

Students' perception of reading assessment in the English education study program

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ABSTRACT

Assessment is a strategy used to process data collection or information from various sources to obtain the results of learning experiences. Through assessment, lecturers can see the ability of each student. Therefore, assessment is needed in the learning process. This study aims to determine the perceptions and problems of students in reading assessment in the English education study program, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. This research used a mixed method. The data were collected by distributing closed questionnaires and conducting semi-structured interviews. There were 44 students who filled in the closed questionnaire and 8 students as interview participants. The results of this study showed that the students strongly agreed that the reading test helped students improve language structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Mean=3.25). The students also thought that the content of the reading test reflected real-world reading tasks (Mean=3.11). The results showed that the majority of students have a positive perception of reading assessment. However, some students had problems during the reading assessment, one of which was that they felt anxious because they were asked to analyze the questions promptly. Another problem found was that students struggled to read long passages.

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1. Introduction

Assessment is a method used to process the acquisition of data or information from various sources to obtain the results of the learning experience. Assessment is a systematic basis for making inferences about student learning and development. As explained by Bouchaib et al. (2021), assessment can be formative, which aims to monitor the process of student growth in a low or no-stakes environment, or summative, which is designed to assess students against their achievements. In addition, we can understand the purpose of assessment is to measure, improve, and understand a person's ability or the effectiveness of a system. In the context of education, the purpose of assessment is various, such as assessment and evaluation, feedback to students and lecturers, and measurement of learning outcomes of what students have learned, understood, and mastered.

According to Par (2020), reading is a collaborative method that involves readers and materials to create meaning. Certain reading skills are required by readers to cover materials and texts effectively and efficiently. Readers are required to have skills in certain techniques to improve their comprehension. Certain reading skills are needed by readers to cover materials and texts effectively

and efficiently. Readers are required to have skills in certain techniques to improve their comprehension.

In addition, perception is defined according to Qiong (2017), as a process of achieving awareness or understanding of sensory information, it is also said that perception consists of 3 stages: selection, organization, and interpretation. Therefore, perception is the understanding of information obtained by each person through an object he sees. Everyone's perception will vary because it is influenced by experience and also ways of thinking that are not always the same. According to Irwanto (2002) as cited in Lestari & Sujito (2022), perception is classified into two types, namely, positive perception and negative perception. Positive perception describes all information or everything that is known, as well as responses that are maintained with an effort to apply them. This is followed by activities or responses that accept and support the objects seen. Meanwhile, negative perception is a perception that includes all the wrong information and responses to the perceived object. This will be followed by disagreeing or rejecting what is seen. When connected in the context of reading, which is explained by Widyana (2012), the higher the student's perception, the more it will affect his reading ability and vice versa. It is also conveyed that reading is closely related to the acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, by reading everyone will find and understand information with their perceptions. Reading is the most important thing in the world of education. According to Zare and Othman (2013), reading strategies have a favorable impact and a strong association with reading comprehension proficiency, and students who employ strategies more frequently and use them will be more able to achieve success in reading comprehension. Moreover, the perception of the assessment of reading can determine the factors contributing to students' perceptions of reading assessment and the results of learning practices. It is critical to understand how students perceive these assessments since their perceptions can substantially impact engagement, motivation, and overall learning results. Reading assessment is divided into independent skills and skills that are combined with one or more of the other three skills (Brown, 2018). Among them are the ability to listen, write, and speak. Not only that, in each ability other supporting points are needed to develop it.

Among them are the ability to listen, write, and speak. Not only that, in each ability other supporting points are needed to develop it. For example, reading requires grammar and vocabulary comprehension. During the learning process, teachers and students interact with one another; student perspectives have two assessments, positive and negative. This occurs in students' understanding of how they can understand the teaching materials that have been delivered by the teacher. According to Baharudin and Zakaria (2018), teachers are the most influential component in the establishment of high-quality educational procedures and outcomes, and their performance reflects their professionalism and excellence.

