

Needs Analysis of Literacy Assessment Using Blended Learning for Beginner EFL Learners

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Abstract—Needs analysis is vital in assessment instrument development because assessment is of paramount importance in teaching and learning. The phenomena of technology developments influence how assessment instruments must be developed to achieve the learning objectives and outcomes. The present study aimed at conducting a needs analysis of literacy assessment using blended learning for beginner EFL learners in Bali, Indonesia. The survey-style research was carried out involving 17 English teachers from 12 public junior high schools. A questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and a focused group discussion were used to collect the data. The data were descriptively analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study results revealed that the needs identified in assessment developments consist of the target needs that cover the necessities of assessments, including the assessment of learning, as learning, assessment for learning, wants and lacks. In addition, the learner needs in the form of authentic materials, technology-based materials, skills-based, and language inputs are all needed in developing instrument assessments. The activities and procedures for conducting assessments in the form of pedagogical and real-life tasks and procedures are required, in addition to the roles of the students as knowledge seekers, problem solvers, collaborators, critical thinkers, and creators. The identified needs were then used as the basis for the framework design. The needs analysis results conducted in this study are expected to inspire teachers in developing research-based assessment instruments in EFL instructions.

Index Terms—assessment, blended learning system, needs analysis, EFL instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

Needs analysis is essential for both teachers and students (Eslami, 2010). It leads teachers to discover the essential needs of the teaching and learning process. The primary role of needs analysis is to provide crucial data to aid teachers in making appropriate decisions. The needs analysis results help educators examine the students' target needs and learning needs (Akyel & Ozek, 2010). It is critical in establishing the appropriate learning materials/resources and assessments based on the instructions' needs and objectives, including English literacy instruction.

Literacy is a communication ability that enables a speaker to share information and comprehend what is stated. Literacy is a skill that involves the ability to receive knowledge, interpret it, and communicate it. Literacy is a term that is frequently used to refer to the fundamental ability to read and write (Padmadewi & Artini, 2018). Humans can utilize a language to obtain information or communicate when they have reading and writing abilities. Recent developments suggest that the meaning of literacy has expanded. Literacy is the ability to utilize diverse abilities, information, and skills in daily life (Damaianti, Abidin, & Rahma, 2020). Hence, every subject requires and incorporates literacy ability. Literacy is also an essential aspect of English language learning since it enables students to comprehend, create, communicate, and convey information. English literacy has a vital role in education, especially in a learning context, to achieve the learning objectives, and through literacy skills humans can survive in a globalization era (Tryanasari, Aprilia, & Cahya, 2017).

The 21st century skills were firstly introduced with the 4C concept: Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity. However, the concept was later expanded into 6Cs, in which the new 2 Cs; stand for Culture and Citizenship (Miller, 2015), or Character and Citizenship (Fullan & Duckworth, 2018). This converts the four Cs into six

Cs: critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, citizenship/culture, and character education/connection. Along with the recent development, students should be prepared to face 21st-century abilities (Nuryana, Suroyo, Nurcahyati, Setiawan, & Rahman, 2020); and have adequate literacy skills in English language. Students should integrate those skills to achieve the learning goals and be ready for the era of globalization through English literacy (Anugerahwati, 2019).

Teaching English literacy in the 21st-century learning and innovation skills has been found as challenging. Many teachers consider that assessment preparation is time-consuming and exhausting (Aliningsih & Sofwan, 2015), and requires research-based decision and development (Aziz, Yusoff, & Yaakob, 2020). Furthermore, the advent of technology in education in the twenty-first century necessitates that teachers modify their teaching and learning activities and their assessments.

The success of English literacy teaching should be conducted by delivering appropriate assessments, by which the learning process and the student's progress can be evaluated. Besides that, the assessments conducted should also allow students to do reflections either by themselves or peers. Assessments also support and improve the students' learning (Nodoushan, 2014). On the literacy side, assessment influences the quality of literacy (Damaianti, Abidin, & Rahma, 2020).

The teachers' challenges in assessment development are not only originated from the complexity of the skills to be assessed but also how technology can be incorporated into the process of teaching and learning. The alternative model used is advisedly using a blended learning system. Blended learning is defined as the teaching and learning process which is conducted through combining face-to-face and online learning activities (Li, Kay, & Markovich, 2018). These scholars acknowledge that blended learning supports and encourages the students through enhanced communication by the use of any flexible online platforms. The implementation of blended learning can help the students increase their understanding of foreign languages, such as English (Isti'anah, 2017). Thus, through blended learning, the students can improve and enhance their English literacy skills.

