

HOMESCHOOLING TEACHERS' VIEWS TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS IN BOOSTING STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE AND MAXIMIZING TEACHERS' POTENTIAL IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUBJECTS

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Abstract. This study explores homeschooling teachers' perspectives on alternative assessments to enhance students' confidence and maximize teachers' potential in English language subjects. Alternative assessments are identified as helpful for homeschooling teachers in conducting specific learning activities as homeschooling teachers need the type of assessment that can facilitate different approaches to assess students' diversity. This research investigates the views of Anggun Homeschooling International's teachers by conducting semi-structured interviews using the purposive sampling technique. The interview guide is used as a research instrument, and the interview questions are adapted from Nasri et al. (2010). By examining the perceptions of homeschooling teachers, this study aims to provide insights that homeschooling teachers agree that alternative assessments are best for homeschooling students with different learning styles and preferences, accommodate students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, make the teaching and learning process more enjoyable, and prepare the students to have real-life skills to prepare them for a real-life situation

Keywords: alternative assessments, homeschooling teachers, English Language Subject, students' confidence, teachers' potentials

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an inseparable part of the English teaching and learning process. Assessment may bring improvement both for students and teachers from the feedback and reflections (Nasri et al., 2010). Implementing language assessments is a must for assessing students' language skills (Szecsi et al., 2017). Different four language skills need different ways of accessing the skills. Teachers have the urgency to think about the best assessment for students, especially by considering the five principles of language testing: practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback (Wulandari & Hamzah, 2023). Teachers need to be aware in choosing the type of assessment used to assess students' skills and performances. As one of the options, alternative assessments can be the option for teachers who expect the situated-classroom assessment, a constructivist-type assessment, and can view the learning process and learning products to be equal (Janisch et al., 2007).

According to Serin (2015), alternative assessments proposed to "reform" the traditional assessment practices and fix the mismatch between the assessment system and the curriculum framework. Alternative assessments are identified as helpful for homeschooling teachers in conducting specific learning activities. In a homeschooling context, providing a meaningful learning situation is a must, however, there are lots of methods regarding the way to assess homeschooling students. As mentioned by Carlson (2020), there are different ways of conducting assessments in a homeschool context: 1) standardized tests for homeschooling, which refer to the students who want to get to the public or formal schools, and 2) no-testing assessments, which refer to projects and portfolios. Some examples of alternative assessments include portfolios, projects, and role-play speaking (Kaya, 2018). Assessing students in homeschool and public schools is different because they have different characteristics and approaches.

Homeschooling is one of the alternatives for students to learn with a home approach, flexible and humanistic elements (Purwaningsih & Fauziah, 2020). Homeschooling students can be instructed by their parents, guardians, or teachers who come to the house. Homeschooling can grow massively due to the trends of families who want to homeschool their kids. Several reasons stated by parents to decide to homeschool their kids, such as concern about school environment, dissatisfaction with formal academic instruction, and preferences based on their culture and religions (Lips & Feinberg, 2008). In homeschooling, students are expected to learn based on their pace, but still meaningful and does not make them stressed out. Homeschooling provides almost similar subjects to public school, including English Language subjects.

English Language is one of the essential subjects to be learned by homeschooling students. The English Language needs to be mastered because nowadays, English plays a vital role as a “*franca*,” or language that is spoken in a multilingual communication context (Tsagari et al., 2023). English language is the subject that focuses on teaching students to have four core language skills in English, including reading, listening, writing, and speaking. As added by Anstrom et al. (2010), there are lots of aspects that can be viewed in assessing students' English skills, knowledge, and mastery, such as phonological, lexical, grammatical, sociolinguistics, and discourse, that will be matched with students' cognitive levels. The English language has also become one of the subjects taught in the homeschooling context and needs careful assessment in judging students' improvements. One of the options in conducting English Language assessments is to choose alternative assessments.

Homeschooling teachers' views towards alternative assessment in English Language subjects become a concern that needs to be discussed. All teachers, including homeschooling teachers, must have the skills to assess their students to perform a characteristics of effective English teachers. As stated by Dincer et al. (2013), there are four characteristic of effective English teacher such as socio-affective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, and personality characteristics. These characteristics are useful when teachers want to give language assessments to their students. They must have good knowledge about the lessons to give valuable input, the skills to communicate with students and invite them to a reflection and discussion, and also the attitudes to make students feel comfortable in learning and encourage them. One way to know this is by reflecting on the teachers' views towards alternative assessment, especially in a homeschooling context.

