



Evaluating Students' Perceptions of the Authentic Assessment in An Online English for Specific Purposes Course: A Mixed-Method Approach

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Abstract

This study investigates Information Technology Education (ITE) students' perceptions of authentic assessments in an online English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. As ESP increasingly adapts to online learning environments, traditional testing methods often fall short in assessing practical language skills crucial for professional contexts. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study examines three dimensions of student perception: benefits, advantages, and challenges. Data were collected through a survey administered to 48 students and semi-structured interviews with 9 participants. From the quantitative finding, it revealed that students have a positive attitude toward authentic assessments, particularly valuing their benefit and advantages in some tasks namely presentations, conversation with foreigners, and reading comprehension of information technology-related scientific articles. Moreover, qualitative data suggests that these authentic assessments boost learners' motivation, confidence, and language proficiency while preparing them for real-world professional environments. However, the data also reported that students faced challenges related to time management, increased workload, technical demands, and also internet connectivity issues. This study highlights the significance of integrating authentic assessment into ESP courses to align language education with contextual and practical needs. It also recommends offering technical support and adopting flexible timelines to address these challenges. This finding offers valuable insights for ESP curriculum development and encourage further study to explore long-term impact of authentic assessment on career readiness.

Keywords: *Authentic assessment, students' perception, language skills, online learning, English for specific purposes*

INTRODUCTION

The significance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has gained growing acknowledgement in several professional fields, including information technology (IT). As the need for English proficiency continues to expand globally, IT professionals have to develop language skills to communicate effectively in contexts such as technical documentation, presentations, and international collaborations (Belcher,

2019). The incorporation of online learning into educational frameworks has also enhanced ESP instruction by providing flexibility and accessibility for students and professionals managing their education alongside other responsibilities (Anderson, 2008).

Assessment becomes a critical component of ESP courses that is used to evaluate students' language proficiency. Utilizing traditional assessment methods for assessing students' outcomes, such as standardized tests, may not fully cover the practical language skills required in professional settings. Therefore, there is a growing shift towards authentic assessment methods, which bring real-world tasks and scenarios into the assessment process (Villarroel et al., 2020). These methods include activities such as video presentations, interactions with native speakers, and comprehension of professional articles, designed to reflect the actual use of English in professional environments. Authentic assessment should reflect actual practice of profession, be cognitively challenging, encourage students' reflexivity, and also promote students' capability to judge their quality product (Tai, Ajjawi, Boud, Dawson & Panadero, 2018; Villarroel et al., 2018; Field, Duffy & Huggins, 2013; (Hodges, Eames & Coll, 2014; Ashford-Rowe et al., 2014)

Authentic assessment is crucial aspect in authentic learning which is the use of real-world tasks to allow students to show that they have acquired new information and abilities in a classroom setting (Swaffield 2011). It is argued that authentic assessment can improve student learning and engagement in order to prepare them for a world that is changing quickly (Herrington, Parker, and Boase-Jelinek 2014; Kearney 2013; Kearney and Perkins 2014). Despite the literature's strong support for Authentic Assessment's ability to give learners personal meaning and real-world relevance (Porcaro et al., 2016; Rundle, 2016). When authentic assessment methods have been implemented in ESP courses, limited of scholars have been observed significant gaps remain in research concerning students' perceptions of these methods and their effectiveness in enhancing language proficiency, particularly within the context of ITE. The existing studies primarily focus on the technical aspects of online learning and the general effectiveness of ESP courses, with minimal attention of examining specific assessment strategies used (Anderson, 2008). Although study highlights the potential of video presentations and interactions with native speakers to improve language skills, there is a notable lack of literatures that covers students' perceptions of these methods in IT-related ESP course (Spector et al., 2023). In the teaching learning context, the alignment with belief of teachers and students is very important as these beliefs effects their willingness to adopt and engage with the process, as well as shape their perception and judgments (Aldrich & Thomas, 2005; Kaleci, 2013; Ardem & Kocadere, 2015; Tutar, 2016). Having a better knowledge of students' belief play significant role as it offers valuable insights into the effectiveness and shortcoming of the current authentic assessment practices, which can lead to the development of more effective evaluation methods (Henry et al., 2018). However, study on how ITE students perceive these approaches and their influence on language learning remains limited.

The speedy swift adoption of online learning platform in higher education provides expanded opportunities for collaboration, interaction, exposure to diverse point of view, and also re-construction of knowledge (Parker et al., 2013; Yuan & Powell, 2013). Moreover, these opportunities play significant role in fostering the development of essential learning outcomes (Bozalek & Watters, 2014). Thus, there is a need to re-evaluating of assessment strategies used to ensure the students' need accomplished since the assessment should emphasized both the achievement of learning outcomes and the students' acquisitions for professional and personal success.

