



Self-assessment Checklist for Assessing Young Learners' Writing Performance

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Abstract. Self-assessment gives students opportunity to be involved on the assessment process not only for the writing process but also to help students predict their writing performance. For this reason, this research and development study was aimed at developing self-assessment checklist as an instrument for assessing young EFL learners' writing performance. The checklist was developed in the form of metacognitive self-assessment. Some elements constellated in the development of the self-assessment checklist were related to the criteria set in the scoring rubric, namely content, organization, language use, mechanics, and writing presentation aspects. Two experts were involved to validate the instrument. During panel analysis, it was approved that the instruments have represented the characteristic of a checklist, where a column of statements and responds are available for the students to put a check on. In terms of their construct, both experts agree to the point that all items are appropriate with the theoretical frameworks which underlie the development of the checklists. To provide empirical evidence, a try out was conducted by involving 142 sixth graders. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the result of the try out for construct validity analysis. The data worthiness analysis shows that the KMO is .677 and the correlation coefficient of all items are $> .5$. As the conclusion, all items (32 items) are considered as valid. Therefore, the self-assessment checklist is ready for field test which the result can be used to verify the readiness of the self-assessment checklist to be implemented to help young learners understand their writing performance better.

Keywords: Young Learners · Writing · Self-assessment

1 Introduction

Self-assessment as a formative assessment provides opportunities for students to perform their responsibility in evaluating their learning outcome. The quality of their work and instruction is reviewed and evaluated by the students. It is consistent with the justification offered by [1–4], and [1]. They emphasize that learners are taught to be conscious of their knowledge—to recognize what they know and do not—as well as to choose a specific approach for learning. As a result, students would be able to identify their areas of strength and weakness in order to make adjustments for a better [5]. This circumstance will support the growth of students' metacognitive awareness, which entails their understanding and self-consciousness regarding their own learning process [6] which

is the ultimate goal of assessment as learning where learners become their own best assessors, and it may be the key to effective learning [2].

Some studies had found that self-assessment worked for more advanced or adult English learners. Piaget and Vygotsky's framework also describe that adults are more capable in self-evaluating their own performance or self-regulating their own learning than children. But in fact, [21] found that self-reflect and self-assess of young learners appear to improve around age 8–12. Young learners who participate in continuous self-assessment are able to self-assess their learning and this positively affects their English proficiency [7]. In addition to young learners' English proficiency, self-assessment also positively affects their motivation, confidence and anxiety [8] which might affect positively toward their English fluency. Therefore, [9] suggest that self-assessment should be applied to students from grade 5 (10–11 years old) when children are initially aware of the importance of learning.

Self-assessment itself has become popular as a topic of research since the first two important studies conducted by [10]. Since that era, self-assessment had attracted many fields of study including writing assessment. Due to the consequences of self-evaluation on students' writing, certain research had been done. Self-evaluation [11], may help secondary school pupils write better. Furthermore, Andrade and Boulay's findings from 2003 show that students' capacity to evaluate their writing draft critically while utilizing a rubric as a guide for their own evaluation has an impact on how well they write in the seventh and eighth grades. In an Iranian EFL University writing class, [12] report that self-evaluation had a beneficial impact. They discover that students who received input from both teachers and themselves improved their writing far more than students who just received feedback from teachers. For this reason, it is obvious that self-assessment brings benefits for the students' performance. Therefore, developing the self-assessment instrument to assist the students is important to be conducted.

Considering the benefits offered by the implementation of self-assessment on students' writing performance, it is important to develop self-assessment that might record the students process of writing which might bring more advantages for their writing product. For this reason, the purpose of the study was to develop the self-assessment checklist as a formative assessment in assessing young learners' writing performance.

2 Methods

This study employed research and development research design [13] steps of development. 142 sixth graders from three different elementary schools in Buleleng Regency in their odd semester were acted as the participants. They were required to write a descriptive paragraph by following the stages of writing process, namely: outlining, drafting, revising, editing and publishing and every time the students finished with the stage, they had to complete the checklist. As the respondents finished the writing process, they published their paragraph by submitting them to the teachers together with their checklist. This writing prompt and together with the scoring rubric were used as the data collection instruments.

For the purpose of the study, the confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to all the 38 items on the self-assessment checklist that have been validated by the experts.

The scores which were the result of teacher's validation were used as the data, and the SPSS 21.0 was used as the statistical package for data analysis.

3 Findings and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to develop self-assessment checklist as an instrument for assessing young learners' writing performance. Some elements constellated in the development of the self-assessment checklist on writing performance are related to the criteria set in the scoring rubric, namely content, organization, language use, mechanics, and writing presentation aspects so that students would be able to connect their performance with the expectation. In addition, the variables and indicators were adapted by referring to some theoretical framework and also empirical findings relevant to the instrument development. Finally, the items are developed accordingly.