The importance of assessment in foreign language learning is not questionable, and its function in identifying teaching success cannot be denied. This makes assessment is of paramount importance in the process of teaching and learning. The challenges of conducting the assessment is even more nowadays because of the phenomena of having remote and online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many studies investigated teachers' perceptions towards certain kinds of assessment (Eridafithri, 2015; and Zaim, Refnaldi, & Arsyad, 2020), and the implementation of certain kinds of assessment in English classroom (Aziz & Yusoff, 2016); Apsari & Haryudin, 2017); Fahmi, Pratolo, & Zahrani, 2020; Inayah, Komariah, & Nasir, 2019; Rahmawanti & Uman, 2019; Suastra & Menggo (2020), Sumardi & Muamaroh, 2020; Yulia, Husin, & Anuar, 2019). Despite the large number of studies conducted on assessment, a need analysis on what kinds of assessments are needed in order to cover the requirements of having appropriate assessment instruments in the digital era was hardly found. The scarcity of research on the need for analysis of developing instrument assessment motivates the current study. The effects of assessment may be positive or negative depending on several factors, ranging from how the assessment procedure or test is constructed to how it is used (McKay, 2006). It is expected that sound and positive effects of assessment are produced when assessments are assigned to students. For that reason, it is imperative to consider the quality of the assessment instrument used in the process of teaching and learning in order to produce positive and beneficial effects.

The first year of junior high school is the first year of formal English learning instruction in Indonesian schooling, and its success is critical for the next level of teaching and learning. It is, therefore, highly needed to carry out a need analysis study of assessment instruments, especially for beginner EFL learners. For that reason, the objectives of the present study are 1) to analyze the students' target needs and the learner need toward assessments of English literacy in learning English as the first year of junior high school, 2) to analyze the framework of assessment needed using blended learning system.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Most experts agree that human learning, training, and performance improvement initiatives should begin with a need assessment. A learning or performance gap between the current condition and the desired condition is called a need. In order to identify needs, a need assessment is required. Needs assessment is a process for figuring out how to close a learning or performance gap. It involves determining what the important needs are and how to address them. The process includes comparing the current condition to the desired condition, defining the problem or problems, understanding the behaviors and mechanisms that contribute to the current condition, determining if and how specific behaviors and mechanisms can be changed to produce the desired condition, developing solution strategies, and building support for action (Gupta, Sleezer, & Russ-Eft, 2007). Learner and target needs are recognized during a needs analysis in the teaching and learning process. The demands of learners are acknowledged as a significant factor that material designers must consider when creating educational materials. Target needs (what the learner must accomplish in the target setting) and learning needs (what the learner must undertake in order to learn) are defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). They point out that the target needs are necessities, lacks, and wants. The learner's desire to achieve well in goal-setting can be viewed as a necessity. Lacks also refer to a learner's failure to cope with their goal situation. The learners' expectations after completing the course are linked to their wants. Meanwhile, there are four types of learning demands: input, process, context, and learner role (Nunan, 2004).

Assessment has the power to change people's lives (Shohamy, 2001). The effects of assessment may be positive or negative depending on a number of factors ranging from the way the assessment procedure or test is constructed to the way it is used. Effective assessment procedures are assessments that have been designed to ensure, as far as possible, valid and fair information on the students' abilities and progress (McKay, 2006).

Assessment takes three approaches: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning (Priyatni & Martutik, 2018). Assessment of learning (AOL) is a standard mechanism used by institutions to demonstrate their accountability to students and parents on students' achievement after completing a course. This sort of assessment occurs independently of instructional and learning activities such as midterm and end-of-semester examinations. Teachers do assessments for learning, whereas students conduct assessments for learning. Assessment as learning occurs through self-and peer-assessment. Assessment for learning (AFL) is frequently utilized in the classroom throughout the learning process to foster interaction between teachers and students and increase student motivation to learn. Stiggins (2005) describes assessment for learning as an alternative to the continual use of several assessment methods to document students' mastery of knowledge and skills compared to standards. It emphasizes the importance of utilizing various evaluation methods to ascertain mastery of previously taught concepts, knowledge, and skills. This data can guide instructors, students, and parents to decide their children's educational progress. In other words, assessment for learning is an assessment that occurs during the process of learning and involves either interactive teaching with students or student-to-student interaction.

All types of assessments are demanded in assessing students' literacy. Literacy is a broad term that refers to the capacity to read and write. In a broader sense, literacy is described as the ability to communicate through language, which includes the ability to listen, speak, read, and write, as well as the ability to think critically in real-world situations (Rintaningrum, 2009). Literacy is a real-world activity in which students apply their classroom reading and writing skills to real-world situations such as reading, writing letters to friends, reading food menus, and reading brochures (Purcell-Gates et al., 2012).

