



## Teachers' conceptions of English assessment in International Baccalaureate Curriculum – Secondary Level

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### Abstract

Assessment as an essential part of teaching and learning might be perceived differently by teachers, whereas teachers' conception of assessment influences strategies and implementation of assessment. The International Baccalaureate curriculum is one of the international curricula widely used with its own assessment principles and implementation. This research aims to explore how teachers in IB secondary schools perceive English assessment in IB curriculum. By implementing a mixed-method approach, six teachers from five different IB secondary schools and two teachers from one IB secondary school participated in the questionnaire and interview. From the data, this research revealed that teachers perceive English assessment in IB curriculum as a valid and reliable means to improve teaching and learning, school accountability, and student accountability. The teachers also believe IB curriculum objectives have been well embedded in the English assessment process. Although the teachers have a positive perception of the assessment process in IB curriculum, several challenges are found, primarily in giving an authentic and personalized assessment. To solve the challenges, the teachers collaborate and share about the assessment practices they conducted in classes. Further research can be done to explore the perception of English assessment in IB curriculum from the students' point of view.

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## INTRODUCTION

As educational research and field are developing, the emergence of the various curriculum also becomes part of the development. One of the curricula widely used is International Baccalaureate Curriculum (IB Curriculum), founded in Switzerland in 1968. Since then, the IB curriculum has been widely implemented in many countries. Although the number of IB schools keeps increasing because of the increasing trend of international education, there is still limited research covering IB curriculum in practice (Lalwani & Fox, 2020), especially for the assessments. Assessment is a vital part of education that has an essential role in judging and evaluating teaching and learning success. The implementation of assessment in language learning is influenced by many factors, one of them is the teachers' conception of the assessment itself. This research aims to explore the teachers' conception of language assessment in the IB curriculum and its implementation in the teaching practice. Therefore, this study examined the issue from two research questions: a) how do teachers perceive the English assessment in IB curriculum? b) what are the challenges faced by the teachers in applying English assessment in IB curriculum?

The teachers' conception influences assessment practice as a part of the learning. Vandeyar & Killen (2007) stated that teachers' perceptions on assessment lead to different assessment practices. In fact, teachers' conception of assessment also plays a significant role since it also influences the effectiveness of assessment policy implementation (Brown & Michaelides, 2011). Previous research on teachers' conception of language assessment showed how teachers perceive assessment led to the different strategies and implementation. Sahinkarakas (2012) revealed that the teachers view assessment as part of instruction, which means assessments are used to provide evidence of teaching and learning progress. Therefore, the assessment practices in the class are much influenced by teachers' perception. Research by Ates and Buyukkarci (2019) found that EFL teachers perceive assessment as a tool to improve students' capability; thus they use various alternative types of assessment such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, and portfolio. Another research conducted by Akter & Khan (2020) revealed that EFL teachers who believe that formative assessment is essential to determine the students' progress, strength, and weakness, apply formative assessment at the end of every session. All the most current research about teachers' conceptions on assessment show that the conceptions toward assessment in one way influence the assessment tasks and practice. Teachers' conception on teaching, learning, and curriculum is essential to be explored because teachers' conceptions influence the teaching practice and the students' learning (Calderhead, 1996, as cited in Brown, 2004). The role of curriculum in the relation of teachers' conception and assessment practice has not much been explored in the previous research. Therefore, this study attempts to explore teachers' conception on language assessment in a specific setting of the IB curriculum. Although the number of IB schools keeps growing every year, the research investigating the IB curriculum is still considerably limited, with only around 200 journal articles available from 2009-2019 (Lalwani & Fox, 2020). Most of the available journal articles covering IB curriculum discuss the curriculum from an international education context. Due to the limitation of IB curriculum research and the need to explore ' teachers' conception on language assessment in a specific curriculum setting, this study attempts to explore teachers' conceptions as factors determining the assessment tasks and practices in the IB curriculum.

## Literature Review

### *Teachers' Conception of Assessment*

Assessment is an inseparable part of learning. Brown (2018, p. 4) described the assessment as "an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain," which means that even when students respond to questions and speak out their mind in the class can be considered that the assessment is in progress. Hughes (2003), on the other hand, described the test as one of the forms of assessment, and there are many forms of assessment, especially in the English class context.

