A Case of Authentic Assessment in Indonesian Secondary EFL Classroom Context:

Teachers' struggle

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Abstract—**The existing literature shows that new curriculum reforms always bring about emotional tensions of teachers as curriculum implementers. However, the real challenges are not so much discussed by previous studies which only seek to understand the perspectives and particular features of the assessment. Employing narrative case study qualitative design, the study documented in this paper draws insights of the challenges of implementing authentic assessment encountered by six English teachers of secondary school in West Java, Indonesia. The obtained data from observations, interview, and document analysis were all analyzed using thematic analysis model in relations to the concerns of this study. The result of analysis demonstrated that the teachers experienced typical challenges of implementation covering student related issues, time and effort consuming, validity issue, reliability issue, resource administration, evidence transformation, and subjectivity. These findings could inform teachers, policy maker, and future researcher to take possible actions on what and how to do next in order to enhance the practice of assessment in Indonesia.**

Keywords—*EFL authentic assessment; Indonesian 2013 curriculum; implementation; challenges*

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades, there has been a major shift in the area of assessment reflected from the shift of the curriculum paradigm around the world [1]. This changes the trend from assessment of learning into assessment for learning in many countries [2]. Some movements have been made by many countries dealing with the practice of testing and assessment so they move into a period with high achievement expectataion [3]. In indonesian context, the movement has also changed the concept of assessment through the policy and practice of assessment in Indonesia which are interesting to discuss. Since 2013, the government through Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia has decided to change the previous curriculum by implementing the 2013 Curriculum. One of the prominent characteristics of this curriculum is the use of authentic assessment which belongs to the post method era [4]. This is the assessment which is mandated to implement by the teachers as stated in government policy assessment standard.

Although a lot of benefits come from the use of authentic assessment, it still remains some interesting issues to investigate. As the authentic assessment consists of multiple form of assessment [5], the teachers will vary in the preference and the use of such kind of assessment. This is demonstrated by the study that found the variation of the types of authentic assessment [6,7]. In addition, the preliminary study conducted with sixteen teachers revealed that most of them felt difficult to implement the assessment although they have joined the training of the 2013 Curriculum. This becomes a classic problem in which the teachers know the theory or concept but they are not able to implement it as required. Therefore, it is very interesting to look at the challenges faced in the implementation comprehensively in order to propose what further action should be conducted since previous studies [8-14] do not specifically discuss the challenges of implementing authentic assessment in the context of the 2013 Indonesian Curriculum. It therefore makes conducting the study about the authentic assessment in terms of challenges of implementation will be worth doing to shed light about the real practice of English language teaching and assessment in Indonesia.

II. METHOD

A case study documented in this paper tries to gain insight of the challenges of the implementation of authentic assessment in the context of the 2013 Curriculum. Therefore, this inquiry was guided by the research question sounding 'What are the challenges encountered by Indonesian EFL teachers in implementing authentic assessment?'

A. Research Context and Participants

The three-month research project was undertaken in one public secondary school in West Java, Indonesia. The school was selected for its achievement in several educational contests and its outcome quality. The access to the site was eased by the existence of a gate keeper in the school, so that the people in school could welcome the researcher. The process of building rapport was conducted during the preliminary study by joining the discussion with the teachers and regularly visiting the school.

The participants involved in this study were six English teachers (3 male and 3 female) and six classes of students in the school. The teachers had 15 to 30-year experience in teaching English at the school. They were selected purposefully among sixteen teachers from six different schools approached. They were selected because of their characteristics covering; (1) they had joined the training of curriculum by the government and therefore had implemented the authentic assessment as mandated by the curriculum, (2) they were the most active, talkative and cooperative teachers, (3) they showed a great interest in the authentic assessment topic. Those rationales made it reasonable to involve only one teachers and her students with particular characteristics mentioned.

