THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MINIMUM COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT (AKM): OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

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Abstract
Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) is the new evaluation system to monitor the education quality in Indonesia. Its implementation starts from 2021. This new system focuses on students’ literacy and numeracy skill without assessing any of school subjects. The purpose of this study is to investigate 1) the opportunities of AKM for English teachers and 2) the challenges of AKM for English teachers. Survey research with descriptive qualitative approach is used on this study. As instruments, online questionnaire and interview is utilized. The findings show that there are four opportunities; 1) English teachers tend to be happier, 2) English teachers are freer to implement certain teaching method, 3) English teachers could focus more on the use of English, not on test completion, and 4) English teachers could give more attention for students’ literacy. In addition, there are five challenges; 1) socialization about AKM is not yet done comprehensively, 2) most of students have less reading motivation, 3) it’s quite hard to connect English with numeration aspect, 4) teachers are having less experience in creating HOTS questions, 5) less skilful teacher in using technology.

Keywords: AKM, English teachers, challenges, opportunities
INTRODUCTION

The changes on evaluation system from Final Examination to National Assessment got a lot of positive responses from various parties. On a study by Muta’ali (2020), 91% respondents agreed on the new evaluation system (National Assessment). This new system is believed to be good since it is not only required students to remember the theories, but more focus on the fundamental concept of thought which are literacy and numeracy (Muta’ali, 2020). It is in line with Novita et al., (2021) that stated 52% of pre-service teachers agreed that National Assessment will be used as the evaluation system on education because the Final Examination is only measured the final result of learning without paying attention to another factors.

Moreover, authentic assessment is appropriate to be implemented as the practice of Merdeka Belajar since it is able to evaluate students’ affective, cognitive, and psychomotor (Sugiri & Priatmoko, 2020). National Assessment measures the holistic education system since it complemented with 3 fundamental instruments; (1) Minimum Competency Assessment or Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum (AKM), (2) Character Survey or Survei Karakter, and (3) Environmental Study Survey or Survei Lingkungan Belajar (Mendikbud, 2020).

Minimum Competency Assessment is one among three instruments that used to evaluate the education system. This kind of assessment will involve students’ participation on completing several questions that related to literacy and numeracy. On this assessment, literacy is not only about students’ skill on decoding words and their capability of reading texts. It is also dealing with students’ skill on understanding, utilizing, evaluating, and reflecting various texts to solve problems and to develop their life’s skill as humans being. Numeracy is dealing with students’ thinking skill on utilizing the concepts, procedures, facts, and mathematic tools to solve daily problems in various contexts.

Both literacy and numeracy are two basic components that should be possessed by students to be productive people in society. This is the reason why government uses those two as indicators on Minimum Competency Assessment. Moreover, literacy and numeracy are competences that need to be established across school subjects. The implementation Minimum Competency Assessment encourages teachers from various schools’ subjects to improve students’ competence on literacy and logical thinking skill.

Not only Bahasa Indonesia and Mathematics teachers but also all school-subjects’ teachers have to participate actively in supporting this new system of assessment. Nehru (2019) concluded 3 crucial phenomena that happened due to the implementation of the new assessment system; (1) the increasing of teacher’s creativity on teaching and learning process, (2) the shifting from Teacher Centered Learning approach into Students Centered Learning approach,
and (3) the decreasing of textbook on teaching and learning process.

Educational parties, such as stakeholders, teachers, students, and parents, are already aware of AKM (Aisah et al., 2021; Fauziah et al., 2021). Moreover, teachers have declared that they are prepared to deal with it (Rokhim et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2020). Teachers also claimed that their schools had previously socialized AKM and provided teacher training on the questions that would be tested on AKM. Giving it is one type of preparation that instructors can conduct.

For numerous reasons, the majority of instructors and students favour this new evaluation system (Fauziah et al., 2021; Munthe, 2020; Nurjanah, 2021; Rokhim et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2020). Students were enthusiastic to embrace AKM since it eliminates the fear of failure (Munthe, 2020). However, according to Yuliandari & Hadi (2020), the implementation of AKM in terms of teaching-learning system management still has to be streamlined. Some teachers continue to use the old conventional learning framework, which focuses on memory testing (Meriana & Murniarti, 2021).

