher education, the process of teaching skills, which includes performing assessments, begins (Graves, 2009). Based on limited interviews with students having teaching practicum at schools or educational practices (*Praktik Kependidikan*, PK), most of them generally do not yet understand authentic assessment and still use traditional assessment instruments like using multiple-choice tests and even to measure productive skills when participating in various mentoring and supervision activities for aspiring English teachers while engaging in teaching practicum at schools (PK). Students converse and write.

This study aims to investigate how potential English teachers perceive the use of real assessment in speaking instruction, which they carry out in PK in schools. The results of this study contribute by giving an overview of how students who are aspiring English teachers see the use of authentic assessment to gauge students' proficiency in classroom activities like PK. It is believed that this student perception will motivate aspiring teacher training institutions (LPTK) to give students real-world assessments. Based on these problems, this article aims to describe the perceptions of pre-service English teachers regarding the practice of authentic assessment, teacher understanding and the the challenges implementation of authentic assessment in speaking classes.

METHOD

This sequential explanatory study used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. A web-based questionnaire was developed and used in this research to obtain quantitative data about what student teacher candidates perceive from implementing authentic assessment in teaching speaking at school. The questionnaire was validated by two experts prior to its distribution. The targeted participants were pre-service English teachers who already had some experience on implementing authentic assessment during their teaching practicum at schools. The questionnaire was sent to the targeted students via google classroom. A total of 46 pre-service English teachers at a university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia who had taken teaching practicum at schools completed the questionnaire. Subsequently, a semi-structured interview was used to collect the qualitative data on the respondents' experience in implementing authentic assessment in their speaking classroom. The questions in the semi-structure interview were validated through expert judgment to make sure that the items really collected the information intended to be collected. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics using SPSS to get the summary and better presentation of the data. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to extract the intended information and to confirm the information collected through the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The goal of this study, as stated earlier, was to scrutinize what pre-service English teachers thought about using real assessment when teaching speaking in the PK program. The research findings are discussed, explained, and described. Three topics are covered: (1) what the pre-service English teachers' perception of authentic assessment practices in speaking classes is; (2) how pre-service English teachers pick up on authentic assessment; and (3) what the pre-service teachers' challenges in implementing authentic assessment are.

Pre-service English teachers' perception of authentic assessment

Authentic assessment is an evaluation method that provides a comprehensive understanding of students' learning progress, success, motivation, and attitudes towards classroom activities. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996), this assessment approach highlights the extent to which students have developed their skills. Moreover, Permendikbud No. 104 Year 2014 defines authentic assessment as an evaluation approach that requires students to apply their knowledge and skills to complete tasks in real-world situations. Authentic assessment employs various methods, such as observations, fieldwork assignments, portfolios, projects, deliverables, journals, laboratory work, performance evaluations, and self-evaluations, as indicated by Kemendikbud (2014). Figure I below presents the results of a survey study conducted on prospective English teachers, which shows that most participants were familiar with the authentic assessment.
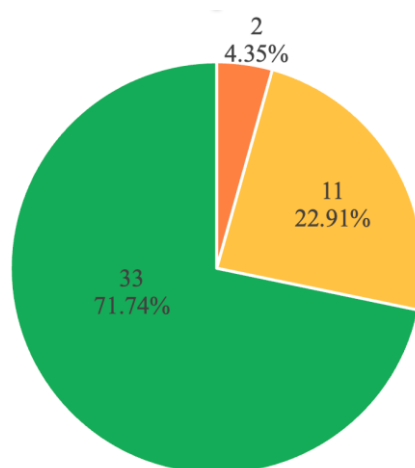

Figure I. Pre-service English teachers' knowledge on authentic assessment

Based on the research results described in the pie chart above, of the 46 respondents involved in this study, 71.74% stated that they understood what authentic assessment meant. However, there are still around 25% of respondents who do not understand authentic assessment. In relation to the idea whether pre-service English teachers understand what authentic assessment, it seems that fewer than three third of them likely have moderate to high knowledge on this kind of assessment, and therefore can have informed choice on types of assessment activities used. Most of these prospective teachers might also be able to identify which assessment activities are appropriate for certain language functions taught, and what tasks should be given to mark their performance. In addition, they might have speaking marking criteria either adopted or adapted from books, like Brown's *Teaching by Principle,* as revealed in the following excerpt.