B. Data Collection and Analysis

The data covering activity, verbal, and textual were collected from several data sources through three data collection techniques namely non-participant observation, semi-structured interview, and document analysis. First, the data of the activity were collected in the classroom for twelve sessions through observation using field notes, observation sheets, and videotape recorder. Second, the verbal data form the teachers and students about implementation and challenges were collected through interview for twenty sessions in total, guided by interview guideline and audio-taped in order to gain insight and enable a clarification or reality check. Third, textual data coming from the teaching administration documents including lesson plans and syllabus as well as notes of the teachers and student assignments were analyzed using document analysis which supported the other two data collection techniques. Those data were then analyzed both through and after fully collecting the data using thematic analysis, meaning that the accumulated valid and reliable data were systematically transcribed, organized, coded, thematically categorized, synthesized, and interpreted to answer the research question of this study [15]. The activity of such data analysis revealed the answer of what is questioned in this study.

III. Results and Discussion

The study captures the challenges of Indonesian English teachers in implementing authentic assessment. They cover several things; student related issue, time and effort consuming, validity issue, reliability issue, resource administration, evidence transformation, and subjectivity. The following are the details.

A. Student Related Issue

The first identified challenge from the teachers was student related issue. This covered the huge number of the students the teachers taught and the variation of the proficiency level of the students. This challenge became the most prominent one among other challenges the teachers encountered. This is reasonable since the teachers should teach plenty of classes in which each class might consist of at least thirty-six students with plenty of variation in it. This is a reality of the educational practice in Indonesia that became one of the challenges encountered by the teachers in implementing authentic assessment.

The big number of the student became a challenge since the authentic assessment the teachers conducted required the detail process of implementation. Therefore, the teachers might become overwhelmed to assess the big number of students in detail. This challenge is relevant to the previous studies about authentic assessment which also found that the teachers in Indonesia felt a problem in implementing assessment for big classes [8,11]. Therefore, they tended to use non-authentic assessment as a solution to the problem.

Although the teachers had a challenge in terms of big number of the students, they still implemented authentic assessment as mandated by the Curriculum. They employed several shortcuts or tricks to ease the process of the assessment. One of them was by asking the students to wear nametag. By using that practice, the teachers were eased to assess the students in a big class.

Another challenge dealing with student related issues was the variation of the students' proficiency level. Although this variation is a normal thing in the classroom, the teachers claimed that it would make the assessment complicated especially in assessing the students' spoken skills. This can be demonstrated by several sessions in which the teachers felt hard to assess the student who did not speak in English or the non-intelligible ones. That might become a challenge for the teachers to improve the student's skills through assessment since the authentic assessment itself supports and assists learning [16,17]. Yet again, although the teachers felt that as a challenge, they were still able to find another way of assessing students using another type of assessment which also became another principle of multiplicity of the authentic assessment [5,18-20]. From the aforementioned findings, it can be concluded that the teachers encountered the big size of the students and their variation as a challenge. However, they still tried to overcome the challenge by several tricks mentioned.

B. Time and Effort Consuming

The second challenge identified from the teachers was that the assessment took time and energy. This became the set of challenge as a result of student related issues. The big size of the students required much time of assessment and a great energy of implementation. This challenge is reasonable for the teachers since the nature of authentic assessment itself which requires good planning and implementation. Therefore, the teachers spent plenty of time and energy in developing and implementing the assessment. This practice was important to the process of increasing the quality of the assessment, but it did require plenty of teachers' time and effort.

This idea is the same as what has been mentioned by scholars that authentic assessment is very labor intensive for the teachers [2,21]. Besides, the findings about the time and effort consuming as one of the challenges of authentic assessment is relevant to the previous studies [9,10,11,14].

C. Validity Issue

The third challenge identified from the teacher's implementation was validity issue. This means that the assessment did not directly assess what to assess. This challenge emerged from the practice of teachers' assessment

who conducted several kinds of assessment covering peer-assessment and performance assessment.

For instance, in assessing the students using peer-assessment, the teachers were consciously aware that the students did not have the capacity of assessing their peer well. Meanwhile, in assessing the students using performance, the teachers felt that the assessment was not valid. It did not assess the real students' communicative skills due to the domination from the more capable students. Therefore, the fairness of the assessment is threatened.

The aforementioned challenges dealing with the validity issue indicate that the teachers seriously encountered the validity aspect of the assessment. However, they still tried to overcome the challenge by employing multiple assessments to assess the students' competences. This multiplicity of the assessment became not only the principle of authentic assessment to follow but also the solution toward the unfair condition and invalid aspect of the assessment.