Some studies that are concerned about teachers' perspectives toward the implementation of alternative assessments. Nasri et al. (2010); Sanjivani (2016); Takahashi & Sato (2003) already discussed how teachers perceive the implementation of alternative assessments. However, those studies focus on school teachers. No study discusses the perspectives of homeschooling teachers toward the implementation of alternative assessments. Therefore, this study is proposed to fill the gap and discover how the homeschooling teachers view the alternative assessments in English Language subjects.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a research conducted in a descriptive-qualitative approach to know homeschooling teachers' views towards alternative assessments in English subjects and how it can promote students' confidence in learning. The study took place in Anggun Homeschooling International, a homeschooling institution for foreigners based in Bali. This homeschooling was chosen as the place to conduct the study because this homeschooling institution is welcomed the idea of conducting this research. To be specific, the participants of this study were 5 (five) homeschooling teachers who taught English Language and who have more than 1-year experience in teaching this subject. 4 (four) teachers were female and 1 (one) teacher was male. The participants in this study are willing to go on the record and agree to have their names written in the participants' information using initials. Below, is the data about the participants.

Table 1. Information of Participants

Name	Age	Gender	Length of Teaching English Language
YC	24 Years Old	Female	1 Year and 8 Months
IP	21 Years Old	Female	1 Year and 3 Months
RP	25 Years Old	Male	1 Year and 2 Months
RI	24 Years Old	Female	1 Year and 2 Months
JW	21 Years Old	Female	1 Year

The kind of sampling used in this study is purposive sampling with several criteria. The participants must be homeschooling teachers with profound experience in teaching English Language subjects to foreigners, with a minimum of 1 year experience. The participants must be familiar with alternative assessments and already experienced in assessing students' knowledge using alternative assessment. The teachers involved in this study have a background in education programs. Moreover, Anggun Homeschooling International has teachers that already trained in international curriculum. Therefore, it can facilitate the researcher in collecting teachers' perspectives more broadly.

The instrument used in this study was an interview guide. The interview guide is selected as the data instrument because it can enable the researchers to obtain deeper data since the participants were not many. The type of interview used in this study was a semi-structured interview. This method is chosen because a semi-structured interview allows researchers to be flexible in changing the order of questions or giving follow-up questions to the participants. The interview session was conducted in English and the data obtained will be transcribed in the study. The interview questions were made to find out homeschooling teachers' views towards alternative assessment in teaching English Language subjects. There are three main questions regarding alternative assessment effects on promoting students' active learning and self-confidence and how alternative assessments make teachers realize their potential asked by the researcher adapted from Nasri et al. (2010).

Table 2. Questions for Interview Session

No	Question
1	How can alternative assessments can promote active learning and self-confidence among students in English Language subject?
2	How can alternative assessments can make you aware of your teaching strengths and weaknesses?
3	How can conducting alternative assessments make you more responsible?

In terms of collecting data, the researcher contacted the participants to ask them about their availability and willingness to participate in the research. The researcher explained the goals of conducting this study, confirmed their participation to be recorded in this study, and made an appointment to conduct the interview session. The interview session was started by asking for information about the participants, such as the length of their teaching period, their age, their educational background, etc. Then, the interview was conducted with the four main questions. The interview session took around 10-15 minutes for each participant. The data were recorded and transcribed before going to the analysis process.

After the interview sessions were conducted and all data were obtained, the researcher transcribed

the interview results. The analysis was conducted with the Miles and Huberman method. The data of this study were analyzed using three processes developed by Miles & Huberman (1994). Those processes include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Before the data are analyzed, they should be collected first in the data collection stage. Miles and Huberman draw the relationship between the data reduction stage, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification as continuous processes and follow each other. In this study, after the data were obtained, the data were specified to get the intended information about teachers' views towards the alternative assessment. After the data of the interview were obtained, selected, and reduced, all of their answers were listed and presented in the discussion section. Lastly, Miles & Huberman (1994) state that the conclusion should be temporarily drawn before it is checked. The conclusion can be changed if strong sources do not support it. However, if valid and consistent sources support the temporary conclusion, it can be credible. To sum up, there was a main heading that was produced from the data analysis process: Alternative assessment can promote active learning and self-confidence among students and maximize teachers' potential.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The results and discussion of this study were presented based on the participants' answers. The chosen data were interpreted in the article. Then, the discussion was made to provide more elaboration on explanation and examples regarding the topic.