Student 2 (16 August 2022: 08:18):

Kalau rubrik yang saya pakai di kelas speaking ya cuma yang dari bukunya Brown itu pak. Boleh kan ya pak? Soalnya dulu dipesenin dosen pas di kelas kalua kita belum levelnya bikin rubrik sendiri, pakai aja yang sudah ada di buku, gitu pak. (For the rubric that I use in the speaking class, it's only the one from Brown's book, sir. Is that okay, sir? The problem is that before the lecturer ordered it right in class, if we weren't at the level yet, we would make our own rubric, just use what's in the book, that's it, sir.)

In line with this, pre-service English teachers likely understand that in performing authentic assessment, they should consider the traits of the assessment. Villarroel et al., 2018 in this regard propose twelve traits of authentic assessment have been drawn from diverse literary sources. These twelve characteristics include (1) problems with real-world context, (2) relevance beyond the classroom, (3) authentic performance, (4) work performance competencies, (5) tasks that are similar to those in the real world or the workplace, (6) practical value, (7) higher order thought, (8) problem-solving ability, 9) decision-making ability, (10) feedback, (11) formative sense, and (12) assessment criteria known in advance (Villarroel et al., 2018). Understanding these characteristics can help teachers design and implement effective authentic assessment tasks that reflect real-world situations and provide students with opportunities to develop practical skills and competencies. Moreover, these characteristics can help teachers provide meaningful feedback to students, promote higher-order thinking, and facilitate formative assessment. By incorporating these characteristics into their assessment practices, teachers can create a more engaging and meaningful learning experience for their students.

These twelve traits are further divided into the reliability, cognitive difficulty, and evaluative judgment elements of authentic assessment (Villarroel et al., 2018). Thus, authentic assessment must be able to present a "real context" (realism) that describes the ability to solve problems that arise in everyday life (problems contextualized to everyday), relevant to the lives of students outside the classroom (relevance beyond classroom), the ability of students to demonstrate their performance in linking their current knowledge and previous knowledge and skills (authentic performance), abilities needed in the workplace (competencies for work performance), and presents values that are practiced in real life (practical values). Furthermore, authentic assessment demonstrates students' capacity to apply their information (cognitive challenge), including higher order thinking abilities (higher order thought) as evidenced in Bloom's and Anderson's Taxonomy, employ problem-solving skills, and make judgments (ability to make decisions).

Considering speaking, students' capacity to comprehend meaning and convey ideas for authentic purposes is the main emphasis of the speaking assessment. This calls on teachers to be able to: (1) speak in authentic language; (2) give students opportunity to utilize language to communicate in real-world settings; and (3) adapt scenarios and conditions in the classroom to situations in the real world (Rukmini & Saputri, 2017). Authentic speaking tasks provide students with opportunities to practice real-world speaking skills and enable them to apply what they have learned in the classroom to practical situations. They involve using language in situations that are similar to those encountered in the real world, such as giving a presentation, participating in a debate, or discussing a current event. Such tasks also require students to comprehend meaning and convey ideas for authentic purposes, such as expressing opinions, persuading others, or negotiating a solution. By emphasizing comprehension and expression of ideas for authentic purposes in speaking assessment, teachers can evaluate students' ability to use language effectively in various real-world contexts. This approach can help students develop speaking skills that are relevant to their daily lives and future careers. Additionally, it can help teachers provide feedback to students on areas where they need improvement and facilitate their learning process.

In practice, several steps are provided by O'Malley and Pierce (1996) for creating a speaking assessment: Identifying objectives is followed by planning the assessment, creating scoring guidelines, defining standards, defining assessment activities, and recording the results. The first step is to identify the objectives of the speaking assessment. Teachers need to determine the learning outcomes they want students to achieve through the assessment. Objectives could include improving students' pronunciation, developing their speaking fluency, or enhancing their ability to express opinions clearly. Once the objectives are identified, teachers need to plan the assessment. This involves selecting the type of assessment that aligns with the objectives and the learning outcomes. The assessment could be a formal test, a presentation, or a role-play activity.

Scoring guidelines or rubrics are created to evaluate students' performance in the assessment. These guidelines should be aligned with the learning outcomes and provide specific criteria for evaluating students' speaking abilities. For example, scoring guidelines could include criteria such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. Then, standards should be defined for each criterion in the scoring guidelines. These standards help ensure consistency in the evaluation process and provide clear expectations for students. The assessment activities should also be designed to align with the learning outcomes and the objectives of the assessment. These activities could include individual or group presentations, debates, or discussions. The final step is to record the results of the assessment.

Teachers should analyze the data and provide feedback to students on their performance. This feedback can be used to guide future learning and help students improve their speaking abilities.

