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Sustainable Assessment in Improving English Proficiency

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Abstract

Sustainable assessment plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning and improving English proficiency. However, the effectiveness of these practices in real-world classroom settings often remains under-explored. This study aims to investigate the perceptions and experiences of eighth-grade students regarding the implementation of sustainable assessment in English language learning at UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving data collection through student questionnaires. The findings revealed varying levels of student satisfaction with the current assessment practices, with a preference for written tests and a desire for more diverse and engaging assessment methods. These findings highlight the importance of aligning assessment practices with diverse learning styles, providing timely and constructive feedback, and incorporating more authentic and engaging assessment tasks to optimize student learning and improve English proficiency.

Keywords: Sustainable Assessment, English Proficiency, Students Perception

Abstrak

Penilaian berkelanjutan memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan pembelajaran siswa dan meningkatkan kemahiran bahasa Inggris. Namun, efektivitas praktik ini dalam lingkungan kelas dunia nyata sering kali masih kurang dieksplorasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki persepsi dan pengalaman siswa kelas delapan mengenai penerapan penilaian berkelanjutan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. Pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan, yang melibatkan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner siswa. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan berbagai tingkat kepuasan siswa dengan praktik penilaian saat ini, dengan preferensi untuk tes tertulis dan keinginan untuk metode penilaian yang lebih beragam dan menarik. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya menyelaraskan praktik penilaian dengan gaya belajar yang beragam, memberikan umpan balik yang tepat waktu dan konstruktif, dan menggabungkan tugas penilaian yang lebih autentik dan menarik untuk mengoptimalkan pembelajaran siswa dan meningkatkan kemahiran bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: *Penilaian Berkelanjutan, Kemahiran bahasa Inggris, Persepsi Siswa*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the basic process in human life that allows the occurrence of exchange of information, ideas, and innovations between individuals or groups. In everyday life, communication plays a vital role because through communication, humans can build social relationships, work together, and resolve conflicts. There are two common types of communication, namely verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication involves using words, both oral and written, while non-verbal communication involves body cues, facial expressions, voice intonation, and eye contact. According to Schramm (2020), communication is a dynamic process that involves sending and receiving messages with the intention of creating a shared meaning. This understanding confirms that communication is more than just message transmission, but rather involves complex interactions.

With the advancement of technology, especially in the field of communication, the way people communicate has changed significantly. Individual interactions have become faster and easier with the advent of the internet, social media, and mobile devices. Communication that was once limited to physical distance can now be done instantly without the constraints of space. In this regard, researchers such as Daft and Lengel (2019) found that digital media, including social platforms, have changed the way people communicate by speeding up the process of exchanging information; however, they found that the nonverbal elements that are important in direct communication have been reduced. This is an advancement that has many advantages, such as the ease of obtaining information and the ability to communicate across boundaries. However, it also has some

problems, such as the possibility of misunderstanding due to the lack of non-verbal elements in digital communication.

Communication is more than just sending messages; it is a way to build relationships, solve problems, and achieve shared goals. The fact that effective communication is important in many aspects of life, both professional and personal, shows that improving communication skills is essential.

Language is fundamental to human life, acting as a primary tool for communication, idea exchange, and self-expression. Beyond being a mere system of symbols or words, language mirrors human thought processes and interactions with the world around them. Evans (2020) suggests that language is a dynamic cognitive framework that evolves alongside human and cultural development, with each language possessing unique features and complexities. This perspective is essential for understanding how people interpret and adapt to their social environments.

The theory of language evolution is also closely associated with the cognitive improvement of humans. In line with Chomsky (2019), people have an innate capacity to speak, called "language acquiring devices" or language acquisition gadgets. Chomsky argued that the human brain had developed to allow precise language abilities, distinct from other residing things. This view means that language isn't something that is without delay taught, but arises as a part of the organic structure of humans. With this innate cognitive gadgets, kids can speedily and effectively study the language they pay attention around them.

