

**AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN CONDUCTING SPEAKING ASSESSMENTS AT MTSN ANDALAN PEKANBARU****Andi Idayani¹⁾, Rugaiyah²⁾**¹*Universitas Islam Riau*

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Abstract

Teaching speaking is an important part in the language teaching, as well as the assessing speaking. Therefore, teachers need to use some strategies in conducting the assessing speaking. Based on that issue, this research was aimed at exploring teachers' strategies in assessing speaking skill. To explore the problems, case study with a qualitative approach was adopted. This research employed observation, questionnaire and interview in collecting the data and involved five teachers from MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru. The collected data were analyzed by using flow data analysis process of Miles & Huberman (1994). The findings revealed that teachers apply the strategy of conducting the speaking assessment in the classroom which are started from the way they identify current status of classroom speaking assessment, the purpose of their speaking assessment, types speaking assessment, then selecting the teachers' strategies of speaking assessment and last, teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of classroom speaking assessment. In general, teachers implementing some strategies in conducting the speaking assessment. There were discussion and conversation, question and answer, role play, repetition, etc. This research was expected to broaden teachers' knowledge about strategies in assessing speaking in terms of the purpose and the type of assessment used, then teachers' perceptions of speaking assessment.

Keywords: *Teachers' Strategies, Speaking Assessment, Types of Assessments.*

ANALISIS STRATEGI GURU DALAM MELAKUKAN PENILAIAN KEMAMPUAN BERBICARA SISWA DI MTSN ANDALAN PEKANBARU**Abstrak**

Mengajar speaking merupakan bagian penting dalam pengajaran bahasa, serta menilai kemampuan speaking tersebut. Oleh karena itu, guru perlu menggunakan beberapa strategi dalam melakukan penilaian kemampuan berbicara siswa. Berdasarkan hal tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi guru dalam menilai kemampuan berbicara siswa. Untuk mengeksplorasi masalah tersebut dilakukan dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan observasi, kuesioner dan wawancara dalam mengumpulkan data dan melibatkan lima guru dari MTsN Andalan Pekanbaru. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan proses analisis data Miles & Huberman (1994).

Temuan menunjukkan bahwa guru menerapkan strategi melakukan penilaian berbicara di kelas yang dimulai dari cara mereka mengidentifikasi teknik penilaian kelas, tujuan penilaian berbicara, jenis penilaian, kemudian memilih strategi guru dan terakhir, persepsi guru tentang efektivitas penilaian kelas. Secara umum, guru menerapkan beberapa strategi dalam melakukan penilaian berbicara. Yakni diskusi dan percakapan, tanya jawab, bermain peran, dan pengulangan. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memperluas pengetahuan guru tentang strategi dalam menilai kemampuan berbicara siswa dan jenis penilaian yang digunakan, kemudian persepsi guru tentang penilaian berbicara siswa.

Kata kunci: Strategi Guru, Penilaian Berbicara, Jenis Penilaian.

1. INTRODUCTION

Having good speaking skill in English is one of learners' purposes in learning the language. Since the first time, they learn the language, they were prepared and trained to speak the language. Linse (2005) states that it is important for teachers to teach speaking as the first skill that they have to learn because it is a base skill to develop other language skills. In this case, the learners have to be able to have good speaking because it will influence their ability in mastering the language.

To help learners in having good speaking skill, teachers' role is very essential in this part. The teachers are not only needed to teach the students in various interesting activities to stimulate the students to speak, but also they have to have be able to design appropriate assessment. Obviously, many teachers focus on the way they teach the students, but problems relate to the assessment usually faced by the teachers.

Appropriate assessment is very crucial for the teachers in evaluating their students. It is one of the important aspects of teaching and

learning process that influences the students. It concerns the quality of the teaching as well as the quality of the learning. Therefore, teachers must have an appropriate assessment that will not interfere with their students' language development.