Along with the advancement of technology, literacy instruction must incorporate technology, the most prevalent of which is the blended learning method. The phrase blended learning refers to a style of learning that incorporates elements of combining or merging two distinct styles. Cheung and Hew (2011) defined blended learning as a combination of in-person and online instruction. Ramadhan, Chaeruman, and Kustandi (2018) defined blended learning as the process of effectively combining synchronous and asynchronous learning environments in order to accomplish learning objectives. Synchronous learning occurs when activities occur simultaneously and in the same or different locations, whereas asynchronous learning occurs at various times and locations (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007). Blended learning incorporates a variety of factors, including but not limited to: methods, media, sources, environment, and learning strategies.

All of the variables as mentioned earlier (literacy, evaluation, and integrated learning) are significant areas of exploration in this study. It is hoped that exploring these variables through needs analysis will provide insight into how assessment instruments are developed for the targeted students.

III. METHOD

A. Design

This study used a survey design that involved 17 English teachers from 12 schools in Bali. The primary purpose of the design is to ascertain community demands for educational services, especially about the needs of assessment instruments required for assessing students' English literacy (Creswell, 2009).

B. Population and Sample

The population of the research was the English teachers in public junior high schools in Bali. The sample schools first of all, were chosen using a multistage cluster random sampling technique, which resulted in six schools were from the southern part of Bali, while the remaining six were from the northern part of the island. After that a simple random sampling was run to select the schools. Finally, one English teacher was invited to give consent to participate in the study.

C. Instruments

Data were gathered through a questionnaire, in-depth interview, focused group discussion, and document analysis. The questionnaire used was based on Hutchinson & Waters' (1987) requirements analysis tool. It consisted of 22 points of close-ended statements and two open points, which required the respondents to provide answers. The questionnaire was intended to explore the needs for an assessment instrument for teaching English in junior high school. The respondents were 17 English teachers from 12 junior high schools who responded to close questionnaire with two options: 'yes' or 'no'. A definite answer is needed in order to have precise needs. The respondents were asked to pick one of the two possibilities available in the consolidated statements, while the three open points require respondents to suggest needs that they believe should be added. The data from the questionnaire were then used as a guideline in an in-depth interview.

D. The Data Collecting Procedure

The study employed four stages to collect data: (1) the questionnaire administration, in which it takes approximately 30 minutes to respond; (2) the in-depth interview followed up the results of the questionnaire analysis and it was intended to seek further clarification; (3) Focused Group Discussions were conducted for one and a half hours using zoom meeting, with the purpose to collect ideas and confirmation about the framework needed ; and 4) the document study was conducted to analyze the syllabus and the textbook to identify the gaps for assessment instruments needed. During the FGD, all teachers were invited to share their knowledge of the target needs and learning needs of their pupils.

E. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed descriptively using descriptive statistics to determine the respondents' preferred options. At the same time, the findings of the interviews and FGD were analyzed qualitatively. The questionnaire results were provided numerically, whereas the in-depth interview and FGD data were presented qualitatively, as they were based on respondents' responses.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

With reference to the objectives of the present study previously mentioned, the findings of the study were categorized into two categories as the first one is the students' target needs toward assessments of English literacy in learning English as the first year of junior high school, and the second one is the framework of assessment needed using blended learning system. The findings were analyzed using Hutchinson and Waters (1987) based on the questionnaire result and the in-depth interview results. The summary of the findings can be summarized in the form of graphs as follows.

A. Target Needs

Analyzing target needs can be further described into several parts, such as the necessities of the target need on assessment instrument, lacks, kinds of wants. The summary of the findings can be described in the following graphs.

1. The Necessities of Target Needs on an Assessment Instrument

Necessities can be described as the aspects of assessments needed by the students in order to be able to achieve the objectives effectively as targeted.

