PORTFOLIO AS AN ALTERNATIVE
OF LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

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Abstract : Portfolio is a formative assessment which aims to monitor students' learning achievement by selecting the collection of students' work. Unlike the summative assessment which summarizes students' achievement through one test taking, portfolio assessment is conducted continously over a semester. This article presents the concepts of portfolio assessment. It also discusses how to implement portfolio assessment in the classroom.

Keywords: assessment, portfolio

INTRODUCTION

At a regular time, a professional teacher should measure how far his or her students can comprehend the material, how far the learning outcome has been achieved and how far the objectives of the curriculum have been reached. All of these factors can be measured and determined through assessment. In English Language Teaching, assessment means to discover what the students know and can do at a certain level of the learning process.

A test is one of assessment tools which provides information about students. It measures how well the students have achieved and mastered the material. Kubiszyn and Borich (1993:9) mention that a test refers to a single measure that yield result at a single point in time. According to Wiersma and Jurs (1990:8-9), a test refers to a set of items and questions designed to be presented to one or more students under specified condition, meanwhile assessment is a process may span days, weeks an entire semester, entire school year or longer

At the end of semester each lecturer of Polytechnic should report the students' grade to the department where she or he teaches. In order to determine the students' grade, the lecturers usually apply the conventional test: the summative. As a formal test, summative test aims to evaluate what have been learned. Looney et al (2005:5) mention that summative test is more familiar, much more newsworthy and seek to provide summary statement of the students capabilities. Since summative assessment purposes to provide information about students' level achievement, many students respond to the reward or to get high grade rather than they want to perform the work. The summative often has not provided feedback such as grading system, grading procedure and student progress. It becomes a serious issue among students as well as the lecturers. Tsagari (2004:2-4) mentions that there are several types of dissatisfaction with formal test procedure such as dissatisfaction with type of gathered information in which learning as a process is denied, dissatisfaction with the standardized test that focus only on skill for the examination and dissatisfaction with the teacher-made tests that overemphasize the reading function

Portfolio is a type of formative assessment which functions to monitor students' learning achievement to provide feedback for the students as well as the teachers or lecturers. It is a collection of students' work which related to the learning material that expresses the students' activities. Portfolio is beneficial to assess the process of the study and to know the students' progress. An assessment should be conducted regularly, continually and holistically which involves all studying aspects, cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Kubiszyn and Borich (2010:11) state that important educational decision should not be made based on a single test taken at a single point in time. This paper discusses the concepts and procedures of portfolio assessment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Key Concept of Language Assessment
Reliability

Reliability relates to the consistency of a measurement. As an instrument, a test will give the same result every time it is applied. As Brown (1996:194) mentions, under the same condition, a test should exactly measure what it is supposed to measure. The reliability of a test relates to the purpose of a test. A test which consistently measures what it is supposed to, should have clear purposes. The concept being tested must be very carefully defined and thought so that the items are straightforward reflection of the purpose for which the test was designed (Brown, 1996:186)

Validity

Wiersma and Jurs (1990:183-184) mention that validity is the extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. Content validity is concern with the extent to which the test is representative of a define body of content consisting of topic and processes. It relates to the syllabus and curriculum as the base of test administration. According to Boyle and Fisher (2007:66), content validity is concerned with the degree to which the questions fairly represent what the test is intended to measure. Face validity is about relationship between the test takers and the test. It relates to how the test takers accept the test. Face validity relates to the question does the test look as if it measures what says it measures? (Boyle and Fisher, 2007:66)

Practicality

Practicality relates to how the test is administered. It refers to the efficiency of the test time, grading and scoring procedures, test items constructing charge and test administration. According to Brown (2004:19), a test has practicality if it is not excessively expensive, stays within appropriate time constraints, relatively easy to administer, and has a scoring or evaluation procedure that is specific and time-efficient.

Authenticity

An authentic test requires the students to perform the real tasks which demonstrate the language knowledge and skill. According to Brown (2004:36), an authentic test should contain language that is as natural as possible, items that are contextualized rather than isolated, topics that are relevant to items is provided and tasks that represent real world tasks.

