The Role of Assessment in Teaching English for Specific Purposes

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Abstract. This study aims to explore the practices and perceptions of tutors in implementing assessment in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction at non-formal language course institutions. A quantitative method was used, involving data collection through questionnaires with both closed and open-ended questions, complemented by an online interview to deepen the understanding of assessment implementation. The results show that diagnostic and formative assessments are the most frequently used types (100%), while performance-based and project-based assessments are used by 50% of the respondents. None of the tutors reported using self-assessment, indicating a limited variety in assessment methods applied. The main purposes of assessment include identifying students' learning needs, monitoring progress, and evaluating teaching effectiveness. Despite facing challenges such as limited time and low student motivation, tutors managed to apply solutions like group discussions and peer feedback. Assessment was found to positively impact both students' skill development and tutors' understanding of -learners' needs. The study concludes that assessment in ESP plays a strategic role not only as an evaluation tool but also as a diagnostic and formative mechanism that supports continuous learning. Therefore, proper understanding and contextual adaptation are essential in maximizing the role of assessment in ESP instruction.

Keywords: Assessment; English for Specific Purposes; English Language Teaching; Learning Evaluation

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi praktik dan persepsi tutor dalam penerapan asesmen pada pengajaran English for Specific Purposes (ESP) di lembaga kursus non-formal. Metode yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner yang terdiri dari pertanyaan tertutup dan terbuka, serta dilengkapi dengan wawancara daring untuk memperdalam pemahaman terhadap implementasi asesmen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa asesmen diagnostik dan formatif merupakan jenis asesmen yang paling banyak digunakan (100%), sedangkan asesmen berbasis kinerja dan proyek digunakan oleh 50% responden. Tidak ada tutor yang menggunakan asesmen diri, menunjukkan keterbatasan variasi metode asesmen yang diterapkan. Tujuan utama asesmen adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kebutuhan belajar, memantau perkembangan, dan mengevaluasi efektivitas pengajaran. Meskipun menghadapi tantangan seperti keterbatasan waktu dan rendahnya motivasi siswa, tutor mampu menerapkan solusi seperti diskusi kelompok dan umpan balik sebaya. Asesmen terbukti memberikan dampak positif terhadap peningkatan kemampuan siswa dan pemahaman tutor terhadap kebutuhan peserta didik. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa asesmen dalam konteks ESP memainkan peran strategis, tidak hanya sebagai alat evaluasi, tetapi juga sebagai sarana diagnosis dan pembelajaran yang berkelanjutan. Oleh karena itu, pemahaman yang tepat dan adaptasi terhadap konteks pengajaran menjadi kunci dalam mengoptimalkan peran asesmen dalam pembelajaran ESP.

Kata kunci: Asesmen; *English for Specific Purposes;* Evaluasi Pembelajaran; Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris

1. INTODUCTION

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected like a global village, English holds a vital role as a primary means of communication, demanding effective teaching methods to help learners achieve optimal language proficiency and mastery (Numunova, 2024) .

Assessment means checking students' learning. It can be done in many ways, like tests, homework, quizzes, or class discussions. The goal is to know what students have learned and what they still need to learn. When teachers use assessment, they can make better decisions about teaching. For example, if many students do not understand a topic, the teacher can explain it again in a different way. Providing effective feedback plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning and performance. Studies have demonstrated that teacher feedback significantly impacts students' academic success (Fitriyah et al., 2024). English teachers need to possess strong technological skills to effectively deliver instruction (Herdina & Aini, 2024). Provided technology is integrated into the learning environment, it can be useful for students (Degirmency, 2021). The rapid development of technology, marked by the rise of online learning and digital educational tools, has become a major trend in supporting the achievement of language learning objectives (Mulyadi et al.,2021).

Assessment means checking how much students have learned. It is a very important part of teaching and learning. With assessment, teachers can know if students understand the lesson or not. If students do not understand, the teacher can help them in a better way. There are many ways to do assessment. Some examples are tests, homework, quizzes, group work, class discussions, presentations, and projects. All of these help the teacher see how well students are doing. Assessment does not always mean a big exam. Sometimes, simple questions in class or small activities can also be a form of assessment. The main goal of assessment is to find out what students already know and what they still need to learn. When teachers see the results of assessment, they can change their teaching methods if needed. For example, if many students make mistakes in grammar, the teacher can explain grammar again in a different way. This helps students understand better.

