

Authentic Speaking Assessment Applied by English Teachers During Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

Online classes become the only alternative that schools are able to do during the pandemic situation when the government issued the regulation to stay at home. Moreover, not all schools are able to provide regular online classroom for the students, so that the progress of students' language production cannot be assessed. This study aimed to investigate how speaking assessment was done authentically in online classroom. This research was guided under qualitative design taking on a descriptive study. The participants were 6 English Teachers in an International Standard English Course in Purwokerto that were still teaching online classes to provide English classroom for those who have difficulty to learn English from their schools. The researcher conducted descriptive design using observation and interview to collect the data. The results showed that the demand to provide authentic score from authentic assessment requires teacher to design an online speaking assessment. There was a series of activities and adapted from the offline authentic speaking assessment. It covered five major activities: Giving Example of video and demonstration, assessing attitude in online classroom, online interview in speaking assessment, assessing skill by having video production, and giving feedback clearly. The implication of the study is to give teachers insight on how to conduct authentic speaking assessment in online classroom without ignoring the nature of authentic assessment as well as the preparation.

Keywords: *Authentic assessment, speaking, assessment, online classes*

1. INTRODUCTION

An authentic speaking assessment is needed to know the progress of student's ability during the learning process. It might help the teacher in observing and deciding students' strength and weaknesses that would be needed for further consideration to prepare the action coming up after the assessment. It should also be a way of giving students regular feedback so that they are aware of their excellence or their failures (Brindley, 2003).

The duty to examine students' speaking ability with correct judgment leads the teacher to design appropriate and meaningful assessment. Malley argued one of the major responsibilities of working with the English language learner is to enable students to communicate effectively through oral language (Malley & Pierce, 1996). As a result, learners often measure their success in language learning as well as how proficient they are before and after taking the English Course especially in oral communication. Speaking task and assessment work in harmony and become authentic assessment as the task is not only used to practice speaking but also to assess

students' ability and achievement at the same time. Thus, it is well understood that types of speaking assessment are known as speaking task as well. The classification types of speaking assessment are oral interview, picture cued, Radio Broadcasts, video clips, information gap, story/text telling (Malley & Pierce, 1996).

A study conducted by Aliningsih and Sofwan (2015) also revealed most teachers already had positive perceptions on the practice of authentic assessment even though the teachers still face many obstacles to implement it. One of the problems is the availability of devices such as laptop, smart phone, and internet connection also plays major role so that state schools owned by government just conduct very limited speaking assessment even almost no speaking assessment.

During the pandemic situation, public schools are not able to provide English lesson properly. For example, the nature of language learning like practicing speaking in pairs, having group discussion, having feedback from teachers. cannot run well, the teacher cannot do classroom activities and all the techniques are very limited. Moreover, the schools are not ready yet to

provide online classroom that accommodate all speaking activities in the classroom. The activities of speaking assessment are very limited or almost there is no speaking assessment. It causes bigger problem that students are not able to speak the target language during the pandemic. Unfortunately, we still do not know when the pandemic is over. Thus, we need teachers to design an authentic assessment to substitute the gaps because of the online learning.

The problem when teachers cannot teach and assess students directly is a situation that requires creativity to produce the same quality when the students learn in the classroom. Furthermore, the teachers are forced to improve students' language skill in any condition. One of the indicators that show students improvement in language learning is how they speak. This is in line with Bahrani and Soltani (2012) that the main concern of the most language teachers is how to help language learners produce satisfying language proficiency. To meet the goals, a design of online speaking assessment becomes important since students are still able to learn other skills reading, writing, and listening individually and the speaking skill they need partner and teacher directly but it doesn't fit to the current condition. Because this is such a new job that haven't been implemented before, teachers are forced to be more creative and flexible to the current condition because having authentic online speaking assessment is the only way they can do during this time. The students also find difficulty to adapt from the regular to the online class. They cannot meet their friends, whereas their friends as speaking partner are helpful in improving student's language production.

Many researchers previously focused on how authentic speaking assessment applied in an offline classroom. For example, the study of the practice of authentic assessment in EFL speaking classroom used group discussion, pairing work, and project presentation (Inayah, Komariah, & Nasir, 2019). Another research study revealed that to assess students' speaking skill in junior high school level, role play and picture talks are the most appropriate ones (Sahyoni & Zaim, 2017). Those previous research studies were conducted before 2020 when schools are still in operation and there is no regulation to stay at home and physical distancing, so the activities may vary.

