

Teacher Challenges in Assessing Students Speaking Ability during Online Learning System

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Abstract

The topic of online assessment has attracted the attention of many educators and researchers. However, the explanations on what the teacher face during the online assessment particularly when productive skills are in focus. The present study aims to find out the challenges faced by the teachers in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system. To serve the aim, the research utilized the qualitative data which were collected from semi-structured interviews done with three teachers in one of the universities in Garut city. The findings showed that the teachers have the same experience. The teachers expressed that the technical problems remain the biggest hurdle that the teachers faced when assessing students speaking ability during online. The teacher strategy and creativity are also key factors in successfully assessing students speaking ability during online. This study concludes that the involvement of the technology in the assessment requires careful preparations and sufficient technological knowledge.

Keywords: *Teacher challenges, speaking assessment, online learning system.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Online learning is the new learning method in pandemic Covid-19. In a broad sense, online learning refers to teacher-led education using the internet and a web-based educational delivery system where teachers and students are separated physically and geographically using software proven to learn with structured learning (Elsa Rosalina, 2020). Online learning presents its challenges for teachers. Teachers will face many challenges. The challenges will faced by the teachers in online learning is assessment. Assessment is one of the challenges will faced by the teachers in online learning. Assessment is defined as process of gathering data to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of student learning process (Hodges, 1995). In the case of online meetings, how do teachers assess the ability of students who attend and only listen? It is tough to see students abilities if students do not contribute or are not actively involved in online meetings. Therefore, the main focus in this research is how teachers can assess students speaking ability skill.

Speaking must develop grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, accuracy (Wulida Wahidatul Masruria, 2021). Assessment plays an important role in the process of learning. The types of assessment is asking our students to do determine how students will approach the learning task and what study behaviours they will use. Assessment then becomes a lens for understanding student learning, identifying invisible barriers, and helping us to improve our teaching approaches (Wood, 2022).

Although, studies related to the challenges for teachers to assess students speaking ability are still limited. The previous study discussed how teachers assess student English skills in general and not specifically towards students speaking ability. Therefore, this research discusses in detail how the challenges teachers face on assessing students speaking ability. Several studies related to this research discussed YouTube as a student teaching material and teacher assessments. However, research on the challenges of teachers in assessing students speaking ability through self-recorded videos uploaded to YouTube is still limited and has many problems. Cheating is one of them, which students can do without being identified by the teacher. This causes the teacher has not been able to identify the cheating committed by the students, so that the teacher assessment of the student abilities is not fully accurate. Furthermore, there are various challenges faced by teachers in implementing it. However, the purpose of this research is how teachers will face the challenge of assessing students speaking ability which will be useful for further research. Interview will be used in this research as method. This is different from previous studies that used direct experiments on students at school. Interviews were conducted on lecturers who had assessed students speaking ability at one of the universities in the city of Garut.

Based on the background above, this study intends to investigate (1) teachers in dealing with the challenges that exist is how to assess students speaking abilities; and, (2) produce effective and accurate teacher assessments.

2. METHODS

This study involved three teachers at one of the universities in Garut to find out the difficulties being faced by teachers when assessing students speaking skills in online classes. The selection of this lecturer is because he/she was required to carry out an online assessment of students due to the pandemic. In particular, this lecturer can carry out speaking proficiency assessments for students before the pandemic in speaking courses. As stated above, interview utilized in this study as instrument. The device researcher uses to collect data is called instrument (Arikunto, 2006). Instrument has important functions in this research. Instrument is one of the significant steps in conducting this research.

The interview will be conducted with participants to obtain detailed information and a description of the teachers' challenges during the assessment of students speaking skills in an online learning system. The interview will consist of three sub-variable questions related to assessing students speaking ability in the online learning system. The data will be classified as complementary to answering research questions. Interviews will be conducted in Indonesian so that lecturers are more comfortable expressing their opinions on how to assess students speaking skills in the online learning system.

