

MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS ROLES IN ASSESSMENT OF SPEAKING SKILL

Khairil Razali & Muhammad Isra

*Khairil Razali Dosen Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dan Muhammad Isra
Alumni Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry*

ABSTRAK

This study aimed to explore about teachers' assessment and the various activities in assessing students' speaking skill as well as teachers' reasons at senior high school. Through interview and qualitatively observation and analysis, the findings indicate that male and female teacher involved in speaking activities in the classroom toward assessing students' speaking skill through different ways. They were discussion, reporting, picture describing, and role play. Practicality, usefulness, washback and authenticity are another reasons behind the application of those speaking activities. In short, the various speaking assessment tasks would be useful in assessing students' speaking skill.

Kata Kunci: Assessment, Speaking Skill, Teacher Roles.

A. Introduction

Assessment is a term that is sometimes mistaken as a synonym term of test, but they are not synonymous term. In the field of education, Khan (2010, p.121) describes assessment as "an ongoing and continuous effort to improve quality of teaching, learning, testing, and curriculum design." In learning, assessment is defined as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (Assessment Reform Group, 2002). Moreover, as a part of learning and teaching process, assessment is classically claimed as a way to find the result of learning process in a period of time. In learning and teaching process it plays an important part as the informer for both teachers and learners about how effective teachers' teaching and how well learners' performance and progress (Pinter, 2009, p.131).

According to Macintosh and Hale (1976) as cited by Conner (1991, p.4), assessment and teaching are inseparable. Therefore, assessment should not be seen as isolated activity. In the past, assessment was decided by government especially ministry of education, school administration or program coordinator while along with the development of

learning-centered and communicative teaching methodologies, teachers have their own authority to decide what kind of assessment that is suitable with their own classroom (Shaaban, 2005, p.35). Assessment which is a result of an interactive process acts as diagnostic tool which provides feedback for both teachers and learners that can evaluate teachers themselves and encourage students through showing them their strength and weakness based on the assessment result (stated by Bostwicz and Gakuen 1995). It is supported with what Jeon (2010) states that learners have the right to be given proper feedback to achieve proficiency. It also can be used to improve instruction and help students take control of their own learning (as cited by Kim, 2003, p.2).

In the process of formal teaching of four basic language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing), speaking tends to be considered as the most important skill to develop. McKay (2008) assumes that in language learning speaking is important because as a part of oral language it acts as a base to the learners when they start to learn a language and will develop their literacy skill. As a skill that language learners should develop and have, speaking skills also play an important part of the curriculum in language teaching and an important object of assessment as well (Louma, 2009, p.1).

B. Literature Review

1. Assessment

In some circumstance, the terms of 'evaluation' is used for 'assessment' term, because 'assessment' or 'evaluation' are both in common usage in educational circles. In the UK, the common use of the term 'assessment' is to refer to judgements of students' work, and 'evaluation' to refer to judgements regarding courses or course delivery, or the process of making of such judgements. Thomas (1995) as cited in Aini (2015, p.20) defines "Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards, and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance". Moreover Janice (2014) stated in Aini (2015, p.20) also adds that "assessment is the systematic collection of information about student learning and the use of that information to improve the learning and teaching process in the classroom, department, and general

education program.” The other expert defines assessment as “a systematic gathering of information (and acting upon that information) for purposes of improving the learning and the teaching in educational settings” (Kostova and Atasoy, 2009, p.51).

Therefore, assessment in this study is measuring the students’ understanding of material that has been taught by teachers and whether they can reach the target or not, because the teachers have targets when they teach the students. Thus, in this occasion the writer wants to know how the teacher assesses his/her students. As a conclusion, assessment is of central importance in Education and also important in learning language, especially in speaking aspect. Through assessment the teachers could know the evidence of students’ improvement, because assessment is applied not only once, but more than once.

2. The Assessment Process

The process of assessment is the mechanics or steps required to effectuate a judgment. A judgment cannot be made within a vacuum, therefore points of comparison, i.e. standards and goals are necessary. The criteria narrow the choices of specific items which are considered important and relevant for any specific judgment within any given context. Therefore, within the process are manifest the parameters within which the judgment is made. In other words, during the process of making a judgment, all these elements are in constant interplay (Tarras, 2005).

