

CONSTRUCTIVIST AND SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON STUDENTS' ASSESSMENTS OF CURRICULUM 2013 IN ENGLISH SUBJECT

Anisa D. Kusumawardani

English Department, Post-graduate program, Semarang State University
anisadiian@gmail.com

Abstract

Assessment is one of the aspects of the curriculum which is changing in Curriculum 2013. Authentic assessment is the type of assessment which is considered as the most suitable technique to assess students' competence in Curriculum 2013. The assessment does not only measure students' knowledge or cognitive competence but also students' attitude and skill. There are instruments which have to be prepared and used by the teachers to conduct the authentic assessment. In this assessment, teachers' are no longer the ones who assess students' performance, students are also involved in the process of assessment. The students' participation is involved in the self-assessment and peers assessment. Based on the illustration above the researcher is eager to investigate students' assessment system of Curriculum 2013 in English subject, especially for junior high students. The constructivist and sociocultural theories are used in investigating the students' assessment of Curriculum 2013 in English subject.

Keyword: assessment, constructivist, Curriculum 2013, English subject, sociocultural

Introduction

Indonesia has experienced the changing of curriculum until now, and the latest curriculum implemented is called Science-Based Curriculum or it is well known as Curriculum 2013. Students' knowledge competence is no longer the only aspect being considered, the government also stresses on students' behavior and skills. Character building is one of the cores of Curriculum 2013 (Ahmad, 2014). It is realized through the Core Competence of the curriculum in which there are two core competences which are designed to maintain and build students' character. The character building includes both spiritual and social competences which are stated on KI-1 and KI-2. Moreover, KI-3 is designed for knowledge competence, while KI-4 is for skill competence. The use of scientific approach on the teaching-learning process is another element of Curriculum 2013 in which it covers the process of observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, creating and communicating. Another aspect of Curriculum 2013 which needs to be considered is the assessment system which introduces the use of authentic assessment.

O'Malley and Pierce (1996) state that authentic assessment refers to the multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, attitudes on instructionally-relevant activities. It means that there are more than one instrument to assess students' competence. The government has proposed several instruments in conducting the authentic assessment such as self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher's journal, and observation as the instruments for behavioral assessment. Oral

test, written test, and assignment are the instruments in conducting knowledge assessment, while in skill assessments the government proposes the use of portfolio, practical test and project (*Permendikbud No. 81A Tahun 2013*).

The assessment which is used in the newest curriculum covers both summative and formative assessment. Summative assessment aims to measure, or summarize what a student has learned (Brown, 2004:6). William states that summative assessment is conducted if the learner has fulfilled the stated goals (William, 2011). In other words this type of assessment typically occurs in the end of a course or a unit of instruction. In educational system of Indonesia, Mid-semester exam and Final-semester exam are the examples of the summative assessment. Those exams measure students' achievement in certain period of course such as mid-semester and in the end of the semester. Another type of assessment based on the function is formative assessment. It evaluates students in the process of 'forming' their competencies and skills (Brown, 2004:6) this assessment helps the students to continue the growth, development process toward their competencies or skills. It means that formative assessment aims on assessing students minute-by-minute and day by day (Sardareh&Saad, 2012). Formative assessment can be conducted anytime and anywhere, not only in the classroom during the teaching-learning process, but also outside the classroom. The notion of formative assessment fits the principles of constructivist and sociocultural learning theories (Sardareh&Saad, 2012) in which the assessment is an ongoing process of constructing knowledge which occurs by interaction in class as well as outside the class.

It has been stated that the form of assessment of Curriculum 2013, which is called authentic assessment, includes both summative assessment and formative assessment which focus not only on students' final competence but also on students' competency development which fit with the notion of constructivist and sociocultural theories. Based on the phenomenon, this paper aims to investigate how the principles of constructivist and sociocultural learning theories engage with the assessment of Curriculum 2013 in English subject of junior high school.

Result and Discussion

Formative Assessment

Constructivist considers assessment as an on-going and continuous process (Sardareh&Saad, 2012). This notion fits to the use of formative assessment in which it assesses students' development from time to time. Formative assessment supports learners to move from what they already know to what they are able to do next (Shepard, 2005). The aim of formative assessment is to improve student's achievement (Black & William, 1998). Formative assessment can be taken through various activities of learning process, such as group work, self and peer assessment and reflection, and teachers' notes and journal.

