

## **Why EFL Students Understand the Language Assessment?**



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**ABSTRACT:** English language assessment is a subject lesson in some university in Indonesia, and it is one of the requirement to be able to master by the students in advocating language learners' quality and competency. Assessing the language skills is a critical process to improve language capacity and competency in mastering language skill correctly. In the other hand, assessment as the most important thing to be understood by all language learners in making their process of teaching and learning are understandable and gaining good outcomes as the expectation. The objective of this paper is to outline the importance of language assessment subject for student who major in teachers training and education faculty. This paper used qualitative descriptive approach, with observation, interview and study documents to collect the data. The triangulation validation is used to validate the instruments. The sample of this research is 5 semester students of teachers training and education from University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang with the total sample is 33 students, majoring of English education study program. The result of this research can be simulated as; firstly, giving understanding language assessment to English learners can motivate and help them in doing their final assignment/mini research easily. Secondly, understanding English language assessment made students' critical thinking increase, because they start thinking about many kinds of language research and the solution in improving English language problems. Thirdly, learning English assessment gave a clear outline for English learners to support their research as a final requirement in getting bachelor degree and foster their competency as the language education learners.

**KEYWORDS:** English assessment; assessing language; language learner.

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education as a part of human need in their life, and it need to be comprehended by all people to support the development of human resource. One of the greatest efforts to achieve a good human resource in education path is through the language. Understanding the language, acquire the method of teaching language, comprehend the language assessment, (Anderson & Timbs, 2016). Those efforts are very crucial aspect for language learner, especially for teachers and training' education study program, because as the outcome of their study is to be a language teacher. According to (Arjulayana et al., 2018)) stated that language as a tool in doing communication to deliver the message needs to be learnt in a good process to acquire a good notion identity and language learners' competency at the end of their study.

Language assessment subject is one of the primary subject in University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang for teacher's training and education faculty, majoring of English education program. In the implementation of teaching and learning process lesson plan as the guide line is required with consisted of learning outcome, learning indicators, and learning standard competency. Learning standard competency loaded the understanding a way and principles of language assessment as subject skill to developing the quality of education process, (Oktaviana et al., 2015).

Learning language consists of 4 categories: 1) learning language as a learning to drive, so in this case there is no fix and systematic rule, but the need of drilling, practice, and motivation to learn. 2) Learning language as a process from a habit mechanism to drilling. In forming those habits can improve the language skills from sub skills, such as words, sound, sentence structure, meaning and etc. 3) a form of habit as ability in doing analysis, problem analysis, knowing some aspects of language uses. 4) Learning language is integration, it cannot be separated from any others sub skills, (KumaravadeivelU, 2006). Assessing

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language is a very crucial aspect for gaining a good language, developing curriculum and in line to the responsive of learners' need. Furthermore, the assessing of language also can show the aptitude of language test, teacher can predict and measure a student's ability in their language learning, (Coombe, 2018). When the aspect of assessing language is known by the teacher, a process of teaching and learning will synchronize, and teacher also can give some feedback simultaneously be based on their students' achievement. Otherwise assessment is very important aspect in language competency, beside of teacher's need it also as a learner's need, because through assessing learner can evaluate what they have learnt and they also can progress their self to meet their goal in learning language. Some expert stated that Assessing as the process of collecting a full range about people's capability with a procedure, it also can be defined as a procedure to evaluate people capacity in wide areas.

As (B. Kumaradavivelu, 2003) stated there were 3 components in language ability; knowledge, skills, and principles. To be able to acquire the language competency well the need of language knowledge is needed, without knowing the language as a function, language as the critical point in developing social relationship and language a system to be able to master comprehensively, it will be hard to catch the language standard ability. Learning language means learning 4 skills and others sub skills of language, such as; listening, reading, and speaking. Beside of those basic skills there are also subskill of language, such as; vocabulary mastery, grammar knowledge, pronunciation, and others. Learning language also should understand the principle, means as language learners the need of understanding the way how to assess, evaluate, and give the language feedback are very crucial one, (Brown, 2004) Those components may not be eliminated in learning language (Davies, 2008). Learning language will always integrate with those component, that is why assessing language should be mastered and understood by language learners and language teachers.