Furthermore, Scriven (1967) explains that the process of assessment is the activity consists simply in the gathering and combining of performance data with a weighted set of goal scales to yield either comparative or numerical ratings, and in the justification of (a) the data-gathering instruments, (b) the weightings, and (c) the selection of goals (stated by Tarras, 2010, p.126). Therefore, the parameters are chosen i.e. (a) the data-gathering instruments, (b) the weightings, and (c) the selection of goals and these are justified. Assessment is a complex process with all the elements used to make the judgment in constant interplay. The result is the judgment that can be compared to a standard or a number on a standardized scale. In short, in assessment process, there has standard as comparison and goal that need to be reached by students.

C. Types of Assessment

1. Informal and Formal Assessment

According to Brown (2004, pp.5-6), informal assessment can take a number of forms, starting with incidental, unplanned comments and responses, along with coaching and other impromptu feedback to the student. Examples include saying "Nice job!" "Good work!" "Did you say can or can't?" "I think you meant to say you bought the book, not you buy the book," or smiling on some homework. And also giving comments on students papers, responding to a draft of all essay, advice about how to better pronounce a word, a suggestion for a strategy for compensating for a reading difficulty, and showing how to modify a student's note-taking to better remember the content of a lecture. Systematically, informal assessment observes and monitors students during in class learning and teaching experiences.

On the other hand, formal assessments are exercises or procedures specifically designed to tap into a storehouse of skills and knowledge. They are systematic, planned sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of student achievement. It uses specific assessment strategies to determine the degree to which students have achieved the learning outcomes. Assessment strategies including: essays, exams, reports, projects, presentations, performances, laboratories or workshops, resource development, artwork, creative design tasks, quizzes and tests, journal writing, portfolio (Brown, 2004).

Thus, we can say that all tests are formal assessments, but not all formal assessment is testing. For example, you might use a student's journal or portfolio of materials as a formal assessment of the attainment of certain course objectives, but it is problematic to call those two procedures "tests." A systematic set of observations of a student's frequency of oral participation in class is certainly a formal assessment, but it too is hardly what anyone would call a test. Tests are usually relatively time-constrained (usually spanning a class period or at most several hours) and draw on a limited sample of behavior.

2. Formative and Summative Assessment

This is the distinction between assessment which is mainly intended to help students learn and assessment intended to identify how much has been learnt. This distinction concerns with the function of an assessment: How is the procedure to be used?

Two functions are commonly identified in the literature: formative and summative assessment.

Based on Brown's explanation (2004) formative assessment is evaluating students in the process of "forming" their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process. The key to such formation is the delivery (by the teacher) and internalization (by the student) of appropriate feedback on performance, with an eye toward the future continuation (or formation) of learning (p.6). Furthermore, McAlpine (2002, p.6) says that "formative assessment is designed to assist the learning process by providing feedback to the learner, which can be used to highlight areas for further study and hence improve future performance." It means that students have a chance to learn from the assessment and improve on their performance because it is used to map/monitor learning progress during a unit of work and provide ongoing feedback to students.

While summative assessment is different with formative assessment. It is generally completed at the end of a unit of work to document the level of achievement. It involves a final grading of student learning; students do not have the opportunity to improve on their performance caused the sum of the performance is measured (Spiller, 2015). Thus, summative assessment aims to measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped, and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction (Brown, 2004, p.6). It may include: written tests, oral presentations, concept maps, problem solving activities, project work, essays, formal assignments and exams.

3. Assessing Speaking

Assessing is a competence that should be conducted professionally by the teachers. Brown (2004, p.4), states that assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. Whenever a student responds to a question, offer a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of students' performance. Written work-form a jotted down phrase to a formal essay is performance that ultimately is assessed by self, teacher and possibly other students. The assessment plays a crucial role in teaching and learning process. Through assessment, the teacher can reveal whether or not she has achieved her plan objectives. Then, the teacher can find out the progress and measure the students' comprehension. Assessment also help the teacher to decide whether to continue the instructional process or change teaching technique in

order to gain what is not achieved before. Assessing spoken language can be divided into two main ways. They are holistic scoring and analytic scoring (Bachman 1991, pp.301-330).