Kearney and Perkins in their study (2019) suggested researchers to explore more in practical implication and outcomes of students' perception of authentic assessment due to the lack of comprehensive studies covered these topics. Talking about the technology integration on learning process, it could not be separated with its barriers. Some literatures have been highlighted some elements of e-learning challenges namely school, curriculum, teachers, and students. Consequently, this paper tries to fill a significant gap in existing studies by exploring ITE students' perception of authentic assessment in ESP courses.

This research covers important information for educators and instructional designers involved in online ESP courses. This study offers strategic insights that align with students' needs through exploring their perception and preferences regarding assessment method, potentially fostering more engaging and effective learning experiences. The result of this study could contribute to institutional policy and curriculum development, supporting best practices and also guidelines to better equip students for professional challenges (Spector et al., 2023; Villarroel et al., 2020). Thus, this research not only provides better academic understanding in language education but also offers practical recommendation for improving assessment approaches in ESP course for ITE students. By addressing existing gaps in the literature and delivering an in-depth analysis of students' perspectives, this study lays a foundation for future research, ultimately contributing to the continuous advancement of education practices and students' outcomes in ESP courses (Belcher, 2019).

Literature Review

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

ESP is a vital component of language education, particularly in professional areas such as information technology (IT). It focuses on adapting English instruction to meet the specific requirements of students within particular professions or academic disciplines (Belcher, 2019). Literature has shown that ESP courses improve learners' language proficiency by focusing on field-specific vocabulary, genres, and communicative practices (Starfield, 2016). Thus, in this research, the ESP observing is the ESP for IT student in Bachelor degree in Lampung. This course requires specific materials for information technology contents for the students. Nevertheless, limited study has specifically examined the distinct barriers faced by IT students in ESP courses. The fast-paced development of the IT industry demands continual update to course content and teaching strategies, creating difficulties for teacher in ensuring the curriculum remains relevant (Adams et al., 2020). Furthermore, most studies on ESP tend to generalize across multiple professional fields, lacking targeted insights into the specific needs in the IT fields. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the experiences and need of ITE students in ESP courses.

Online Learning in ESP

The adoption of online learning platform has profoundly impacted ESP education, offering students with increased flexibility and accessibility. Online learning accommodates diverse schedules and encourages the use of digital tools to enrich the learning experience (Anderson, 2008). Research has shown that online ESP courses are particularly effective when they incorporate interactive and multimedia resources that cater to different learning styles (Tsai, 2019). However, challenges remain in implementing authentic assessment in the full online ESP courses. Key issues include the digital divide, varying levels of digital literacy among students, and the need for effective online teaching strategies, all of which require further investigation (Sun &

Chen, 2016). Additionally, limited research exists on how online learning influences students' perceptions of assessment methods in ESP courses, revealing a critical gap. This study aims to address this gap by exploring ITE students' perspectives on online assessments in ESP courses.

Authentic Assessment Methods

Authentic assessment methods seek to determine how students can use their knowledge and skills in realistic situations. Other than traditional forms of assessment, which are usually based on standardized testing, authentic assessments are made up of tasks that simulate professional activities: presentations, project-based assignments, and interactions with native speakers. Hence, these approaches offer a greater insight into students' learning and, at the same time, prepare them for what awaits them in an actual workplace. According to Hagler (2017) it is for this reason that authentic assessment methods hold a great promise for language learning by offering a more engaging and contextually appropriate assessment experience. These will help the students to increase their speaking skill and hence give them more confidence while video presentations. Interacting with native speakers will increase their listening and conversational skills thus, (Cheng & Warren, 2005). However, there is a lacuna of research on students' view regarding these methods in an ESP course especially in information technology. The study also attempts to investigate ITE students' perceptions of authentic assessment methods and the effectiveness thereof.

Students' Perceptions

Students' perceptions are important to educational methods and their outcomes. Perception in this case involves beliefs, attitudes, and feelings that students hold concerning the various teaching and assessment methods. Theories underlying perception in education highlight its subjective nature; that is, the way students view the learning environment determines significantly the levels of motivation, engagement, and academic performance (Bandura, 1986). It is necessary to measure several cognitive and affective dimensions: perceived usefulness, ease of use, and satisfaction about the learning and assessment methods. Expectancy-Value Theory is one such common theoretical framework in which perceptions are measured in an educational setting, such as; for instance, (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) can be applied in order to explain how expectations of success, along with the value attributed to certain tasks by students, influence their engagement in, and motivation toward certain activities. Moreover, perception is crucial element that effects students' motivation, engagement and learning outcomes (Maphosa, 2024). Perceptions is also significantly factor in determining successful of teaching learning process since it involves their opinions, belief and attitudes toward decision of accepting the learning process (Male & Lumbantoruan, 2021). Within the context of ESP and the different methods of assessment, students' perceptions develop based on different kinds of assessment experiences. Traditional tests and authentic assessments are two contrasting kinds. Findings have shown that students often perceive authentic assessment as more relevant and engaging compared to traditional assessments. However, the specific perceptions of ITE students concerning the use of authentic assessment in ESP courses have not yet been fully investigated. This study, therefore, tries to fill this gap by examining the perceptions of ITE students about these authentic assessment methods and their impact on learning outcomes.