Many factors influence the validity, reliability, and practicality of an assessment. One of the factors is the teachers' conception of the assessment itself. In the assessment context, Barnes et al. (2015) described conceptions as an overall process of how teachers perceive and be aware of the assessment. The discussion about teachers' conceptions on assessment is essential because the way teachers perceive assessment affects the assessment practice in the class (Vandeyar & Killen, 2007). On the other hand, teachers' conceptions on assessment might also be affected by teachers' concern on keeping students' constant attention, students' collaboration, and teachers' control (Kahn, 2000). The relation between the assessment practice and teachers' conception is interrelated. Brown (2004) explained that teachers' conceptions are various and straightforward but multifaceted and interrelated.

Brown (2004) attempted to explain teachers' conceptions on assessment as the agreement and disagreements on assessments in four different categories; assessment is for improving teaching and learning, assessment is for the school accountability, and assessment is for student accountability, and assessment is irrelevant. For the first category, assessment is conducted to optimize students' learning and teachers' teaching practice. The assessment gives feedback and information about the teaching activity, which can improve the teaching in the class (Opre, 2015). Once the teachers optimize their teaching from the assessment result, it will influence the ways students collaborate and respond to the learning. For the second category, assessment is used to demonstrate the jobs done by the teachers and schools (Smith et al., 1999, as cited in Brown, 2004). Assessment in this category also can be used to judge and evaluate whether the school has achieved the curriculum objectives or not. For the third category, Opre (2015) explained that assessments demand students to be responsible for their own learning and pass specific standards and qualifications to continue to different education levels. For the last category, assessment is usually comprehended as an exclusively formal and organized process to evaluate student performance and has no place within teaching and learning (Brown, 2004). Hughes (2003) mentioned that language teachers have a deep mistrust of tests as part of assessment because they bring harmful effects to teaching and learning. In this category, the assessment is viewed to have negative washback and fails to measure students' competence.

### ***IB English Curriculum***

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where the world has become more borderless, one of the skills needed is collaborative skill. The need for international education has also increased. Wells (2011) stated that the term international education refers to the establishment of broad and dynamic educations. International education aims to answer the needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where the students need to be ready for a multicultural and globalized world (Räsänen, 2007) and need to have skills to cope with the global economy by being lifelong learners (Bentley, 2000). One of the curricula established to answer the challenges and needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Curriculum, founded in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1968. In Indonesia, there are 58 schools registered as IB schools per 2020 (IB World Schools Yearbook, 2020). IB curriculum has the primary mission to prepare students for deeper understanding between peoples to create a more peaceful world (Hill, 2007).

IB curriculum uses various assessment types such as formal & informal assessment, formative & summative assessment, and internal & external assessment. For language curriculum, the performance is also assessed by the international benchmark for the passing grade. Students' comprehension and progress are monitored through various evaluations such as presentations, discussions, and project making.

Although the number of IB schools keeps increasing, the research on IB curriculum is still limited. According to Lalwani & Fox (2020), there are 200 journal articles between 2009 – 2019, and this number is worrying because the number of researches does not follow the increase of IB schools increase. Therefore, this research aims to discover the IB English curriculum from the assessment context. From the assessment context, this research specifically focuses on teachers' conception of assessment.

### **METHODS**

This research employed a mixed-method design, involving qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions (Johnson et al., 2007). Hamied (2017) stated that mixed-method research aims to combine both research approaches to provide a better understanding than one approach alone. This research was expected to provide a comprehensive description to answer the research questions using the mixed-method design.

### **Respondents**

The population of this research was eighteen officially registered IB secondary schools in Indonesia. The respondents were chosen randomly, as the quantitative data collection often involved a random sampling method (Hamied, 2017). The data was obtained by randomly sending the questionnaire to the teachers coming from different IB schools. The participants of this research were six English teachers, coming from five different IB secondary schools, who taught English as a first language (Language and Literature) and second language (Language Acquisition) at the secondary level. The small number of IB secondary schools affected the data collection, as it limited the available data

resource. Therefore, the small number of data was due to the resource constraint, and additional data was needed to outweigh the data limitation (Lenth, 2001). In this research, the additional data was gained from the interview. Two teachers from the same school were interviewed to explore the topic further. The two respondents were chosen purposively because the researcher has personally built a connection with the respondents, therefore, the interview is more accessible to conduct. In qualitative data collection, the researcher often chose the research site which is convenient for the researcher (Hamied, 2017).