Obviously, assessing speaking skill is a challenge in language teaching, especially when it relates to English learner. It is a quite difficult task since they have higher activity levels and get easy to be distracted by others. They also have a shorter attention span, wariness of strangers, and inconsistent performance in unfamiliar environments.

Based on the explanation, the following research questions (RQ) were carried out to guide this study:

- RQ1: What is the current status of classroom speaking assessment conducted in MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru?
- RQ2. What are the assessment practices in term of types assessment, Teachers' Strategies and Feedback?
- RQ3: What are teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of classroom speaking assessment?

1.1 Teacher Strategies in Assessing Speaking Skill

A various number of speaking teaching strategies are utilized and used in the classrooms for many circumstances. Among others, the strategies of teaching speaking are cooperative activities, role-play, creative tasks, and drilling. Cooperative activities can encourage negotiation of language item (Newton and Nation, 2009). Role plays are activities where students are asked to pretend to be in various social contexts and various social roles (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 2005; Solcova, 2011). Creative tasks resemble real-life tasks as Solcova (2011) asserts that students develop their fluency best, if engaged in tasks where all their concentration focuses on producing something, rather than on the language itself. Drilling, as Thornbury (2005) argues, is a strategy to improve pronunciation by imitating and repeating words, phrases, and even whole utterances. It functions to make students pay attention to the new materials and emphasize words, phrases, or utterances on students' mind, move new items from working memory to long term memory, provide means of gaining articulatory control over language (Thornbury, 2005).

In addition, designing activities for teaching speaking requires some principles to be considered. Firstly, speaking activities need to maximize the production of language to provide the best conditions for autonomous language use (Brown, 2001; Thornbury, 2005). Secondly, the activities should be performed in situations where students can show

interest, understanding, and ask questions or make comments, called interactivity, and include competitive element where students work together to achieve certain purpose (Thornbury, 2005). Thirdly, teachers bear in mind what student needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency to encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts (Brown, 2001). Besides, meaningful contexts for each activity is important to relate new material with what has been learned and experienced by students so that it can be stored in the long-term memory of students (Brown, 2001; Richards and Rodgers, 2002). Meanwhile, the functions of speaking including talk as transaction aims to exchange information or goods, and talk as interaction aims to maintain social relationship (Brown and Yule, 1999; Brown, 2001; Bailey, 2005; Thornbury, 2005; Richards, 2008).

1.2. Purpose of Assessment

Assessment should provide multiple measures and opportunities for students to create and demonstrate what they can do with a language. To provide a comprehensive picture of a student's language ability, the teacher should strive to create a balance between formative assessment and summative assessment. Assessments should be authentic and include alternative and integrated performance-based assessments.

The teacher and language learner need to identify goals, objectives, and expected results before beginning to plan a lesson or activity. In other words, it is essential

to determine what the learner should know, understand, and be able to do. According to Terry Crooks is his article about classroom evaluation, classroom assessment “guides students’ judgment of what is important to learn, affects their motivation and self-perceptions of competence, structures their approaches to and timing of personal study... and consolidates learning and affects the development of enduring learning strategies and skills.”

The purpose of assessment differs according to who is conducting or using the assessment.

- 1) School administrators use assessment as benchmarks for instruction, placement, or exemption in course levels and certification.
- 2) Teachers use assessments as diagnostic tools and feedback for guiding instruction, evidence of progress, and evaluation of teaching or curriculum.
- 3) Researchers use assessment to gather data on knowledge about language learning and language use, and for evaluation or experimentation of programs.

1.3.Types of Assessment

Assessment is integral to the teaching–learning process, facilitating students to learn and improve instruction, and take a variety of types. Classroom assessment is generally divided into three types: assessment for learning, assessment of learning and assessment as learning.

1). Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)

Assessment for learning is ongoing assessment that allows teachers to monitor students on a day-to-day basis and modify their teaching based on what the students need to be successful. This assessment provides students with the timely, specific feedback that they need to make adjustments to their learning.