Research Question(s)

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are students' perceptions of the video presentations, conversations with native speakers, and article comprehension as authentic assessment methods in ESP courses?
- 2) What challenges do students face when completing these authentic assessment tasks?

METHODS

Research Design and ESP Course Overview

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively understand ITE students' perceptions of authentic assessment methods in ESP courses. Specifically, this research employs an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, beginning with a quantitative survey followed by semi-structured interviews to further explain and explore the quantitative findings in greater depth.

The ESP course under investigation is a 2-credit course designed for Information Technology Education Students at a state university in Lampung, Indonesia in Even Semester Academic year 2023/2024. The course involves 100 minutes of lecture and 4 hours of independent study and assignments per week, spanning 16 weeks in a semester. It is the only English course within the curriculum for the students, emphasizing its importance in equipping them with the necessary language skills for their academic and future careers as IT educators or professionals. The course focuses on developing students' reading and speaking skills in realistic contexts.

The course employs three types of authentic assessments: presentations, speaking assessments, and reading comprehension. Presentations evaluate students' ability to present IT-related topics both live and through recorded videos. Speaking assessments involve online free talk sessions with foreigners, which are recorded and reviewed to evaluate students' speaking skills. Reading comprehension assessments measure students' understanding of scientific articles related to information technology.

Participants

The population of this study are second year students from the Undergraduate Program of Information Technology Education at a state university in Lampung, Indonesia. These students have completed one semester, Even Semester of 2023/2024 Academic Year, of an ESP course designed specifically for their program. The sample of this research consisted of 32 female (66.3%) and 16 male (33.3%) totally 48 students voluntary as participants. In total, 48 students participated in the survey, and 9 students were selected for semi-structured interviews to provide a more detailed understanding of their perceptions. The age range of the participants was 18-20 years. Further detail of the participants was presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' demographic

Gender		Internet access		
Male	Female	Good	Adequate	Poor
16 (33.3%)	32 (66.7%)	24 (50%)	23 (47.9%)	1 (2.1%)

The ESP course was conducted entirely online due to the lack of sufficient classroom facilities, with some buildings under renovation and construction. This situation significantly influenced the learning dynamics, particularly the reliance on internet quality for effective participation in the course activities. Table 1 shows the gender of students and the quality of their internet access, which was collected through a self-reported questionnaire. The researcher gave the online questioners about the gender information and also the internet quality. All the participant filled the questionnaire by themselves based on the choice given. It shows that a majority of the participants were female (66.7%), and internet access quality varied, with half of the participants reporting good internet access (50%), nearly half reporting adequate access (47.9%), and a small percentage experiencing poor access (2.1%).

Instruments and Data Analysis Technique

Two main instruments were used for data collection. First, a survey questionnaire. A structured questionnaire was designed to capture students' perceptions of the benefits, advantages, and challenges of the three types of authentic assessments. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items to gather quantitative data, referring to the works of several research (Diharmis & Hamzah, 2021; Maysuroh et al., 2023; Nurhasanah et al., 2021; Saputri et al., 2019). Initially, the questionnaire comprised 20 items, but after conducting a validity test using Pearson correlation, three items were found to be invalid. Therefore, the final questionnaire included 17 valid items. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.931, indicating a high level of reliability. Hence, the questionnaire fulfilled the criteria to effectively collect the data. Second, an interview guide. An interview guide, adapted from Arend (2019), Pratawati et al. (2021), and Todorova-Ruskova (2023), was developed for conducting semi-structured interviews. The guide included open-ended questions to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and suggestions regarding the assessment methods.

Data were collected in two phases: the administration of surveys and the holding of interviews. The questionnaire, which was administered at the end of the semester just after their completion of the ESP course, was completed by each of the students. Access and convenience were ensured with the administration of the online survey. Semi-structured interviews were held with a total of 9 randomly selected students based on convenience and their willingness to give in-depth responses. The interviews were conducted online and recorded for further analysis. Each interview took approximately 30-45 minutes. Data analysis was done both quantitatively and qualitatively. First, descriptive statistics of the students' perceptions about the assessment methods were performed. Second, thematic analysis was employed in examining the transcripts of the interview for recurring themes and patterns within the students' responses. It was conducted through coding the significant units of information and categorizing them into bigger themes. Thematic analysis was employed as it is most suited to research attempting to interpret meanings and uncover intricate perceptions.