### **Instruments**

As the mixed method aims to combine the strengths of quantitative and qualitative approaches for a deeper understanding of the topic (Hamied, 2017), this research used two instrumentations from both approaches. First, the research used the questionnaire entitled Teachers' Conceptions on Assessment Abridged Scale (TCoA-III A) developed by Brown (2004, 2008, 2011) to represent the quantitative data. Second, the interview was also conducted to explore how teachers perceived the assessment practices and processes in English class to represent the qualitative data.

Brown (2004) established TCoA-III in a full version for the primary teachers in New Zealand. Then, Brown (2006) created an abridged version with the validation that involved primary and secondary teachers in Queensland. TCoA-III A has been widely used in many international research (Brown & Michaelides, 2011; Gebril & Brown, 2014; Ates & Buyukkarci, 2019). TCoA-III A is used to generate how teachers agree with four categorizations of assessment purpose (teaching and learning improvement, school accountability, student accountability, and irrelevance). The questionnaire uses 5-likert scale with 27 items. Besides using the questionnaire, the interview was also conducted to let the participants describe their experience (McCracken, 1988).

For the purpose of this research, the questionnaire was adapted and validated based on the inputs given by three experts. One English lecturer checked the sentences to make sure that the items are understandable. One language assessment expert reviewed the questionnaire's content to ensure it is suitable for this research context. One senior IB language teacher checked the questionnaire to ensure that the statements were understandable and ideal in the context of the IB curriculum assessments.

### **Data collection procedures**

The data collection was begun by contacting teachers in several IB secondary schools in Indonesia. Six teachers from five different IB secondary schools confirmed their willingness to be part of this research. After that, six teachers were given a questionnaire to fill in. Two out of six teachers were interviewed to analyze their perceptions on English assessment and discover the possible challenges faced by the teachers.

### **Data analysis**

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using simple statistical analysis. This study calculated the percentage of Likert-scale in each statement to determine how teachers perceive assessments from four aspects: the improvement of education, the school accountability, the student accountability, and the relevance of the assessment. Statements number 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, and 17 cover the improvement of education aspects. Statements number 14, 24, and 25 cover the school accountability aspects. Statements number 5, 10, and 18 cover the student accountability aspects, while statements number 9, 12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, and 27 cover the irrelevance of assessment aspects. From the percentage, this study concluded whether the teachers favor or against each aspect of the assessment.

After the data analysis from the questionnaire, the interview was conducted to elaborate a deeper analysis of the questionnaire result. Besides that, the interview was also conducted to explore the challenges faced by the teachers in conducting IB language assessment practices.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Quantitative data**

The quantitative data focused on exploring how the teachers perceived the English assessment in the IB curriculum. The questionnaire results were divided into four factors; assessment related to school accountability, assessment related to student accountability, assessment related to the improvement of education, and assessment was irrelevant.

Table 1. Items related to the improvement of education

No	Items	Percentage					
		SD	MD	D	A	MA	SA
1	Assessment provides feedback to students about their performance.						100%
2	Assessment is integrated with teaching practice.				17%		83%
3	Assessment is a way to determine how much students have learned from teaching.					33%	67%
4	Assessment information modifies ongoing teaching of students.					50%	50%
6	Assessment establishes what students have learned.					50%	50%
7	Assessment helps students improve their learning.				17%		83%
8	Assessment feeds back to students their learning needs.					50%	50%
11	Assessment results are trustworthy.				50%	33%	17%
13	Assessment results can be depended upon.				17%		67%
15	Assessment measures students' higher order thinking skills.					50%	50%
16	Assessment allows different students to get different instruction.				17%		67%
17	Assessment results are consistent and valid.	17%	17%		17%		50%

