Authentic Assessment Awareness for Assessing Students' Speaking Ability in a Suburban Indonesian EFL Classroom

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Abstract—**The postponed implementation of 2013 curriculum in several regions in Indonesia has made some schools have implemented authentic assessment while other schools have not. This study aimed to investigate English classroom speaking assessment along with the teacher's perceptions of the authentic assessment and to observe the feasibility of fostering authentic assessment to assess students' speaking ability. The qualitative method has been used in this study. Field note classroom observation, document observation, and semi-structural interview with the teacher was used to obtain the data. The findings show that even though the classroom has not implemented authentic assessment to assess student speaking ability, the classroom has used authentic material in some topics of learning. Moreover, issues such as time constraint and classroom time management, students learning motivation, teacher teaching practice and the demand of current curriculum become some challenges as well as opportunities need to be contemplated and reflected to implement authentic speaking assessment effectively.**

Keywords—*2013 curriculum; authentic assessment; authentic material; speaking task; students center; teacher's perceptions*

I. INTRODUCTION

Assessment is part of learning that should be employed in teaching and learning process along with testing and evaluation. The use of appropriate assessment will lead teachers to figure out what will the teacher does next in their teaching [1]. Summative assessment which often forms as a conventional test at the end of instruction is one of common assessment used by teachers in most of public school. However, summative assessment in the form of paper-based test is insufficient to provide information about students learning process and progress particularly in assessing students' English speaking ability [2]. Insufficiency of the assessment can lead the students to become less engaged and motivated in learning due to their inability to find the usage of their learning into their real-life experience [3].

However, speaking task as one of performance assessment is not suitable to be assessed by paper-based test. According to [4], a good speaking test must consist of test which focuses on a real-life situation, as it has been known that spoken language in real-life situation requires verbal communication to express ideas being communicated. In other words, to assess students speaking ability, task and test based on real life situation must be provided for the students. Task based real-life situation which known as authentic assessment, allows the teacher to collect the students learning progress from various students' activities in the classroom [5,6]. Authentic assessment also can serve as a powerful tool for assessing students' 21st-century competencies in the context of global educational reforms [3].

In Indonesia, authentic assessment had been introduced from the 2013 curriculum. In 2013 curriculum, authentic assessment along with non-authentic assessment must be employed by educators to assess students' outcome at the end of the study. It is in line with Dutt and Maddox, which argued, integrating non-authentic and authentic assessment can provide a better construction of the students for what he or she knows [7]. Authentic assessment demonstrates a student ability to perform tasks, solve problems or express knowledge in simulate situations that resemble student's real-life situations [3,8]. It is expected to increase student motivation to learn because in authentic assessment students experience their learning in a meaningful way to their real-life situation.

On the other hand, even though authentic assessment had been introduced in 2013, due to the Indonesian ministry of education policy, the implementation of authentic assessment was different in some regions in Indonesia. Several previous studies show this policy leads to the number of schools and their teaching staffs have employed authentic assessment even though it is still not properly done yet [9,10]. Meanwhile, other schools and their teaching staffs have not, due to their lack of understanding in implementing authentic assessment [8]. Another study from Aliningsih and Sofwan, also revealed most teachers already had positive perceptions on the practice of authentic assessment even though the teachers still face many obstacles to implement it [11].

Based on previous studies summarized briefly above Hamidah [9], Rukhmini and Saputri [10], Trisanti [8], Aliningsih and Sofwan [11], there still limited study which discusses about the teacher and classroom awareness or readiness as well as classroom potential to use authentic

assessment with specifying the address to suburban EFL classroom. The awareness of the authentic assessment advantages, as well as the implementation of authentic assessment, is beneficial in teaching and learning as it helps both teacher and students to find the best way to identify and improve students' speaking ability. The present study aims to investigate English classroom assessment along with the teacher perceptions on the authentic assessment. Also to observe the feasibility in employing authentic assessment to assess students' speaking ability.

A. Moving towards Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment in the global education field is not a new invention to assess students' learning progress. However, for some teachers in Indonesia particularly in suburban area were still unfamiliar to the term and concept of authentic assessment.

In term of authentic material, Peters argues authentic assessment must have authentic content, that she proposes several guidelines for selecting authentic content, the first is the material should reflect important themes and ideas, the next is the material should be consistent with the goals of the subject area curriculum in our district, after that the material should be rooted in real-world experiences and have application to the world both within and beyond classroom, then materials should be sensitive to the developmental progression of students, and last is the materials should allow students to engage in higher order thinking [12].