Formative Assessment occurs in the short term, as learners are in the process of making meaning of new content and of integrating it into what they already know. Feedback to the learner is immediate (or nearly so), to enable the learner to change his/her behavior and understandings right away.

2). Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment)

Assessment of learning is the snapshot in time that lets the teacher, students and their parents know how well each student has completed the learning tasks and activities. It provides information about student achievement. While it provides useful reporting information, it often has little effect on learning.

Summative Assessment takes place at the end of a large chunk of learning, with the results being primarily for the teacher or school's use. Results may take time to be returned to the student/parent, feedback to the student is usually very limited, and the student usually has no opportunity to be reassessed. Thus, Summative Assessment tends to have the least impact on improving an individual student's understanding or performance.

3). Assessment as Learning

Assessment as learning develops and supports students' metacognitive skills. This form of assessment is crucial in helping students become lifelong learners. As students engage in peer and self-assessment, they learn to make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge and use it for new learning. Students develop a sense of ownership and efficacy when they use teacher, peer and self-assessment feedback to make adjustments, improvements and changes to what they understand.

2. METHOD

During the term of the method, descriptive method was used in conducting the research. It was used to find a variety of possibilities in solving the actual problem through collecting, collating, or classifying the data, analyzing, and interpreting it (Surakhmad, 1994). Alwasilah (2006) also explained that descriptive method was useful for describing the characteristics of group and the phenomenon. This research was conducted at Islamic Junior High School/ MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru. The participants were five English teachers at MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru.

Observation was conducted first in collecting the data in order to know the framework of strategies that teachers used in assessing Junior high School students' speaking skill. To gain more accurate and specified data, interviewed with the participants were conducted. This was in line with

Cresswell (2008) that explains, 'asking the participants individually with open-ended questions or semi-structure interview made the participants easier to have their best voice of their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher findings and it allowed the participants to create the options for responding'.

This study employed a questionnaire to answer the research questions. Three types of data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed in light of the two subsidiary questions (RQ1 and RQ2). The frequency and/or the percentage were employed to describe the distribution of responses of closed and open-ended questions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports on the results of the questionnaire and the interview survey in light of the three main research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What is the current status of classroom speaking assessment conducted in MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru?

RQ2: What are the assessment practices in term of types assessment, Teachers' Strategies and Feedback?

RQ3: What are teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of classroom speaking assessment?

The qualitative and quantitative data collected from the observation and questionnaire were used to determine the overall status of

speaking assessment at MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru (RQ1) and teachers' strategies and feedback (RQ2). Then the data from interview elicited in-depth information of teachers' perceptions (RQ3).

3. 1 Current status of speaking assessment at MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru (RQ1)

3.1.1 Teacher profiles

Table 3.1 Teachers Profiles

	Variables	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	2	40
	Female	3	60
Age	23-30	-	-
	31-40	-	-
	36-40	3	60
	41-45	2	40
	above 45	-	-
Year of teaching	less than 1	-	-
	1-2	-	-
	More than 2-5	-	-
	more than 5 years	5	100
Class size (number of students)	25-30	1	20
	31-35	3	60
	36-40	1	20
	41-45	-	-
	more than 45	-	-
Conducting speaking assessment	Yes	5	100
	No	-	-

Based on the table 3.1, the majority of participants (approximately 60%) were female and 40% for male, and their ages mostly ranged from 36 to 45. 100% of the teachers had more than 5 years of teaching experience. To investigated teachers' view of the benefits of classroom speaking assessment, first of all, it was asked whether the teachers had conducted speaking assessment in their classroom. Out of the 5 teachers (approximately 100%) indicated that they had conducted

For the first main research question, the profiles of the teachers were outlined before presenting the results of the questionnaire on the purposes and practices of speaking assessment.

speaking assessment in their classrooms. Consequently, these 5 teachers' responses were included for data analysis.