Table 1 showed teachers' perception of English assessment related to the improvement of education. Item no. 1, 7, and 8 represented the improvement of the learning process. As shown in the table, 100% of the teachers strongly agreed with item no. 1, 50% mostly agreed, and 50% strongly agreed with item no. 8. Therefore, it means that the English assessment conducted in the IB curriculum gave feedback about students' performance. Furthermore, 83% of the teachers strongly agreed with item no. 7. Therefore, it means that the English assessment in the IB curriculum brought impacts to students' learning. From the percentages of these three items, it can be concluded that the teachers perceived the English assessment process in the IB curriculum as an essential means of feedback.

Items no. 3, 6, and 15 represented the ability description that the assessment provided. 67% of the teachers strongly agreed with item no. 3, 50% mostly agreed, and 50% strongly agreed with item no 6. The percentages mean that the English assessment conducted in the IB curriculum provided information about how much students have learned. 50% of the teachers mostly agreed, and 50% of other teachers strongly agreed with item no. 15. It means that the teachers agreed that the English assessment played roles in measuring students' higher-order thinking skills. From the percentages of these three items, it can be concluded that the teachers perceived the assessment process in the IB curriculum to measure and describe students' abilities from the learning process.

Items no. 2, 4, and 16 represented the improvement of teaching. 83% of the teachers strongly agreed with item no. 2, 50% mostly agreed, and 50 strongly agreed with item no 4. The percentages mean that the English assessment in the IB curriculum was viewed as a part of the teaching process. 67% of the teachers mostly agreed with item no 16. It means that most teachers believed that the students could get different instruction because of the assessment. From the percentages of the three items, it can be concluded that the teachers included assessment as an important part of the learning process that can improve teaching.

Items no. 11, 13, and 17 represent the validity of the assessment. 50% of the teachers agreed with item no 11, and 67% mostly agreed with item no 13. The percentages mean that the English assessment results were trusted, and the teachers could depend on assessment results. 50% of the teachers mostly agreed with item no 17. It means that the teachers perceived the assessment results as valid. Most teachers perceived the assessment results as accurate, trustworthy, and can be depended upon from the percentages of the three items.

Table 2. Items related to school accountability

No	Items	Percentage					
		SD	MD	D	A	MA	SA
14	Assessment provides information on how well schools are doing.			17%		33%	33%
24	Assessment is an accurate indicator of a school's quality.	17%	17%	17%	17%		33%
25	Assessment is a good way to evaluate a school.	17%	17%			33%	33%

Table 2 showed teachers' perception of English assessment related to school accountability. 33% of the teachers agreed, and 33% mostly agreed with item no 14. It means that most teachers supported the idea that assessment provided information about how the school was doing. 33% of the teachers mostly agreed, and 17% agreed with item no 24. This percentage indicated that only half of the teachers supported the idea that assessment was an accurate indicator of a school's quality. 33% of the teachers agreed, and 33% mostly agreed with item no 25. It means that more than half of the teachers perceived assessment as one of the ways to evaluate how the school was doing. From table 2, it can be concluded that most of the teachers perceived that assessment was one factor that determined the school's quality and condition.

Table 3. Items related to students' accountability

No	Items	Percentage					
		SD	MD	D	A	MA	SA
5	Assessment places students into categories.				33%	50%	17%
10	Assessment determines if students meet qualifications standards.			17%		67%	17%
18	Assessment is assigning a grade or level to student work.	17%		17%		67%	

Table 3 showed teachers' perception of English assessment related to students' accountability. 50% of the teachers mostly agreed, 33% agreed, and 17% strongly agreed with item no 5. The percentages showed that all the teachers favored the statement that the assessment placed students into categories based on their performance. 67% of the teachers mostly agreed with item no. 10. It means that most of the teachers agree that the assessment determines qualification achievement. 67% of the teachers mostly agreed, while 34% disagreed with item no. 18. It means that most teachers believed that the assessment was meant to grade students' work. From table 3, it can be concluded that most of the teachers favored that assessment was used to determine students' level, capability, and accountability.