B. Authentic Assessment in Speaking

Trisanti [8], Zaim et al [13] and Koh [3] define authentic assessment as an alternative assessment method aside of traditional standardized test. They also added that authentic assessment should be provided to demonstrate students' ability to perform tasks, solve problems or express knowledge in simulate situations that resemble student's real-life situations. Furthermore, Koh [3] and Mbeh [14] added that traditional standardized test can limit the assessment to build higher-order thinking skills and other essential 21st-century competencies due to the nature of the item format. Moreover, Dutt and Maddox argue that "authentic assessments require students to think critically while applying skills to solve real-world problems" [7]. Based on all the concepts and advantages of authentic assessment pointed out above, it can be concluded that authentic assessment is very beneficial to be fostered by the teacher because authentic assessment has an important role in identifying the real outcome from students' learning.

Assessing speaking also important to the teacher which is speaking as one of major skills to determine the level of language learners' proficiency Louma describes two forms of spoken languages, that are speaking as interaction and speaking as a social and situation-based activity [15]. In an academic context like school, English spoken have two functions that are communicative language function and academic language function [1]. In Indonesian context where English is not commonly spoken beyond the classroom, teachers need to design and modified speaking assessment in the classroom which represent students' real-life situations. O'Malley and Pierce suggest several types of speaking activities which

teacher can use to assess students' speaking ability, among them are oral interviews, picture-cued descriptions or stories, radio broadcasts, video clip, information gap, story or text retelling, role-playing, oral reports, and debates [1].

Moreover, O'Malley and Pierce indicate several steps in preparing speaking assessment as follow: 1) Identifying purpose, an analysis is needed to meet what learners need and reviewing local curriculum guide, 2) Planning for assessment, this process included identifying and deciding instructional activities or task, deciding when to assess student individually and in cooperative learning and outline major instructional goals or learning outcomes, 3) Developing scoring procedures, 4) Setting standard, 5) Involving student in their own, 6) Selecting assessment activities, and 7) Recording teacher observation [1].

In addition, Paris and Ayres stated several types of authentic assessment that are portfolios, self-evaluation, inventories and survey, journal, self-portrait, letter, and conferences [5]. Furthermore, according to Edutopia, there are several types of authentic assessment such as observation, essays, interviews, performance tasks, exhibitions and demonstrations, portfolios, journals, teacher-created tests, rubrics, self- and peer evaluation [16]. Though it is not exactly the same, types of authentic assessment proposed by Paris and Ayres [5] and Edutopia have several similar types as proposed by 2013 curriculum that is observation, portfolio, self-evaluation, and journal [16].

II. METHOD

Qualitative design was used in conducting this study. The subject of this study was one English teacher and a 10th grade of private senior high school English classroom. The teacher participant and 10th grade private senior high school were chosen as it already represented the whole classrooms and teacher in the sample school based on teacher's qualification and the classroom number. Whereas the school has been chosen as the sample due to the limitation of this study that intended to investigate suburban EFL classroom.

In collecting the data, the researcher used three kinds of instruments: field note classroom observation, document observation and semi-structural interview for the teacher. In observing teaching and learning in the classroom, it was noted whatever activities found which relate to oral or speaking activities. In interviewing the teacher, the questions were about the result of classroom observation, to ask teacher clarification toward the teaching and learning process. In the interview, the teacher was also asked some questions that leading the conversation to gain teacher perceptions on authentic assessment and the feasibility to foster authentic speaking assessment. The use of class observation is beneficial to investigate how the real process of teaching and learning in a classroom occur. Document observation is needed to be done to identify such content or task in speaking activities for assessing students' speaking ability and teacher preference scoring in assessing students speaking ability. The data analysis in this study used Miles and Huberman analysis model which consist of data collection to data reduction, data display, and conclusion [17].

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were parted specifically into two scopes to obtain the conclusions. There were findings from classroom observation including the document observation and teacher clarification about the speaking instruction in the classroom. The second is teacher's perceptions in implementing speaking assessment along with the feasibility to implement authentic speaking assessment in the classroom.

A. Speaking Assessment in English Classroom Instruction

There are several issues need to be underlined based on the finding from classroom observation including teacher clarifications toward the present speaking assessment in the classroom.

