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Writing Assessment Literacy: Investigating EFL Teachers' Writing Assessment Practices in A Vocational School

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ABSTRACT

The study examines English Teachers' knowledge and attitudes concerning different assessment methods in SMK Ky Ageng Giri. Understanding assessment concepts helps teachers choose and create the best methods to assess students. How much SMK instructors Ky Ageng Giri knew about writing assessment and if they had formal training before instructing are two major research topics. Three SMK Ky Ageng Giri English teachers complete open-ended surveys and classroom observations. The poll found that most individuals had some formal training, but 33.3% had none. All teachers claimed they had no formal assessment writing training. More than half complained about creating evaluation projects to evaluate their students. The open-ended questionnaire answers match class practice and evaluation background. The study aims to evaluate the implementation of current

educational programs in classrooms and identify assessment writing concerns among English teachers to inspire Vocational School teachers to review their assessment processes.

Keywords: Assessment, Assessment Literacy, Writing Assessment Literacy, Writing Assessment

Introduction

Assessment's significance in the teaching and learning process has been acknowledged as a significant undertaking. Assessment is crucial in the classroom. As stated by Luthfiyyah et al. (2020) up to 25-50 percent of a teacher's time is spent monitoring and helping students and instructors enhance learning based on classroom evaluations. Furthermore, Fisch et al. (2021) mention in the assessment process, the teacher is crucial.. Therefore, knowing assessment theory and having the expertise to provide fair grades is essential for improving and sustaining educational excellence. Moreover, Zulaiha et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of assessment in determining the quality of future assessments of teaching and learning. Understanding effective assessment procedures is crucial for teachers of the English language. Assessment literacy is a term typically used to describe fluency in the use of valid and reliable evaluation tools in the context of English language instruction and student performance. Moreover, the teacher needs proficiency with testing instruments (Prastikawati et al., 2020). In addition, the teacher must be assessment-literate.

Stiggins (1999) stated nearly thirty years ago that the time has come to encourage assessment literacy for all. Assessment literacy refers to a level of familiarity with and competence in the use of assessment in both learning and grading by various parties. Moreover, Valizadeh (2019) depicts the teachers who have mastered the art of assessment are well-versed in the following: what to assess, how to assess it, potential difficulties that may occur, and solutions to those problems. To be more specific, assessment literate educators are able to conceptualize, create, and administer tests that fairly and appropriately measure student progress toward learning outcomes (Larsari, 2021). Furthermore, assessment results to students, parents, and the public, and understanding what constitutes an appropriate, inappropriate, and unethical assessment (Valizadeh, 2019). Finally, assessment literacy covers a wide range of topics, from theory to application, and has the ability to enhance both student learning and teacher efficacy (Firoozi et al., 2019). One aspect of assessment literacy in learning English is writing assessment literacy.

According to Coombe et al. (2020) teachers want dependable methods to assess their student's writing proficiency, and these assessments must be unbiased. Literacy is a crucial skill that can either benefit or hinder students' learning. Despite the importance of ensuring that teachers are knowledgeable about assessments, Soltanpour & Valizadeh (2019) stated that researchers and academics pushed hard to have assessments be a part of teacher preparation. However, the extent to which this is true is not known. Experts agree that this is due to educators' insufficient familiarity with writing assessment literacy. According to Valizadeh (2019) findings from his interviews with numerous writing teachers. Several teachers felt inadequately prepared to evaluate their pupils' performance. Larsari (2021) shows that teachers' insufficient writing assessment literacy leads to feelings of discomfort and unpreparedness. Foreign language instructors sometimes neglect teaching writing in their courses due to inadequate training in writing instruction and thorough assessments of writing (Valizadeh, 2019). So, English teachers must know how to be assessment literate, especially in writing assessment literacy.