Table 4. Items related to the irrelevance of assessment

No	Items	Percentage					
		SD	MD	D	A	MA	SA
9	Teachers should take into account the error and imprecision in all assessment.				33%	17%	50%
12	Assessment results should be treated cautiously because of measurement error.					50%	50%
19	Assessment forces teachers to teach against their beliefs.	33%	17%	17%	17%	17%	
20	Assessment is an imprecise process.	17%	50%		17%	17%	
21	Teachers conduct assessments but make little use of the results.	50%	17%		17%	17%	
22	Assessment results are filed and ignored.	33%	50%			17%	
23	Assessment interferes with teaching.	67%				33%	
26	Assessment is unfair to students.	50%	33%			17%	
27	Assessment has little impact on teaching.	50%	33%			17%	

Table 4 showed teachers' perception of English assessment related to the irrelevance of assessment. Items no. 19, 23, and 26 represented the drawback of the assessment. 33% of the teachers strongly disagreed with item no 19. In total, 67% of the teachers disagreed, while around 33% agreed with item no. 19. 67% of the teachers strongly disagreed, and 33% agreed with item no 23. From the percentages, it can be concluded that most of the teachers disagreed that assessment intervened their teaching against their beliefs. 50% of the teachers strongly disagreed, and 33% mostly disagreed with item no. 26. It means that 83% of the teachers disagreed that the English assessment was unfair. From the percentages of the three items, it can be concluded that most teachers disagreed that English assessment intervened their teaching and was unfair for the student.

Items no. 21, 22, and 27 represented how the assessment was ignored. 50% of the teachers strongly disagreed, and 17% mostly disagreed with item no. 21. 33% of the teachers strongly disagreed, and 50% mostly disagreed with item no. 22. From these percentages, it can be concluded that most of the teachers disagreed that the English assessment results were of no use and should be ignored. 50% of the teachers strongly disagreed, and 33% mostly disagreed with item no. 27. It means that most 83% of the teachers disagreed that assessment brought little impact to their teaching. From these

percentages of the three items, the teachers utilized the assessment results, which impact their teaching.

Items no. 9, 12, and 20 represented the inaccuracy of the assessment. 50% of the teachers strongly agreed, 17% mostly agreed, and 33% agreed with item no. 9. 50% of the teachers mostly agreed, and 50% strongly agreed with item no. 12. From the percentages, it can be concluded that all teachers agreed that despite its importance, teachers needed to consider the possible error and inaccuracies in the assessment process. 50% of the teachers mostly disagreed, and 17% strongly disagreed with item no. 20. It means that the majority of teachers believed that assessment was a precise process. The percentages of the three items showed that most teachers disagreed that the assessment was imprecise despite its possible inaccuracy occurrence.

**Qualitative data**

The qualitative data was gained from interview sessions with two teachers to explore and dig deeper into their conception of assessment in IB curriculum. Besides that, interview was also conducted to triangulate the data from questionnaire and validate teachers' conception from the questionnaire results. Major themes were teased out from the interview sessions. The themes that emerged were as follows: the significance of assessment, benefits of conducting the assessment, correlation of assessment with IB curriculum, and challenges of conducting the assessment.

***Significance of assessment***

From the interview, it was found that both teachers agreed that assessment was an important process in the teaching and learning process that cannot be left out. Without assessment, the improvement was impossible to achieve because teachers and students could not reflect upon the learning process they have been through. In addition, various types of assessment were also mentioned to contributing to giving feedback on the teaching progress. Thus, the teachers could alter their teaching plan if necessary.

T1:
<i>By having assessment, we could provide better learning and teaching method. I mean, better learning experience to the students, so that we can improve their capabilities and skills.</i>
T2:
<i>I think assessment is really important. Because usually when people think of assessment, they think of final summative assessment. But I think we can have assessment in the beginning of a course to measure one's understanding, and then track progress, how far a student has progressed and understood and what can be improved.</i>

The teachers also defined assessment as a tool and a process to evaluate teaching and learning. The assessment was also inferred as a process and tool with various objectives to measure understanding and ability, set goals and plans, and evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning process.