Language also plays an important role in shaping cultural identity. Language is not only as a communication tool, but also as a representation of the values and traditions of a society. Halliday (2022) stated that every language brings a unique cultural heritage and serves as a tool to maintain the sustainability of traditions and norms in society. Halliday also emphasizes that the preservation of local languages is crucial to prevent cultural homogeneity in the era of globalization. Strong local languages allow people to defend their identities in dealing with the influences of global language, such as English.

In an increasingly advanced and developed rapidly, English As a global franca, serves as a crucial communication tool in various contexts, including businesses, education, and international relationships. According to Crystallized (2020), English is currently estimated to be used by more than 1.5 billion people around the world, both as native speakers and non-sli speakers. The broad use of English reflects its dominant position in the global community, facilitating cultural exchange, sciences, and technology.

English development is inseparable from the profound and social influence. According to McWhorter (2021), English has experienced significant transformation since the Anglo-Saxon era to date, influenced by various cultures and other languages, including Latin, French, and Scandinavian language. This process creates rich and diverse vocabulary, and affects the structure of grammar. McWhorter also emphasizes that language change is a natural thing and happens over time, with English speakers who continually adapt and adopt new elements in their language.

In the context of education, English has a very important role, especially as an introductory language in higher education. According to Lotherington (2022), English control provides a competitive advantage for students in the increasingly connected global market. Many educational institutions around the world use English as an introductory language, so students from various backgrounds strive to improve their English skills. Lotherington also notes that good English skills can open broader job opportunities and increase access to information and resources available on the internet. However, besides the existing advantages, there are also difficulties for those who live in countries that use English as foreign languages.

As a country that uses English as a foreign language, of course student English proficiency is very lacking. This is certainly due to things that make it difficult for students to master English, such as the pronunciation of each different word, the presence of interventions from student culture, also a lack of briefing and assessment provided to students. So that when they are wrong in saying or writing a word in English, they will have difficulty correcting these mistakes. In this case the importance of continuing assessments to measure the extent to which the English proficiency is students.

Sustainable assessment methods are increasingly important to education, especially to increase English proficiency. This method not only focuses on the final results, it also looks at students' learning processes from a broader point of view. Sustainable assessment allows teachers to better understand student progress and find areas that need to be improved, according to Stiggins (2021). Therefore, assessment is a useful tool to help students continue to improve their English skills. One of the key benefits of sustainable assessemnt is its ability to provide beneficial and timely feedback to students. According to Hattie and Timperley (2019), effective feedback can improve students' motivation and encourage them to try harder to learn. In terms of English, this feedback can include assessments of students' ability to write, read, speak, and listen.

Students are more motivated to participate actively in the learning process through sustainable assessment. When students engage in self-assessment and reflection, according to Boud and Molloy (2020), they are more likely to understand and control their own learning processes. During learning English, students can be asked to make self-assessments to assess how far they have gone, like not taking notes how well they speak or write. This improves their English skills and gives them a sense of responsibility for their learning process.

The implementation of sustainable assessments in English teaching also requires support and training for educators. According to Black and Wiliam (2020), teachers need to understand the various assessment methods that can be used in the context of the English language. This training includes the use of assessment rubrics, strategies give effective feedback, and techniques to analyze the results of the assessment. With proper knowledge and skills, teachers can create a learning environment that supports the progress of students' English proficiency.

Sustainable assessment plays a key role in supporting English proficiency. This approach allows constructive feedback, increasing students' engagement, and provides insight into teachers' progress. By applying ongoing assessment in English teaching, it is hoped that students can reach higher levels of proficiency and more ready to use English in various contexts.

There are many problems faced by students in the world of education, especially in mastery of English. Conventional assessment methods are often unable to provide a thorough picture of the ability of students to use English effectively. Assessment that focuses only on written exams often ignores other important elements, such as speaking skills, hearing, and interacting.

Sustainable Assessment offers a broader and sustainable approach to assessing students' ability. This does not only rely on exam results, but also conducts sustainable assessments that include various aspects of the use of student english. According to Laure Villeneuve and David Tremblay of Université du Québec Chicoutimi, sustainable assessment can be an effective and systematic tool to assess students' abilities in various situations. They emphasize that sustainable evaluation is crucial to achieve sustainable development goals, including in the field of education.