In Indonesia, there is currently little investigation into writing assessment literacy. Most of them investigated assessment literacy in general. Zulaiha et al. (2020)investigated twenty-two Indonesian EFL teachers from six public junior secondary schools by using surveyed and interviewed instruments. The result shows teachers have high assessment knowledge, but there are still several gaps in their application in the classroom, such as implementation and monitoring. This is impacted by school regulations, student absences or attitudes, as well as their parents' background. Moreover, Umam & Indah (2020) examined nineteen teachers in Bogor by using questionnaires and focus group discussion instruments. According to the data, teachers lack assessment literacy. As a result, teachers must remain updated by participating in ongoing professional development. Subsequently, Thirakunkovit (2019) examined 27 language instructors and 23 content teachers through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation checklists, and field notes. Findings indicate that only a small number of EAP teachers possessed assessment literacy. The subject of study, university degree, and assessment training courses were identified as statistically significant factors predicting EAP teachers' assessment literacy. Participants found discrepancies in the evaluation beliefs and actions of both groups of teachers due to various reasons. An analysis is conducted on the repercussions for EAP teachers and EAP teacher education programs. The previous studies examined the assessment of literacy in general. So, it is important to investigate literacy assessment in the context of writing.

In this study, the writer delves into analyzing the evaluation of English teachers' writing assessment, performance, beliefs, and the training requirements of Islamic teachers. This analysis is based on previous studies that focused on teachers in public schools, particularly English teachers at SMK Ky Ageng Giri Demak.

Assessment Literacy

Assessment literacy refers to the knowledge and skills that teachers should have. The most common technique for defining assessment literacy is to enumerate particular assessment-related knowledge, understanding, and abilities that an assessment-literate educator must have. Zulaiha et al. (2020) claim that teacher education preparation programs fall short of providing future educators with assessment abilities. Just 24% of teacher education program curricula reviewed by the Council were found to sufficiently

prepare teachers in how to assess learning and use student performance data to influence teaching. As a result, the majority of pre-service teachers may not be able to effectively utilize assessment data or understand how to use this data to prepare for teaching. Nurdiana (2022) advised that pre-service teachers be supplied with "various and rich course content throughout their preparation that would enable them to become assessment-literate and data-wise" in a report on teacher preparation programs. As a result, the authors' recommendation for greater course material quantity and quality, along with the Council's assessment of overall preparation program shortcomings, exacerbates the gap between knowledge and application.

Writing Assessment Literacy

Writing assessment literacy is the ability of teachers to evaluate and interpret the validity and reliability of written tests. According to Brown & Abeywickrama (2019), assessment of writing involves a wide range of skills and knowledge, such as the capacity to design, implement, score, and analyze writing exams. An in-depth familiarity with the ideas and procedures of writing assessment, including the many writing tasks, scoring rubrics or criteria, and standards or benchmarks used to evaluate written output, constitutes writing assessment literacy (Liu & Huang, 2020). This is also in line with Firoozi et al. (2019) that stated, understanding the benefits and drawbacks of various assessment techniques is also essential, including but not limited to holistic scoring, analytic scoring, and self-evaluation. English teachers in vocational high schools would greatly benefit from taking training to improve their knowledge of writing assessment, both for themselves and their students. Literacy in writing evaluation is defined as the ability to accurately evaluate a student's writing skills (Umam & Indah, 2020).

First, English teachers in technical high schools can improve the assessment of their students' writing and the quality of their feedback by increasing their assessment literacy. In doing so, they gain insight into their writing talents and weaknesses, which ultimately helps them improve as writers. Teachers who are well-versed in evaluation can better meet the linguistic needs of their pupils, including those who are enrolled in vocational high school and may have special requirements in this area according to the nature of their chosen careers. Furthermore, teachers who are literate in writing assessment are better equipped to create meaningful and trustworthy writing evaluations for their students. They have the ability to develop rubrics and criteria that are tailored to the unique educational goals of specialized high school programs. In this way, we can be sure that exams are giving pupils a fair chance to show off their writing skills.

According to Thirakunkovit (2019) writing assessment literacy refers to the range of expertise that teachers need to accurately evaluate and rank their students' work. List of important literacy assessments for writers: knowledge of writing standards, understanding of assessment types, rubric development, analyzing and interpreting writing samples, feedback and grading, assessment bias awareness, data analysis. These writing assessment literacy skills help teachers analyze and manage students' writing growth, improving writing instruction and student accomplishment.

Methodology

The methodology of this research is qualitative design, specifically using openended questionnaire and observation for analyze the statement of the problem in this study. According to Tobi & Kampen (2018) qualitative research collects and analyzes non-numerical data in social sciences, humanities, and other subjects. It offers deep insights into people's experiences, viewpoints, and societal phenomena. Qualitative approaches allow researchers to comprehend human behavior and relationships by capturing their complexity and nuances.