Washback

How the test affects the teaching and learning is the washback. It could be positive and negative. Positive washback is the expected test effect such as encouraging the students to study more, promoting the connection between test standards and test instruction, and innovating teachers' methodology. Negative washback is unexpected test effect. It may involve the teachers, the students and school's program. Djuric (2008) mentions that washback can be positive if it is presented as a stimulus for a change and as a bridge for efficient communication between teachers and students. Otherwise it can be negative if the teachers have lack insight to the test. Cheng in Pan Y. (2009:258) states that washback indicates intended and unintended or accidental direction and function of curriculum change on aspects of teaching and learning by means of a change of public examination

The Theory of Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio is a collection of students work. It could be in the forms of reports, grades, journals, writings. Venn in Valenzuela (2000:530-531) mentions that portfolio is a systematic collection of students' work and related material that depicts a student's activities, accomplishments, and achievements in one or more school subjects. It includes evidence of student reflection and self-evaluation, guidelines for selecting the portfolio contexts, and criteria for judging the quality of the work. Meanwhile, Alimemaj and Lavdoush (2010:9) state that portfolio is the systematic and longitudinal collection of students' work which is created in response to specific and known instructions and objectives.

Judging the students' portfolio aims to monitor their skill, knowledge, and attitude. Portfolio functions to help the students document their progress which is directed toward the achievement of the curriculum. Portfolio assessment provides the students with additional purposes to learn, uses the assessment to guide the future instruction and emphasizes what is important.

In accordance with language learning, portfolio assessment could be applied within the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. This kind of assessment provides the students' progress in the language learning process. The development of reading skills, the compositions and other written products could be the content of portfolio which indicates the progress of reading and writing skills. The audio and video recordings are the parts of listening and speaking portfolio. According to Alimemaj and Laudosh (2010:10), using portfolio in the field of foreign language education can provide students with opportunities to display their work, serve as a vehicle for critical self-analysis and demonstrate mastery of foreign language.

The Characteristics of Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio is a continuous process which functions to monitor and measure the process of the study. It focuses on students' experience, acquisition, skill and attitude. It needs the students to perform, create and produce, essay, writing, report, journal etc.

The portfolio is usually applied through daily activities. It can be in the form of assessment itself or in the form of simulation which express the strength and weaknesses of the students. Paul (1995) states that portfolio assessment has characteristics as follows:

- It clearly reflects stated learner outcomes identified in the core or essential curriculum that students are expected to study.
- It focuses upon students' performance-based learning experiences as well as their acquisition of key knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- It contains samples of work that stretch over an entire marking period, rather than single points in time.
- It contains works that represent a variety of different assessment tools.
- it contains a variety of work samples and evaluations of that work by the student, peers, and teachers, possible even parents' reactions.

Meanwhile Brown (2004:252) characterizes the portfolio assessment as the real-world tasks which represent the meaningful instructional activities. It focuses on the processes and products of the teaching and learning that provides students' the strength and weaknesses.

DISCUSSION

The Concept of Portfolio Assessment
Reliability

Reliability is the consistency and accuracy of measurement. Reliability of portfolio assessment relates to the scoring system and the criteria. Criteria is a statement of what skill and knowledge the students have to master, what constitute mastery and how the progress of mastery is measured.

To reach the accuracy of assessment, the grading process of portfolio is usually performed by two raters. The scoring system of portfolio assessment is determined by the raters prior to the process of portfolio assessment. It is about the consistency of standard rate and same performance. It needs the agreement between the raters. The raters should have high understanding of the performance criteria. The reliability can be achieved when the contents of the portfolio are identical with purposes of the task. Moreover, it should be clearly specified and standardized. The scoring rubric used by the interrater is well defined in advance. A decision is made regarding how content standard to be applied to get a score. The range of scoring system can spread from analytic to holistic approach. Analytic scoring is judged systematically on separate aspects and scores are combined to get a judgment on the total performance. In holistic scoring, the performance is directly judge as a whole

Validity

Validity refers to how well what is assessed matches what it is intended to assess (Wiersma and Jurs ,1990:183). It relates to the appropriateness of an assessment. In this case is the extent to which the portfolio assessment based on the learning objective of the curriculum. Different forms of validity is taken depending on the ways of how to estimate it: content validity, face validity and construct validity.