D. Reliability Issue

The fourth challenge identified from the activity the teachers conducted was reliability issue. This challenge was likely to be the consequence of the big size of the students. It is because the teachers sometimes tried to overcome the challenges in terms of student big size by not employing a specific rubric in assessing the students, particularly in observation. The indirect use of rubric itself can be seen from several observations in which the teachers just observed the student's competence without specific rubric in their hand.

In addition, the document analysis toward the teachers' note also revealed that the notes were just notes. There was no specific rubric or criteria for the assessment. Therefore, one occasion might be viewed as different thing in different time. Although the teachers were not aware of this challenge, the aforementioned evidence is enough to conclude that the teachers faced that challenge. This is still reasonable since the teachers tried to do the best in fulfilling the demand of the 2013 Curriculum.

E. Resource Administration

The fifth challenge identified from the practice of the authentic assessment conducted by the teachers was resource administration. This challenge dealt with the equipment of the assessment that affected the process of assessment. In the context of the teacher's assessment in this study, the teachers were likely to feel a challenge in implementing authentic assessment.

In the teacher's assessment, there was an occasion happened during observation in which the teachers stopped the activity of assessment due to the problem with the equipment. The LCD projector to support the listening activity did not work. Therefore, the teachers should stop the activity and tried to fix the problem with the students. Unfortunately, they could not fix the problem so that the activity of assessment should be totally stopped and the teachers decided to change to the other activity. These findings clearly indicated that resource administration became the challenge for the teachers involved

in this study as stated by Lund [21]. Besides, this lack of support from facilities also happened to be the challenge for the teachers as what was found in previous study conducted by Jumiarti [8].

F. Evidence Transformation

Another challenge identified from the teachers' practice of implementing authentic assessment in the context of the 2013 Curriculum was evidence transformation. This challenge dealt with the problem in transferring the evidence of the students' achievement to the score on the teachers' scoring sheet. Although the teachers tried to be specific as well as holistic to assess the students' achievement, the teachers still felt the problem in the practice due to the big number of the students.

The findings clearly indicate that the teachers felt hard to transfer the evidence of the student's achievement to the score although they had conducted two versions of scoring mechanism namely holistic and analytic. All in all, this encountered challenge is one of the challenges of implementing authentic assessment as mentioned by Lund [21]. Therefore, this is seen to be basic challenge of the implementation.

G. Subjectivity

Another challenge identified from the teachers' implementation of the authentic assessment in the context of the 2013 Curriculum was subjectivity. The subjectivity itself dealt with the practice of scoring which sometimes according to the teachers required her concentration to ensure the scoring activity became objective. This challenge also happened due to the consequence of big number of the students to assess. Therefore, the teachers should pay high attention to assess the students in detail. However, they could not do that, so that they used their intuition to assess the students.

From this finding, it can be seen that the teachers felt difficult in maintaining consistency to become objective in scoring the students. This idea is in line with the challenge mentioned by Lund, Mehrens, and O'Malley and Pierce [5,21,22]. Since the students' evidences were judged against a set of the criteria, in some instances, there was no clear-cut answer that was required. Therefore, the teachers tended to use their intuition rather than their professional judgment.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown various challenges of implementing authentic assessment in Indonesian context. The discussion of the challenges has contributed the discussion of the practice of authentic assessment in Indonesia which is still limited to discuss. Then, the typical challenges that were consciously and subconsciously encountered by the teachers imply that the teachers still had lack of understanding of authentic assessment. The challenges cover (1) student related issue, (2) time and effort consuming, (3) validity issue, (4) reliability issue, (5) resource administration, (6) evidence transformation, and (7) subjectivity were encountered due to some carelessness of the teachers.

Since the findings of the study are drawn from the experiences of six English teachers of secondary school in

Indonesia, the future work is required in other context to investigate similar issue to map out the challenges of implementing authentic assessment in Indonesia, so that the understanding of the issue will increase. Besides, the more specific kind of research which is research and development are suggested to develop a model of authentic assessment in Indonesian context, so that it will be very beneficial and will make the teachers in general understand on how to assess the students and to avoid the typical challenges of implementation. By providing the teachers with the model, it is expected that the practice of assessment will be good in which the students' real competence can be reflected and the teachers can give appropriate follow up action.

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