The subjects of this study were teachers in SMK Ky Ageng Giri Demak. They are 3 teachers that investigate in this study. These subjects were chosen based on observations who revealed that these teachers had implemented writing assessment in their teaching and learning process.

In this study, the writers used open-ended questionnaire and observations for the instruments. This open-ended questionnaire and observations are used by the writers in collecting data on English teachers perform writing assessment in their classrooms. The teachers answer the items about their teaching and perform writing assessments in their classroom in more detail and depth because there are no limited answers for the respondent. Open-ended questionnaire adopted and adapted from Thirakunkovit (2019).

For collecting the data, Before the closed questionnaire was given, the writers explained the background of the study, the research objectives, the procedures, and the confidentiality of participants. The writers also explained each of the points in the closed questionnaire. After the participants understand, the open-ended questionnaire is given to them. After that, the writers joined the teaching and learning process to observe the practice of writing assessments and the beliefs of those three teachers. Then, the required data is written on the observation sheet. The writers analyze all the data from an open-ended questionnaire and observation to capture the English teachers writing assessment literacy.

Findings

The open-ended questionnaire results on the implementation of English teachers' writing assessment practices in the classroom In this phase, open-ended questionnaires were given to each teacher. Table 1 displays the results of the survey's questions about participants' current assessment procedures in the classroom, which complement the questions about participants' assessment knowledge. The answers to the seven questions here are left open-ended so that teachers can provide their own insights based on their own professional experiences.

Table 1. Adapted and Adopted Open-Ended Questionnaire from Thirakunkovit (2019) about Assessment Practices of the English Teachers

Questions	Ν
Do you employ a multiple-draft method while teaching students how to	
write?	1
\Box Yes	1
□ Sometimes	1
□ Never	0
How do you evaluate students writing?	0
□ Identify language faults in the text and instruct pupils to rectify	0
them.	0
Correct student language errors	0
Use a coding strategy to mark faults for easy identification.	
□ Mark an error in a sentence by placing a check in the margin	0
 Disregard errors unless they result in significant. 	
 Provide feedback emphasizing recurring patterns. 	
Do you provide students with a rubric or a list of criteria when assigning	2
a writing assignment?	
□ Yes, I present the assignment rubrics every time I give assignment.	1
□ Yes, but not always.	0
\Box I rarely present the assignment rubrics.	
□ I never present the assignment rubrics	
Do you design your own rubrics for your writing tasks?	1
□ I define the rubrics by myself.	1
□ I adopt the rubrics.	0
I do not define the rubrics	1
□ I do not use rubrics.	0
Do you employ any methods to guarantee that students understand your	1
assignment criteria and writing rubrics?	
□ Yes, consistently	1
□ Yes, sometimes	0
\Box Not sure.	1
No applicable as I do not present rubrics/criteria for my students	0

Do you offer instruction to students on how to interpret the rubric?				
Yes, I have a particular method.				
\Box I offer a casual overview of the rubric being used, but I wouldn't	1			
classify it as training.	0			
□ I do not give any introduction	1			
□ I have no rubrics in my English class	0			
	0			
How would you describe the effect of utilizing rubrics to grade writing	2			
assessments?				
□ In my opinion, rubrics serve as a valuable instrument for holding students to their standards and illuminating the reasoning behind	0			
their grade.	0			
□ Although I believe that rubrics might be useful for students, I am	1			
uncertain if they give them the attention they need	0			
□ Despite students' best efforts, they may still fail to make use of the	1			
feedback provided by the rubrics to enhance their writing.				
□ In my opinion, rubrics are not very useful.				
\Box I do not use rubrics.	1			
	0			

According to Table 1, all the participants used a multi-draft strategy for their own assignments, although not for every task that they were provided. When asked about the strategies that are used when dealing with language problems regarding student tasks, SA and MF use correction codes by circling and giving the correct form of the mistake through comments on the student answer sheet. On the other hand, YE prefer to ignore mistakes that are not considered to cause miscommunication.

When asked about the use of their heading, YE stated that they utilized the heading or list of criteria for each activity that they assigned to their students, but SA responded that they only did so for a few tasks by informally discussing the topic with their pupils alone. It is interesting to note that the response from MF was that she never provided training or instructions on how work would be graded. And then the question was asked to the teacher about whether they made their own assessment rubrics. YE in front of her responded that she was making all his own assessments and that she had accepted and adapted Brown's method, but that she had also broken it down and changed it to the capacity of his students. While this was going on, the SA commented

that he did not make very many headings because he just utilized a few of them for grading.