***Benefits of assessment***

The teachers perceived assessment to be beneficial for teachers, students, and also school. For the teachers, the assessment results could reflect on the suitability of the teaching plan in the class. Besides that, assessment results also told the teachers how far the students had progressed during the learning process. One of the teachers specifically mentioned the benefits of assessment depending on the types of assessment implemented in the class. For the pre-assessment, he mentioned that the results helped teachers map students' abilities prior to designing the teaching plan. The results from the formative assessment helped the teachers measure how much students had developed themselves throughout the lesson. The results from the summative assessment helped the teachers to see how successful the learning process was in general.

T1:
<i>The first one is that depends on what type of assessment. Let's say it's pre assessment. In a pre-assessment is to measure or to map the student's ability in our classrooms. So that by having pre assessment, we could map and also figure out what teaching method and then what type of, what level of the difficulties that we could give to the students. And then formative assessment, formative assessment is for us to measure the development or the progress of the students learning. And then while for the final assessment or summative assessment, this assessment is to measure how successful the learning process is.</i>
T2:
<i>For the teachers, I think it's a good way of a reflection for the teacher to know whether the course that we have designed is really suitable and appropriate for the students. Let's say, through formative assessments, we can see how students have progressed or whether they struggle throughout the course so we can alter the course in the middle of the unit or term or semester.</i>

The teachers believed that the assessment process was also beneficial for the students. They mentioned that students could place themselves according to the ability they possessed. The students could also learn from the feedback given by the teachers in the assessment process. Therefore, the learning process could be more effective because the students only needed to focus on the area that needed improvement. Assessment could also help students plan their personalized learning to enhance their abilities, knowledge, and skills.

T1:
<i>By having an assessment, they could place themselves in what level their ability is. And then for formative assessment, the teacher will give feedback or advices to students to improve in areas that needs to improve. By having that feedback and an advice, the students will enhance their abilities or skills. And then for summative assessment, by having the result of summative assessment, I believe that the students will measure themselves and then they will know what to do more, and then what to improve more from themselves.</i>
T2:
<i>Let's say usually I do pre assessments in the beginning of a unit to see what they know, to see their background knowledge. So, from there, I can make some kind of individualized plan for the students, so they know, oh, this is what I know, this is what I need to know. And then, let's say next one would be formative assessments like, by me giving feedback to my students, they know that what they need to improve, so they don't need to, like focus on wrong things, wasting time focusing on wrong things, or things that they have mastered.</i>

The assessment also brought benefits for the school as an institution. The assessment results could be used as the school's standards to reflect and compare the quality of education every year. Besides that, the assessment results could also be used to build a strategic plan at the school level to elevate the school quality in general. The teachers mentioned that good assessment results could also build a school's reputation that might also affect the favorable profile of the school in society.

T1:
<i>As in my opinion, so assessment is more like the standard. The school standard. And then if the school has good result of assessments, I believe that the school will benefit from it by having a good standard, and it is more like the marketing thing. Okay, the better result they get in assessment. So, meaning that they will have you know, better reputation.</i>
T2:
<i>For schools, assessments can give some kind of a profile of the students so we can see how well our students in the whole school progress. We can compare it to the previous year or the years to come, the students who are coming in the years to come and even comparing the scores or grades of students in our school to other schools, perhaps. So, I think it's really beneficial.</i>

One of the teachers also mentioned the assessment result that could be utilized by the department wise. In this case, the English department from IB school could get insights from assessment results to plan the learning process for the following years. Moreover, the assessment results could be information sources to know if any adjustments were needed for the students in every academic year.



From the teachers, it can be inferred that assessment was viewed as a part of an evaluation to reflect how successful the teaching and learning process was. Therefore, all parties included in teaching and learning could alter and change the design and plan of the teaching if necessary. Even for the students, assessment could also give insight about the areas and material the students need to focus on.

#### ***Correlation of IB curriculum with the assessment***

From the significance and benefits of assessment in general, assessment in the IB curriculum was also perceived to be well integrated with the curriculum. IB learner profiles as one of the distinguishing features of the IB curriculum was well embedded in the assessment process in the classroom. The assessment process was also much influenced by the assessment criteria reflected from the objectives of the IB curriculum. Therefore, the assessment type and assessment process in the class was conducted to help students achieve IB objectives.