Content validity estimates how far the criteria of the assessment correlates to the instructional objective of the study. Construct validity is the extent to which an assessment measures the concept or construct that it is intended to measure. Face validity is a property of a test intended to measure something. It relates to the validity in the term of face value. Mousavi in Brown (2004:26) mentions that face validity refers to the degree to which a test looks right, and appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgments of the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and other psychometrically unsophisticated observers.

Content validity of portfolio assessment relates to the representativeness. The assessment can have high content validity if it has the representativeness of learning objective of the curriculum. Matching the content of portfolio to the purpose of instructional and objectives and establishing the clear criteria of portfolio in relation to original objectives enable portfolio achieve the content validity. Generally, portfolio has high content validity since the content of this assessment based on the objectives of the curriculum.

Portfolio assessment generally has high face validity since its ability to assess real objective of life performance using quantitative and qualitative tools in several setting. Quantitatively is when the students conduct portfolio systematically and overtime. Qualitatively means the students have the process and progress of skill and knowledge.

Construct validity of portfolio assessment relates to the question does the topic within an assessment measures the educational or psychological construct that the assessment was designed to measure?. It concerns to the relevance of the effects of the assessment process. Wiersma and Jurs (1990:279) mention that the determination of construct validity is essentially a search for evidence that will help us to understand what the test is really measuring and how the test works across a variety of setting and condition. Portfolio does not assesses the construct validity directly. It measures the behavior and performance that reflect construct validity.

Practicality

An assessment or test has practicality if it is not excessively expensive, stays within appropriate time constraints, is relatively easy to administer, and has a scoring or evaluation procedure that is specific and time efficient (Brown:2004:19). Portfolio assessment is impractical from the time point of view since it consumes time. However, it has practicality if it is viewed from the functionality. The result of portfolio is suitable for giving information on the students strength and weaknesses. In this case the students can discuss the problem with the teacher and find the solution together. Portfolio assessment provides benefit both for students and teacher. Students can recognize his or her weaknesses and find solution to overcome it. Teacher, besides finding the solution for the students weaknesses, can evaluate curriculum based on the students' achievement.

Authenticity

O' Malley and Pierce in Syafei (2012:208) maintain portfolio assessment has strong content validity. It well represents what the students are doing in the classroom and reflects their progress toward instructional goal. The contents reflect the authentic activities through which the students have been learning in the classroom. Since the tasks are the real-world activities which reflect the application of essential knowledge and skill, the portfolio brings the authenticity of the assessment.

Washback

Relating to the grading, portfolio assessment reveals the positive washback effect. as Kirkpatrick (2012:13) states, the well designed rubric helps the teachers or raters provide detailed and unbiased assessment. In term of teaching and learning processes is reported that the limitation of certain method is discouraged. It is seen by the teachers and students the assessment as the

fundamental part of the entire teaching and learning process. Moreover, he states that tasks are weighted to balance the formative and summative roles of assessment. Portfolio assessment may also be used as self assessment, where the students evaluate their own working, especially if clear and criteria with which to be evaluated and revised is given in advance, it will reveal the positive washback since the students have time to evaluate and revise their work before submitting. Relating to the writing skill, Syafei (2012: 214) states that portfolio assessment also brings artistic aspect to the students in which they beautifully design portfolio book. The collection of their work shows the personal characteristics, creativity, courage, enthusiasm regularly in composing essay in it.