Based on the questions about the use of strategies to ensure the student's understanding of the criteria of the task or heading of his writing, YE responded that she uses the method on a consistent basis, but SA responded that he sometimes uses it but does not always reassure the students. It is dependent on how difficult the task that has been given to you is. It is interesting to note that MF does not employ any technique at all in order to provide students with an awareness of the parts of the assessment that will be examined. And next to the question that was asked of the teacher concerning whether they provide training to students related to the section, the YE and the SA answered that they have a specific approach to giving training to their students, whereas the MF stated that she does not use the section in her class.

When asked their perspectives on the use of rubrics for assessing writing assignments, teachers were given a set of questions to answer. YE agreed with the statement that rubrics are crucial in assisting students in understanding how their writing job is evaluated. On the other hand, SA mentioned that he had doubts about whether the students paid sufficient attention to the grading rubric that was utilized by the teacher to evaluate their work. Even MF thought that the relative headline did not add anything to the discussion.

The more detailed details of the data obtained from observations in the classroom to survey when the English teachers' writing assessments were implemented in teaching and learning are explained by the writers. The observation results on the implementation of English teachers' writing assessment literacy practices in the classroom. In this phase, observations were carried out to complete and support data related to English teachers' writing assessment practices in the classroom. During the learning process, the writers observed the application of writing assessment in the classroom. The observations obtained show that many teachers use various writing assessments in their teaching and learning processes. The details of the writing assessment practices used by teachers are presented in Table 2 below.

	Teacher 1		Teacher 2		Teacher 3	
	Availa	Unavai	Availa	Unavai	Availa	Unavai
	ble	lable	ble	lable	ble	lable
1) Diagnostic assessment on						
the students' power	\checkmark		\checkmark		\checkmark	
writing ability.						
2) Writing task during the	2			2		2
learning process.	N			v		N
3) Writing task at the end of					2	
the learning.	N		v		N	
4) Rubric of writing task.	\checkmark		\checkmark			

Table 2. Observation Form of Writing Assessment Practices by the Teachers

	- Diagnostic Assessment			
Kind of writing tasks that	Taskin (Hand-) Writing Words and Sentences			
implemented.	- Grammatical Transformation			
	- Translate Texts			
Teachers feedback in writing task/assignment.	- Link to Resource			
	- Questioning			
	- Say Back			
	- Appreciation			
Students respond during the writing task.	- Answer the teacher questions during teaching			
	and learning process.			
	- Asking the teacher about the materials that			
	they did not understand yet.			

Based on the observations presented in Table 2, the diagnostic assessment to increase the students' power writing ability was implemented by three teachers. Furthermore, YE implemented writing tasks during the teaching and learning process and at the end of the learning. But SA and MF just implemented a writing task at the end of the lesson. Furthermore, SA and MF implemented rubrics and described them to their students, but MF did not use a rubric in their writing assessment practices in the classroom. But here, the rubrics that used by the teacher just simple rubrics that adopted and adapted by Brown.

There were five types of writing assessments used by three teachers in their teaching and learning: diagnostic assessment, grammatical transformation task, asking the students to translate text, and task in (hand-)writing words and sentences. Supported by data in the form of percentages in the table above, the diagnostic assessment is used by all teachers. The second kind of assessment that is also widely used by YE and MF is the grammatical transformation task. Furthermore, three teachers also use other writing assessment types to evaluate their students' performance such as hand-writing tasks, and translating texts, which are rarely used by teachers for their writing assessment practices in their teaching and learning.

In addition, teachers' feedback on writing tasks is also carried out by the writers. In their teaching and learning, teachers receive four types of feedback. The writers found a kind of link for a resource, such as giving the students the correct answer by showing the materials. Furthermore, there was also questioning during the teaching and learning process by the teacher to make sure their students understood. Moreover, the writers also found praise and appreciation from the teachers for the students who could answer questions about the material. "Good job," "great," "good," "amazing," and so on are examples of compliments. This is also supported by the students' responses during the teaching and learning process. The writers found that the students were mostly active in the classroom with their responses to the teachers. The students' responses that were found by the writers included answering the teachers' questions and asking the teacher about the materials.