1) The confusion between speaking activities and using English as a medium of Instruction: Based on the classroom observation result, it revealed that speaking activities and interaction are mostly the activities wherein the teacher asked the students individually related to learning topic orally. Then, the students answer every question from the teacher spontaneously. Most of the questions were answered shortly by the students. According to the teacher, this interaction through simple short question and answer are considered as one of speaking activities in classroom. It implies that the teacher has the same view between using English as a medium of instruction and students' speaking practice. It emerges the query between the use of English as an instructional medium in teaching-learning and the use of English in specific activities to make students practice their English.

However, based on the classroom observation, it shows that the teacher mostly uses English in teaching and interacting with the students. On the other hand, the interview with the teacher is not in accordance with which the researcher found in the real classroom interaction. The teacher claimed that most of her students are disadvantaged in English so that when she interacts with them in English, they will not give expected responses or reactions to the teacher. It is indicated that the teacher might just force the students to listen and speak in full English instruction even though the teacher has already known that students did not understand the teacher's talk in the classroom.

2) Spoken activities to improve students' speaking ability is less priority in the teaching and learning: Aside from asking questions or instructions which required spontaneous responses from the students, the teacher also asked the student to give their opinion about the topic given. In making the student be able to express their opinions or ideas, the teacher gives time about 2 minutes for students to think about what their answer for then write it down to the paper and then the teacher asked the students to read what has been written as their answers one by one. According to the teacher, these kinds of activities were considered as speaking activities that suitable for the English proficiency level for most of the students. Based on the teacher's clarification, it implies this kind of oral activity might be involved as one of the speaking activities, but it is not specified to assess students speaking ability.

The teacher also exclaimed that if she asked the students to give their ideas over the material or topic given orally, about 22 students in the classroom, only around 3 students who were able to respond spontaneously and precisely. This teacher's assumption is not in line with Indriani who propose that paper-based test is not suitable to identify students' speaking ability progress in learning [2]. The teacher also clarified that the low English proficiency level of the students make it hard for the teacher to expect the English teaching and learning become communicative in English spoken language. In addition, according to the teacher, improving students' speaking ability is less priority just now and prefer to gain students' vocabulary repertoire in the first place.

The other finding from classroom observation also revealed that the teacher assesses her students speaking ability from pronunciation practice by asking her students to read the same text individually. Through pronunciation practice, the teacher claimed that pronunciation practice is more appropriate to assess her students speaking ability in the level of where most of her students are in. Based on the interview with the teacher, she was believed that pronunciation practice is what her students need to improve their English spoken ability.

However, the teacher chooses to prefer students vocabulary improvement than actualize students' spoken practice must have been considered deliberately. Another anomaly which comes to the surface is whether students' spoken practice and vocabulary enrichment can go along together in teaching and learning or not.

3) There is no scoring document or assessment rubric found: Based on finding discovered in previous section above, it is indicated that the teacher has employed two steps from all six steps in preparing speaking assessment which are identifying purpose and planning the kind of assessment. Unfortunately, the teacher has not developed the scoring procedures and next steps in preparing speaking assessment for the students. It is justified as the teacher did not use any rubric or any document to show scoring preference by the teachers in determining students spoken assessment score.

The teacher also did not give any feedback or correction toward students' linguistic aspect from students' spoken practice. Meanwhile, to identify students' progress in learning, the teacher acknowledged that she used her 'teacher's institution' or free observation without neither noting nor recording her observation toward each student. The only assessment teacher did in English classroom instruction is through conventional paper-based test from written exercise and task provided in the students' worksheet. The less variety of speaking activities make teacher cannot realize their students' improvement effectively. It indicates the cause of the students might never show their progress and teacher just walk in the same state of students' ability in mastering English spoken. After all, the use of only conventional test can limit the assessment of students' higher-order thinking skills and other essential 21st-century competencies due to the nature of the item format as proposed by Koh which it is insufficient to identify students' progress in learning [3].

B. Teacher's Perceptions and the Feasibility to Implement Authentic Speaking Assessment

1) Teacher's perceptions of speaking assessment: It has been explained in the previous section that the teacher claimed to only focus on gaining and inviting students' the confidence to speak English rather than supporting student to be able to speak English communicatively. However, based on the teacher's interview, it is two different things between inviting students confidence to speak and improving students spoken ability as if these two abilities cannot be joining to progress in the same time. The base of this assumption is not without any reason. It is because of the students' passive act in teaching and learning. Students tend to keep silent most of the time in teaching and learning. According to this reason, the teacher perceives that it is important to keep asking students or interact with students in English whatever their English answer is and not to correct them directly in order to create livelily and relax atmosphere for students to be brave in talking or speaking in English. In short, it is important to make students not afraid of making a mistake in speaking English. However, the assumption from the teacher needs to take into account and being studied further.