In fact, several studies on teachers’ perceptions and readiness to face AKM (Fauziah et al., 2021; Rokhim et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2020) have been conducted. However, a specific study that investigates the opportunities and challenges for English teachers in facing AKM is less conducted. English teachers are teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. The English subject itself is not tested in AKM. Even it is not tested, the English teachers need to support AKM and find out the best way to do it. It is necessary to understand the opportunities and challenges that face by English teachers to help them in deciding the best way to support the AKM.

This study, therefore, investigates the opportunities and challenges of English teachers in facing AKM. Both the opportunities and challenges could be investigated by looking for teachers’ perception and experience related to the implementation of AKM as part of new education system in curriculum. A study by Oloruntegbe (2011) showed that teachers were reluctant in implementing new curriculum since they were hardly ever involved in the development and even how best way to implement it. This study, therefore, is intentionally conducted to provide real picture of English teachers’ opportunities and challenges on AKM. It is expected that this study will enrich teachers, especially English teachers to embrace AKM as the new assessment system and to provide action plans using suitable methods and material that meet students’ need.

The aim of this study is investigating the opportunities and challenges of AKM on English teachers. The implementation of Minimum Competency Test (Prativi Khilyatul Auliya, The Implementation of Minimum Competency Test)

1. What are the opportunities of AKM for English teachers?
2. What are the challenges of AKM for English teachers?
METHOD

Design

This is survey research that employed descriptive qualitative approach. Survey research is used by researchers to investigate people’s beliefs, opinions, characteristics, and behaviour (Ary et al., 2010). It is in line with this study’s purpose which is investigating the opportunities and challenges of AKM for English teachers. There were six steps taken; (1) planning, (2) defining the population, (3) sampling, (4) constructing the instrument, (5) conducting the survey, and (6) processing the data (Ary et al., 2010).

Participants

In survey research, the subjects should be selected (randomly, if possible) from the population of interest (Fraenkel et al., 2012: 398). In this study, therefore, 20 English teachers (10 teachers from secondary school and 10 teachers from high school) were chosen as the participants. The teachers were from 11 different schools in some cities in East Java, such as Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Gresik, Mojokerjo, and Jombang. The secondary and high school English teachers were chosen because English is taught as compulsory subject on those two levels.

Instrument

The most common instruments that utilized in survey research are the questionnaire and the interview (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2012). The combination of close-ended and open-ended questionnaire were used in this study. Moreover, semi-structured interview was used after that to get in depth data. The two instruments were validated by the expert before administered to the participants.

Data Collection and Analysis Technique

The data were collected on October – November 2021. Firstly, all the 20 English teachers completed the questionnaires that administered through google form. Data taken from the questionnaire then analyzed descriptively. To gain in depth information about the issue, follow-up interviews was held. There were 7 English teachers who participated in phone interview. The recorded data from interview then transcribed to ease the analysis process. Coding was done after that to help drawing a comprehensive conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Opportunities of AKM for English Teachers

Based on the data, most of English teachers showed their positive value on the implementation of AKM. They argued AKM brings out several opportunities or benefits for English teachers. It falls into several categories as follows;

First, from the psychology perspective, English teachers tend to be happier when AKM is implemented in Indonesia. At first, English teachers are quite stressful since they have responsibility to “help” students pass
the English exam in Ujian Nasional (Jones et al., 2003). But now it is not happened anymore. AKM is not focusing on gaining good score for each student. On the other hand, it focuses on the internalisation of basic skills (literacy and numeracy) for students’ life (Mendikbud, 2020). Since then, English teachers are not forced to focus on teaching theory and providing exercise as a purpose of resulting students’ good score. It is stated by Teacher 03, “When UN was still exist, I focused on the UN Score. UN targeted the teacher to "help" the students to gain high score. Honestly, it was very stressing for me as a teacher because every day we supposed to teach the students by giving them un questions again and again. It’s so boring. But now, after the government stated that AKM will be used, of course it is good news. We don't need to prepare many things (especially questions prediction) to prepare the students. All I need is to teach my students happily to make them good at English.”. When teachers are happy while teaching, it affects students’ motivation as well as students’ attitude towards the teacher (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). Moreover, teachers’ happiness is highly correlated with their creativity, job performance and instructional activities (Jalali & Heidari, 2016; Lavy & Bocker, 2018; Mehdinezhad, 2012). Therefore, teachers’ happiness could be an opportunity in AKM implementation.