The method provides a systematic but flexible framework for qualitative data analysis. Besides its clear and flexible way to understand students' perceptions, thematic analysis also helps in identifying patterns and creating themes from qualitative data (Lochmiller, 2021). The researcher is able to connect the frequency of a theme with its significance across the dataset, contributing to the validity and richness of the interpretation. Thematic analysis also allows one to establish relationships between concepts and enable comparisons across different contexts and time points within the

study. By employing thematic analysis, the study was able to link various student voices, unveil subtle insights into authentic assessment, and portray the diversity of student experiences in an online ESP learning environment. Besides allowing in-depth data interpretation, this analysis method also facilitated the generation of meaningful meanings from the data. Thematic analysis is appropriate for this study because the researchers employed a participatory and exploratory approach by conducting coding, categorizing, identifying, and classifying the survey results based on results of survey based on the 3 and 4 different themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The main issues this research try to inquire about are the benefits, advantages, and challenges found when implementing authentic assignments into an ESP course for students in one public university in Lampung, Indonesia. The elements of demographic data of respondents, quantitative analysis of data from the questionnaire, qualitative interview data, and a discussion section which integrates these findings with the literature will form the basis of organization in this section. Each section elaborates on the students' perception and experience of the ESP course in terms of authentic assignments used.

Quantitative Data

Results from the survey described in Table 2 revealed that students generally perceive authentic assessment to be positive, with a mean score of 3.81 classified as 'high'. While under these two aspects, namely, the benefit of authentic assessment and Advantages of authentic assessment, all are perceived positively and falls into 'high'. From these scores, it would seem that students perceive the authentic assessment as helpful to them in reinforcing learning and attaining learning results. Furthermore, the challenges associated with authentic assessments have a lower average score of 2.57, falling under the 'low' category. This suggests that students do not perceive significant challenges in the implementation of authentic assessments. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.78 to 0.91, indicate relatively consistent perceptions among students. Overall, the data highlight a positive attitude towards authentic assessments, recognizing their benefits while acknowledging minimal challenges.

Table 2. Summary of Students' Perception

parameter	Students' Perception			Overall
	The benefit of authentic assessment	Advantages of authentic assessment	Challenge of authentic assessment	
Average	3.90	3.87	2.57	3.81
Category	High	High	Low	High
STD	0.82	0.83	0.91	0.86

The distribution of students' responses in Table 3 reveals insightful trends in their perceptions of authentic assessment. Under the two aspects of student perception—the benefit of authentic assessment and the advantages of authentic assessment—for all items on the questionnaire, the majority of students, ranging from 58.3% to 81.2%, agree or strongly agree about the benefits and advantages of authentic assessment for their ESP learning. The item with the highest score is regarding "video

presentations help me improve my IT-related speaking skills in English." Meanwhile, no students responded 'strongly disagree,' and those who 'disagree' are only below 10%. This indicates a generally positive perception from students, with only a small minority disagreeing with these statements.

Additionally, the "challenge of authentic assessment" aspect shows a slightly lower rate of agreement compared to the other two aspects. While 22.9% of students agree that authentic assessments require more time and effort than traditional assessments, the overall perception of challenges is in the 'low' category, as displayed in Table 3. These findings suggest that while students recognize the benefits of authentic assessments, they also face minimal challenges in terms of time needed, time management, and workload.

Table 3. Distribution of students' response

No.	Statement	Students' response [n (%)]				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A	Benefit of authentic assessment					
1	I feel more motivated and engaged in learning when authentic assessments are used	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	16 (33.3%)	23 (47.9%)	8 (16.7%)
2	Authentic assessments encourage me to participate more actively in class discussions and activities	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (35.4%)	19 (39.6%)	12 (25%)
3	I am more enthusiastic about learning English because of authentic assessments	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	19 (39.6%)	20 (41.7%)	8 (16.7%)
4	The variety of authentic assessments makes the courses more interesting	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.2%)	12 (25%)	22 (45.8%)	12 (25%)
5	Authentic assessments have helped me become a more independent learner	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	13 (27.1%)	20 (41.7%)	14 (29.2%)
6	Authentic assessments are more effective than traditional tests for learning English	0 (0.0%)	4 (8.3%)	14 (29.2%)	22 (45.8%)	8 (16.7%)
7	Authentic assessments improve my communication skills	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	13 (27.1%)	23 (47.9%)	11 (22.9%)
8	Video presentations help me improve my IT-related speaking skills in English	0 (0.0%)	3 (6.3%)	6 (12.5%)	23 (47.9%)	16 (33.3%)

9	Free talk with foreigners assignments enhance my conversation skills and confidence in using English	0 (0.0%)	4 (8.3%)	9 (18.8%)	13 (27.1%)	22 (45.8%)
10	Authentic assessments have improved my ability to collaborate with others	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.2%)	14 (29.2%)	21 (43.8%)	11 (22.9%)
B Advantages of authentic assessment						
1	I believe authentic assessments offer advantages by enabling self-paced learning	0 (0.0%)	3 (6.3%)	14 (29.2%)	21 (43.8%)	10 (20.8%)
2	Live presentations give me practical experience in using English in real-life situations	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.2%)	12 (25%)	16 (33.3%)	18 (37.5%)
3	I feel that authentic assessments better prepare me for professional use of English	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	15 (31.3%)	24 (50.0%)	8 (16.7%)
4	Authentic assessments provide a comprehensive evaluation of my English language skills compared to traditional tests	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	19 (39.6%)	16 (33.3%)	12 (25%)
C Challenges of authentic assessment						
1	Authentic assessments require more time and effort compared to traditional assessments	3 (6.3%)	15 (31.3%)	19 (39.6%)	8 (16.7%)	3 (6.3%)
2	I feel stressed when completing authentic assessments	7 (14.6%)	21 (43.8%)	16 (33.3%)	4 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)
3	I struggle with time management and workload when dealing with authentic assessments	6 (12.5%)	17 (35.4%)	20 (41.7%)	5 (10.4%)	0 (0.0%)