1.1 Teachers' Views on Alternative Assessments Promoting Active Learning and Self-Confidence of Students

Alternative assessments are mostly believed to be good for motivating and encouraging students to perform well and showcase their efforts. As the interview found, most participants agree that alternative assessments can promote active learning and self-confidence among their students. Alternative assessments are best for homeschooling students who really need to adjust their learning styles and preferences. It is like Teacher YC and RI's views towards alternative assessments.

Teacher YC: *"Homeschooling students often have diverse learning styles and preferences. Alternative assessments can be designed to accommodate these differences by allowing students to perform their understanding through methods that suit them best. For example, visual learners are best in creating multimedia presentations, while kinesthetic learners will be super motivated in project-based assessments."*

Teacher RI: *"Certainly! I feel Alternative assessments can promote active learning and self-confidence among students in homeschooling. In my case, I often conduct projects, presentations, and portfolios that require my students to actively apply their knowledge. One of the example is when I teach my students about informative texts and they need to compile all of their works in a form of portfolio."*

Teacher YC's view concerns the differences of learners. With alternative assessments, teachers can facilitate students' differences, ranging from their learning styles, preferences, and needs. She mentioned how teachers can observe the students and match the type of assessment that suits with learning preferences the best. Teacher RI's view is positive towards the alternative assessments. She mentioned that she usually had projects, presentations, and portfolios to help the kids apply their knowledge in a fun way, not only just by writing it down. At the same time, her students feel confident about showcasing the topic they have learned. Their statements are in line with several previous studies. Firstly, it is in line with the findings from Takahashi & Sato (2003) about slow learners and portfolio assessments. Their study revealed that portfolio, as a part of alternative assessment, was successfully improving slow learners' speaking skills and they were happy with the result. As added by Nourdad and Banagozar (2022), portfolio assessments can promote students' vocabulary domain and make them more independent and motivated. A study from Khoiriyah et al. (2015) also supported positive views on project assessments. Projects given to the students can raise their critical thinking and influence their active learning from the developed Self-assessment Scale

on Active Learning and Critical Thinking (SSCAT). Alternative assessments make students learn in various ways because they are not assessed uniformly. However, the students will demonstrate their skills and their creative thinking (Nasri et al., 2010).

Teacher JW and teacher IP share their experiences regarding alternative assessments by implementing projects integrated with art and presentations.

Teacher JW: *"Absolutely, alternative assessment methods like projects encourage my students to engage with the material. My experience is when I asked them to create a poster magazine using simple present tense. This activity allows my students to showcase their understanding in creative ways, which can boost their confidence as they see the relevance of their learning to real-world applications."*

Teacher IP: *"I agree. Alternative assessments such as presentations often engage students actively. I often ask my student to present their short story by presenting them in front of me. I also asked her to draw some pictures as illustration for the story. With this method, she can speak clearly and confidently. Moreover, she can put her creativity in drawing things she like, such as unicorns."*

Teacher JW mentioned the relevance of conducting projects with real-world applications. Indeed, alternative assessments can be good options to teach and prepare for real-life challenges in the future. The relevance between alternative assessments and with real-life world is mentioned by Dikli (2003) that alternative assessments, such as projects, help students to apply the skills that are useful in real life and make students gain broader perspectives and insights about real-life skills. As added by Nasri et al. (2010), alternative assessments provide problem-solving skills and decision-making skills to prepare students to face real situations. Teacher IP mentioned a point about "confidence" and "clear." It can be inferred that her student was happy during the learning process and could apply their speaking skills well. It is in line with the statement from Janisch et al. (2007) that alternative assessments pose empowerment for students in learning with their responsibilities. The students can be more active, enjoy, and relaxed along the way of the teaching and learning process.

Other examples regarding types of alternative assessments and their effectiveness were mentioned by teacher RS.