T1:

*I believe that every IB teacher always embed the IB objectives into their teaching okay. And let us say, open mindedness okay. So, in order to build the open mindedness in the students, the teacher usually come up with the actual cases and then give exposure to the students with the different perspectives, something like that, so that they will accept the differences and be open minded students.*

T2:

*And what I think is unity coherence between IB learner profile, assessment criteria, and the assessment itself. I think they're quite tight, we put together so we can see from IB criteria.*

The teachers seemed to have a similar understanding of the assessment process in IB curriculum, proven from their answers during the interview process. The teachers admitted to having IB training for two weeks with assessment as one of the materials discussed. One of the teachers informed that the training upskilled the teacher with the teaching skills, one of which was to conduct the suitable assessment.

#### ***Challenges***

The use of various types of assessment in the IB curriculum might be one of the strengths of this curriculum, as this curriculum respects each student with his/her own uniqueness. However, the teachers might face several challenges in conducting assessments in the classroom. Providing personalized assessment and providing authentic assessment were two main challenges mentioned by the teachers. Teacher 1 expressed that personalized assessment was meant to respect and give each student an equal chance and opportunity to perform the best based on their own needs and choices. However, in the actual implementation, the teacher found that making a personalized assessment for the student was pretty challenging because there were many factors to consider, such as the student's capability, interest, needs, and learning styles. To overcome this, the teacher gave several different types of assessments that the students could choose based on their liking. The topic and the assessment procedure were similar; only the final product of the assessment would be different for each student.

Teacher 2 mentioned that the challenge in the assessment process was the authentic assessment the teacher had to provide. One of the profiles of IB learners is to be communicative. Therefore, the teacher gave the authentic assessment used in the real-life context. The teacher stated that providing authentic and engaging assessments could be challenging because of the lengthy preparations needed. To overcome this challenge, the teachers would usually collaborate and share the possible assessment given to students.

T1:

*Yeah, giving assessment to IB students especially is quite challenging, because in giving the assessment, we have to pay attention to the, you know, the students learning styles, and then the student's capability as well. And I think that the most difficult thing, is that how we should differentiate the assessment to different students. So, it's more like how we implement personalized teaching and assessment to the students.*

T2:

*Challenges that I face when conducting assessments in class is that I need to make authentic assessments. You see, because in IB, English language and literature or language acquisition assessments, we need to make assessments as realistic as possible, something that you can find in real life situations.*

*Another challenge also to make sure that I don't repeat the same assessments again, and again, between units and between levels because students remember.*

### Discussion

From the findings above, both the quantitative and qualitative data, the teachers perceive that assessment is essential in the teaching and learning process. The first finding indicates the teachers perceive assessment to be helpful to improve the quality of education. This finding is reflected in the questionnaire result in which the teachers strongly agree that assessment improve the quality of education by providing feedback, determining how much students have learned, and helping students improve their learning. Therefore, the assessment results are used to reflect on their teaching and see if any alterations and adjustments are needed in the teaching process. A similar finding from Cheng et al. (2004) revealed that one of the purposes of assessment is instructional purposes where the teachers use assessment information and results to plan and improve their teaching instruction. Another research result from Das et al. (2014) also supports that assessment results are used by the teachers to identify gaps in students' learning because assessment is a crucial concept to measure progress in learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that student assessments and evaluation results are the sources to reflect and measure how successful the teaching and learning process is.

Another use of assessment results lies in the different assessment types because the information collected through different types of assessment can serve different purposes (Moon, 2005; Morris & Adamson, 2010). Moon (2005) explained further and divided assessment into three phases; pre-assessment phase to plan instruction, formative assessment to guide instruction, and summative assessment phase to evaluate instruction. Although the questionnaire does not explicitly talk about different types of assessment, but the teachers agree that results from various assessment types are consistent and valid. From the qualitative data, the teachers stated that each assessment type serves different purpose. Through pre-assessment results, teachers admitted they can gain information about students' prior knowledge, students' ability, students' learning preferences, and students' needs which can be used as a first step to plan their instructions in learning. Further learning is expected during the learning process, but grading or scoring are insufficient to guide the students, therefore giving feedback is necessary (Leahy et al., 2005). Through formative assessment, the teachers admitted they can use chances to provide input and feedback to students' learning. Feedback has a vital role in assessment, especially in formative assessment, because feedbacks give direction for future learning and teaching (Heritage, 2010 in Guadu & Boersma, 2018). And through summative assessment, the teachers admitted to use the results to measure how successful learning process in one semester is. Summative assessment serves to evaluate student achievements at the end of the course (Pishghadam et al., 2013), which can be used to determine their final grades (Cheng et al., 2004).