The checklist itself was developed in the form of metacognitive self-assessment [1] explanation. Meanwhile, the language used to develop the instrument was in Bahasa Indonesia as the students' first language to maintain its validity [4].

Panel analysis was conducted to validate the self-assessment checklist. Two experts were involved to give judgment on the instruments in terms of its face and construct validity, as well as the language use. Based on the discussion with the experts, it was approved that the instruments have represented the characteristic of a checklist, where a column of statements and responds are available for the students to put a check on. In terms of their construct, both experts agree to the point that all items are appropriate with the theoretical frameworks which underlie the development of the checklists. Therefore, all the items in the instrument were considered to be valid in terms of its construct. Meanwhile, due to the language use for developing the items, the experts suggested to replace the term *Evaluasi Diri* into *Penilaian Diri* since the term is more familiar for the students.

In order to provide empirical evidence on the construct validity of the self-assessment checklist, a try-out was conducted. Confirmatory factor analysis was applied for construct validity analysis. The purpose was to confirm or disconfirm a theory specific to what the instrument is measuring [14]. In the other word, the result of the analysis would give evidence on the appropriateness of the items in the self-assessment checklist with the theoretical construction.

The Factor analysis was started by analysing the value of KMO. It was done to know the worthiness of the data. It was found that the KMO value is $0.623 > .5$. It means that the data have fulfilled the worthiness value.

The KMO value which is higher than $.50$ allows the stage of factor analysis to be continued. The step was continued to check the valid or invalid items. It was done by checking the result of Anti-Image Matrices table, particularly Anti-image Correlation part. The Anti-image matrices on Anti-image Correlation showed that there were 32 items with correlation coefficient $> .5$ and 4 items which correlation coefficient $< .5$, namely item number 1, 2, 20, and 32. Therefore, the four items were considered as not valid items that must be dropped.

Reanalysis was then conducted since there were 4 invalid items. In order to reanalyse the data, the invalid items were excluded. In this second analysis, the KMO value

increased to be .662. Then, further analysis was done to check the valid or invalid items. In this second analysis, only item number 38 had the correlation coefficient is $<.5$. Therefore, item number 38 was considered as not valid item, and therefore it must be dropped and excluded from the data for the third factor analysis.

The third factor analysis was conducted considering that there was still invalid item. After item number 38 was excluded, the reanalysis showed the KMO value was .674 which is higher than the second reanalysis. Therefore, the analysis could be continued to investigate whether all items already valid or not. The result showed that item number 24 had correlation value $<.5$ which means that item number 24 is invalid item that must be dropped and excluded in the fourth cycle of factor analysis.

For the purpose of the fourth cycle of factor analysis, item number 24 was excluded. The data worthiness analysis shows that the KMO is .677 and the correlation coefficient of all items are $>.5$. As the conclusion, all items are considered as valid items.

A crosscheck was conducted to the blueprint to make sure to which writing dimension each invalid item belongs to. Items number 1 and 2 are related to content dimension, items number 20 and 24 refer to language use dimension, and items number 32 and 38 belong to writing presentation dimension. Since the items were not correlated with the dimensions, those six items were not used as the items in the self-assessment checklist. Therefore, the self-assessment checklist which was used as the instrument for the study contains of 32 items which were spread in five different writing dimensions: 9 items for assessing content dimension, 5 items for organization, 7 items for language use, 4 items for mechanics, and 7 items for writing presentation.

It is expected that the developed instruments help young learners to be ready for the instruction and making reflection for improvement so that they are ready for the subsequent learning [15]. In addition, students are also given opportunity to monitor and critically reflect on their learning so that they could decide on the next step (self-reflection, self-monitoring, and self-adjustment) [1–4, 16–18].

Since writing also involve process, students should follow some steps namely: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students need to keep monitoring the progress of their writing and making reflection toward their own writing ability by concerning on their strengths and weakness. They should find solution for their problem that will help them producing good writing product. Self-assessment would provide directions for the students to make revision and trigger their motivation to submit better final product [19]. As the consequence of their self-assessment, the writing quality could be improved [11]. Moreover, this is also relevant with [20] finding that the students' writing performance is affected by their ability in critically judge their writing draft by using rubric as their self-assessment instrument.

4 Conclusion

The self-assessment checklist which was developed to assess the young learners' writing performance integrated the six dimensions of the writing performance, namely: content, organization, language use, mechanics, and writing presentation. Among 38 items developed, there were 32 items which were finally used in the self-assessment checklist by considering the result of the factor analysis for its' construction. Since the empirical evidence was derived from preliminary field test, main field test should be conducted in the

future in order to verify the final version of the self-assessment checklist so that it would be ready for its implementation for assessing young learners' writing performance.

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