Assessment is also useful for students. It shows them what they are good at and what they need to improve. When students understand their strengths and weaknesses, they can focus on their learning. It also helps them feel more confident because they can see their progress step by step.Assessment is not only for giving grades. Grades are important, but the bigger purpose is to help students learn better. If assessment is done well, it does not make students feel afraid. Instead, it can make them feel motivated to study more. Good assessment helps both the teacher and the student. There are two main types of assessment: formative and summative. Formative assessment happens during the learning process. For example, when a teacher gives short quizzes, asks questions in class, or gives feedback on homework, this is formative. It helps teachers and students see progress quickly and make changes if needed. Summative assessment happens at the end of a topic or course. Examples are final exams or

end-of-term projects. The goal is to check the final result of student learning. Both types of assessment are important, but formative assessment helps more with daily learning and improvement.

Good assessment should be fair, clear, and related to what was taught. Providing students with English instruction using materials that align with their specific needs is essential for supporting their professional development and future careers (Nashir et al., 2022). Teachers should make sure the assessment matches the lesson goals. If the questions are too difficult or not related to the topic, students can feel confused or frustrated. Clear instructions and fair marking are also important. In conclusion, assessment is a powerful tool in education. It is not just for giving marks, but also for helping students learn better and helping teachers teach better. With good assessment, teaching and learning can become more effective. That is why assessment must be planned and used with care and purpose.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Teachers' competencies in early foreign language instruction are vital, as students in the initial years of primary school are in a critical period where they may either develop a positive connection with the language or begin to feel discouraged in their learning efforts (Dagarin et al., 2022). Language is inextricably linked to human life (Khair & Misnawati, (2022). Language plays a crucial role in uncovering, defining, and preserving knowledge within specific academic disciplines (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021). English for Specific Purposes sets itself apart from general language instruction by concentrating on the specific and intentional use of language for defined purposes (Hyland, 2022). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an approach to teaching English that is tailored to the specific field of study of the student, the term 'specific' is used to denote the particular purposes and needs for learning English that arise in the context ofa specific field of study (Maruf et al., 2021). Language assessment plays a vital role in higher education, especially in evaluating English proficiency. This includes assessing competence within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Putri et al.,2024).

Educational assessment involves gathering and analyzing information to evaluate students' learning achievements, with the goal of determining whether they have successfully understood the education, instruction, or training provided (Hidayah & Syahrani, 2022). Assessment also helps students. Assessment and evaluation in early childhood education are essential instruments for gaining insight into and improving young children's learning experiences (Adewusi et al, 2023). Certain students might demonstrate strong English skills—

they speak fluently, respond to teachers' questions enthusiastically and promptly, possess a wide vocabulary, construct grammatically correct sentences with ease, and read English texts effortlessly (Ningrum, 2022). The teaching of English as a second or foreign language presents its own unique set of challenges (Wulantari et al., 2023). At its best, the process of teaching and learning English is engaging, meaningful, and creatively stimulating for everyone involved, fostering students' skills, self-assurance, and imagination while also nurturing positive learning attitudes (Cremin, 2022). Motivational strategies refer to the approaches and techniques used to stimulate and sustain learners' motivation (Umam et al., 2023). They can see what they are good at and where they need to work harder. It gives them a clear picture of their progress. Good assessment is not only for giving grades. It is also for helping students learn better and faster. In this article, we will talk about how assessment can make learning better and improve education.

3. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative method. As started by Rana et al. (2023), quantitative method is the collection and analysis of numerical data to answer scientific research questions. The participants of this study were two English teachers currently teaching at various language course institutions in Kraksaan. The aim of this research was to examine the perspectives and practices of teachers in implementing assessment in the context of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) classes.

Data were collected through a Google Form questionnaire consisting of both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were designed to identify the frequency and types of assessments used by the teachers, while the open-ended questions aimed to gain deeper insights into the reasons, challenges, and beliefs they hold regarding assessment in ESP teaching. The combination of both types of questions allowed the researcher to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously.

This study was conducted in several language course institutions (non-formal education) in Kraksaan that offer ESP classes for learners from various occupational backgrounds. The teachers were selected based on their experience in teaching ESP classes. The questionnaire included several questions covering assessment models and types, the purposes of assessment, encountered challenges, the effectiveness of teaching, suggestions or opinions, and the overall impact of assessment. All participants answered each part of the questionnaire. Their responses were then analyzed to identify recurring themes as well as variations in teachers' practices and perspectives.

The participants were selected based on their direct involvement in ESP teaching and their experience in the field. In addition, the researcher also conducted an online interview with one of the ESP teachers to validate the questionnaire responses and gain a deeper understanding of the assessment design process, student responses, and classroom implementation. The interviewee was selected based on their availability and willingness, as well as their consistent involvement in the ESP teaching process. Therefore, the interview was used to enrich the findings from the questionnaire.