Iftanti (2015), also mentions a good reading habit for EFL students is defined as reading various sorts of English reading materials on a regular and intentional basis as part of EFL students' daily activities. However, a recent study suggests that not all students develop the same reading ability. Reading builds pre-reading skills, such as vocabulary and grammar competence. Also, according to Gunardi (2022), teaching phonics offers children a concept of how to describe sounds in literature and inspect the word on each sound well, as well as some typical reading comprehension challenges.

In the English Education study program at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, students take the Critical Reading course in the fifth semester. In the course, students are expected to react to what students read critically. According to Griffin and Care (2015), critical thinking skills, creative skills, communication skills, and collaborative abilities are examples of 21st-century competence. On the other hand, some students find it difficult when take reading tests because of a lack of motivation which can influence students' concentration. Also, they find it difficult to read assessments due to limited vocabulary and difficulty identifying word order. Sari and Prasetyo (2021), concluded in their research that almost all students who felt apprehensive when practicing critical reading were concerned about their faults, particularly in grammar and meaning. Some of them were likewise hesitant to practice English.

The findings presented by Grumilah (2014), it explained students' perspectives on the use of informal assessment in language classes and described which types of informal assessment are most favorable and preferred by students. The researcher collected data through questionnaires and also analyzed data using descriptive statistics. Portfolio assessment worked effectively for a large number of students in all language skills classes, although peer assessment and observation worked best for those in excellent groups. Based on the research, there are similarities and differences. This research

discusses exploring student perceptions and the difference is that this study used 600 students as the population and in this study analyzed semester four.

2. Method

The design of this research is a mixed method. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the mixed method is the incorporation of two forms of data in research, including discussing data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation, discussion, and procedures in validation in context. For this reason, the data is presented in descriptive and numerical form. This method was conducted to learn in-depth about students' perceptions and common problems of reading assessment. The population of data collection in this quantitative research was students who enrolled in the English Education Study Program. The population of the data obtained by the researcher in the critical reading course was 50 students, and the number of samples used was 44 students. For the qualitative data, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique a non-random sampling strategy in which the researcher obtains illustrative quotations by determining a unique identity that matches the study aims and is expected to respond to the research case (Lenaini, 2021). Only 8 students of the critical reading class in the English education study program Universitas Ahmad Dahlan Yogyakarta participated in the interview for the academic year 2021.

The instruments that were used in this research were questionnaires and interviews. The semi-structured interviews were used to know students' common problems. This questionnaire was used to determine students' perceptions. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale which is divided into 4 categories namely strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

Table 1. Mean Range of Perception Scale Scores

Score	Mean Range	Degree	Interpretation
4	4.00 – 3.00	Strongly Agree	Positive
3	2.99 – 2.00	Agree	
2	1.99 – 1.00	Disagree	Negative
1	1.00 – 0.99	Strongly Disagree	

Furthermore, the questionnaire consisted of twenty-five closed questions from 5 principles based on Douglas. H. Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), which are practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback.

Table 2. Blue Print Categories of the Questionnaire

No.	Aspects	Number of Items
1.	Practicality in Reading Assessments	1 – 5
2.	Reliability in Reading Assessments	6 – 10
3.	Validity in Reading Assessments	11 – 15
4.	Authenticity in Reading Assessments	16 – 20
5.	Washback in Reading Assessments	21 – 25

The questionnaire was used as a closed questionnaire which was analyzed quantitatively using a Likert scale. The closed questionnaire was analyzed by determining the total number of students. The semi-structured interview findings were analyzed through steps as stated by Creswell (2018), including organizing and preparing the data for analysis, reading or looking at all the data, starting coding all of the data, generating a description and themes, and representing the description and them.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Findings

a. Students' Perception of Reading Assessment

1) Practicality in Reading Assessment

Table 3. Practicality in Reading Assessment

Statement	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	Mean	Degree
1. I think the reading tests used in the class are easy to do.	8	26	8	2	2.72	Agree
2. I always get clear instructions and guidelines for conducting reading tests.	6	29	8	1	2.90	Agree
3. I believe the time needed to conduct the reading test is sufficient and manageable.	8	30	4	2	3	Strongly Agree
4. I think the results from reading tests are presented in a timely and clear manner.	9	30	5	0	3.09	Strongly Agree
5. I believe the reading test results are always swiftly revealed.	10	28	4	2	3.04	Strongly Agree

