THE USE OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN AN ONLINE LEARNING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the use of authentic assessment in improving students' reading comprehension in online learning for English Literature courses. This study used a qualitative approach with the type of case study. The research data were online class observations (non-participant observations) and interviews (semi-structured). The participants in this study were selected purposively consisting of lecturers of English education at a university in West Java. The results of class observations showed that lecturer used authentic assessment in online learning for English Literature courses. The lecturer use text-based teaching methods and also some references from journals; and used learning media through WhatsApp groups Zoom Meetings. It showed that the use of authentic assessment can improve students' reading comprehension through evidence of responses to students' written literary works as a form of presentation task.

Keywords: Authentic Assessment, Reading Comprehension, English Literature

INTRODUCTION

In order to acquire a foreign language as well as the first language, four main components must be mastered, there are: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This is supported by Chitra and Thiagarajan (2001, p. 96) who state that mastering

language skills will determine the students' communicative competence in the target language. In this case, reading foreign language has been a challenging skill to acquire since it requires layered capabilities in understanding L2 texts and communicating their comprehension of texts while dealing with language barriers (Zhang, 2008). In other words, of the four components of English, namely, the ability to read skills, must be mastered by students. This is the most important and useful component because the ability of reading skills can help students to communicate. In addition, it help students in understanding what they get when learning is taking place, both for themselves and to help others, and can also determine students' communicative competence.

Reading comprehension and skills are important things that must be mastered by everyone, especially students. This is important because reading cannot be separated in the teaching process and study. In learning English, reading comprehension and skills are needed because it can determine the extent of one's ability to understand and master the practice and pronunciation of English. Learning English reading and understanding skills is not easy. It takes stages and some continuous practice to be able to master and understand it properly and correctly.

The stages we can take to learn reading skills are by way of, they are: 1) we can learn the form or structure of a sentence; 2)we can also understand the essence of reading; and 3) we can spend a lot of time reading favorite books. Then we can do these stages continuously or repeatedly until finally, we can master reading skills. As argued by Abidin (2017) that "reading helps humans acquire or fulfill their needs in the form of knowledge, information, experience, skills, and so on" (p. 56). Accordingly, reading can help someone to get or get their needs, namely needs in the context of getting knowledge, information, experience, and of course, it can also improve someone's reading skills. Good reading comprehension and skills will benefit readers to receive a variety of useful information (Abidin (2017, p. 56).

Students' reading development can be measured by assessment, in particular,

an authentic assessment. Authentic assessment is used here to measure and describe how far the development and learning achievement of students during the teaching and learning process is taking place. Also, authentic assessment is an assessment that is used to evaluate the domains of attitudes, knowledge, development, and student achievement, which requires students to demonstrate their ability to complete assignments and solve problems so that they can help students think critically. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996, p. 11), "authentic assessment is a type of assessment that reflects student learning development and achievement, as well as student learning attitudes during the teaching and learning process". In other words, authentic assessment is a type of assessment that reflects the development and achievement of student learning.

The present research is supported by previous researchers (Aziz & Yusoff, 2018; Reynisdóttir, 2016; and Kinay & Bağçeci, 2016). The first result of the research indicates that authentic assessment is valuable and effective in improving English writing skill of elementary school students. Reynisdóttir (2016) reported that students' need and the objective must be taken into consideration in shifting from a traditional assessment to an authentic assessment. Kinay and Bağçeci (2016) also revealed that an authentic assessment is effective in improving the ability of pre-service teachers' problem-solving.

Based on the previous research, there is a gap in term of the learning techniques and strategies, the research site and the learning media used. For that reason, the researcher is interested and intends to research which connects the use of authentic assessment in learning English literature to improve students' reading skills. This research focuses on investigating the way the lecturer apply authentic assessment to improve the students' reading comprehension of English Literature course in online class.

METHOD

In this study, researchers used a case study research design, in which data is collected by means of observation and interview. A case study is a research

approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context (Creswell, 2012; and Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). The research participants consisted of 3C grade students and a lecturer in English education at the University, West Java. This study collected the data using online observation and semi-structured interviews. The data of the study from online observation was analyzed by organizing, trancribing and summarizing. Then, to analyze the data from the interview the researcher transcribed the important point, translated it into English, analyzed the data-interpreted the data and drew the conclusion.