4. FINDINGS AND RESULT

This study collected data through questionnaires distributed to two ESP (English for Specific Purposes) tutors at a language course institution. The questionnaire was designed to comprehensively explore the types of assessments used in ESP teaching, their purposes, effectiveness, challenges faced in implementation, solutions applied, and the impact of assessment on student development. The aim of this data collection was to understand to what extent assessment is strategically utilized in ESP instruction and how it influences students' learning outcomes. Based on the results, the most commonly used types of assessment were diagnostic tests and formative assessment, both reported at 100%. Furthermore, half of the respondents reported using both performance tasks and project-based assessments. Interestingly, none of the tutors reported using self-assessment, even though this method is often considered important in competency-based learning. This indicates that there is still a limited variety of assessment methods applied, possibly reflecting a lack of awareness or confidence in the effectiveness of self-assessment in non-formal ESP teaching contexts.

In terms of purpose, all respondents (100%) stated that the main goals of assessment were to identify students' learning needs, monitor their progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. This suggests that the tutors view assessment not merely as a tool for measuring learning outcomes but also as an integral part of a well-planned teaching strategy. In other words, assessment serves as a means to support more informed, data-based instructional decision-making. When asked about the effectiveness of the assessment models used, 50% of the tutors rated them as very effective, while the remaining 50% rated them as quite effective. The primary reasons given were that assessments help track student progress and ensure learning objectives are being met. This reflects a general confidence in the role of assessment in supporting the continuity and quality of learning, even if tutors do not feel that their current assessment methods are fully optimal.

Regarding challenges, all respondents (100%) reported experiencing obstacles in implementing assessments, particularly related to time constraints and low student motivation. Additionally, 50% mentioned the lack of supporting media or tools as a barrier. These findings illustrate the realities of conducting assessments in non-formal educational settings, where resources are often limited, and conditions may not always be ideal for implementing comprehensive assessments. To address these challenges, the tutors employed several adaptive strategies. A total of 66.7% of respondents reported using group discussions and peer feedback to improve assessment effectiveness, while 33.3% chose to simplify the assessment format. Notably, no tutor opted to reduce the amount of assessment or use digital tools such as Google Forms, suggesting that digitalization of assessment has not yet become a common practice in their teaching environment.

As for the impact of assessment on learning, 66.7% of respondents stated that it significantly improved students' skills, while 33.3% believed that it helped tutors better understand student needs. This confirms that, despite limitations, the assessment practices used by these tutors still make a meaningful contribution to both teaching and learning in ESP contexts. These findings align with Hutchinson and Waters' (Hyland, 2022) theory, which emphasizes that assessment in ESP should focus on learners' specific needs and be developed with flexibility. In practice, although ideal assessments are expected to be comprehensive and structured, tutors often adopt more practical and adaptive methods that suit the classroom context and available resources. Theoretically, this study also supports previous findings by Dudley-Evans and St. John (TooGood & Hale, 2025), who stated that assessment in ESP must be aligned with learners' professional needs and real-world application. The main contribution of this research is to highlight that assessment in non-formal language course institutions still holds significant strategic value, provided that tutors fully understand its function and adapt its implementation to the learning context. Thus, assessment in ESP plays not only an evaluative role but also a diagnostic and formative one, supporting the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research results obtained through questionnaires and interviews with two ESP tutors in non-formal language course institutions, it can be concluded that assessment plays a strategic role in supporting the English for special purposes (ESP) learning process. The most widely used types of assessments are diagnostic and formative assessments, which help tutors to identify learners' learning needs and monitor their progress. While performance

and project-based assessments are also used by some tutors, self-assessment is not yet an established practice. The findings show that assessment is not only seen as a means of evaluating the end result, but also as a planned and continuous learning strategy. Despite obstacles such as time constraints, low student motivation and lack of supporting media, tutors are still able to develop collaborative approaches such as group discussions and peer feedback to optimize the assessment function. Thus, assessment in the context of ESP in non-formal institutions is proven to have a real contribution to the improvement of student abilities and teaching effectiveness, provided that it is carried out with proper understanding and adaptation to the learning context.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that ESP tutors receive adequate training to improve their literacy towards various forms of assessment, including self-assessment which is not widely used, as well as the application of digital technology in the assessment process. The utilization of digital platforms such as Google Forms, online quiz applications, and automated feedback tools can be an effective solution in overcoming the constraints of limited time and learning media that are often found in non-formal course institutions. In addition, the assessments developed should be contextual and relevant to the specific needs of learners, especially in relation to their future professional goals, in order to align with the main principles in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Further research with a wider range of participants and a more in-depth qualitative approach is also needed to explore more varied and representative assessment practices in other non-formal institutions. In addition, language course institutions are expected to develop policies that support the implementation of assessment in a reflective manner, not merely as a means of measuring final results, but as a strategic tool to improve overall learning effectiveness.

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