Qualitative data

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to provide in-depth insights into how students perceive and evaluate these assessment methods. Each section is supported by relevant interview quotes to reinforce the findings. Overall, students showed positive perceptions of authentic assessment in their ESP course. They experienced significant positive impacts, found the methods beneficial and advantageous, although they acknowledged some challenges.

Thematic Analysis of Students' Perceptions and Challenges in Authentic Assessment Tasks in ESP Courses

1. Students' Perceptions of Authentic Assessment Methods

Thematic analysis of interview data indicated that the students overall appreciated the introduction of authentic assessment tasks into the ESP course. These assessment tasks, i.e., video presentations, free talk with foreigners, and article comprehension, were not only viewed as effective tools of measuring their language ability, but also as worthwhile learning activities resulting in language progress. Each modality was experienced to have unique strengths that targeted various aspects of language learning, e.g., fluency, vocabulary building, confidence development, and academic knowledge. These authentic tasks were discovered to be more motivating, related to everyday communication, and thus more appealing than the more traditional forms of evaluation, hence guiding students' overall experience within the ESP course towards a more functional and motivational direction.

a. Video Presentations: Enhancing Speaking Practice through Structured Expression

Many students acknowledged that video presentations helped them practice public speaking effectively and allowed them to prepare their ideas in advance. The ability to record and re-record content before submission gave students a sense of control over their learning and reduced performance anxiety often associated with live speaking tasks. They appreciated the flexibility in preparing their script, practicing pronunciation, and refining their presentation skills at their own pace. Several students highlighted that this modality allowed them to organize their ideas more clearly, rehearse content multiple times, and become more aware of their speaking habits and grammatical accuracy. It also supported the development of digital literacy skills, as students engaged in video editing, audio clarity adjustments, and visual design for their presentations. It is reported that student A said that, "*saya bisa mengatur waktu saya sendiri untuk take video dan memperbaiki pengucapan saya, jadi lebih percaya diri.*" The flexibility of asynchronous speaking tasks allowed students to reflect on their language use and improve their presentation style through multiple recordings. For students who experienced anxiety in live speaking situations, this modality served as a more accessible format for demonstrating speaking ability.

However, despite these benefits, some limitations were also noted. A number of students mentioned that video presentations felt less interactive, as the communication was one-way and lacked immediate feedback from peers or instructors. Others observed that it was easy to simply read from a script, which might hinder spontaneous speaking development. Nonetheless, students agreed that this form of assessment encouraged them to speak more confidently and build their self-awareness as language users, especially when reflecting on their own recordings to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Student B expressed, "*kadang audiens tidak benar-benar memperhatikan saat presentasi online, jadi terasa seperti bicara sendiri.*" Additionally, some students admitted relying heavily on reading from scripts, which diminished the spontaneity and natural flow of their speech. While students valued the comfort and flexibility of the video format, they also recognized its limitations in fostering dynamic communication.

b. Free Talk with Foreigners: Building Confidence and Real-World Communication

Among all authentic assessment tasks, free talk with native or fluent English speakers emerged as the most meaningful and transformative experience for the students. Many described it as both challenging and rewarding, particularly because it required real-time thinking and genuine language interaction. This activity was praised for creating a real-life context in which students had to negotiate meaning, clarify ideas, and respond spontaneously—skills that traditional language tasks often do not address. It also provided exposure to various accents, idiomatic expressions, and natural speech patterns, which significantly improved students' listening and comprehension abilities. Students described the experience as "*seru*," "*menyenangkan*," dan "*menantang*," especially because it pushed them to communicate in real-time. Student C mentioned, "*Awalnya saya takut, tapi setelah ngobrol beberapa menit, saya jadi lebih berani dan senang bisa mengerti lawan bicara saya.*" These sessions provided authentic opportunities to develop fluency, adjust to different accents, and engage in spontaneous conversation beyond the structured classroom environment.