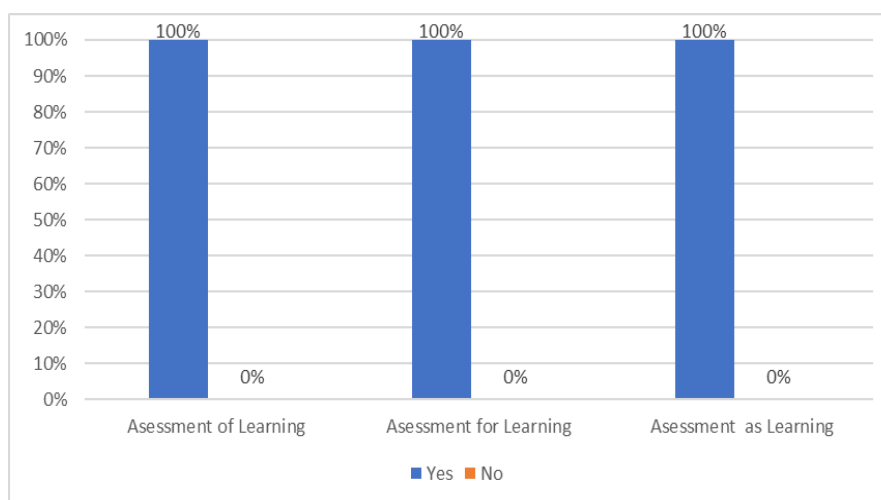


Figure 1. The Necessities of Target Needs on Assessment Instrument

Based on the results of the questionnaire, deep interviews were then conducted. The questionnaire results reveal that there are three types of assessment that need to be developed: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment of learning. All respondents agreed that all three types of assessments are highly required.

2. Lacks

Lacks can be described as what students have not mastered. This is a gap between what has been and what has not been mastered. The information about this can be summarized in Fig. 2.

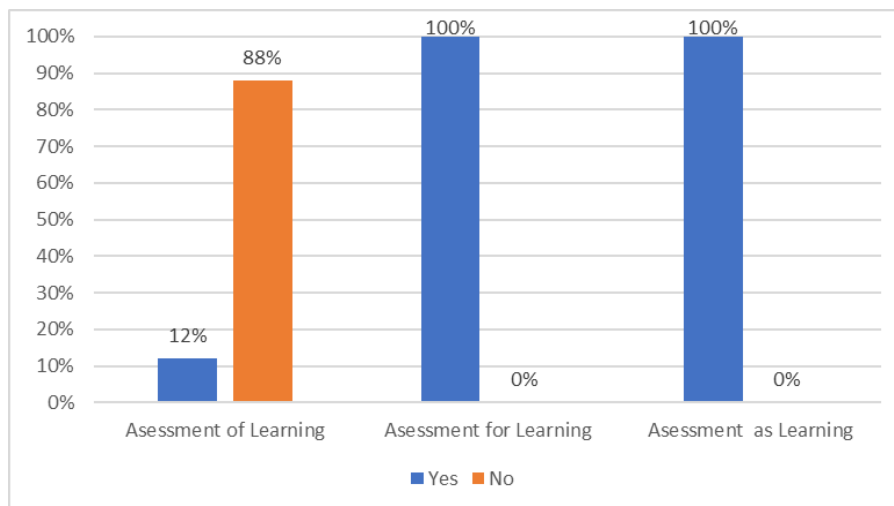


Figure 2. Lack of the Target Needs

Fig. 2 indicates the results of the questionnaire regarding lack. Not all respondents agree that the assessments of learning need to be produced; in fact, 88% chose the "No" option. Following additional deep interviews with the teachers, as validated by the experts/lecturers on TEFL and assessments, it was revealed that the teachers had already frequently employed the assessment of learning in the form of recognition tests. In other words, they chose "no" for the recognition type of assessment, while the assessments of learning that explore students' critical answers are considered highly needed. Additional interviews revealed that a variety of assessments of learning that place a premium on authentic assessments of language use are still desperately needed. The other two types of assessments, those that serve as assessments for learning (on how much feedback is required for students' progress) and those that serve as assessments for learning (on how well students can write reflections), are also regarded as critical.

3. Wants

Wants are related to the expectation from the learners after they are completing the English literacy courses. For that reason, the assessment must be able to deal with the assessments which are intended to fulfill the expectation of the students to have the ability to use English in real -life.