2) Teacher perceptions on difficulties face implementing authentic speaking assessment: In implementing authentic assessment particularly in speaking skill, the teacher expressed her uncertainty to be able to foster authentic speaking assessment effectively for where the situation of the students and the teacher been right now. The teacher pointed out several reasons for that. The first is teacher perceived that the 2013 curriculum is demanding too high meanwhile the ability of student is far more to reach the goals. This reason relates to the new regulation from the 2013 curriculum which the time for English subject per week that being cut from 4 hours per week into 2 hours per week. According to the teacher, it causes the teacher having more struggle in managing time in teaching and learning. This finding is in line with Rukhmini and Saputri which found limited time become a handicap for the teacher to conduct authentic assessment properly [10]. The teacher also confused whether they should teach the student to focus on knowledge about the material only or to focus on improving the students' communicative skill only. As both of those goals are hard to reach along due to many competencies the students should learn while the time given is not enough to produce competent students in both knowledge and communicative skill.

The other difficulties teacher found to implement authentic speaking assessment is the lack of information and sources. The limited source of material to teach the students is another issue since the teacher is only focusing her teaching by the material given in students' worksheet and rarely used other sources of material. The teacher also complained about school and curriculum staff which are not fully take their attention on teacher understanding about 2013 curriculum is also an issue caused the implementation of authentic assessment cannot be done appropriately. The teacher exposed she did not familiar

with the authentic assessment that she claimed her school only start applying 2013 curriculum in 2017.

Hence, the teacher proclaimed that she still studying and trying to become accustomed to new regulation of the 2013 curriculum. It is become more complicated by the less sharing and cooperating work between each teacher since this school only had two English teachers with the other teacher have a dual occupation in school other than teaching. The teacher felt hard to have cooperative work to find the solution or doing any improvement since another teacher did not focus on his role as an English teacher. Despite all of the handicap face to implement authentic speaking assessment, the teacher shows her positive attitude toward the advantages of authentic assessment even though the teacher admits that she needs further observation to foster authentic assessment.

3) The feasibility to implement authentic speaking assessment in the classroom: Despite some problem being pointed out in previous sections, teacher is having great awareness on the need and importance of authentic material content, students as the center of learning and her assessment practice that need to be recovered. In term of authentic content of learning, the classroom observation revealed that teacher has been brought the topic learning which stimulates students' interest and related to student real-life situation. From the teacher clarification, the topic in every session of learning has chosen according to the topic provided in the students' worksheet. On the other hand, the teacher also revealed that not all of the materials or topics provided in students' worksheet were suitable to the situation of the students' real life. Even though not all of material and topic offered by students' worksheet is based on students' real-life situation, it was discovered that she tried her best to connect the teaching material to the student real-life situation.

It also revealed the teacher has a very good understanding of learner as the center in English learning. It is justified by the effort the teacher did to gain student creativity and less dependent on the teacher is minimalized their involvement in students' task and only give major instructions to students. Even though some spoken practice cannot be seen in the time researcher observe the classroom, from teacher interview, it was also revealed that the other speaking performance ever done in the classroom are a small group discussion and role-playing in form of drama performance.

After all, even though the speaking assessment conducted in this classroom is still cannot be considered as authentic assessment, yet some steps of designing authentic speaking assessment have been done by the teacher and two types of authentic speaking assessment were used. It is revealed that even though the learning activities for the students mostly exercise and task from students' worksheet, some speaking performances also have been done in students classroom activities. Based on teachers' perception of speaking performance mentioned above, it indicated that the teacher is considering the purpose of her teaching and learning. Even though her purposes and her expectation were still cannot effectively attain due to the difficulties mentioned above. At last, the finding also indicated that the teacher is aware to bring

the students context in the instruction to make the material connected with students' real life.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, even though the feasibility to implement authentic speaking assessment in the classroom is not that high. Yet the teacher has fully aware on the usefulness of authentic material, students as the centre in learning, and her positive attitude toward the use of authentic speaking assessment including her awareness of her own flaw in assessment practice. Therefore, there are some issues need to be underlined which become some challenges as well as opportunities need to be contemplated and reflected to implement authentic speaking assessment properly. The issues such as time constraint and classroom time management, students learning motivation, teacher teaching practice, and the demand of current curriculum mostly main problem in implementing authentic assessment need to be studied and discussed further.

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