Students also noted that the activity built their confidence and motivation. While students acknowledged the initial nervousness and fear of making mistakes, they also reported that repeated exposure to these conversations boosted their speaking confidence and reduced anxiety over time. Several participants expressed a sense of pride and excitement after successfully communicating with someone from another country, describing it as a milestone in their English learning journey. Student D stated, "*saya merasa bangga bisa bicara langsung dengan orang luar negeri. Itu pengalaman pertama saya dan sangat membuka wawasan.*" The sense of accomplishment after a successful conversation seemed to outweigh the initial nervousness. Furthermore, students appreciated that their communication was based on real-life exchanges rather than rehearsed dialogue, making their language use more practical and reflective of real-world interaction. Challenges included limited vocabulary and difficulty finding conversation partners, but overall, free talk was viewed as a powerful and motivating experience that fostered not only language proficiency but also intercultural competence and global awareness.

c. Article Reading Expands Vocabulary but Lacks Immediate Engagement

Compared to the interactive tasks, article comprehension was perceived as a more traditional yet still beneficial component of authentic assessment. Students noted that engaging with academic or professional articles in English helped improve their reading fluency, contextual vocabulary, and analytical skills. It required them to process information critically and extract key ideas, which contributed to their ability to discuss topics more intelligently in speaking tasks and write with greater depth. Some students reported that reading comprehension activities supported their understanding of specific terminology relevant to their academic or career fields, aligning well with the goals of ESP. Student E noted, "*dari membaca artikel, saya jadi tahu istilah-istilah baru dan lebih paham cara menyampaikan ide secara akademik.*" These tasks allowed students to build lexical knowledge relevant to their academic and professional fields, aligning with the ESP course goals.

However, several students reported that this modality felt less engaging and more cognitively demanding, especially when articles were lengthy or complex. Without adequate guidance or follow-up discussion, article tasks sometimes lacked immediate relevance or application. Nevertheless, students recognized the long-term value of this activity, particularly in strengthening their academic language foundation and

preparing them for English use in professional or scholarly contexts. Student F stated, *"menurut saya membaca artikel itu bermanfaat, tapi kadang membosankan dan saya cepat kehilangan fokus."* Without interactive discussion or immediate application, article reading felt more passive. Still, many acknowledged its value in supporting their reading fluency and critical thinking, especially when the material was linked to themes discussed in class or used as input for speaking tasks.

2. Challenges Faced in Authentic Assessment Tasks

While students generally recognized the educational value of authentic assessments in the ESP course, many also reported a range of challenges that interfered with their learning experience and performance. These challenges, drawn from thematic analysis of the interview data, can be categorized into four main areas: technical and interactional barriers in online learning, anxiety related to public speaking, the technical demands of video-based tasks, and the linguistic as well as psychological difficulties encountered during free talk activities.

a. Online Modality Limits Interaction and Creates Technical Barriers

One of the most prominent challenges identified by students was the technical limitations associated with online learning environments. Frequent internet connectivity issues led to unstable communication during synchronous presentations and disrupted video uploads. For instance, Student G shared, *"jaringan saya sering bermasalah, jadi suara saya putus-putus saat presentasi dan itu bikin tidak percaya diri,"* highlighting how technical instability negatively affected students' confidence and clarity. In some cases, these disruptions also caused delays and missed deadlines, thereby reducing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the assessment process. Moreover, the online modality significantly hindered real-time interaction, a key component in effective language learning. Students expressed that the absence of visual cues, body language, and direct peer responses made learning feel isolating and impersonal. As Student H put it, *"kuliah daring membuat interaksi jadi hambar, saya merasa cuma 'menyimak' tapi tidak benar-benar terlibat."* The lack of spontaneous feedback and immediate engagement limited students' ability to engage in meaningful language exchanges, particularly during tasks like live presentations that benefit from interactive dialogue.

b. Public Speaking Anxiety and Passive Audience Hinder Presentation Effectiveness

Another recurring issue was performance anxiety, especially during live or synchronous presentations. Many students struggled with nervousness, which led to forgetfulness and diminished delivery quality. Student I said, *"saya sering lupa apa yang mau saya katakan saat live, padahal sudah latihan,"* emphasizing how stress interfered with their ability to perform despite prior preparation. This anxiety was intensified by the online setting, where the speaker could not receive reassuring feedback from the audience, thus creating a sense of speaking into a void. In addition to anxiety, students expressed frustration over the lack of active participation from peers during presentations. Some presenters felt their efforts were undervalued due to inattentive audiences, which affected their motivation. Student J recounted, *"waktu presentasi online, teman-teman kadang tidak menyimak. Jadi saya merasa tidak dihargai."* This perceived lack of appreciation and absence of dialogue during the task reduced the authenticity of the learning experience and, in some cases, discouraged students from putting forth their best performance.

c. Video Assignments Demand Technical Skill and Resources

While video-based assignments provided a degree of flexibility, they also imposed significant technical and logistical demands on students. A number of participants reported challenges in ensuring audio clarity, minimizing background noise, and editing videos for submission. Student K shared, "*saya harus take ulang berkali-kali karena suara motor atau tetangga masuk ke rekaman,*" illustrating how environmental distractions made the process time-consuming and stressful. Additionally, students faced technological limitations, such as insufficient storage space or outdated equipment. Student L noted, "*memori HP saya penuh, jadi harus hapus file lain supaya bisa simpan video tugas.*" This highlights the digital divide in access to adequate tools for producing quality content. These technical constraints not only impacted the output but also led to unequal learning conditions, where some students felt disadvantaged due to their limited resources.