In the others hand we can say language assessment is a tool to be implemented in doing the process of assessing the language. That tool requires a good comprehended by the teacher to avoid some misunderstanding of doing evaluation. This paper will report the data be based on the problems 1) do language learners have to understand the language assessment? 2) Why understanding language assessment is important for language, learners? 3) Do language learners need to know the strategy in implementing the language assessment.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. What Is Language Assessment?

Education as the core to enhance generation Language as a tool to communicate and interact with others people needs to be learnt to make it always exist in human life. Hence, language is a core of general life, and also in education, Tetey et al (2017). The importance of language can suggest language learners and language teachers to understand and comprehend language assessment, because language assessment is the process of measuring and inference individual ability in language skills, (Coombe, 2018). Learners will know their capacity in language skill after getting an assess from their teacher, through this information they can improve their language skill, because they have known their weakness and strongness regarding to their language skills.

In education field assessment is a regular activity for teachers and learners, because in this section the education quality will be provided. According to (Coombe, 2018) assessment as the systematic process in evaluating and measuring learners' information in their language knowledge, language learning process and also understanding their ability in improving their self be based on their language knowledge. Through language assessment both teacher and learner can realize and know their language competencies. Knowing language competency can help them to acquire and focus on what language skills they need to improve. Basically language assessment can be said as a core in language knowledge, because without assessing language competence the process of language education will not effective and difficult to gain the objective with good standardize.

### 2.2. Aspects Of Language Assessment

The primary things that teachers and learners should understand in understanding language assessment is language assessment aspect. Through the aspect of language skill that will be assess by the teacher the process of assessing will run and gain the result as the expectation. Doing assessing also needed to know the principle of language assessment to gain the language skills test could be eligible and understandable by the test taker. Some basic principles in language assessment such as practically, authenticity, validity, reliability, and washback can be focused in the beginning before designing and giving the test.

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Before understanding the listening aspects, language learner could be able to recognize between micro and macro skills in listening. Some micro skills in listening such as discriminate the distinctive of English sound, retain in language chunk in different length of memory, recognize the english stress pattern, process speed of speaker's sound, and recognize the the particular meaning and cohesivedevices, (Brown, 2007). in macro skills, listener also need to be able to know some critaria, such as distinguish the communicative function, recognize the literal and non literal meaning of the contentss, understanding the facial movement, body language and other, (Brown, 2004).

Ideally, language assessment should be consisted by 3 major aspects, such as cognitive demanding, communicative and authentication. In cognitive demanding listener is required to distinguish some cognitive aspects, such as memory, association, storage and recall. the pronunciation, grammar knowledge, lexical, collacotaion, cohesion, semantic interpretation, and pragmatics competence are needed in communicative's aspects. In authentication needs to know the content validity, context, the use of words/ vocabulary, (Brown, 2004).

Reading as one of receptive skill, can be assessd in multy ways, test taker can implment the test such as simple essay and comprehenad the story or news. In reading criteria language learner/ teachers need to be aware in some of the sub skills, such as comprehension of main idea, infrence, factualinformation stated, vocabulary uses (both synonym and antonym), phrase, sentence structure. Those criterion stated also can be found in TOEFL reading test.

Speaking skill also called profeciency skill because in speaking the speaker shows language competency orally, and it can be said profeciency.

Assessing writing can be eliminated in some criteria be based on type of writing. After knowingt he type of writing the aspects can be focused related to the test presented. The critaria such as voccabulary use, spelling,grammar,sentence's squence and others.

Speaking as a productive skill of language, has some types, such as: immitative, intensive,integrative, responsive and extensive. In this oral profeciency of the test, there also have micro skill and macro skills in. Focusing on the grammatical, structural/ sequence of sentence, phoneme are include the micro skills while anxiety,act of speaking,and others include macro skills.