The purpose of classroom speaking assessment

To examine this question, responses to questions no.3 (Q3) were analyzed. Table 3.2 summarizes the results of the analysis of responses to Q3 (i.e., for what purpose do you conduct speaking assessment?). In this question, the teachers were asked to choose one or more primary
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purposes among the seven options. The most frequently chosen option was ‘ongoing students assessment’ followed by ‘final evaluation of a

topic/unit of work’ and ‘to follow the curriculum policy of a school or the education council’.

Table 3.2: Primary purposes of classroom speaking assessment

No	Purpose	Frequency
1	Assessment of students for class placement	0
2	Pre-topic planning	2
3	Ongoing programming (lesson planning)	2
4	Ongoing student assessment (e.g. marking, feedback)	5
5	Final evaluation of topic/unit of work	4
6	Providing information to others (e.g. bureaucratic report, parents, school)	1
7	Following the policy of schools or the education council	3
8	Others:	1

Note: The teachers had more than one choice

‘To provide information to others (e.g. Assessment of students for class placement)’ was marked as the lowest ranking answer. The comment noted by a teacher that classroom speaking assessment was used only for the purpose of summative evaluation was categorized in ‘others’.

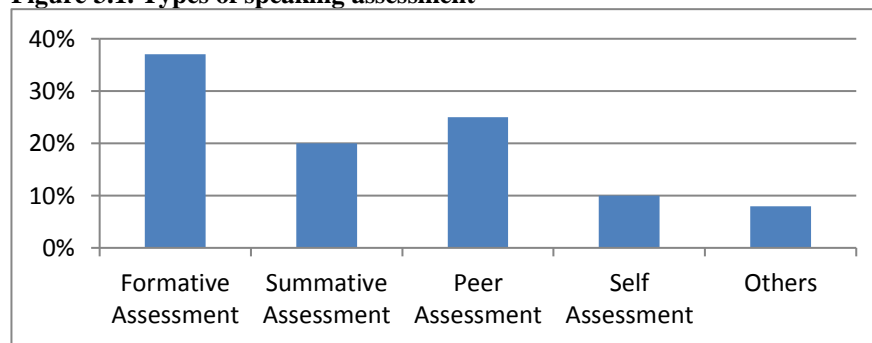
3.2. What are the assessment practices in terms of speaking assessment, Teachers’ Strategies, and feedback? (RQ.2)

To examine this question, the responses to three questions (Q4, Q5, and Q6) were analyzed.

To gain results on the nature of speaking assessment, two sequential questions (Q4 and Q6) were analyzed in the aspects of assessment types, strategies of speaking and teacher feedback. In Q4, teachers were firstly asked to choose one or more types for speaking assessment. Then, in Q5, those who choose ‘marking specific strategies of speaking’ in the previous question were asked to give brief descriptions.

3.2.1 Types of classroom speaking assessment (Q4)

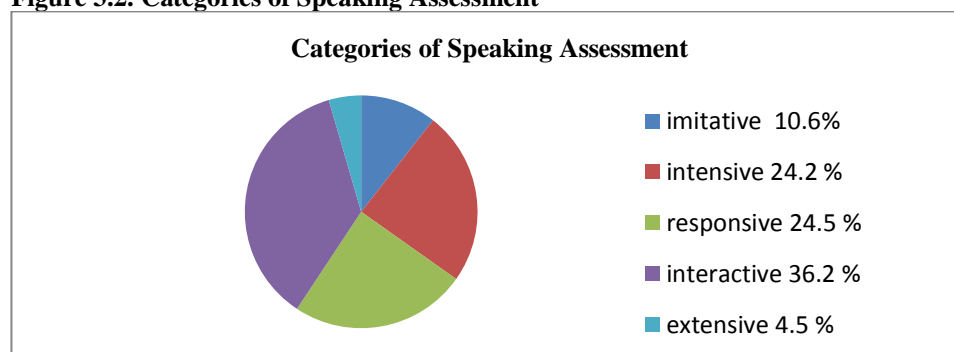
In the teachers’ responses to the question, “which types do you use for speaking assessment?” the majority chose ‘Assessment for Learning (formative assessment)’

Figure 3.1. Types of speaking assessment

3.2.2 Strategies of Speaking (Q5)

According to Brown's (2004) taxonomy, he categorized the basic types of speaking with five

categories such as imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive.