d. Authentic Conversation Requires Confidence and Lexical Competence

Despite being viewed as the most engaging and beneficial task, free talk sessions with foreigners posed significant challenges for students in terms of linguistic readiness and psychological preparedness. Limited vocabulary, difficulty in sentence construction, and lack of fluency often made students feel hesitant or overwhelmed. As Student M admitted, "*saya sering bingung mau jawab apa karena kosakata saya masih kurang,*" indicating that the pressure to communicate spontaneously in English sometimes triggered anxiety and self-doubt. In addition to language difficulties, students also faced problems in finding appropriate conversation partners. Not all learners had equal access to native or fluent English speakers, and some struggled to maintain a meaningful dialogue. Student N commented, "*saya susah cari lawan bicara yang bisa diajak free talk dengan serius,*" emphasizing how this task depended heavily on external factors. Despite these barriers, many students reported that the experience challenged them to develop strategies for overcoming communication breakdowns and gave them valuable practice in real-world language use.

Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed that students generally held positive perceptions toward authentic assessments in their online ESP course, recognizing multiple benefits and advantages while also acknowledging several notable challenges. Below are the summary of the qualitative data findings.

Regarding benefit, there were six common themes: confidence, motivation, interest, skill development, creativity, and collaboration. Students felt more confident in using English, especially in free talk practice with foreigners, and appreciated video presentations as fun and motivating. These tasks made learning exciting and meaningful and helped to improve pronunciation, vocabulary, and general communication. Assignments allowed for creativity and gave students space to express ideas, and collaboration encouraged support and working together.

On the advantage, students liked the convenience and flexibility of online presentations, especially where there were no physical classrooms. The application of real-world communication with native speakers gave them experiential exposure to English in real-life contexts. Video-based tasks allowed for self-reflection and revision, enabling more profound thinking and enhancement. Others further added that these tests could easily adjust to their level of language, offering a more personalized learning experience.

However, students also had some problems, primarily with the technicalities like unstable internet causing communication disruptions. Video assignments were

technically demanding and time-consuming, requiring planning, editing, and digital skills. Time management and balancing workload were ever-present problems. Lastly, communication barriers like being unable to understand native speakers or failing to catch visual cues created anxiety in some students during live interactions.

Discussion

This study tried to recognize ITE students' perceptions of authentic assessments in an ESP course, focusing on the benefits, advantages, and challenges of these assessments. Both quantitative and qualitative findings indicate a predominantly positive perception, highlighting how authentic assessments contribute to skill development, motivation, and professional readiness. The quantitative data from the Likert-scale survey revealed that the majority of students (around 75-80%) agreed that authentic assessments, such as video presentations and free talk sessions with native speakers, significantly enhanced their engagement and motivation. This finding is supported by Saputri, Nurkamto, and Wahyuni (2019) who found that The implementation of authentic assessment significantly improves students' motivation, interest, enthusiasm, activeness, self-confidence, creativity, English skills, and learning outcomes. This is supported by the qualitative findings in interview section, where students expressed increased confidence and a willingness to participate more actively in class. The inclusion of real-world tasks helps bridge the gap between academic content and practical applications, aligning with (Villarroel et al., 2020), who found that tasks with real-world relevance boost intrinsic motivation by demonstrating the direct applicability of learned skills.

The findings indicate distinct advantages of authentic assessments, particularly in fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability. In the survey, 78% of students agreed that these assessments improved their critical thinking skills, a result echoed in the qualitative data, where students reported enhanced problem-solving abilities during tasks such as video presentations and live discussions with native speakers. Authentic assessment enhances thinking skills by fostering meta-cognitive awareness through its principles (Pantiwati, 2013). These activities required students to organize content effectively, tailor their communication strategies, and respond adaptively in real-time conversations, which supports research by (Spector et al., 2023) that suggests authentic assessments enhance higher-order thinking skills by engaging students in complex, context-rich tasks. This finding is also supported by As'ari, Rosali, and Mulyanie's finding that showed authentic assessment implementation with a field-lab approach could improve students' critical thinking skill since it requires students to be actively engaged in learning process and applied their knowledge and skill in real context (As'ari, Rosali, and Mulyanie, 2024).

The qualitative data provided additional insights beyond what was captured in the survey. For instance, students highlighted the development of creativity and adaptability, particularly when preparing video presentations. They described the process of planning, scripting, and editing as an opportunity to not only practice language skills but also enhance their creative thinking. This aligns with findings by (Villarroel et al., 2020), which indicate that authentic tasks involving creative content production encourage students to think innovatively and tailor their communication for diverse audiences. It is also in line with the result of the study by Pullu and Gömleksiz, (2021) that implementing authentic task-oriented applications in programming instruction had a greater positive impact on students' problem-solving and creativity skills compared to conventional teaching methods.