Therefore, to fill the gaps from the previous research about the minim study of how to assess students' speaking skill authentically in online classroom. The researcher conducted the research in order the reveal the information how authentic assessment works in a very limited access condition and to know what the challenges are to assess student's speaking skill without having regular activities in the classroom. Furthermore, the researcher construct research questions as a guidance to achieve the aims of the research, such as:

1. How teacher assess students authentically during the online classes?
2. What are the types of authentic speaking assessment during the online classes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessments are defined as a performance-based tasks done in an environment that is actually closely approximates to the real-world setting. Assessment is an ongoing process that requires combination of methodologies and techniques. This process is supported by to facilitate the students in various ways such as having collaboration with others, it must be scored with reference to authentic standards of performance which students must understand to be inherent to successful performance and it is done by applying typical procedures of assessment design are reversed, and accountability serves students learning (Zaim, Mukhaiyar, & Syahriati, 2017). Furthermore, the research showed that the combination of methodologies in the authentic speaking assessment is gathered in some types of assessment such as oral presentation, story of text retelling, pair dialogue, oral report, picture cued description, information gaps, speech, discussion, roleplay, debates, and short presentations.

Many experts (Zaim et al., 2017; Koh, 2017) agree that authentic assessment is an alternative assessment method aside of traditional standardized test. According to Koh (2017), Mueller authentic assessment is defined as a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world task that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills. The keyword of authentic means there is a meaningful application that relates the material given to the use of the language in a real world (Mueller, 2005). The way of scoring the students does not come from once performance only also from several process during the lesson.

Authentic assessment is the renewal style of old assessment which only does not cover the holistic thing during the learning process. The major characteristics is Task based real-life situation which known as authentic assessment, allows the teacher to collect the students learning progress from various students' activities in the classroom (Hidayati, Bentri, & Rahmi, 2017). This is a multiple form of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation and attitudes on instructionally-relevant classroom activities (Malley & Pierce, 1996). the term of authentic assessment also appears in the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 81, year 2013 about 2013 Curriculum assessment, an authentic assessment focuses on measuring student's learning process dealing with their behavior, knowledge and skill. There are some examples of activity that

teachers are required to assess students' skills such as performance, project, and portfolio assessments. Performance assessment a type of activities that is conducted by observing students demonstrating a particular activity related with real-world implementation; while portfolio assessment is defined as a continuous assessment process based on a set of information that shows the development of students competence; while project assessment is an integrated activity which cannot be in a short period of time; it requires the students to do a series of tasks producing specific product or data (the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture no. 104, year 2014).

2.2. Designing Authentic Speaking Assessment

The way to assess speaking skill authentically has some crucial points that teachers must prepare. First, they must be able to design an authentic assessment and learning objectives as suitable as possible for the students. (Hoelzel, Barker, & Boyda, 1993) suggested to following eight steps in planning and designing authentic assessment: 1) building a team, 2) determining the purpose of the authentic assessment, 3) specifying objectives, 4) conducting professional development on authentic assessment, 5) collecting examples of authentic assessment, 6) adapting the existing authentic assessment or developing a new one, 7) trying out the assessment, and 8) reviewing the assessment

In implementing the authentic, there are some activities promoted by the Government such as performance, portfolio, and project assignment that can be applied. Finally, the result of the speaking assessment should be basic data to give feedback and the further actions. In this area, the design of the authentic speaking assessment should be turned into online design. For example, when there is performance experience such as storytelling, teacher should provide the instructions, example, material and explanation of each instruction. Previously, their concept of performance assessment is to show or demonstrate something in front of the classroom to their friends, but now they have to present it in the online class that needs different preparation and this is the role of teacher and parents to help them provide guidance. The authentic assessment also covers behavior assessment while teacher cannot control whether they cheat, thus parents are involved to ensure that the assessment done in a fair way. When students are not supported by their parents during the speaking assessment, they will face difficulty and it makes them get demotivated during the assessment.