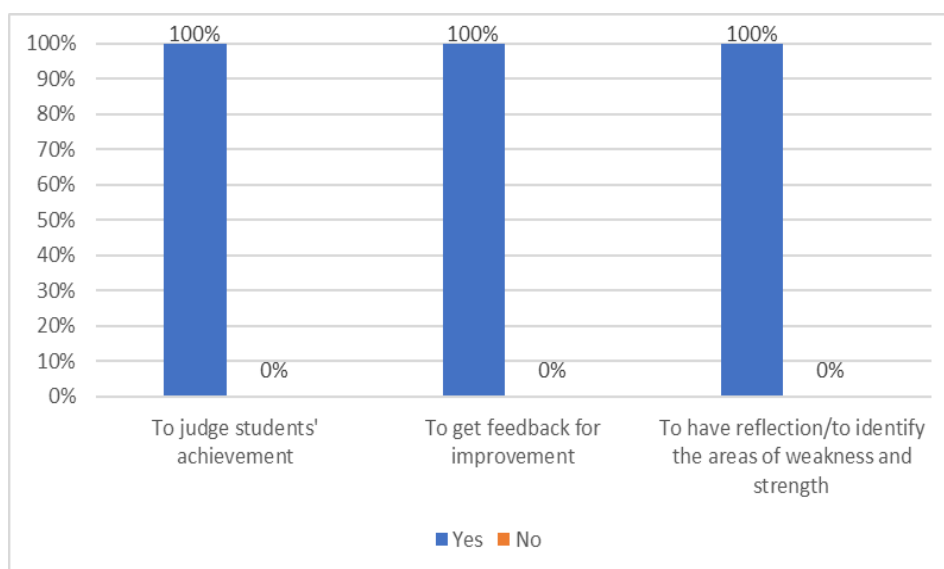


Figure 3. Aspects of Wants in the Target Need

Fig. 3 indicates the required assessments for students to be competent in using the language in use. The assessment aims to improve students' ability to use language (real-life literacy assessment), which involves the assessment to judge students' achievement, assessment instruments to get feedback for improvement, and reflections and identify the areas of weaknesses and strength. All respondents agree to these kinds of needs.

B. Learners' Needs

In addition to the target needs, the learner needs are also stated as important needs to be analyzed (Hutchinson and Waters (1987). There are several aspects of learners were analyzed: input, procedure, setting and learners' roles. Each aspect of need is summarized in the following figures.

1. Input

Input in this research is described as sources of materials needed for students in assessment. Based on the questionnaire and interview conducted there are several categories of input such as authentic material (integrated material), technology-based materials, skills-based material and also language based-input.

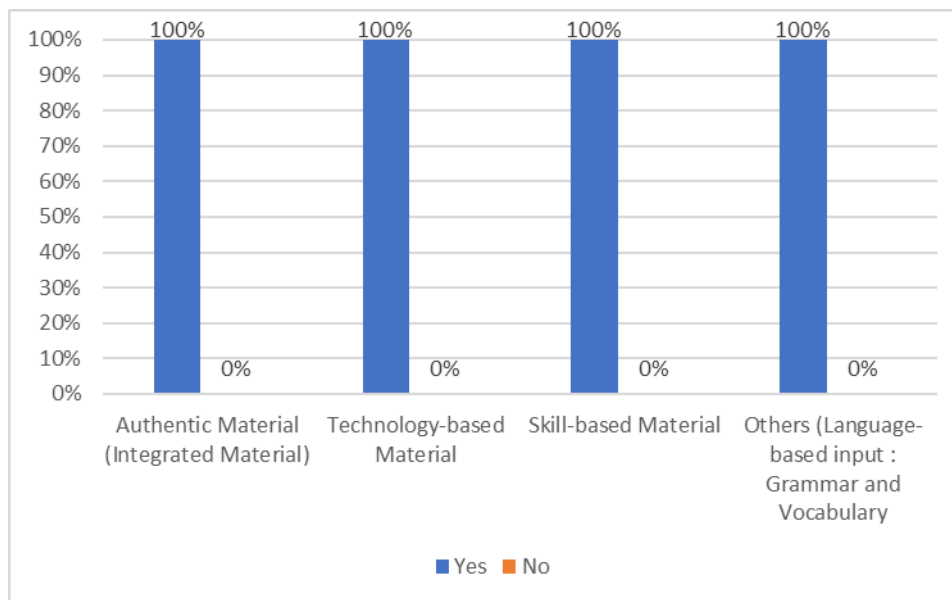


Figure 4. Aspect of Inputs in the Learners' Needs

2. Types of Activities

Types of activities refer to any tasks assigned to students to complete in order to meet the learner's needs. There are two types of literacy activities identified as being required such as pedagogical tasks-based literacy activities and real-life-based literacy activities.