Sociocultural mentions the important of social community in the process of constructing knowledge. It means that there is interaction between learners, teachers and also tasks (Holt & Wilard-Holt, 2000). Collaboration among learners is one of the examples of social community in the classroom. Students are able to work, solve the problem within the interaction with others. They learn how to construct knowledge, solve the problem, and compare also share their thought to their peers. Working with peer is one of the activities which will affect on the students' development. Vygotsky mentioned the interaction with more capable persons or peers, and during teamwork enables students to learn through interaction and mentoring provided by friends or

other experts who have different capability and proficiency. The expert can be their peer or the teachers.

Constructivist sees the learning process as an active activity. Active means that they are not receiving the knowledge, but constructing the knowledge. Students should know what they learn, what they will learn, in other words students have to set their own target of learning. In conducting the assessment, teachers should involve learners to get information on what they have learned, and teachers may use self and peer assessment. Andrade and Du (2007:160) state that self-assessment is a process of formative assessment in which students reflect on and evaluate their work and their learning, identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and revise accordingly. Moreover peer assessment requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product or a performance (Boud & Falchikov, 2007).

The Ministry of Education of Indonesia has proposed some instruments which can be used for conducting the formative assessments. Among those instruments, self assessment and peer assessments has been used by teachers in supporting teachers' observation and journal (Kusumawardani, 2014). Based on the author's experiences, English teachers use peer assessment for the behavioral and skill assessments. Teachers prepare the form of the assessment then students are asked to grade and evaluate their peer's work and performance which mostly conducted after group work. The peer assessment is used to track students' participation during the group work.

It has been mentioned that the function of formative assessment is to provide evidence of students' learning process (Sardareh & Saad, 2012). And formative assessment leads to the feedback toward students' progress. Yet, teachers in Indonesia have not reached the aims of this assessment. After gathering all the information of students' progress from teachers' notes, journals, students' self and peer assessments, most of teachers do not read and record it to know each of their students' progress. Teachers mostly stop at the step of conducting the evaluating and assessment, however the step of giving feedback to the students mostly has not been done by the teachers. Teachers' feedback is used to improve students' learning, teachers provide them explanation on what they have gained, their strengths and weaknesses, and what they have to do next (Sardareh & Saad, 2012). Since there is no feedback, the students do not realize what they have achieved and what they should do next. And it makes the formative assessment useless, does not affect on students' learning development.

Authentic Assessment

Khaira and Yambo (2005) argue that "authentic assessments should resemble meaningful performances in real world contexts" and should "involve real life tasks with multiple solutions for the student". Real life tasks or can be called as authentic tasks help the learners to improve their higher order thinking skill and also in problem solving. Authentic assessment is performance-based and by demonstrating the knowledge, learners are able to improve their skill.

O'Malley and Pierce (1996) have listed characteristics of student performance that should be considered inauthentic assessment: (1) constructs responses based on experiences and new multiple resources; (2) higher-order thinking which require skills in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; (3) authenticity in tasks which are meaningful, challenging, relevant to a real-world context; (4) integrative, combining tasks with other subject of learning; (5) demonstrating the process and the final result in solving the problems given; (6) performance assessments build over time with various activities.

Since authentic assessment is performance-based teachers tend to use it in assessing students' skill. For example in the chapter 3 in grade 7 which discusses about day, date, month, year, the teacher asked the students to make callendar. Students are devided into several groups in which each group is assigned to make two months callendar which also consists several important information such as hollidays and friends' birthday. During the group work, teacher observed and monitored the students. At the end of the task, teacher assessed and evaluated students works. During this activities teacher also conducted peer assessment in which students are assigned to evaluate their friend's work during the group work.

Group work indeed help the teachers in conducting the authentic assessment since by working in the group covers all of the characteristics of authentic assessment which are stated by O'Malley and Pierce. Group work is also the notion of sociocultural theory since students are able to participate in group work actively while collaborating with their friends. Over the group work activity, students learn to construct information they get into meaningful knowledge and also they learn deviding the tasks among the members, for example those who have the task in gathering information gather important days in the months they got by interviewing their friends and searching through internet, after they got the information needed, they informed it to their group members and those who are responsible to the making the product started making thecallendar. This task also covers the integrated characteristics in which it can be related to other subject of learning that is history. Students gathers important dates such as Hero's day, Independence Day, Labour Day, etc.