The writers concluded that YE, who utilizes rubrics in their teaching and learning and who explained more information to the students, demonstrated that the students had a better understanding of the writing work and were able to finish it in an ideal manner. This was the conclusion reached by the writers. But SA, who is utilizing rubrics in their teaching and learning but did not explain them in greater depth to the students, revealed that the students were more active and asking the teachers about the writing job that was given by the teacher. The rubrics are being used in teaching and learning. In addition, the teacher, who did not use rubrics in the process of teaching and learning, required the students to do the writing assignment in accordance with their own individual comprehension.

Furthermore, about the approach of the teachers in assessing students' writing, the writers found that the data in the observation session was not the same as the data in the open-ended questionnaire. Where the data was in the open-ended questionnaire, SA and MF said that they used correction codes by circling and giving the correct form of the error through comments on the student answer sheet. On the other hand, YE prefers to ignore mistakes that are not considered to cause miscommunication. But, in the observation session, the writers found that SA and MF prefer to ignore mistakes that are not considered to cause correction codes by circling and giving the correct form of and giving the correct form of the error through comments on the student and MF prefer to ignore mistakes that are not considered to cause miscommunication. But, in the observation session, the writers found that SA and MF prefer to ignore mistakes that are not considered to cause miscommunication codes by circling and giving the correct form of the error through comments on the student answer sheet.

Discussion

In practice writing assessment in the classroom. The writers found that all teachers have given writing assessments in their writing classes. There are teachers who are highly structured by encouraging and explaining the assessment rubric in detail that will be used in evaluating student writing. However, there are also teachers who do not use rubrics in evaluating student writing and do not even include writing assessment during teaching and learning. This may be due to the background education of the teacher. Furthermore, the authors found that most of teachers are already very determined in this regard when it comes to "providing feedback to students based on information from tests or assessments," which is an important component in the learning process in the classroom to develop writing skills and enhance student motivation (Schildkamp et al., 2020). Nevertheless, MF reported that she had never obtained either "basic" or "advanced" training. However, student's writing abilities can greatly benefit from the application of the strategy of self-evaluation and use rubrics in scoring (Al-Mwzaiji & Alzubi, 2022; Mahasneh, 2020; Meihami & Varmaghani, 2013; Rehm et al., 2021; Wambsganss et al., 2022). The assertion was supported by the opinions of more than half of the teachers. On the other hand, one of them have doubts regarding the comments they made about themselves. Most of them acknowledge that they are in need of extensive training in the implementation of self-assessment and create rubrics for students.

The study revealed that the teacher training experiences had a substantial impact on their assessment knowledge and practices. In this study, the writing assessment knowledge and practice level of trained teachers was considerably greater than that of untrained teachers, consistent with previous research (Afshar & Ranjbar, 2021; Lam, 2015). One potential explanation could be that these training programs included the necessary information for the teachers' regular writing assessments. After completing the training programs, teachers will have several opportunities to apply their newly acquired knowledge, consequently improving their understanding and strengthening their writing assessment skills. This could also clarify why the writing assessment training programs had the most significant influence.

To conclude, English teachers in vocational high school must be assessment literate because it is crucial for them to clearly state and evaluate the result of writing process during their teaching and learning. This is also in line with (Crusan et al., 2016) that stated a high level of writing assessment literacy is essential for English teachers. This pertains to your familiarity with the processes, procedures, and methods necessary for accurately rating students writing abilities.

Conclusion

Some conclusions are presented during this study. In the English teachers' practices, writing assessment literacy in the classroom shows all teachers give writing assessments in their class. There are highly structured teachers using the assessment rubric and explaining it in detail to students about what is assessed in student writing tasks. However, there are also those who do not use an assessment section at all in evaluating student writing. With their writing assessment literacy being lacking, this results in their writing evaluation practice in the class also being standard. Seeing from the headings that use only simple headings, there are some teachers who do not include writing assessment in the classroom and only give writing evaluation at the end of the teaching activity, and this also affects the feedback of less active students in the classroom. Inadequate assessment literacy leads to unstandardized and unethical testing practices.

The writers would like to provide a few suggestions based on the results of this study. Future research should include more participants in the sample. The length of time a teacher has spent in the classroom is a relevant factor to consider when analyzing the impact of writing assessments on student learning. The findings from studies examining the effect of teachers' gender on writing assessment methods need to be refined through additional research.

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