Table 3 indicates that practicality is one of the principles of assessment. Almost all students strongly agree that the results of the reading tests are presented in a timely and clear manner (Mean=3.09), which has the highest score. Furthermore, many students strongly agree that students believe the reading test results are always swiftly revealed (Mean=3.04). The students also believe the time needed to conduct the reading test is sufficient and manageable (Mean=3.00). In addition, the students agree that they always get clear instructions and guidelines for conducting reading tests (Mean=2.90). Finally, some of the students think the reading tests used in the class are easy to do (Mean=2.72).

2) Reliability in Reading Assessment

Table 4. Reliability in Reading Assessment

Statement	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	Mean	Degree
6. I think that the tests used in the class are fair.	11	29	3	1	3.13	Strongly Agree
7. I think the reading test results are consistent with other indicators of my reading proficiency.	10	29	5	0	3.11	Strongly Agree
8. I think the lecturer provides well-defined rubrics or guidelines for assessing my reading skills.	4	23	12	5	2.59	Agree
9. I think reading assessment covers important aspects of consistent reading skills including grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.	8	31	4	1	3.04	Strongly Agree
10. I feel the reading assessment criteria for the reading test are specific and understandable	7	27	8	2	2.88	Agree

Based on table 4 shows that reliability is one of the assessment principles. Most students gave their positive perceptions by choosing to agree. The students strongly agree that the tests used in the class are fair (Mean=3.13), which is the highest score. The students strongly agreed that the reading test results are consistent with other indicators of my reading proficiency (Mean=3.11). Then, many students also strongly agreed that the

reading assessment covers important aspects of consistent reading skills including grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Mean=3.04).

3) Validity in Reading Assessment

Table 5. Validity in Reading Assessment

Statement	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	Mean	Degree
11. I think the reading test procedures align well with the curriculum and RPS	8	28	6	2	2.95	Agree
12. I think the reading test methods contribute effectively to improve my learning outcomes	8	28	7	1	2.97	Agree
13. I think the reading tasks measure my reading ability accurately and comprehensively	8	30	5	1	3.02	Strongly Agree
14. I believe the reading test helped me to improve my language structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension	14	27	3	0	3.25	Strongly Agree
15. I think the reading test reflects the reading skills and subskills that I learned in class	9	32	2	1	3.13	Strongly Agree

Table 5 indicates that validity is one of the assessment principles. Most students expressed positive impressions by selecting to strongly agree. The students choose to strongly agree that the reading test helped them to improve their language structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Mean=3.25), which is the highest score. The students strongly agree that the reading test reflects the reading skills and subskills that I learned in the class (Mean=3.13). Also, the students think the reading tasks measure their reading ability accurately and comprehensively (Mean=3.02). The students believe the reading test methods contribute effectively to improve their learning outcomes (Mean=2.97). The students agree that the reading test procedures align well with the curriculum and RPS (Mean=2.95).

4) Authenticity in Reading Assessment

Table 6. Authenticity in Reading Assessment

Statement	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	Mean	Degree
16. I think the content of reading assessments reflects real-world reading tasks	12	26	5	1	3.11	Strongly Agree
17. I think the reading tasks provide opportunities for collaboration and communication	9	31	4	0	3.13	Strongly Agree
18. I think the reading tasks allow me to demonstrate my critical thinking and creativity in my daily life	13	24	5	2	3.09	Strongly Agree
19. I think the reading tasks are relevant to my interests and needs	5	25	12	2	2.75	Agree
20. I think the reading tasks are similar to the texts and genres that I read outside the classroom	7	24	9	4	2.77	Agree

Based on table 6 authenticity is one of the assessment principles. The majority of students chose to strongly agree, expressing their positive perceptions. Almost all students strongly agreed that the reading tasks provide opportunities for collaboration and communication (Mean=3.13), which has the highest score. The students strongly agreed that the content of reading assessments reflects real-world reading tasks (Mean=3.11). The students also strongly agreed that the reading tasks allow to demonstrate their critical thinking and creativity in daily life (Mean=3.09). The students agree that the reading tasks are similar to the texts and genres that I read outside the classroom (Mean=2.77). The

students agreed that the reading tasks are similar to the texts and genres that they read outside the classroom (Mean=2.75).