The findings of this study suggest that preservice teachers should not only be able to make sense of what authentic assessment is but also be capable of understanding the 12 traits of authentic assessment and the steps of creating speaking assessment well. Teachers should understand the 12 traits of authentic assessment (Villarroel et al., 2018) because it provides them with a framework for designing and implementing effective assessments that are relevant to real-world situations and meaningful for students. This understanding can help teachers create assessment tasks that promote higher-order thinking, provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in practical settings, and prepare them for future academic and professional endeavors. By aligning assessments with learning objectives and ensuring that they reflect the needs and interests of students, teachers can create assessments that are more engaging, relevant, and motivating for students, and promote their overall learning and development.

Pre-service English teachers' pick up on authentic assessment

The second survey question was about the channels or sources in which preservice teachers of English have gone through for acquiring the knowledge on authentic assessment. There were four offered options in the survey item, namely (a) university course, (b) tutor teacher, (c) Internet, and (d) none. The results are visualized in Figure 2 below.
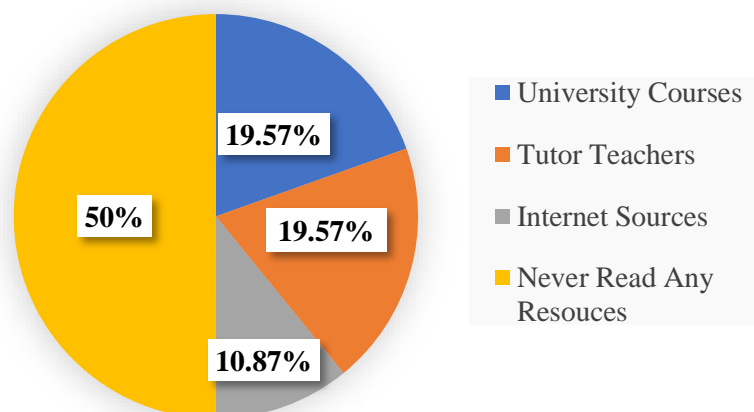

Figure 2. Pre-service English teachers' pick-up on authentic assessment

The pie chart up top, meanwhile, shows how respondents' pick-up on authentic assessment. Before enrolling in the PK program, the majority (50%) of the respondents attended lectures where they learned about authentic assessment. While taking part in the PK program at school, a number of respondents studied authentic assessment from various sources, including the internet and tutors. According to the research data displayed in the pie chart above, 19.57% of respondents had never read anything regarding authentic assessment.

While there are various sources available, including university courses, tutor teachers, and the internet, the most important factor is that teachers have access to accurate and reliable information about authentic assessment. Ideally, teachers should learn about authentic assessment through a combination of formal and informal learning experiences. University courses can provide a strong foundation in the theory and practice of authentic assessment, while tutor teachers and colleagues can offer practical guidance and feedback on assessment design and implementation. The internet can also be a useful source of information, provided that teachers use reliable and reputable sources. If teachers have never heard about authentic assessment, it is essential that they seek out information and resources to develop their understanding. They could start by conducting research on the topic and seeking guidance from colleagues or mentor teachers who have experience with authentic assessment. Professional development opportunities, such as workshops or online courses, can also provide a structured and comprehensive introduction to authentic assessment.

In the interview some student teachers also stated that lecturers who instruct Language Assessment courses are the primary source of their information regarding the idea and use of authentic assessment. Their participation in the PK program also helps them comprehend authentic assessment. According to a respondent in the following interview, the tutor's role is crucial in helping students develop their understanding of authentic assessment. Tutor, as this study found, can provide necessary support and guidance that students need to develop their understanding of authentic assessment and to apply these principles in practice. By working closely with tutors, prospective teachers can develop the knowledge and skills they need to design and implement effective assessments, which can help promote their overall learning and development.

Student 18 (19 August 2022: 05:32)

> *Awalnya saya mengetahui konsep dan teknik penilaian authentic dari kelas...err... Apa itu ya, yang assessment… (Language Assessment), dari PPT nya…, yang di ajar oleh pak X…, trus waktu PK juga di perdalam sama gurunya Pak …* (At first I knew the concept and technique of authentic assessment from the class ... err .... What is that, the assessment … (Language Assessment), from the PPT …, which was taught by Mr. X … then when PK it was also deepened by the teacher, sir ….)

Meanwhile, other sources such as books and the Internet have not been widely accessed by respondents in obtaining knowledge about authentic research. As shown in the following interview results.

Student 4 (16 August 2022: 07:21):

> *Nggak Pak … nggak baca sendiri. Ya cuma dari PPT dosen saja, sama dikasih tahu pas PK. Ada sih bukunya. Cuma malah belum di baca semua…. he he…* (No, sir…, I didn't read it myself. Yes, only from the lecturer's PPT, the same as being told at the PK…. There is a book. I just haven't read all of them yet... he he...)