The second finding indicates that teachers perceive assessment to determine school accountability. Brown (2004) explained assessment could demonstrate how the school has achieved the curriculum objectives. In this research, the results seem to show that the teachers perceive assessment as one of the school quality indicators because the assessment results can be used as the school's standard. The researchers believe that assessment, especially high-stakes assessment, defines which curriculum elements and objectives are emphasized (Isaacs, 2014). As in the IB curriculum, the teachers believe that the teachers have well embedded IB learner profiles in the assessment process. The questionnaire shows that most teachers agree assessment can be one of indicators of a school's quality. One of the teachers mentioned how IB learner profiles, curriculum objectives, assessment criteria, and the assessment process are in a well-united coherence. The alignment among learning materials, pedagogic practices, and assessment process with the main objectives of the curriculum is essential (Das et al., 2014), as the primary concern of assessment is to evaluate students' achievement with the desired learning outcomes stated in curriculum objectives (Earl, 2003). The alignment and coherence between assessment and curriculum can only be achieved once the teachers deeply understand the curriculum and the suitable assessment process. Kim (2014) emphasized the importance of training on language assessment to equip teachers with better knowledge and skills to develop better assessments and tests. In fact, the teachers in IB schools get the training at the beginning

of their teaching year that covers all materials about IB curriculum. Although there has been no specific training focusing on assessment, the teachers had been equipped with the knowledge about assessment at the beginning. Besides that, the teachers also collaborate to provide the most suitable assessment for the students. Collaboration and mutual trust among key stakeholders, including teachers, are essential for the ELT educational reforms (O'Donahue, 2012).

As teachers' perceptions towards assessment influence the assessment process and practice in the classroom (Sahinkarakas, 2012; Ates & Buyukkarci, 2019; Akter & Khan, 2020), the third finding of this research revealed the challenges faced by the teachers during the assessment process. The teachers believe that assessment and curriculum are embedded, therefore the teachers attempt to instill one of the principles in the IB curriculum to respect each student with their uniqueness, background, and needs. Personalized and authentic assessments are the focus and criteria of the assessment the teachers attempt to apply in their class. The recent trends in education believe that the best learning occurs when students work on authentic tasks that help students construct responses to realistic problems (Brown, 2008). The philosophy of education believes in the differentiation to recognize, articulate, and commit to planning for students' different needs (Tomlinson, 2001). The provision of different assessment forms allows the students to demonstrate their understanding differently yet to achieve similar learning objectives and goals. Although the assessment process seems to be ideal, the teachers face the challenges in its implications. The teachers admitted that their creativity and other factors need to be considered before designing the assessment. To overcome these challenges, the teachers collaborate and share their experience related to the assessment in their class. As researchers posit, collaborative efforts among teachers can improve teaching and learning (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

## CONCLUSION

Various types of assessment with the focus to prepare students to face and overcome the challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have become one of the distinguishing features of the IB curriculum as an international curriculum. Formal & informal assessment, formative & summative assessment, and internal & external assessment are the assessment types applied in the IB curriculum. Teachers as key actors in the teaching and learning process might have their beliefs and perceptions brought to the classroom. This research revealed that teachers perceived assessment in the IB curriculum as a valid and reliable means to improve teaching and learning, school accountability, and student accountability. Although the teachers have a positive perception of the assessment process in the IB curriculum, several challenges were found primarily in giving an authentic and personalized assessment. To solve the challenges, the teachers collaborate and share their experiences related to the assessment practices they conducted in classes.

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