Teacher RS: *"Yes, alternative assessments can promote active learning and self-confidence among students. Unlike traditional assessments like exams and quizzes that hardly focus to memorize things, alternative assessments focus on more meaningful aspects of learning, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity..."*

Teacher RS provided a comparison between alternative assessments and traditional assessments. Indeed, traditional and alternative assessments have different characteristics. Traditional assessments are often made in standardized tests and have strict judging criteria. However alternative assessments provide flexible judging criteria, which can enable students to apply their creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking in their works. In terms of comparing traditional assessments and alternative assessments, we cannot say one type of assessment is better than another since traditional and alternative assessments have different characteristics. A similar statement is made by Juma & Patel (2024) that traditional assessments are not suitable for education in this era since education nowadays has changed and needs assessment that can offer the flexibility of assessing students with different approaches. On the other side, traditional assessments are better to assess students' language assessment, such as grammatical tests since it has standards in terms of validity and reliability (Phongsirikul, 2018). Traditional and alternative assessments should be chosen wisely by the teachers based on the students' needs (Phongsirikul, 2018). However, if teachers' goals are to raise students' creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, alternative assessments can be a good one. As revealed by Dikli (2003), alternative assessments can assess students' higher-order thinking skills and highly focus on students' performance improvement.

To sum up, all teachers of Anggun Homeschooling International agree that alternative assessments can promote students' active learning and self-confidence. Homeschooling teachers feel the students can show more interest and grow motivation to finish their tasks when alternative assessments used in the classroom. Then, alternative assessments, such as projects, presentations, and portfolios. The

teachers also compare alternative assessments with traditional assessments, and they agree alternative assessments are more meaningful to be implemented in homeschooling settings. Homeschooling teachers propose many ideas to assess students in English Language subjects using alternative assessments, such as teaching about informative texts, creating posters to learn simple present tense, and presentations to assess speaking skills.

1.2 Teachers' Views on Alternative Assessments Raising Awareness of Teachers' Teaching Strengths and Weaknesses

The next finding concerns teachers' views on alternative assessments that can make them aware of their teaching strengths and weaknesses. Homeschooling teachers see alternative assessments as something that can make them realize their potential in teaching and the aspects that they have to improve.

The statements below from teacher JW, teacher RI, and teacher YC signify that alternative assessment has transformed them into adaptive and creative teachers who know what to do to improve the lessons.

Teacher JW: *"Yes, alternative assessment provides valuable insights into my teaching effectiveness. Observing how my students perform in tasks like projects or discussions helps me understand where my teaching methods are effective and where improvements are needed. It makes me easy to adapt my approach to better meet the diverse learning needs of students."*

Teacher YC: *"By conducting alternative assessment, I am aware of my teaching strength and weakness. After I see my students accomplish their projects happily, I feel that I want to keep fostering my creativity and keep learning to make me "close" with my students, to understand what they want to do. And for the weakness... I think I can evaluate what I should improve, like grading criteria and make it suitable for homeschooling setting."*

Teacher RI: *"Conducting alternative assessments can provide valuable insights into my teaching strengths and weaknesses. When students engage in alternative assessments, I can observe how well they understand and apply the material. On the other side, it also can reveal areas where my teaching has been effective or where students may struggle."*

Teacher JW, teacher RI and teacher YC argue on the insights of alternative assessments to make them realize the strengths in teaching. By observing students' responses and performances, teacher JW and teacher RI can evaluate their teaching methods. They can think of any improvements to make their teaching better and fulfill the needs of the homeschooling students. Alternative assessments are important tools to help teachers see the talent of students (Yudha et al., 2022). Teacher YC added that alternative assessments have encouraged her to be more creative and keep learning so she can always stay updated, which can help her assess her students better. By implementing fun and meaningful activities, such as projects or performances, teachers can benefit from measuring students' abilities through engaging activities (Arifuddin et al., 2021). The findings also discovered that alternative assessments make her aware of her weakness, which is in grading criteria to make it more suitable for homeschooling students. The statements from these three teachers show that they are teachers who possess a progressive conception (Tan, 2012) as they are aware of the disciplinary effects of alternative assessments.

Meanwhile, teacher RS and teacher IP highlight the idea regarding alternative assessments that make them realize things to improve in teaching English Language subjects.