Feedback and Reflection

There are four steps in applying constructivist teaching learning: 1) eliciting prior knowledge, 2) creating cognitive dissonance, 3) authenticity and applying tonew contexts with feedback, and 4) reflecting on learning (Abulnour, 2016). Some scholars state that feedback is the most important part of assessment process which affects students learning and achievement (Black & William, 1998; William, 2011; Shute, 2008). Feedback is information that is intended to modify learners' thinking or behaviour for pupose of improving learners (Shute, 2007). Furthermore, the function of feedback is to improve students' knowledge, skill and understanding in some content of material of learning. Feedback also provides comments and suggestions on students' learning development which are given either by peer or teachers. Meanwhile, reflection is a technique in which learners reflect on their own learning. This self-reflection is applied so that the learners experience assessment as an integral part of learning (Earl &LeMahieu, 1997 in Sardareh&Saad, 2012). Furthermore, feedback and reflection provides learners information on their currect level of achievement related to the goal (Sardareh&Saad, 2012).

The application of assessment in Indonesia has not reached the level of feedback and reflection, it stops at the level of testing, measuring and grading the students' achievement. The remedial program is the only follow up program which is conducted by teachers. This follow up program only covers the knowledge competence of the students. after having test and remedial, teachers barely give the students any comment or feedback. This creates the paradigm within most of students in Indonesia that their learning will stop when they have test and receive the result.

Bloom's Taxonomy on Written Test Item

Written test is one of the instruments in conducting the assessment of Curriculum 2013 i which it is used in assessing students' knowledge competence. Relating to the test item to assess students' cognitive skill, Bloom taxonomy has an important part. It

is stated by Abulnour (2016) that Bloom's Taxonomy is used to help teachers to focus on the higher order of thinking. It provides the teachers the guidance in designing tasks, questions, and feedback to the students (Krathwohl, 2002). Teachers may make use of the taxonomy in setting the learning goals and writing the learning outcome.

Bloom's Taxonomy classifies three domains of learning based on the learning objectives, they are cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domain. Cognitive domain refers to thinking and mental skill, psychomotor domain refers to physical activities or manual skill, and affective domain refers to experiences, feeling, emotions or particular attitudes (Borich & Tombari, 2004: 47 in Abulnour, 2016). Those domains and assessment types of Curriculum 2013 are the same. Cognitive domain relates to the knowledge assessment, psychomotor relates to skill assessment, while affective domain relates to behaviour assessment.

In cognitive domain there are six categories which represent the level of thinking, from the simplest to most complex: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create (Anderson, Lorin, Krathwohl, & David, 2001). Those six categories are recategorized into another three levels which are labeled as C1, C2, and C3.

- Remembering; includes the process of recognizing and recalling knowledge from long-term memory. This category belongs to C1 level.
- Understanding; is the ability to construct meaning from instructional messages. The process which include in this category are interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining. This category belongs to C2 level.
- Applying; applying procedure to a familiar task which includes the process of executing and implementing. This category belongs to C3 level.
- Analyzing; breaking knowledge down into its parts and thinking about how the parts relate to the overall structure by differentiating, organizing, and attributing. This category belongs to C4 level.
- Evaluating; making judgement based on criteria and standard. This includes process of checking and critiquing. This category belongs to C5 level.
- Creating; organizing parts to accomplish tasks, including the process of generating, planning, and producing. This category belongs to C6 level.

The government proposes Bloom Taxonomy to be used as the guide for the teachers to design the test item for knowledge and skill assessment. It is used in constructing the indicators of the knowledge and skill assessment.

Conclusion

Reflecting to the assessment of Curriculum 2013 and relating it to the principles of constructivist and sociocultural theory, the author has mentioned how those theories are blended in the assessment of the newest curriculum in Indonesia, and how the assessment is carried out by the English teachers of junior high school. As mentioned in the discussion, some of the principles of the two theories have been internalized in the assessment of Curriculum 2013 which is mostly called as authentic assessment such as the use of instruments which reflect on the notion of formative assessment, students' active participation wither in the learning and assessment process, collaboration among students and between students and teachers, and the term of authentic assessment, although several instruments of formative and authentic assessment are only applied in assessing students' skills and behavior, meanwhile in assessing the knowledge the teachers still use of written test. Based on the analysis, the implementation of the assessment has not reached the aims of the constructivist and sociocultural principles which stress on the important of feedback and reflection.

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