Additionally, free talk sessions with native speakers became a very beneficial element that allowed students to improve their speaking skill and flexibility. In such real-life conversations, students were exposed to various shades of language and its practical use, gaining more confidence in an English-speaking context. This finding corroborates Henry et al. (2018), who contend that authentic, unscripted dialogues with native speakers develop the adaptability of students that is necessary within professional contexts, particularly in those industries-like IT-where collaboration often occurs on an international scale. Unlike many assessment tools, these situations are indeed real-life-oriented and hence afford students precious practice in dealing with sudden conversations and linguistic challenges. Moreover, the fact that authentic assessments were collaborative in nature further helped in developing interpersonal skills. Most of the group-based activities include joint video presentations, thus requiring students to coordinate and negotiate with others. This fosters teamwork- an important skill in an IT workplace. According to Villarroel et al. (2020), authentic assessment provides unique opportunities to develop collaboration skills, often invisible in more traditional forms of testing. In this, paper, students showed that cooperation during the solution of complex tasks not only improves their linguistic but also their cooperative competence, crucial in professional settings.

Despite these benefits and advantages, the implementation of authentic assessments in an online ESP course also brings their challenges. Most learners reported problems with time management and the technical demands of the tasks such as video presentation. The data showed that students felt stressed because of the effort and time they needed to put into doing the course. These findings also correspond with Henry et al. (2018) observations that authentic assessments draw considerably on cognitive and technical resources that may be difficult for students with multiple life responsibilities. The need for creating the content, visually coordinating the information, and sometimes even collaborating with someone, therefore, made such assignments even more complex and longer than traditional assessments. Murphy, Fox, Freeman, and Hughes (2017) also identified that difficulties may arise as some form of resistance among students, managing large groups, and also resources and time limitations. Other major challenges were the technical issues, especially since this was an online learning environment. Access to reliable internet access and digital skills were necessary for effective participation in live interaction and to create quality video content. Those who did not have such resources often experienced descriptions, like poor connectivity during free talks and problem with video editing that affected the quality of submissions. This agrees with findings by Spector et al. (2023), who noted that inequity in digital access and skills can lead to inequity in learning in an online environment and reduce overall performance and confidence of students.

To work thorough these barriers, instructors and institutions should offer special support in particular areas of need: digital skill training and time management. Workshops on how to use video production or presentation software, plus some flexibility with deadlines, may help reduce some of the technological and scheduling burdens on learners. (Soffer et al., 2019) also note that flexibility in online class may significantly increase students' success by supporting various students' need and reducing their stress. In general, the results show the advantages of integrating authentic assessments within ESP class at least for ITE students. These tasks enhance language development and, at the same time build crucial competencies need in IT professions: creative, collaborative, and flexible. By aligning academic tasks with real-world contexts, authentic assessments offer a robust framework for preparing students to meet the demands of the modern workplace (Sokhanvar et al., 2021). However,

addressing practical barriers related to digital access and time management is essential for maximizing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of these assessments. These challenges can be reduced by implementing practical solutions such as campus-based access to necessary technology and adaptable assessment formats. In this way, ESP courses will also be able to better prepare students for the dynamic, collaborative nature of the global workforce, thus enhancing both language proficiency and professional readiness (Arnó-Macià et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This research underlines that ITE students generally hold a positive perception toward authentic assessments in ESP courses, with acknowledged enormous benefits, advantages, and some challenges. The quantitative findings also reveal that authentic assessments assigned to students, such as video presentations and free talk sessions, work effectively in enhancing students' motivation, engagement, and self-confidence to apply English in realistic contexts. These tasks bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical applications, helping students develop relevant skills for their future IT careers. The qualitative data support these findings even further by giving a deeper understanding of the experiences of the students. According to the participants, authentic assessment nurtured critical thinking, adaptability, creativity, and teamwork skills, especially in real-time interactions and the presentation of technical content. Such tasks allowed students to self-organize ideas, solve problems, and effectively communicate with diverse audiences independently, which is in line with professional requirements within the IT industry. Despite the benefits and advantages, there were challenges on time management and technical demands. Students often struggled with producing high-quality video presentations and managing digital tools, especially in an online learning environment. Such issues can be addressed by allowing flexibility in deadlines, improving technical support, and providing focused training in digital skills, which will help alleviate these barriers and optimize the effectiveness of authentic assessments. Therefore, educators should offer additional support and resources to make these assessments as beneficial and inclusive as possible.

While these findings offer useful insights into students' experiences, this study is not without its limitations. This study mainly looked at how students perceive authentic assessment in an online ESP class. It didn't include the teachers' point of view, which is also important since they're the ones who design and manage the assessments. So, future research is encouraged to explore how teachers see and experience using authentic assessment in online ESP settings. Also, it would be valuable to do longer-term studies to find out whether these types of assessments actually help students improve their English skills and prepare them for real jobs, especially in tech-related fields. Looking into these areas can help give a fuller picture of how well authentic assessment really works over time.

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