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This research was guided by qualitative research design. It took descriptive study aimed to know the reality condition of how authentic speaking assessments was applied by English teachers in an International Standard English Course. The reason was to describe the situation or event as completely in order to provide new knowledge. Walliman (2017) stated that a qualitative research can be used to establish reality based on participants' point of view. Through the participants' point of view, it figured out the process of an event as complete as possible. Furthermore, the data were collected in the form of description through interview and open-ended questionnaire (Creswell, 2012). This is strengthened by Creswell (2012) that the data are in the form of words and sentences.

3.2. Research Participants

The subject of the study were 6 English teachers in an English Course in Purwokerto, Central Java. The teaching experienced of the teacher were about 1-5 years. The participants were chosen using purposive sampling. According to Arikunto it is way of deciding sampling after having certain considerations. (Arikunto, 2010) The considerations in this research where they were still teaching English lesson through online system since the pandemic. Whereas, most of the English Course stopped their operation. Furthermore, they have their own platform namely EFstudyonline.com in conducting the online classes. The platform is the same as the platform that China used during the pandemic. Thus, the platform is proven able to provide proper and premium online classes to support students learning that they cannot get it from school.

3.3. Data Collection

To collect the data, the researcher used two methods; class observations and interview. The observations were done in 6 classes and the researcher joined the class in the same room with the teacher while the students were in their home. This is intended to know the process of how authentic speaking assessment was applied. By watching directly how it was, the data obtained were completely figured out. While the class observation was done with the teacher when the agenda of the online class was speaking assessment. The observation covered the planning, implementation and feedback sessions from the teacher. The instruments used in this method was field note The field note was used to record information and situation happened. In the field note, it covered the steps of Planning Assessment as what have been presented by Hoelzel (1993). It also helped the researcher to note

specific moment such as students and teacher's response during the assessment

After doing the observation, the researcher interviewed the participants in semi-structured way since further discussion might come from beyond the questions and expected answer prepared by the researcher. The instrument used in this method was interview guide. The interview covered the questions to reveal how teachers processed the authentic English-speaking assessment during the online classes both external and internal problems.

After the data were obtained, they were analyzed by using three steps of Miles and Huberman's analysis model, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The researchers transcribed the interview results and categorized the data based on their categories. Meanwhile, the data of the class observation and document observation were typed and categorized respectively. Then all the data were reduced, and the important items remained. The following step was displaying the analyzed data. The researcher transcribed and analyze the result in a descriptive qualitative form. The last, the researcher interpreted deeply about the finding and integrated with the theory and previous study.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Due the limitation of schools, there are many aspects in teaching that cannot run well as usual There are two aspects discussed in this section; Planning and Implementation of the speaking authentic assessment.

4.1. Online Assessment Planning

The first aspect that requires teacher to do is planning the speaking assessment, they usually use their regular design that is constructed in their own curriculum to assess students' speaking skill. However, when the curriculum does not provide them with the online speaking assessment, they have to design their own design adjusting the current condition happening. The preparation of the online assessment based on Hoelzel consists of 8 stages, however the teachers only apply 6 out of 8 stages, they are: 2) determining the purpose of the authentic assessment, 3) specifying objectives, 4) conducting professional development on authentic assessment, 5) collecting examples of authentic assessment, 6) adapting the existing authentic assessment or developing a new one, 7) trying out the assessment. (Hoelzel et al., 1993)

Based on the field note, all teachers did not apply the stages number 1 (building a team) and number 8 (reviewing the assessment). However, there two teachers (Teacher 2 and Teacher 3) that applied less steps. Those teachers skipped Step 4 Collecting Examples. Teacher 5

also skipped Step 5 Trying Out the Assessment. Based on the analysis of the field note regarding the Planning, the Step 1 and Step 8 were not conducted because in the interview teachers revealed that they tended to work individually, and the characteristics of the classes are different.

There are some considerations in the design such how long they have been joining the class, one of the teachers revealed that 'the longer the students join the course the more active they are'. Thus, the teachers designed the assessment also considering the relation between students in the classroom. The respondents (T3) stated that when they applied discussion technique to a new class although their English level was quite good, but they did not know each other, they tended to be silent and did not show their ability. Thus, the appropriate assessment was presentation or performance. Moreover, in the form of the activities and interaction, normally, before the pandemic when schools were still open, there were many kinds of interaction such as Teacher-Student, Teacher-Students, Student-Students, or Student-Student. However, when the class was conducted through online system, the interaction was very limited and mostly use Teacher-Student interaction.