Not only bringing happiness for English teachers, students are on the same felling. At first, students see English as hard subject on Ujian Nasional, beside Mathematics (Indrianie, 2015). Now, the teachers stated that students feel happy since English is not tested anymore and is not put as consideration for the passing a certain level of education. The happiness of both teachers and students will be a good starting point in conducting teaching and learning process. Since then, “Teachers can provide good material that do not require students to memorize a certain material which is not used in their daily life”, said T07.

Second, from the pedagogical perspective, English teachers are freer to implement certain teaching method that match students’ need and interest. “English teacher could teach them on how to use English in daily live rather than focused on textbook. Teachers could insert many good values while teaching English. The point is, teacher can be more creative and freer”, said T12. It is in line with (Hakim & Saputra, 2020), in which teachers decision on teaching method is influenced by teachers and schools’ need to “help” students passing Ujian Nasional. It is why teachers’ method more focus on passing the test. In fact, however, running appropriate method for teaching is the one component on

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A teacher stated that an opportunity of implementing AKM is “Can apply a method that suitable with students needed, and give them more time to solve their own problem. So, they will get more experience.” While another teacher said that “Teacher could give relevant method such as
discovery learning to activate students’ multiple intelligences”. It seems that teachers have motivation to change their teaching method, from focusing on test mastery to English skill mastery.

The third, English teachers could focus more on the use of English, not on completing test. On the previous scheme of assessment on education (Ujian Nasional), teachers have to drill students so many questions in order to pass the exam so that could go on to the next level of education. Since teachers focus on English test preparation on Ujian Nasional, it harms the development of basic English competence (Hakim & Saputra, 2020). Now days, AKM is not used to assess students’ achievement. Therefore, teachers no more focus on drilling questions rather than improving students’ English skill (listening, speaking, reading, writing). A teacher stated that “mastering vocabulary as part of English skill is really important for students because the English words are often appeared on AKM questions. That’s why I focus on teaching skill rather than giving drilling questions”.

Improving students’ English skill is the only target of teachers now days. Compared to the previous situation, where teachers have to “help” students passing the Ujian Nasional and improving students’ English skill at the same time, now, teachers have more time to focus on students’ improvement. It is stated by a teacher as follows; “I have more time to focus on students’ skill rather than test. I focus on how to teach students to use English by communicative teaching. So, just focus on improving skill even it is little progress because English is quite difficult lesson for high school students who don’t have any great skill on it”.

The fourth, English teachers could give more attention for students’ literacy. Language and literacy are interconnected. They both build students’ skill in facing this life. By having AKM, teachers are able to emphasis more on students’ literacy by providing good teaching material, media, and method on English language learning, “I have opportunity to explore more on students’ literacy. Students will learn how to use the language rather than just to answer questions in exams, especially in reading skill. It will build the students’ English literacy as well” said T20. It is in line with (Merisuo-Storm, 2007) study that mentioned bilingual classes in which 20% of the instruction is in English showed better literacy skill than monolingual classes.

Furthermore, literacy itself is part of AKM. Literacy is the basic competence that students must have to be able to absorb information and solve any problems in daily life. Teacher 09 stated that “It’s a great change for me, as I can focus and develop my students’ literacy through English subject. It also can be connected and support our school literacy movement. And fortunately, literacy is part of AKM and literacy is part of language too, including English language”. From the statement above, it can be seen that the teacher is eager to deal with students’ literacy that has can be gained by learning English subject. It is also mentioned by (Byrnes &
Maxim, 2004), “The more we can model the kinds of thinking that literacy demands the better we can prepare our students for the broadest range of language use and allow them to achieve their full communicative potential”.

2. Challenges of AKM for English Teachers

Besides some opportunities that already mentioned earlier, there are also several challenges that faced by English teachers on the implementation of AKM. It is elaborated as follows;

First, among 20 participants, 3 of them still have not got any training about AKM yet. It seems that the socialization about AKM is not yet done comprehensively. It makes some teachers still confuse of what is expected to do. Teacher 04 said that “I haven’t had any training in AKM, so I do not know what to do. I am still doing the same as before”. It is in line with Rokhim et al., (2021) that mentioned “the education unit has not yet disseminated the implementation of the national assessment which has three instruments including the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), learning surveys and learning environment surveys”. On the contrary Aisah et al., (2021) stated that The Ministry of Education and Culture has successfully disseminated the AKM, it can be proven by seeing that this new policy is already acknowledged by various parties including parents.