In addition, this study has the potential to provide significant results in the field of education. It is hoped that this research will find better assessment methods and be appropriate to help students in mastering English. The results of this study can be used by

educators and educational institutions to create curriculums and better teaching strategies. We'd like to do research on sustainable assessment to improve English skills because we not only need to find a better way to assess English skills, but we also want to produce a positive impact on students' English skills and prepare them for success in the future.

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to obtain the deeper understanding of this phenomena from students of the usage of sustainable assessment in improving their English proficiency, this study employed a qualitative methodology. Use questioners as a data collection tool. According to Aspers and Corte (2019) qualitative research is defined as an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied. After receiving the data, the researchers conclude the response, and then receives the results. Data collection was done with the tool. The instruments used in this study were the answers from the questioners that given to known the effectiveness of sustainable assessment in improving students' English proficiency. The way to collected data is by asking students to fill out the questionnaire that has been provided by the researchers. There are ten questions.

Research Design

The research design was descriptive. Descriptive research describes a scenario without considering the relationship, influence, or difference between factors. According to Sugiyono (2017), descriptive research is research that is used by describing or describing the data that has been collected as it is without intending to make conclusions that apply to the public or generalizations that aim to analyze the data. Descriptive research seeks to accurately and methodically define an inhabitant, situation, or phenomenon.

Research Participants or Population qnd Sample

1. Population

According to Ibid and Ary a population is defined as all members of any well-defined class people, events, or objects. Population is defined as a group of individuals who have the same characteristic. The population refers to a group of things or persons having specific qualities that researchers analyze and draw conclusions about. Therefore, the population of this study was all of the seventh grade students of UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Pematangiantar in the academic year of 2024/2025, which all consist of 32 students.

2. Sample

A sample is part of the population that is being studied. The sample of this study is taken from the population that is the VIII.9 grade students of UPTD SMP NEGERI 1 PEMATANGSIANTAR. Therefore, the sample of this study was students of VIII.9 grade which consist of 32 students. They all consisted of 14 male students, and 18 female students. The researchers chose this class because they are eligible to be the subject of this study.

3. Instruments

In collecting the data of the research, questioner used to be the instrument to obtain the data. According to (Sugiyono, 2018:124) a questionnaire is a data collection carried out by giving written agreement to the respondent to ask questions he answered. This questionnaire is an efficient data collection technique when the researcher knows with certainty the variables to be measured and knows what can be expected of the respondents. Questionnaires are used to obtain data. In this study, questionnaires given to students containing questions or statements about using sustainable assessment approach in improving students' English proficiency.

4. Data Analysis

After all the data is collected, the next step is to analyse the data so that the data can be drawn a conclusion. The data analysis technique in this study uses qualitative descriptive data analysis techniques. Qualitative descriptive studies describe phenomena rather than explain them. Phenomenological studies, ethnographic studies and those using grounded theory seek to explain a phenomenon. Qualitative descriptive studies aim to provide a comprehensive summary of events. The approach to this study design is journalistic, with the aim being to answer the questions who, what, where, and how (Doyle L et al., 2025).

Questionnaires

No.	Question	Option	Check
1.	How often do you take continuous assessment in English lessons?	Always	
		Sometimes	
		Never	
2.	How do you rate the effectiveness of ongoing assessment in helping you understand English materials?	Very effective	
		Less effective	
		Not effective at all	

3.	What type of sustainable assessment is most helpful for you in learning English?	Written test Oral test Presentation
4.	How do you rate the feedback given by the teacher after the ongoing assessment?	Very useful Less useful Not useful at all
5.	Does the ongoing assessment help you be more confident in communicating in English?	Very helpful Less helpful Not helpful at all
6.	Do you feel that your motivation to learn has increased because of the ongoing assessment?	Very improved Less improved Not improved at all
7.	How do you rate the clarity of the instructions given before the ongoing assessment?	Very clear Less clear Not clear at all
8.	Do you feel that ongoing assessment provides an opportunity to correct mistakes and learn from them?	Agree Disagree Distrongly disagree
9.	How satisfied are you with the type and frequency of sustainable assessment in English lessons?	Satisfied Not satisfied Neutral
10.	In your opinion, what can be done to improve the effectiveness of ongoing assessment in English lessons?	