FINDINGS

The observations were made on May 24th and 31st, 2021. The interviews were conducted on June 28, 2021. This part answers the questions contained in the problem formulation which focused on investigating the use of authentic assessment in improving students' reading comprehension in online learning for English Literature courses. The first part is the results and the latter is discussion of the application of authentic assessment to enhance students' reading comprehension skills in learning English literature at a private university in West Java.

From the results of the first and second observations that researcher have done, it can be concluded that lecturer applied authentic assessment in learning English literature by using text-based methods such as; poems, novels, short stories, and other literary works as well as references from journals. This activity was to improve students' reading comprehension in the online learning process.

The results of the study indicates that lecturer should start planning and designing assessments from an early on. In assessing students, the lecturer gave instructions or assignments via Whatsapp Group and then asked students for explaining or present according to their understanding. In online learning, lecturer also applied authentic assessment in the form of project portfolio activities. This can be seen in the second observation, namely, the lecturer instructed the students

to work on the assignments given in groups. Meanwhile, the conclusion from the results of interviews that researcher have done is that the use of this assessment has several steps. These steps are not too difficult, and easy to implement.

The application of this authentic assessment also used the observation method with the purposes of observing the results of student performance, through presentations and group learning project activities. This authentic assessment is also effectively used and applied in this course and is beneficial for the lecturers themselves and their students. For the lecturer himself, this made him easier to observe and assess the students. He also realized more about students' learning progress. The benefits for students maybe that students became more understanding and active in this online learning. They became more aware of the material provided.

The majority of the students enjoyed implementing the use of authentic assessment in online learning for literature courses. They became more focused, and more responsible for their learning. The use of authentic assessment using text-based methods and references from journals made students easier to pay more attention and participate in learning. An important role in the use of authentic assessment in online learning for this literature course is the lecturer. While the students only follow what the lecturer told them to do. Students followed the instructions given by the lecturer, then from these instructions, the lecturer could observe and find out the extent of the student's understanding.

DISCUSSION

From the results of the study, the use of authentic assessment to improve students' reading comprehension in learning English literature can be used in online classroom activities. The use of authentic assessment is also effectively used in online learning. The results of this study have differences from previous studies. Several previous studies have analyzed the effectiveness of authentic assessment in teaching and learning activities.

According to the previous explanation, the researcher concluded that students 'responded 1) to the use of authentic assessment, the effectiveness of using authentic assessment, 2) the impact of using authentic assessment, 3) implementing authentic assessment to improve students' reading comprehension, and 4) also the effect of using skimming method in teaching reading comprehension. However, in this study, the researcher observed the use of authentic assessment in enhancing students' reading comprehension in online learning of English Literature course. Online class observation data shows that the use of authentic assessment by lecturer provided students an increase in reading comprehension.

The application of authentic assessment at the time of learning the literature course are as follows: 1) the lecturer provides material based on the text, then it is explained, 2) students are allowed to understand the material, if anyone does not understand, they can ask questions and students are required to be able to explain the material based on the text's instructions; and 3) the lecturer provides input or feedback on the results of student work. In this online learning, lecturers use text-based methods and references from journals. This activity is in line with Berardo's (2006) theory. According to Berardo (2006), providing a possible solution is to provide text-related tasks.

Based on research that has been done by researcher, the use of authentic assessment is indeed very helpful and effective in online learning such as Literature courses. This is strongly supported by Hyde's theory (as cited in Ferita and Retnawati, 2016, p.70), namely that assessment is indeed needed as an integral part of curriculum and learning. Authentic assessment has the potential to help

improve students' understanding and see their learning progress. The theory expressed by Montgomery (2002, para. 4) also promoted the use of authentic assessment in college courses to provide solid proof of students' recorded reading progress through authentic assessment tools.

CONCLUSIONS

There are several steps in the application of authentic assessment carried out by lecturers to improve students' reading comprehension in online learning of Literature courses. In the first step, the lecturer explains the material first, the material is in the form of poems, short stories, dramas, or others. Then, the lecturer gave an example of one of the journals related to literature. Then he invites his students to ask questions, maybe there are those who don't understand. Next, the lecturer gives assignments or instructions to students to understand and explain the response of the literary journal. Lastly, the lecturer provides feedback to them about the assessment that the lecturer observed when they presented their work.

This authentic assessment is also effectively used and applied in Literature course and has benefits for the lecturer themselves and their students. For the lecturer himself, this makes him easier to observe and evaluate his students. The lecturer also knows more about the progress of his students' learning. The benefits for students is that they become more understanding and active in this online learning.

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