Figure 3.2. Categories of Speaking Assessment

The responsive and the interactive were predominant categories. In contrast, the intensive and the

extensive category presented relatively less popularity.

Table 3.4. The frequently used Strategies of Speaking in each category.

Categories of Speaking Assessment	Strategies of Speaking	Description	Frequency
Imitative	Repetition	Students repeat word or sentence	7
	Directed Response	Transform a sentence (grammatical output)	3
Intensive	Read Aloud	Read a passage in the textbook.	5
	Sentence/Dialogue Completion	Complete a sentence or dialogue.	8

Responsive	Question and Answer	Answer question from teacher/students.	10
	Giving instruction/Direction	Read instructions on how to operate an appliance.	4
	Paraphrasing	Read or hear limited number of sentences and produce a paraphrase of the sentence	2
Interactive	Interview	Interview questions (a teacher and a student)	2
	Role play	Role play in a small group.	4
	Discussion and Conversation (pair work)	Discuss a topic, issues.	15
	Games	Recreate a sentence, explain vocabulary, crossword puzzles, information gap.	3
Extensive	Oral Presentation	Present a paper, marketing plan,	0
	Story Telling	demonstrate written script based on memorization.	3
	News Event (reporting)	Retell a story based on a text or picture. Reporting new event.	0

Note. Here the frequently used strategies of Speaking for each category were presented among total of 5 English Teachers. The full strategies of Speaking can be reviewed in Appendix 4.

In the interactive category, ‘discussion and conversation’ was the most frequently used for teachers in speaking strategies. Then, in the responsive category, ‘the question and answer’ speaking strategies was the most frequently used because students could rehearse what they would answer in the assessment because a list of questions was suggested to students beforehand. In addition, the extensive category, ‘Story telling’ were the frequently used speaking tasks. The students were demonstrated written script based on memorization and by using their own words/ sentences.

Interestingly, out of all 66 cases, merely two task formats in the

‘intensive’ category—‘reading aloud sentences’ and ‘reading a passage in the textbook’—were the type of tasks that assess phonological facets including intonation, pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and junction. The result may suggest that evaluation of phonological features is rarely aimed at in classroom speaking assessment.

3.2.3 Types of teacher feedback (Q6)

To examine the type of teacher feedback, four options were provided: marking scores, criterion descriptions plus marking scores, oral feedback, and written feedback. Table 4.5 summarizes the results. 29.4% of teachers chose ‘criterion

descriptions plus marking scores' and oral feedback given, while 23.5% of teachers responded to provide solely 'marking scores'. Although the percentage of 'marking scores' was relatively lower than the one of 'criterion descriptions plus marking scores', the difference of the

percentage of the oral or the written feedback (respectively 29.4% and 17.7%) was distinctive.

Table 3.5 Types of teacher feedback

No	Feedback	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Only a score of marking	4	23.5
2	Criterion description plus score of marking	5	29.4
3	Oral feedback given	5	29.4
4	Written feedback given	3	17.7
5	Total	17	100

Note: The Teachers had more than one choice.

3.3 Teachers' perceptions of effectiveness classroom speaking assessment (RQ3)

This section primarily reported on the results of the analyzed of the interviewed data. The two questions asked relating to teachers' perceptions of effectiveness of classroom speaking assessment were: what they thought the role of classroom speaking assessment was, and what positive effects of classroom speaking assessment they perceived on teaching and learning were. Five teachers had approximately above five-year teaching experience in junior high schools, and the main teaching approach was a grammar-translation method. They used the responsive, the intensive, and the interactive type of speaking strategies as similarly as the frequently used task formats revealed from the questionnaire survey.