5) Washback in Reading Assessment

Table 7. Washback in Reading Assessment

Statement	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	Mean	Degree
21. I think the reading tests positively affect my reading skills	9	31	3	1	3.09	Strongly Agree
22. I believe the reading tests motivate me and are useful for improving my reading performance	10	30	3	1	3.11	Strongly Agree
23. I believe the reading test provides useful feedback for my reading development	9	31	3	1	3	Strongly Agree
24. I think the reading test challenges my critical thinking skills	16	24	3	1	3.25	Strongly Agree
25. I believe the reading test motivates me to read more extensively and intensively	9	25	8	2	2.93	Agree

Table 7 washback is one of the assessment principles. Almost of students chose to strongly agree, expressing their positive perceptions. Almost all students strongly agreed that the reading test challenges with their critical thinking skills (Mean=3.25), which has the highest. The students believe the reading tests motivate them and are useful for improving their reading performance (Mean=3.11). Moreover, the students agreed that the reading tests positively affect their reading skills (Mean=3.09). The students believe the reading test provides useful feedback for their reading development (Mean=3). The students agreed that the reading test motivates them to read more extensively and intensively (2.93).

b. Students' Common Problems and Strategies in Reading Assessment

Based on the interview research, the respondents have some problems with reading assessments. One of them is the students felt anxious because they were asked to analyze the questions promptly and some of them felt afraid because they could not find the answer. As mentioned by student 1.

"I think the reading class was a bit nervous at first when asked to analyze a sentence [...]"

Also reflected in the statement of student 3.

"For obstacles, I feel afraid of not finding the answer [...]."

Another problem is the students have difficulty when they encounter a question or a long passage. Student 5 gave a statement:

"I have experienced obstacles, when the text is long and the time is short, I have to understand the text and determine the right answer."

As supported by student 4.

"Having obstacles when reading long passages that must be read quickly because the time given to answer is quite short."

The following statement was given by student 2:

"My feelings on critical reading courses, and for me who don't like reading, it's difficult because for critical reading courses, you have to criticize a text reading, so my feelings are 'feeling struggle' to take critical reading courses."

In addition, there are also the same students who have different problems in reading assessment. Apart from the statements they showed above, some of them had problems with the lack of vocabulary they had in this reading assessment. The following statements were given by student 7:

“My lack of vocabulary made it difficult for me to understand the material because the language was a bit high. There was not enough time for me.”

Student 3 also has an idea that is almost the same,

“My lack of vocabulary made me concerned about the lack of ability to deliver the answers correctly.”

Furthermore, the interviewer shared the strategies they used when they faced challenges in reading assessment. Firstly, students can measure themselves where their shortcomings in reading assessment lie. As expressed by student 1:

“My strategy for dealing with challenges in reading assessment is to read frequently and analyze long reads.”

Supporting the statement given by student 1 and student 3 also gives another statement:

“For strategies, maybe I can be more detailed in reading not quickly or maybe I can ask a friend, then for the lack of vocab, we delivered it I mixed Indonesian and English.”

In addition, student 5 gives an additional opinion.

“Strategies that can be faced repeated reading, understanding if you don't know usually postpone working on it in the remaining time.”

In addition, student 2 also gives other strategies:

“My strategy is to ask friends, and if I don't understand the meaning, I usually use Google Translate into Indonesian [...]”

Student 4 also has an opinion:

“The strategy is to learn to understand the content of the text, skimming, and increasing vocabulary will be easier. Another technique that I used is to learn to read scanning.”