Secondly, the teachers consider the technique to execute the assessment through online system (see Figure 1). They usually use their own platform similar to video call for 8-10 people and the teacher is able to show presentation to them. However, this platform is not effective to do the performance or presentation because the other student sometimes just takes their attention away and do something else. Consequently, the teachers turn it into a video presentation to produce clearer voice and picture, it also adds teachers' document as an example for the next classes.

4.2. Planning Rubric Assessment

In the planning stage, the teachers design rubric assessment to help them score the performance, the rubric is usually prepared by the schools, however because of the online situation they modify the rubric and add some points like how clear the voice is and the rest points are still the same; grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. For some teacher, they would like to give the students extra score when they do the assessment without being helped by people of their family. For example, when the interview is done through video that is submitted sometimes the students show unrealistic progress in very quickly way then when the teacher asked whether they read the text behind the camera they admit that they are cheating. This would be not fair to the other students who do the assessment honestly.

4.3. Online Authentic Speaking Assessment

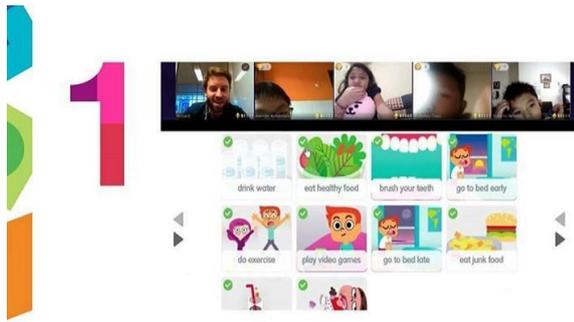


Figure 1 Online speaking assessment platform.

The authentic speaking assessment in this English course mostly applied for Junior High School to College student. In this period, the teacher used Presentation and Interview to assess the students speaking ability. Usually, the bigger project is made whenever they will end the course and it is such a drama, games, or presentation that show all of the target language learned for 4 months or in 1 level.

Based on the interview, basically all of the English Curriculum applied in the course are real-world based and use Common European Frame of Reference as their reference. The assessment is done twice within a unit of lesson (one topic), and the rest activities are practicing. There are some steps in implementing the authentic assessment for the students.

1. Giving Example

Before the students start the assessment, they should know that the activity is an assessment, so they perform the best. The teacher started to give example through several ways. First, when the activity is an individual activity, teacher would pretend to be a student to present or demonstrate the object. Furthermore, the teacher always emphasized the target language within the presentation and repeated for more than 3 times until he felt that the students got the point. The teacher also gave example of common mispronounced word or grammar to eliminate the mistake.

2. Scoring

Teachers scored the students by using the rubric and all of the teacher used analytic rubric to assess students speaking skill. There are some important points done by the teacher such as not having high expectation for the oral production and they stick on the goal of the lesson when student can achieve the goal so they will give them maximum score. Consequently, the distinction between students who produced better target language and those who produce less must be clearly pictured. This is the implementation of the fairness of the students.

"I tend to stick to the rubric, though other ways I try to gauge students' speaking skills is through how well

they apply learnt grammar vocabulary in both mandatory activities and casual discussions" T2

"My students always talk in English with the staff so I should praise them more by giving them extra score" T6

"I love to see my students talking in English with their friends even when they do not realize that I am around so their score should show their daily conversation as well" T1

Amid the process of the assessment, there are three aspects in the authentic speaking assessment when teachers watch their students' (Aliningsih & Sofwan, 2015) performance.

a. Attitude Assessment

The type of assessment in this section is done through the observation by the teacher from the beginning until the end of the class. There are behaviors assessed during the speaking assessment such as respect, care, honest, discipline, confidence, responsible, teamwork, peace, and cooperation. This attitude should be established well because it is a basic assumption in a community (Fitzsimmons & Ferb, 1977).

The concrete process during the online speaking assessment started when the teachers asked them to turn their microphone off and ask them to work in pairs to have very quick pair discussion about the "Covid-19 Pandemic Learning" ending up with the question "What would you do if you are the President of Indonesia?". In 5 minutes, they have to have quick discussion with their classmate in pair via Whatsapp phone. Next, the teacher gathered them together and see which pair can handle the discussion best. Some of the students may fight because his friend was not cooperative.