Besides, it was found that lack of reading books has been a concern for respondents in applying authentic assessment as stated by one of the respondents.

Student 1 (16 August 2022: 09:08):

> *Untuk saya sendiri yang paling di khawatirkan ya itu pak…. Kurang baca… he he.. Jadi karena ndak banyak tahu akhirnya ya khawatir bener nda ya saya pakai ini dan itu buat menilai speaking yg authentic.* (To me, what worries me the most is that I don't read much... he he... So, because I don't know much, in the end, I was really worried, so I used this and that to judge authentic speaking.)

The findings of this study differ from those of Mardjuki's (2018) research because the respondents to this study were teachers. The findings of this study suggest that teachers learn about authentic assessment through a variety of activities, including training sessions, seminars, and reading a variety of sources, including books and online.

At the very least, the books recommended by the instructors should be used as a resource when creating assessment criteria. Even professors advise students to follow the current form of assessment rubrics. An excerpt from the interview is provided below.

Student 2 (16 August 2022: 08:18):

> *Kalau rubrik yang saya pakai di kelas speaking ya cuma yang dari bukunya Brown itu pak. Boleh kan ya pak? Soalnya dulu dipesenin dosen pas di kelas kalua kita belum levelnya bikin rubric sendiri, pakai aja yang sudah ada di buku, gitu pak.* (For the rubric that I use in the speaking class, it's only the one from Brown's book, sir. Is that okay, sir? The problem is that before the lecturer ordered it right in class, if we weren't at the level yet, we would make our own rubric, just use what's in the book, that's it, sir.)

Overall, it is likely that future instructors taking part in this study will concur that the majority of the knowledge required to conduct authentic assessment comes from their university coursework, course readings, and online resources from the Internet. To ensure that their assessments are accurate, they still need further exposure from reading reliable sources.

Future teachers' type of speaking assessment activities

In terms of types of assessment tasks for speaking, this study found that most preservice teachers use various activities for authentic assessment. This is clear from Figure 3 in which there are ten types of activities carried out during their PK.
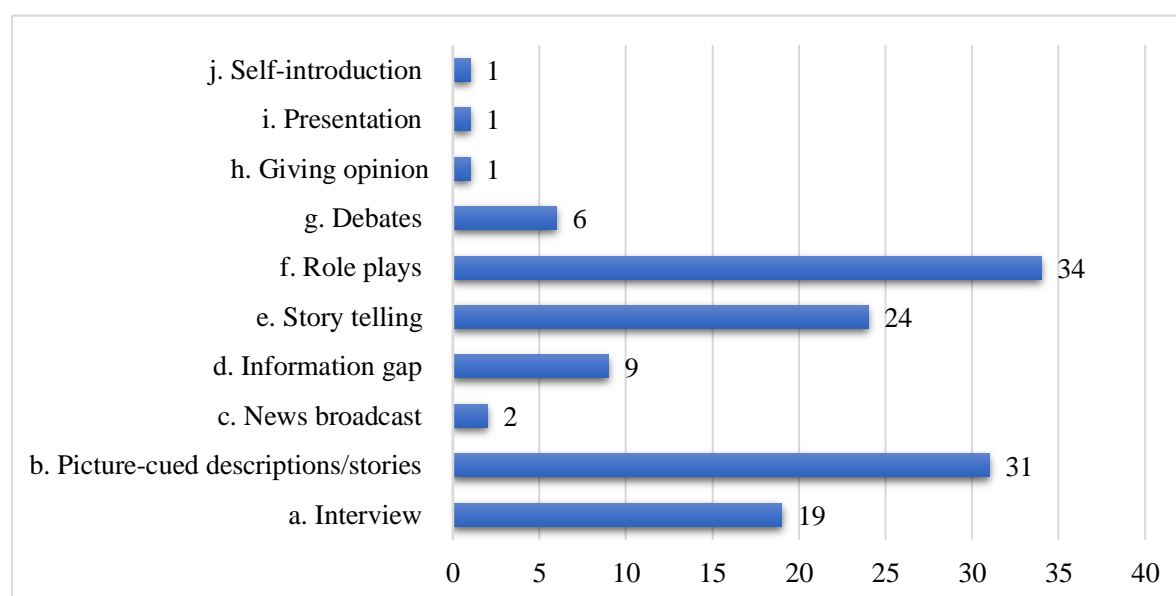

Figure 3. Preferred authentic assessment activities

Most respondents (84.76%) have used a variety of speaking assessment activities with authentic assessment, as seen in the bar chart above. Authentic assessment activities such interviews, picture-cued descriptions/stories, role plays, storytelling, and information gaps were most used by respondents, according to the aforementioned statistics. The majority of responders also used role plays and picture-cued descriptions/stories for assessment. These findings are consistent with those of research by Zaim, Refnaldi, and Arsyad (2020), which demonstrates that authentic assessment methods frequently used by instructors include picture-cued descriptions, role plays, oral interviews, and story/text retelling. Of all authentic assessment activities, using interviewing techniques and story telling is the one that is used by respondents who use authentic assessment. Oral reports and debates are infrequently used as types of activities by responders.