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3.2. Discussion

a. Students' Perception of Reading Assessment

1) Practicality in Reading Assessment

Based on practicality data results, almost all students strongly agree that reading test results are delivered on time and clearly. Furthermore, many students strongly believe that the outcomes of reading tests are always revealed quickly. The students also agree that the time required to conduct the reading exam is sufficient and possible. In addition, the students agree that they always receive clear instructions and rules for distributing reading assessments. Finally, some students believe the reading assessments presented in class are simple to complete. This statement is in line with Kubela et al. (2022) that teachers provide specific and clear reading skill instructions so that students can understand the material

2) Reliability in Reading Assessment

According to the reliability data, almost all of the students expressed their positive perceptions of the fairness of assessments utilized in class. The students all agreed that the reading test results were consistent with previous measures of my reading ability. Then, many students strongly agreed that the reading exam discusses an essential component of consistent reading skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. This statement is in line with Rusnawati (2022), that the reading assessment effectively boosted their language skills with its components.

3) Validity in Reading Assessment

As a result of the validity data, almost all students chose to strongly agree, indicating positive perceptions. The students majority agreed that the reading test helped them enhance their language structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The students also agree that the reading test accurately represents the reading skills and subskills they taught in class. In addition, students believe that the reading activities properly and completely assess their reading abilities. The students believe that reading test methods help to improve their learning outcomes. The students agree that the reading methods of testing are consistent with the curriculum and RPS. This statement is in line with Swaffield (2011) as cited in G. T. L. Brown (2019) when the learner is in the spotlight, assessment for learning is as much about fuzzy outcomes, vistas of possibilities, problem-solving, and evaluative objectives as it is about precisely specified curriculum objectives matched to prescribed standards.

4) Authenticity in Reading Assessment

Based on the authenticity data results, the majority of students decided to strongly agree and share their positive impressions. Almost all students strongly agreed that the reading exercises encourage collaboration and communication. Students generally thought that the substance of reading tests reflected real-world reading tasks. The students also strongly believed that the reading activities enabled them to display critical thinking and creativity in daily activities. The students agree that the reading tasks are similar to the books and genres they read outside of class. The students agreed that the reading tasks are relevant to the texts and genres they read apart from class.

5) Washback in Reading Assessment

Based on the washback data results, the majority of students decided to strongly agree, indicating their positive perceptions. Almost every student believed that the reading test tests their critical thinking abilities. Students believe that reading examinations encourage them and help them improve their reading skills. Furthermore, students agreed that the reading assessments improved their reading skills. The students agree that the reading test provides good feedback on their reading progress. The students agreed that the reading test encourages them to read more widely and properly. This statement is in line with Sari and Prasetyo (2021) that critical reading classes are designed to improve students' critical perspective skills.

b. Students' Obstacles and Strategies in Reading Assessment

Based on the results, most students feel that through this reading assessment. First, by conducting the reading assessment students can identify the areas that need to be improved. Second, the students felt anxious because they were asked to analyze the questions promptly and some of them felt afraid because they could not find the answer. Moreover, the students also have difficulty when they encounter a question or a long passage. Almost all of them had problems with the lack of vocabulary they had in this reading assessment.

The strategies that students used in the reading assessment are more reading practice and analyzing long passages, rereading to understand the content of the text, doing assessments from the easiest to manage their time, and using Google Translate as a tool to help translate the text because they often work independently and inevitable they ask friends to help them understand more.

4. Conclusion

The study found that students generally had positive perceptions of reading assessments, describing them as timely, clear, adequate, easy to conduct, fair, and consistent with their previous reading abilities, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. Most students believe reading tests improve language structure, vocabulary, comprehension, and teaching skills, aligning with the curriculum and RPS. Reading exercises encourage collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity, reflecting real-world tasks and relevant texts and genres read outside the classroom. These activities are beneficial for daily activities.

Reading assessment aids in identifying improvement areas but also causes anxiety among students. Fear of not finding answers and difficulty with long passages are common issues, influenced by limited vocabulary. Students employ strategies like practice, analysis, rereading, time management, and Google Translate for reading assessments, often relying on friends for assistance.

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