As previously mentioned, this research used qualitative research methods. Therefore, the data in this study are generally analyzed using inductive analysis. Research data analysis is a process used by researchers for reducing data to a story and interpreting it to derive insight (Lecompte, 1999). Inductive analysis, on the other hand, is a more emergent strategy, where the researcher reads through the data and allows codes to emerge/names concepts as they emerge. It's more of a "bottom-up" analytic strategy (Bingham, 2021). Next, analyze the data. Interview data by listening to recordings and matters around 10-15 minutes related to how the teacher assesses the speaking ability of online class students. Then, the data is categorized, synthesized, and interpreted as the final step.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This present study was design to investigate the teacher challenges in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system in one of the universities in Garut city. It was conducted by semi-structured interview of three teachers in one of the universities in Garut city.

Findings

In this section, the findings from the interview will be presented. The interview results mainly provided the answers to the research questions about the teacher challenges in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system.

Under the purpose of the study, which is to find the teacher challenges in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system. The first thing to discuss is the knowledge of each participants about speaking online assessment. The interview process revealed that the participants know what is speaking online assessment based on their own opinions refers to the experts. The following responses illustrated these findings. (R is the abbreviation for respondent)

#R1: Speaking online assessment according to the rules of the assessment itself is the same as online or offline, depending on the way of learning from the teacher. The point is how students can talk from beginning to end and then their ideas can be conveyed well.

The answer from the resource person who has experiences in assessing students speaking ability during online learning. Although, there are several different opinions between the participants. The point is how students can talk from the beginning to the end and their ideas can be conveyed well, but there are some challenges faced by the teachers when assessing speaking abilities of these students.

#R1: There are many challenges, speaking will be successful if there is two-way communication between lecturers and students, sometimes there are also students who are passives so they have to be provoked by using questions, there are also those who want to speak but the student does not know the meaning in English.

Furthermore, technical factors that usually occur during online meetings are unstable networks and device problems.

#R2: The problems that often arise among students are shame and fear of being wrong in pronouncing and speaking English, including the teacher sometimes explaining in Indonesian. Therefore, make English a place for practice so that we are accustomed to speaking or conversing in English.

The challenges faced by the teachers often occur in the learning process. Fear and lack of self-confidence from students become things that often happen. This can be serious when the teachers does not have the right strategies. Responding to this, the teachers must find the accurate strategies with the conditions that fit the need of their students.

#R1: The first is to always appreciate students who are active in class, so students can be more motivated in arguing, secondly, don't often blame students so that they are not afraid or not confident in expressing their opinions or arguments. After that, other elements such as speech, ideas presented, and presentation from beginning to end were good or not.

#R3: The first is encourage students to have a conversation, every social interaction gives students a new opportunity to practice the language, so I mentoring because there are some students who are little difficult to engage in conversation. The second is ask some questions to students, repeat the student answers, so that the students become more confident and have a good conversations.

Furthermore, the strategies that can be done to get the results of the assessment by the teachers are students more confident to deliver their opinions, always appreciate students who are active in the class, and asking a questions that lead to arguments among the students.

#R3: Most of the media I used during the pandemic are Zoom meetings, sometimes I also used Google Meet in the learning process. I also often used youtube as a media, I ask students to make a short video conversation after that it is uploaded to the students YouTube or Instagram. For the assessment is from how students communicate whether it's fluent or stammered, with that I knew the abilities of each student.

Moreover, the media that usually used by the teachers are Zoom meetings application. This application, according to the teacher opinions who have been using this application from the beginning of online learning system is facilitates the online speaking assessment process. The teachers can recording the student appearances without having to used direct assessment like in offline class.