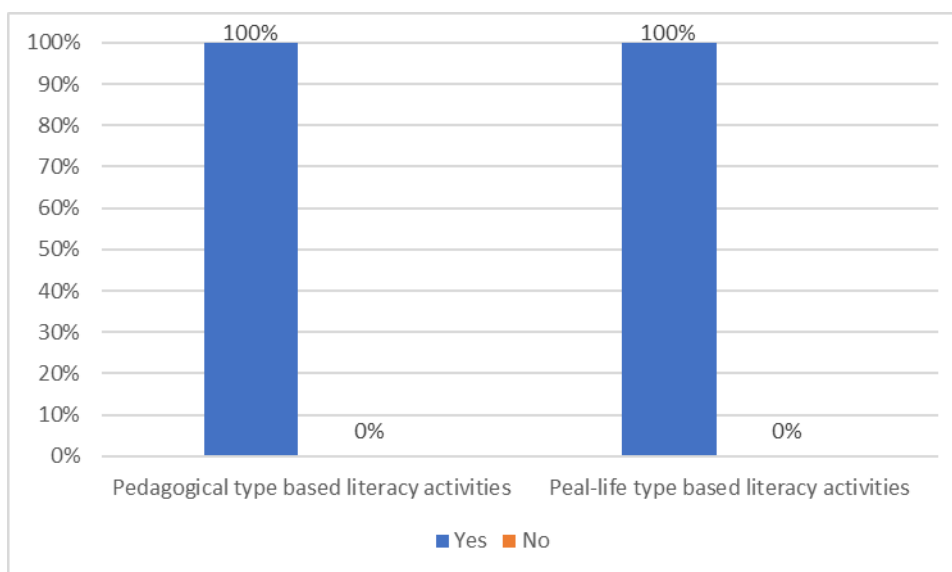


Figure 5. Types of Activities Needed

Fig. 5 reveals that all respondents agree that both kinds of activities are needed by the students. Further interviews with the respondents admitted that both kinds of activities are fundamental. The respondents further informed that assessments on the pedagogical types-based literacy activities are needed to assess the students' competency in dealing with the English literacy usage, which is a foundation for having the competency in using the language for real-life activities.

3. Procedure

The procedure is another aspect of learner needs. It is concerned with the procedure of teaching in order to meet the expected learner needs of assessment. The results of the questionnaire and interviews reveal that there are two types of teaching procedures to achieve the needs of the learners in assessments, such as pedagogical-intended procedures and real-life task-based procedures, depending on the types of activities needed.

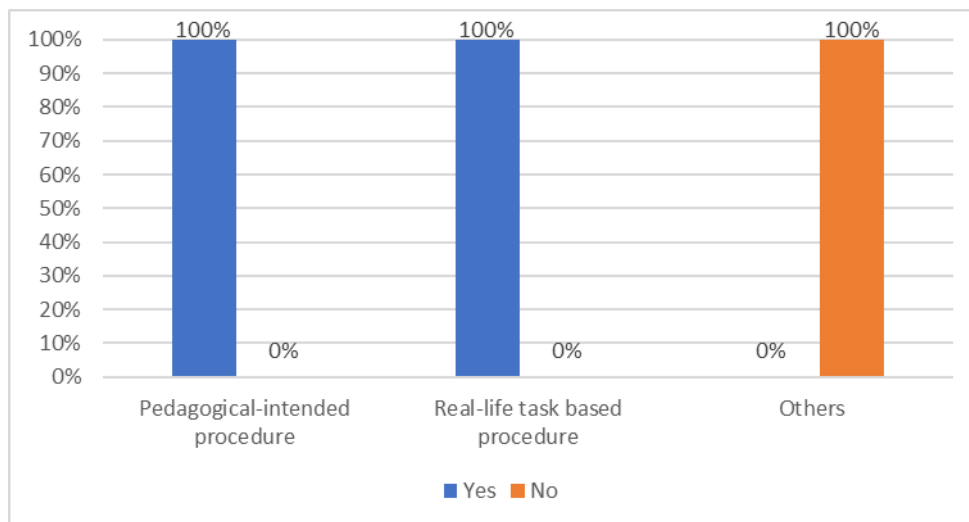


Figure 6. Procedures Needed by the Students

Fig. 6 reveals that all respondents agree that the three learning procedures are required when implementing assessments. The assessments can take the form of pedagogically intended procedures. Pedagogical intended procedures are the procedure of conducting activities that learners undertake in order to acquire language in instructional settings. On the other hand, real-life procedures are those that students perform in their daily lives while speaking the target language, in this case, English. For language learners, these also provide opportunities for language learning as well as language activation.

4. Setting

The setting is about when and where the assessments are conducted. Based on the results of data analysis on the questionnaire and interviews conducted, it is possible to conclude that the modes of learning used to determine the assessment settings. There are four modes of learning: synchronous mode, asynchronous mode, blended learning system, and face-to-face mode of learning.