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

In this capther researchers presented the research finding and discussion form questionnaires. Furthermore, the results of the answers from the students will be presented in the table.

Questionner

No.	Question	Option	Total
1.	How often do you take continuous assessment in English lessons?	Always	32 Students
		Sometimes	-
		Never	-
2.	How do you rate the effectiveness of ongoing assessment in helping you understand English materials?	Very effective	10 Students
		Less effective	12 Students
		Not effective at all	10 Students
3.	What type of sustainable assessment is most helpful for you in learning English?	Written test	26 Students
		Oral test	6 Students
		Presentation	-
4.	How do you rate the feedback given by the teacher after the ongoing assessment?	Very useful	32 Students
		Less useful	-
		Not useful at all	-
5.	Does the ongoing assessment help you be more confident in communicating in English?	Very helpful	5 Students
		Less helpful	27 Students
		Not helpful at all	-
6.	Do you feel that your motivation to learn has increased because of the ongoing assessment?	Very improved	30 Students
		Less improved	2 Students
		Not improved at all	-
7.	How do you rate the clarity of the instructions given before	Very clear	29 Students

	the ongoing assessment?	Quite clear	3 Students
		Not clear at all	-
8.	Do you feel that ongoing assessment provides an opportunity to correct mistakes and learn from them?	Agree	27 Students
		Neutral	9 Students
		Distrongly disagree	-
9.	How satisfied are you with the type and frequency of sustainable assessment in English lessons?	Very stratified	16 Students
		Neutral	16 Students
		Not statisfied at all	-
10.	In your opinion, what can be done to improve the effectiveness of ongoing assessment in English lessons?	<p>The following are some of their responses:</p> <p>Haqqin: "I want more assignments related to daily life, such as making short conversations or mini presentations. In addition, feedback from teachers is also important so that I know where I need to improve."</p> <p>Johannes: "I don't like it when assessments only focus on grammar. I want more fun assessments, such as making short videos or podcasts."</p> <p>Bintang: "I get confused when there are too many assessments and too often. Sometimes I forget what I've learned."</p> <p>Kristiano: "I want more varied assessments, not just written exams. For example, it could be presentations or group discussions."</p> <p>Evan: "I feel more motivated if the assessment is given immediately after the assignment is completed, so I can immediately know my shortcomings."</p> <p>Parida: "I want more opportunities to practice speaking English with friends. Maybe there could be group discussion activities that are assessed."</p>	

This questionnaire aimed to gather students' perspective on the effectiveness of sustainable assessment in English lessons to improve their English proficiency. The researchers found, that while all of students agree that sustainable assessment is conducted regularly, the students also gave various response to this assessment's effectiveness.

Most of the students normally found that written test is most helpful assessment to them. While others found that oral test is more helpful assessment to them. Almost all of the students appreciate the opportunity to learn from their mistakes through sustainable assessment. While some students felt that the sustainable assessment can help them sometimes to learn from their mistakes, and sometimes not. Major of the students thought that the instructions given before the assessments are clear and easy to understand.

However despite those responses, the students felt that the assessment could be more varied and interesting to enhance their motivation. Moreover the students felt that the quality and usefulness of teacher feedback require the improvement to maximize their learning through sustainable assessment. Furthermore, half of the students felt that the current frequency and types of assessments are satisfactory, and other half of the students felt neutral. Also the students need type of assessment that related to the real-life activities. The students also want the immediate feedback. Based on those responses the teacher got the valuable insights to refine their assessment and create more effective and varied types of assessment when conducting sustainable assessment.

CONCLUSION

According to the research findings, the students thought that using sustainable assessment is effective to improve their English proficiency. However, the students need more varied types of assessment. Additionally, when implementing sustainable assessment, it is not easy for students to adapt, because in essence most teachers only apply one assessment, not as intense as sustainable assessment until students' English proficiency increases. Teachers are also expected to be able to create a more effective and interesting assessment system that encourages student learning and improves English language skills at UPTD SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar.

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