From the elaboration above, it is shown that there are still some teachers who have not got socialization on AKM. Therefore, the government, in this case The Ministry of Education and Culture should provide socialization for all level of teachers in all education level to create comprehensive understanding about AKM. Besides, it is to avoid the misinformation that widespread among educators or in society. The comprehensive socialization, moreover, will help Prativi Khilyatul Auliya, The Implementation of Min...
questions are utilizing HOTS after using several reading strategies. Students who love reading will be familiar with English vocabs, grammatical structure, as well as reading strategies that need to understand the text. It makes them easier in completing HOTS questions. And on the contrary, students who have low interest on reading tend to have small number of English vocabularies and small portion of understanding the grammatical structure and reading strategies. Therefore, students’ low interest on reading is a challenge for teacher on implementing AKM.

Third, it’s quite hard to connect English with numeration aspect. Teacher 15 said “Sometimes I feel my material does not fit with numeration aspect. While for literacy, it has strong connection with English subject because it is a language”. Teachers think that because English is a language and it is more dealing with words rather than numbers, it will be hard to insert numeration into English material. However, Rutherford-Becker & Vanderwood (2009) pointed out that math performance is affected by students’ reading comprehension skill. While reading comprehension will only happened if students understand the language. It means that language plays an important role on students’ numeracy.

Teachers need to improve students’ literacy to support students’ numeracy. By having exposures on literacy practice such as daily practice in reading and writing, the workshop model, small-group work, guided reading, independent practice, and conferencing can also maximize numeracy learning (Sienna, 2009). From that study, it could be seen that literacy and numeracy are interconnected. As a simple example, to solve mathematical problems, firstly students have to understand the problems itself. It means that students must comprehend the language used, so that students could make decision what step that will be done to solve it.

Fourth, teachers are having less experience in creating HOTS questions. Most of teachers are still giving the LOTS (Low Order Thinking Skill) questions including memorizing, understanding text, and applying certain instruction. A teacher stated "The questions in AKM are HOTS, but I still never got any training to create such. But I try to make it for exercise". This result, is in line to the previous study that mentioned teachers are still using a standard learning framework by providing assessment that is limited to testing memory (Meriana & Murniarti, 2021). It means that teachers need training on creating HOTS questions for English subject that can be used to support AKM.

Fifth, less skilful teacher in using technology. As the implementation of AKM, teachers are freer in choosing teaching method and media that match students’ need and interest. In fact, however, there are still numbers of teachers who have less skill in
benefitting technology for teaching. Teacher 18 said, “Using more technological tools as teaching media takes time for some teachers”. Even if technology could help teachers engaging with students, it can be a burden if the teachers are less skilful. It is in line with the previous study by Iman et al., (2021), that one of problems in embracing AKM in during the pandemic is the minimum skill of teachers to use technology. It can be inferred that, training on the use of technology for teaching is demanded now days.

CONCLUSION

Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) is the new evaluation system to monitor the education quality in Indonesia. Its implementation starts from 2021. This new system focuses on students’ literacy and numeracy skill without assessing any of school subjects. Even though all school subjects are not tested, all school teachers, including English teachers have to participate in embracing this new system. The implementation of AKM give opportunities and challenges for every school subject teaches.

On this study, the writer focuses on investigating the opportunities and challenges of AKM for English teachers. Based on the data taken from 20 English teachers, there are four opportunities; 1) English teachers tend to be happier, 2) English teachers are freer to implement certain teaching method, 3) English teachers could focus more on the use of English, not on test completion, and 4) English teachers could give more attention for students’ literacy. In addition, there are five challenges shown; 1) socialization about AKM is not yet done comprehensively, 2) most of students have less reading motivation, 3) it’s quite hard to connect English with numeration aspect, 4) teachers are having less experience in creating HOTS questions, 5) less skilful teacher in using technology. English teachers should take the opportunities and try to find out solution for the challenges appeared.

REFERENCES


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