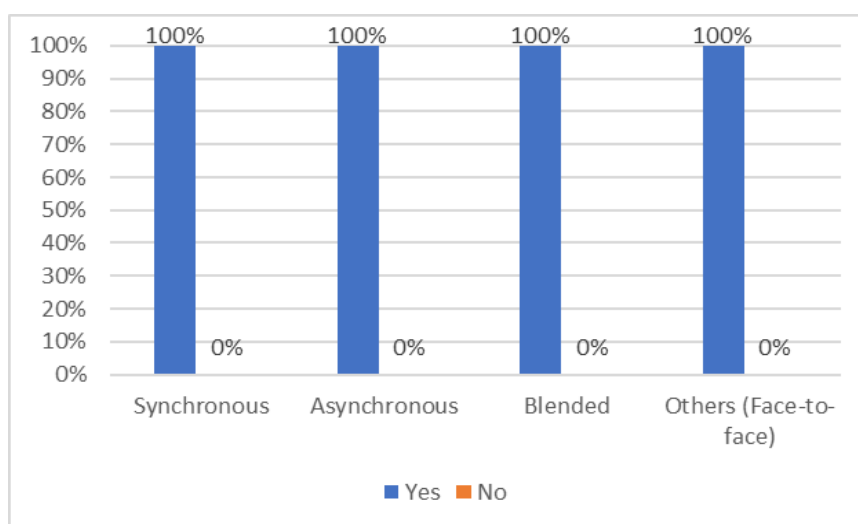


Figure 7. Types of Setting of Learning Needed by the Students

All respondents agree that all modes of learning are essential to be considered in developing the assessment instruments. The setting of the assessment is flexible and depends on the mode of learning implemented.

5. Learner Roles

Learner roles deal with the roles that the students must be able to perform following the completion of assessments. The results of data analysis revealed that several roles needed to be acquired by the students, such as problem solvers, communicators, knowledge seekers, and others (collaborators, critical thinkers, and creators) from which assessment instruments are developed.

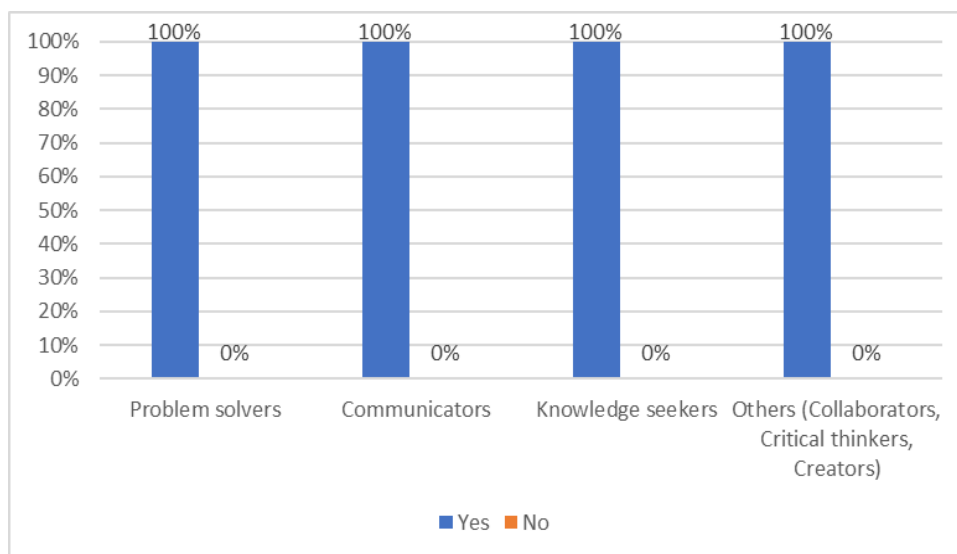


Figure 8. Roles of Students Needed

Fig. 8 demonstrates that all respondents agree on the roles of the students, which must be used as a reference for instrument assessments. With all of these needs identified, the framework for assessment needed using a blended learning system is analyzed and developed to answer the study's second research question.

C. The Framework of Assessment Needed Using Blended Learning System

The needs profiles were then followed up with in-depth interviews. The interviews were also continued into focused group discussions on developing the assessment framework using a blended learning system. The findings of the data collection and analysis are summarized below (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
THE FRAMEWORK OF ASSESSMENT NEEDED USING BLENDED LEARNING SYSTEM