3.3.1 Role of classroom speaking assessment

Three of five teachers showed positive attitudes towards classroom speaking assessment as indicated by the comments involving benefits for the students' confidence, learning motivation, class participation and so on:

(1) Assessment is a good tool to inspire learning motivation especially in a short term or long term. Without assessment, it would be difficult to get students eagerly involving speaking activities. (Teacher B)

Teacher B's belief that assessment can encourage students' participation during the regular class time was in accordance with her assessment practices. Namely, he commented that his only assessment criterion was a student's attempt to use English.

Thus, he gave marks if a student participated in class activities. Teacher D said that classroom assessment might

contribute to reducing students' inhibition caused by their low proficiency. She maintained that students as a result could have more opportunities not only to practice oral skills while preparing the assessment but also to speak out in front of many people. She expected that eventually, her students could somewhat build up their confidence.

3.3.2 Positive effects of speaking assessment on teaching and learning

Five teachers mentioned any positive effects of speaking assessment on their teaching. The first two teachers commented that speaking assessment was beneficial for speaking instructions and organizing the next teaching plan. That is, Teacher C said that she employed a greater variety of communicative activities apart from the structured curriculum based on the textbook, in order to conduct speaking assessment.

In terms of learning, teachers' attitudes can be divided into three categories: positive, neutral, and negative. The majority of interviewees, four teachers, had a somewhat neutral position, and the rest of two teachers revealed respectively positive and negative opinions about its effectiveness for learning. Only Teacher B perceived positive effects on students' motivation towards learning, stating "classroom speaking assessment might increase students' recognition of how important speaking is in learning English. Although the (speaking) assessment was not frequently conducted, I think that even one or two opportunities in a

semester could address the requirements of learning English."

All of the five teachers who had a neutral position commonly indicated the limitations of the current types of speaking assessment. Teacher C and Teacher D mentioned that with the current method based on memorization, it would be hard to see positive effects on learning in the short term, but it may be beneficial to some students' real language uses in the long term. In this regard, Teacher E who commented on its positive function in encouraging students' participation during the class was not fully convinced of its direct effect on learning:

(2) I think that classroom speaking assessment is good because it can give opportunities for students to use English. If they should say something in English for assessment, they may realize that they can do it. In terms of speaking achievement, however, I am not sure that such assessment has evident positive effects.(Teacher E).

To sum up, the teachers were somewhat consistent in their attitudes towards the positive effects of classroom speaking assessment with their attitudes towards its role. However, even the teachers who commented on the useful roles of classroom speaking assessment, showed skepticism about its positive effects on teaching or learning. Most teachers' pessimistic attitudes stemmed from the current assessment methods that were characterized by a lack of

spontaneous responses and interpersonal exchanges.

4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the teachers' strategies in conducting speaking assessments and investigated the current practice of speaking assessment by examining its current status and teachers' perceptions on its effectiveness. The observation, questionnaire and interview targeted English teachers who were teaching at MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru. The questionnaire drew out data which could portray the current status of assessment including purposes and practices, the latter encompassing the types of assessment, strategies of speaking, and teacher feedback.

The results of the data analysis showed that classroom assessment was broadly conducted using specific speaking strategies and that criterion description plus marking scores and oral feedback were the main types of teacher feedback. This suggests that speaking assessment currently conducted at MTSN Andalan Pekanbaru had the possibility of being an authentic tool in terms of being both a benchmark speaking assessment style and a supportive learning strategy with informative feedback. Still, it presented a strong tendency towards traditional formal testing for measurement and reporting learning outcomes. Although this tendency seems to stem from the need for measurement and testing, it is evident from this study that this system of assessment needs improvement in order to

facilitate more effective teaching and learning. In this regard, this study has implications for the way to improve such classroom speaking assessment.

For further researcher there was a need to extend the scope of the analysis. By including students' perceptions in the study along with those of teachers and also balancing teacher participants, a more complete picture of the purposes and practices of speaking assessment in Junior High Schools can be drawn and also an improvement in the level of confidence given to the authenticity of the results, effected.

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