Teacher RS: *"...for me, alternative assessments can also reveal areas where teaching may not have been as effective. If students struggle or perform poorly in certain types of alternative assessments, it may indicate gaps in instruction or areas where concepts were not clearly explained by teachers. For instance, if students struggle with a project making that requires applying knowledge, it means teachers need more intensive explanations or additional practice."*

Teacher IP: *".... I can evaluate my weakness using alternative assessments by reflecting on the outcomes. Sometimes I feel assessing students' grammar are hard using alternative assessments, and it is easier to use traditional assessment, such as quiz to assess them. I think it encourages me to develop better and adaptive."*

From the statements above, it can be concluded that teacher RS and teacher IP agree that alternative assessments can help them evaluate what aspects should be improved in their teaching. Not all kinds of skills can be assessed ideally through alternative assessments. Tan (2012) said alternative assessments present a non-formal testing method to support the discouraged by formal tests or traditional assessments. Then, alternative assessment is greatly recommended if teachers want to assess tasks that are related to real-life contexts and promote higher-order thinking skills (Tal & Miedijensky, 2005). The concepts and methods of alternative assessments need to be understood by teachers since some challenges may limit students' achievements. As stated by Ly (2024) and Sari et al. (2024), alternative assessments may be time-consuming, require additional resources, and tend to be subjective. So, teachers need always to be prepared with the content knowledge and adaptive to technology, as mentioned by teacher RS and teacher IP.

1.3 Teachers' Views on Alternative Assessments Encouraging Teachers to Become More Responsible

Based on the interviews, all teachers agree that alternative assessments can make them more responsible for how they assess their students. Below are the statements highlighting how alternative assessments encourage teachers to become more responsible.

Teacher JW: *"Yes, I think I become more responsible because I need to assess my students through varied methods. Especially my students are easily get bored and I need new way to assess my students' understanding. By assessing students, I gain a clearer understanding of their individual progress and learning styles..."*

Teacher RS: *"Sure. As you observe and evaluate student performance in various tasks, you can reflect on the effectiveness of your instructional methods, assessment strategies, and classroom management techniques. I also often to reflect on my teaching method and the way to assess my students..."*

Teacher IP: *"I would say that I become more understanding of my students' needs. Alternative assessments make me realize that my students become more engaged to finish tasks when they can contribute actively, make them think critically and use lots of their imagination."*

Teacher YC: *"I feel alternative assessments make me aware that I need to conduct projects, discussions, and maybe artwork to the English subject because the kids love it so much. We need to be responsible in preparing the activities as well as executing it well."*

Teacher RI: *"Hmm... compared to traditional assessments, alternative assessments help me more in becoming more adaptive and preparing strategies for my students. For example, one of my students really hates writing on paper, so what I do I prepare hands-on-projects that still can facilitate him to write."*

Based on the findings, the main points of alternative assessments are encouraging teachers to become more responsible in finding the most suitable assessment for students, reflecting on their teaching and learning process, and influencing them to be aware of students' needs and differences. This finding is supported by Tajularipin et al. (2019) that alternative assessment allows teachers to teach in a flexibly and creatively since it is not focused on the outcomes but on the process they have been through with the students. A similar idea is proposed by Sari et al. (2024) that teachers need to be more creative and understand students' learning style differences and need to apply more hands-on activities, projects, and collaborative assignments to increase students' engagement. By reflecting on the assessment process, teachers can adjust the type of assessments based on classroom situations and learning objectives (Fadilah et al., 2023). It can be beneficial for the teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSION

Alternative assessment has become an essential part of conducting English Language subjects, especially in a homeschooling context, which requires more hands-on activities, creativity, and adaptability. Alternative assessment can motivate students to perform their skills better, increase their motivation in learning, and may form students' critical thinking and creativity. These benefits are important for homeschooling kids who mostly need intensive treatment from the teachers. Since there is limited research discussing the view of homeschooling teachers toward alternative assessments, this study presents homeschooling teachers' perspectives toward alternative assessments. The findings discovered three main views of alternative assessments; there are alternative assessments promoting students' active learning and self-confidence, alternative assessments raising awareness of teachers' teaching strengths and weaknesses, and alternative assessments encouraging teachers to be more responsible. The homeschooling teachers involved in this study agree that alternative assessments promote their students' active learning and self-confidence from the application of projects, presentations, portfolios, and other hands-on activities as assessments. The teachers also agree that the implementation of alternative assessments can maximize their potential as teachers since they can reflect on strengths and weaknesses and then evaluate themselves to become more responsible in adapting to students' needs. As a recommendation, homeschooling teachers should be more creative and adaptive to assist their students' needs.

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