Modes of learning	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Face-to face
Types of Assessment	Authentic assessment: Assessment as learning Assessment for learning	Authentic assessment: Assessment as learning Assessment for learning	Authentic assessment: Assessment of learning
Activities	Assessment-based activities	At-home task-based assessments	Assessment based activities
Example	Quizzes using Question/Answer session	Formative and summative assessment in the form of recognition and production type of assessments which are skill-based and language based, both in the form of pedagogical literacy based as well as real-life literacy-based assessments.	Recognition and Production type of assessments which are skill-based and language based, both in the form of pedagogical literacy based as well as real-life literacy-based assessments.
	Online quizzes (Kahoot and other synchronous-types of assessment). Dependent and independent speaking assessment.	Examples among others are: -Online based assessment -Writing composition -Reading comprehensions -Video-based assessment/integrated language assessment	Examples among others are -Reading comprehension test -Writing test -Speaking dependent test -Integrated listening test

Table 1 shows that the framework of assessment needed using the blended learning system designed has been accommodated the needs identified through the need analysis conducted. The framework recommends a blended learning system consisting of synchronous modes of learning combined with asynchronous as well as face-to-face modes of assessment. This is in line with how Alonso, López, Manrique, and Viñes (2005) defined blended learning as "learning that mixes various event-based activities: self-paced learning, live e-learning, and face-to-face classrooms". The results of interviews with the experts describe that the assessment instruments developed as real-life literacy assessments must also cover the skills of 21st-century skills, including self-regulation, self-determination, and other learning and innovation skills.

The current study's findings are consistent with earlier research. Due to COVID 19, Chan (2021) conducted research to include formative assessment in blended learning for Chinese language lessons. He believes that there is a need to incorporate an assessment into blended learning that would help and encourage students to self-regulate. To improve the learning experience and to attain the desired outcome of blended learning, formative assessment (FA) is recommended. He discovered that FA encourages students to set learning goals, self-evaluate, reflect, change, and improve their learning through online or face-to-face meetings. He went on to say that the most crucial aspect of FA was feedback. Teachers must choose which modes (online or conventional) will be more beneficial in improving the language skills of their students.

The respondents reconfirmed that all modes of learning and assessment designed as shown in the framework are considered to be important and useful, because the framework is perceived as beneficial not only during online learning but also as an essential framework even in the process of learning post-pandemic or in the new normal situation. The types of assessments recommended consist of three approaches, which are assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning. It is critical and highly essential to incorporate multiple assessment methods into the process of developing English literacy. The more information gathered and used to make decisions about the students' assessments, strengths, and weaknesses, the better the decision will be. Assessment is the process of collecting information on student learning outcomes from measurements in order to explain or analyze student performance on assignments and tests assigned by the teacher (Wulan, 2007).

The findings of this investigation are also coherent with those of Titov, Kurilov, Titova, and Brikoshina (2019). They researched university students that combined summative and formative evaluation in blended learning. Summative evaluation refers to the final grade and is more formal and traditional than formative assessment. Summative assessment alone is insufficient for thoroughly assessing students' learning. To address the limitations of summative evaluation in blended learning, formative assessment, which monitors students' learning progress, is used. The teacher or practitioners in blended learning might use integrative assessment to examine the interaction between computer-assisted and traditional activities and their impact on the learning experience.

The framework's emphasis on implementing authentic assessment supports the study by Zaim, Refnaldi, and Arsyad (2020). They conducted a research and development study on authentic assessment to evaluate the English language skills of Junior High School students. The assessment was developed to determine the teacher's needs for speaking skills assessment and develop an authentic assessment model that is appropriate for the needs of both teachers and students. This study used the ADDIE model, in which data was collected from a questionnaire distributed to teachers. According to the findings of the study, the appropriate needs analysis could be used effectively for assessing students' speaking abilities. Although this study has limitations because it only uses self-perceptions for teachers, this research is useful for teachers to provide accurate assessments. In addition, through this assessment, students can realize their abilities and find out what skills they need to improve.

Despite the framework resulting from this research, the present study does not cover the development of the framework into completed and finished assessment instruments ready for use because the instruments can be further developed based on the existing situation of the schools. In other words, any teacher or lecturer can further develop the framework into instruments based on the context of the situation in the schools. With the needs profile identified and the framework developed, the present study is expected to inspire all teachers worldwide who teach English literacy as a foreign language in junior high schools to develop assessments based on these findings.

V. CONCLUSION

Understanding the needs of assessment instruments is crucially important in developing English literacy skills. The data on needs can be treated as the basis for the development of literacy assessment instruments for blended learning. Identifying target needs and learner needs can guide teachers to develop quality instructions, learning outcomes, and help students achieve literacy skills in English as a Foreign Language. Furthermore, incorporating technology into the assessments design and implementation is an effort to incorporate 21st century skills through English lesson. This study identified the needs for assessment instruments and developed the assessment framework for blended learning. The framework may be used as a guide for assessment instruments by researchers who can benefit from it in the future.

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