The negative washback obviously will come up since it has several weaknesses as follows, (1) it needs time to conduct, (2) it requires more understanding about selecting and grading portfolio , (3) it tends to let the students leave the portfolio until the end of the course. Alimemaj and Laudosh (2010:9) mention that there is no assessment tool that meets every teachers' purpose perfectly, is entirely valid and reliable, takes no time to prepare, administer or grade. It is the teachers or lectures responsibility to choose and design assessment that meets their most important instructional and assessment needs and which they have resources to implement and evaluate.

The Implementation of Portfolio Assessment

Since the implementation of portfolio assessment takes time and profound understanding, It needs planning and preparation about the entire procedure in advance. Damiani (2004:129) points out that there are several component parts of portfolio implementation must take place before it is utilized effectively:

- Deciding the purpose and theme
  The purpose of the portfolio may be different based on the instructional needs. The teachers have to clarify what skills and techniques to be applied. It relates to what skills the students have been learned. It must be decided specifically what to be assessed.
- Considering the samples
  Samples of student work to be included as content portfolio might best illustrate the application of the educational goal. Written work, journal, test result, reading comprehension tasks are several samples of portfolio.
- Determining the selecting steps
  In this case the teachers work together with the students to choose the procedure in selecting the samples of students work.
- Deciding types of assessment
  It is important to decide what students' work to be assessed, process or product. Each work will be scored by using different scoring system.
- Determining and developing the scoring system
  Using a scoring rubric with point scale description what to be evaluated assists the teacher very much in grading the work. Sharing the rubric to the students makes them familiar with the aim they want to achieve.

Basically the implementation of portfolio assessment following several steps; planning, implementing, grading and documenting. Planning consists of explaining the learning objective, outcome indicator, grading system, grading procedure and data or students' work to be collected to the students. Implementing and grading steps are conducted during the teaching and learning process. Together teachers and students evaluate and record the process and the result of teaching and learning based on determined criteria. On the last step teachers classify the students' scoring into each category, whether it is result or process (summative or formative), structured task, or daily task.

Klinghemmer (2005) suggests several steps in implementing portfolio assessment as follows:
At the beginning of the school year or term the teachers or lecturers explain to the students what a portfolio is and the how the portfolio process works. Together they determine what will go into their portfolios and what the criteria for evaluation will be. Student language proficiency and academic goals will determine the extent of student input. Each student then receives a list of the portfolio contents and criteria for evaluation. The students can use this as a checklist towards the end of the term to see if they have everything in the portfolio.

The teachers tell the students how and where the portfolio will be kept. It could be in a loose leaf notebook, in a file or in an envelope. They also set up a regular, predictable procedure for working in, adding to, and checking the portfolios. The teachers will also make clear to the students what their responsibilities are in regard to the portfolios. It would be a good idea to post those responsibilities on the wall of the classroom. Since reflection is an important part of the process, students could also be given guidelines.

At the beginning also, the teachers will meet briefly with each student to help each sets up personal goals for the class. These will be included in the portfolio. Because reflection is an important part of the portfolio process, the teachers may want to set up guidelines to help students learn how to do a reflection, and to state expectations for how often students should do a reflection.

About half way through the term, the teachers will again meet with the students for a portfolio conference. The purpose of this conference is to go over the students' work in the portfolio, help them see their strengths and weakness or where they need more work, set new goals for the second half of the term. Conferencing could also be done more informally, meeting maybe with just a few students each week throughout the term. This may be better for larger classes.

Towards the middle and/or end of the term, the teacher gives students peer and self-evaluation forms. Teachers give them time in class to work with a partner to do the peer evaluation using the forms. They do the self-evaluation before they hand the portfolio in for final evaluation, so that they can make needed corrections and additions.

And finally, the teacher or lecturer evaluates the portfolios and gives students a final grade. This evaluation uses the criteria that the teacher and students set up in the beginning.

CONCLUSION

Portfolio is an assessment based on the collection of students' work which indicates the process, progress as well as the result of teaching and learning. Since portfolio meets the concept of an assessment such as validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and washback, it can be considered as an alternative assessment besides summative assessment. Clarifying the guidelines and criteria beforehand enables the students to conduct portfolio well.

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