#R2: For acts of cheating committed by students, even when I did the practice test, there were minimal acts of cheating and even no acts of cheating, because the point

of the conversation there was not memorizing a text but what was needed naturally. Therefore, a student who can speak naturally, he can talk and automatically he is good at conversation. If the student only reads it will be detrimental to himself. So if the student memorizes and understands that is good, so it doesn't matter because reading is also part of data collection. When practicing real time, the context of speaking is at that moment so you can't be fooled.

The interesting things happened during the practical exam. It is common things that some students cheat during practical exams. However, in the speaking case, it is hard for the students to acts of cheating or even there is no cheating. Basically, the speaking assessment are expected and assessed by the teachers are natural speaking from the students and students can automatically to speak.

#R1: Because this is not face-to-face, so there are students who may be brave online without fear of being intimidated by other students, but when they are offline, the tendency of students to be brave may even be reduced. Therefore, speaking is more comfortable using face to face interaction if online there are students whose voices are not clear, there are students who have low voices, and also students who turn off their cameras and many other technical factors.

Although, there are advantages and disadvantages faced by the teachers. The teacher are still able to provide the right ideas and the right strategies in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system.

Discussion

This study aims to find out the teacher challenges in assessing students speaking abilities during the online learning system. Interview utilized in this study as instrument with three teachers in one of the universities in Garut city as participants. Based on the findings above, it can be conclude that the teachers has their own assessment in assessing students speaking skills during online by considering existing aspects such as accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding. This is in accordance with the theory, according to (Hughes, 2002) there are five important aspects for the assessment of speaking ability test which as follows: accent; grammar; vocabulary; fluency; and understanding. Furthermore, the teacher develops some of these aspects. Assessment by the teacher still refers to the 5 aspects that have been mentioned.

The practical test are not expensive, within time constraints limitation, easy to conduct, and procedure of scoring is specific and efficient in time (Abeywickrama, 2010). This statement showed that the practice test are inexpensive and it makes simpler for the teachers to assess students speaking abilities as quoted by second respondent. Moreover, the practical test has specific and efficient in time. According to the first respondent who has experiences to assess students speaking ability during online learning system when assessing through online the assessment can be obtained specifically, the teacher can look back at the students appearance that has been recorded in the zoom

meetings application. This makes it easier for the teachers to assessing students speaking ability which is efficient in time.

Furthermore, based on the interview above, the media used by the participants is zoom meeting application and other supporting applications such as youtube. These media helps and makes it easier for the teacher in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system. In fact, audio media is very easy to apply because the teacher only gives lessons in front of the class to achieve the objectives of teaching and learning activities (Munadi, 2010). Assessments can also be very easily accepted by teachers because they only listen to what students have done. The material can be in the form of audio media such as audio recordings of dramas, news, or even songs, and others.

This research is not without the limitations. The first things this research has a small number of participants. There are only three teachers who has experiences in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system in one of the universities in Garut city. Then, the second things the focus of this research is reached only at the university level. The instrument used interviews and it is not accompanied by quantitative data.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Overall the findings showed that each teacher has a different assessment, but the assessments carried out so far have not deviated from the five main aspects of speaking. The other findings showed that teacher views on online speaking ability assessment are not much different. The media such as zoom meetings, google meet, and youtube are often used by the teachers as learning media and the process of assessing students speaking ability itself.

However, based on the findings obtained from interviews with teachers, it was found that there is an interesting way of assessing students speaking skills in this online learning. This is marked by an assessment of the courage and self-confidence of students in speaking, because the challenge that is almost experienced by the participants, in this case the teacher, is the lack of confidence from the students. Therefore, the teacher develops an assessment that is not only fixated on the five aspects mentioned above but the things that encourage students to be more courageous and confident in conveying ideas are assessed by the teacher.

This study provides some suggestions for teachers to face challenges in assessing students speaking ability during online learning system. The findings in this study help teachers to make it easier to assess students speaking abilities and provide a new perspective in terms of assessment based on the findings presented previously. However, the teacher must be considered about the environmental conditions and student conditions when assessing students speaking ability during online learning system.

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