With regard to this, Permendikbud No. 104 Year 2014 also states that authentic assessment can be accomplished through observation, fieldwork assignments, portfolios, projects, products, journals, laboratory work, performance, and self-evaluation. Oral interviews, picture-cued descriptions or stories, radio broadcasts, video clips, information gaps, story. text retelling, role plays/simulations, oral reports, and debates are just a few examples of authentic assessment methods (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996).

Challenges for implementing authentic assessment

The respondents were interviewed stated that the challenges with implementing authentic assessment were the time constraints and the sheer volume of students, particularly if the activities took the form of project-based and performance-based activities. In a study by Mardjuki (2018), respondents who were teachers also reported that authentic assessment activities take a long time and that it is challenging to evaluate pupils when there are many students in a single class. Apart from implementation issues, Retnawati, Hadi, and Nugraha (2016) claim that instructors' implementation issues with authentic assessment are also a result of their lack of understanding of authentic assessment and information sources for assessments. The statements given by various respondents are listed below.

(Student 4 (16 August 2022: 09:11):
  Setelah itu ketika pembelajaran mengenai report saya menyuruh mereka untuk sebelumnya mengamati hewan yang mereka punyai kemudian melaporkan secara lisan hewan yang mereka sukai dengan proyek video yang mereka rekam dan di upload ke googledrive kelas pak. (After that, when learning about reports, I told them to observe the animals they had beforehand, then report orally the animals they liked with a video project that they recorded and uploaded to Google Drive class, sir.)

Student 3 (18 August 2022: 06:46):
  Kalau kesulitan ya itu pak.... Kan jumlah siswanya banyak di kelas saya pas PK, ada 30 berapa gitu, nah pas harus menilai speaking satu persatu waktunya ndak cukup dan kurang bisa fokus jadinya. (For the challenge... There were a lot of students in my class during the PK, how many were there, like that, so when I had to assess speaking one by one, the time wasn't enough, and I couldn't focus.)

Similar points were reported in the previous study by Huda (2020) in which performing authentic assessment may be challenged (Aziz, Yusoff & Yaakob, 2020) by some factors like student motivation, limited time constraints, higher costs, and the number of components/criteria in authentic assessment (Huda, 2020). Meanwhile, the importance of instructors' capacity to use assessment data and student assessments to improve students' learning has long been emphasized by assessment specialists and researchers among these numerous aspects of teaching competency (eg, Black & Wiliam, 1999; Hattie, 2008; Popham, 2009; Stiggins, 2005). A philosophical framework known as Assessment for Learning (AfL), or assessment to assist students' learning, serves as a general representation of this teacher's assessment expertise. The Assessment for Learning (AfL) paradigm calls for a change in teacher assessment approaches from merely documenting and evaluating student accomplishment to assisting and motivating students to take an active role in their learning through assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1999; Hattie, 2008; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

CONCLUSION

The results of this survey show that 25% of student teachers (pre-service English teachers) do not comprehend or are not aware of what authentic assessment comprises, while 71.74% of prospective English instructors are familiar with what authentic assessment entails as learned from various sources. Remarkably, 19.57% of future English teachers have never participated in an authentic assessment course. These pre-service English instructors have difficulties due to the lengthy implementation times for authentic assessment, the class size, and the time allotment. They provide authentic assessment tools such oral interviews, picture-cued descriptions or stories, information gaps, story or text retelling, role plays or simulations, oral reports, and debates, to name a few. Oral interviews were conducted by prospective English instructors who employed authentic assessment (84.76%). This study recommends that prospective English teachers should make efforts to understand authentic assessments' 12 traits and that they seek knowledge from reliable sources. Moreover, such more trainings or sessions concerning authentic assessment should be conducted for English teacher candidates that they have good understanding and are able to implement it in their classes. Future research may also investigate university facilitations for pre-service English teachers' efforts in seeking that knowledge and evaluate the effectiveness of such related programs.

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