### 2.3. Procedure Of Assessing Language

Doing assessing lague correctly should be awared on some princile in the beginning: practically,realibility, validity, authenticity, and washback, (Brown, 2004). Assessment as the core of teaching and learning process will be given understanding as the evaluasion to gain better output. Language which consist of 4 skills, will have precedure in doing the assessment. For productive skill language assessment, thetest must be synchronized with a real time interaaction, Louma (2004) or for speaking can be semi-structured perform. The test taker may take the assess be based on intensive,immittaive, responsive,or extensive assessment, (Brown, 2004) Making an Assessment of language can be draw strat from Planning, Revising, listening/ reading/speaking/writing, Supporting Evidence, and Thesis did appear to activate existing repertoires of instructional knowledge – for example: pre-writing and outlining,litening comprehensive-outlining, intensive reading-outlining, immitative speaking and outlining.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

### 3.1. Research Design

This research is qualitative descriptive method, where the data is gained by classroom observation, interviews, and study documents. The use of interviews with 10 questions are given to 33 English learners who are focusing on teachers training and education. The interview used open-ended question to explore student's understanding related to their prombelm's in learning language assessment subject, (Creswell, 2014). The research is conducted at university of Muhammadiyah Tangerang indonesia focus on English study program students especially in 5th semester. . The classroom observation is done for a semester then continue by interview and data analysis be based on student's task about their language assessment's understanding.

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### 3.2. Data Analysis And Research Findings

The primary objective of this research is to find out student's understanding on language assessment, the reason why understand language assessment is important, and to explain how do their understanding to the importance of language assesment as a language learners and candidate of language teacher. In hence, as language learners knowing the aspect of doing evaluation is needed also, (Joe et al., 2015). Based on interviewed to 33 students they know the language assessment is, and it is important for language learner to understand it. 100% respondents have already known about language asesment, but did not know the procedure to implement it.

Respondents also know 4 skills of language because they are language learners,(Lange & Brown, 1996) that is why language assessment as a phase in evaluating students language skills, about 97% they known clearly about assesing knowledge. In the other question should teacher know the way of assesing language skills, 100% are agreed, they assumes as a language teacher knowing and undertand language skill is an ought. 93.9% respondents also agreed on language skills strategy. As a language assessor, the need of specific strategy in assesing language skills also need to be known and gained by the teacher. This respond can be understood because being a language learner knowing the strategy of assesing as an ought.

Respondents have different answear in responding the reason why languaga assesment is important, but almost of them said that language assesment can be as a guide line for the language teacher and language learners in assesing language skills, through language assesment also language teacher are able to know their students's weakness and strongness in language skills, and learning language is important to know the way in assesing language skills. In hence, the question about why language teacher should understand the way of assesing language skill, the answer also variaties. 30% respondents as the highest in similar answer said that teacher as a facilitator and role model in academic should understand clearly about language aspect and language assesment to encourage their professionalism in doing language assesment.

When the students are interviewed about why they should understand the language assesment, almost of them said that through language assesment their motivation to learn language and to understand it increase, because they became encourage to know the critaria of assesing language skills. Furthermore, this subject lesson could support their skills offered by the university, (Anderson & Timbs, 2016). They can be motivated to do their final project in getting bachelor degree through understanding language assesment. If they understood the language assesment clearly and knowing the critaria in assesing laguage skills they will do the final project eazily, so they can finish their bachelor degree soon and able to understand the language assesment outline for their future after graduated from university.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings language assesment can stimulate students' understanding related with language skills competencies. In line with the language competency, the advisor and language leraners are critical important to involve in achieving language skill to be better through the lanuage assesment, (Anderson & Timbs, 2016). The awareness of mastering the language assesing before implementing to the test takers also can be a good guidance in the beginning to support their critical thingking regarding to the language material and testing design. That is why As the language learners and language teacher, start from in the beginning language assement should be understood. suggested by Acar (2008) through the assesment teachers also can consider the language level. Without any awareness of understanding language assesment motivation in learning language also will low because the language learners felt blur and bias about the competencies and what they should do after learning language especially in language assesment. This data also show that language assesment help them to gain their self awareness in learning language skills and encourage their critical thinking to prepare their mini thesis at the end process of their learning as the student in university. Understanding the language assesment also opens their point of view about language critarion and test indicator and the way to assess, so both of those should be coherence especially in classroom test, Barret.at al (2014). In conclusion, knowledge, skills and principle should be mastered by the language learners and language teachers to give assesing to avoid some error scoring and test design.

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