If teacher found such behavior that caused chaos during the online assessment, unfortunately the teacher put 3 or 5 points minus for the students in the analytical rubric.

b. Knowledge Assessment

In this section, the types of the assessment applied is short interview consisting of several questions that need detail questions. It is intended to know the understanding of what the students said and the relation between the video as the authentic material to support the authentic speaking assessment. However, the difficulty is when students are not able to do the task and understand the material (Mulyanah, 2019). 5 of 6 teachers revealed that most of the students only copy the language within the video without knowing the real meaning within. This is important for the next step of the assessment that if they did not understand the material, they would not be able to present the material in the performance section which is the last part of the assessment.

The teachers' questions in doing the knowledge assessment were about the detail information using the

WH Questions. The types of the questions are also various such as Yes/No, Pick One, Reasons, and Identification questions. Examples of questions used in knowledge assessment:

“What are the symptoms of Covid-19?”

“Does it belong to SARS virus family?”

“In which city Corona formerly spread out? Beijing or Wuhan?”

c. Skill Assessment

Finally, the type of assessment for the speaking exam adopted performance project. Due the limitation of time and students cannot perform the whole performance one by one in the online classroom. All teachers asked them to take a video in 2-3 minutes to retell the information and promote a solution to solve the problem. The teachers preferred to do it not in the video call session because they want to keep the video and use it as the authentic material for the next class. The assessment rubric used to score the students was still the same with the offline rubric; analytical rubric. The analytical rubric had the aspects like pronunciation, intonation, fluency and accuracy. Those are the indicators of proficiency as the representations of productive skills. (Köroğlu, 2019). However, the teachers added some points such as autonomous video recording without clues and cheat with others behind the video, and the clarity and the quality of the video also mattered.

3. Giving Feedback

During the online classes, giving feedback can be done in two ways, through the video conference and sending messages to students. Teacher gave feedback to the students after all of the students finished their presentation and mostly focused on their pronunciation and grammar.

“I give feedback after the activity by drilling the mispronounced words and reviewing the grammatical errors (I usually do this by asking the students to compare 2 sentences which are grammatically correct and grammatically incorrect, then I have them to find the mistake.) Sometimes I also use the incorrect sentence that the student made as a concept checking question. This will guide them to find the error without telling them directly” T1

“Our teachers always apply CCQ or Concept Checking Questions so that they do not only know what is wrong, but they know how to correct” T4

There are three ways of giving feedback applied by the teacher: Drilling mispronounced word, identifying mistakes, concept checking questions. Seeing those three ways of giving feedback, it can be concluded that all the teachers give feedback through two ways interaction. Usually, when the feedback is only given one-way interaction, teacher cannot predict that the students really

understand what mistakes they make before. All teachers involved in this research always apply CCQ (Concept Checking Questions) in the middle of giving their students feedback, the example of the CCQ is “Do you use “eat” or “ate” when you do the activity yesterday?”. Instead of letting them know the answer instantly the CCQ helps students to recall their memories of teachers’ explanation so they know the concept clearer when the teachers give them feedback.

The feedback is given indirectly and there was research showed that the indirect feedback group outperformed the direct feedback (Eslami, 2014). This style of giving feedback is still rarely found in any schools and the teacher in this English Course has routine professional development as one of their obligation working in their school.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that there were decreasing number of activities to conduct authentic speaking assessment. However, to conduct speaking assessment in online system is still possible. The speaking assessment should consider the device and application to conduct the interaction between teacher and students or student and students. Teachers are required to have better problem anticipation to overcome the possible problem that might appear during the online learning. The major activities found in this research were covering: Giving Example of video and demonstration, assessing attitude in online classroom, online interview in speaking assessment, assessing skill by having video production, and giving feedback clearly. The possibility of conducting speaking assessment should be followed by the readiness of all parties; schools, teachers, students, parents, learning material. The authentic assessment also needs feedback in students’ behavior and intelligence to improve their skills. In addition, when we are still waiting for the schools open, teachers are required to design many more designs for many authentic materials.

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