Holistic scoring uses a single score as the basis of an overall impression, while analytic scoring uses a separate score for different aspect of the task. Holistic way means assessing the situation overall, and how the subject handles and performs in a situation that is being assessed. Holistic way of assessing is based on the idea that we cannot see grammatical, or other language function that take place inside one's mind, so therefore we cannot judge them. We have to judge the functions we are able to observe: the learner's ability to perform in a given task. This holistic way has advantages of being quick and it perhaps suitable for informally assessing progress.

By contrast, analytic scoring takes longer since it requires the teacher to take a variety of factors into account and is probably fairer and more reliable. Analytic way of assessing means looking at certain, predetermined points, for instance pronunciation, rhythm etc. It also provides information on specific weaknesses and strengths of students. However, the disadvantage of analytic scoring is that the score may be distracted by all categories and lose sight of the overall situation performed by the students. Therefore, four or five categories seem to be the maximum that can be handled at one time.

Thus, assessing speaking is a complex activity that should be conducted by the teacher frequently and systematically. There are several things that should be considered in assessing students speaking skill; the time of assessing, the appropriateness of assessment activity, and the format of assessment criteria that will be used. The teacher should conduct the speaking assessment in the right way, although the speaking assessment has the challenges and often considered as the most difficult skill to be assessed.

As conclusion, assessing speaking should be conducted systematically. There are four steps that should be done by the teacher in assessing students' speaking skill. Those steps are identifying the purposes of speaking assessment, planning speaking assessment, designing speaking test rubric, and selecting activities of speaking assessment. Each step is very important and need to be considered seriously by the teacher in assessing students speaking skill.

In order that, teachers as students' assessors need to be familiar enough about creating rubric. Center for Teaching and Learning Assessment (2014) defines rubric a guide

to assist the marker to make consistent and reliable judgments about the quality of student work. They also can be used to provide feedback to students about the quality of their work and how they might improve. Rubrics are commonly presented in the form of a matrix that includes: marking criteria (the elements that the marker will consider when judging a piece of work), and grading standards (descriptive statements about the level of each criteria, often expressed on a scale). Rubrics may vary in complexity from simple tables to very detailed matrices that provide description of each dimension of quality and characterize each level of accomplishment. Rubrics can be adapted to grade many different types of assignments including essays, reports, oral presentations, group work, research papers and many more. Above all, rubrics should be simple and clear so that students can readily understand and engage with them.

D. Research Design and Participants

This research was conducted qualitatively through interviews. Mertens & McLaughlin (2004) suggest using qualitative methods under the following conditions; the program emphasizes individualized outcomes, in-depth information is needed about certain clients or program, and no standardized instrument is available that can validly and reliably measure program outcomes.

The study focused on the male and female teachers due to the researcher intends to explore teacher roles and assessment methods in assessing speaking skill by male or female teachers at a senior high school. Thus, the subjects of this research were English teachers of SMA Methodist, Banda Aceh.

1. Data Collection and Analysis

To allow the researcher systematically collect information about my objects of study, interviews were applicable in this setting. Indeed, the analysis of the data as follows:

The result of the interview is analyzed descriptively based on what the teachers said when the process of interview occurs. The descriptive analysis is a good method used in analyzing and collecting the data of interview, because it's used to obtain detailed descriptions, examine the result of the data deeply, and seek to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects in order to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996). Thus, to avoid misinterpretation in analyzing the

data, the researchers would record all the conversation between the interviewer and participants until it can be rewind many times as the researcher expected.

2. Findings and Conclusions

The study proposed two main research questions; RQ.1: What kinds of speaking activities do teachers apply in the classes? and RQ.2: How do the teachers assess their students' speaking skills?.

Principally, There were many activities promoted speaking skill such as discussion; debate, reporting (presentation), and picture describing but MD applied like: discussion; debate, reporting (oral presentation); speech, and role play. In practice, teachers combined other skills to trigger it. Commonly the teacher modified it to be more creative even the lesson target was not speaking. If it could be combined, he did. The major obligation in practicing speaking in the classroom and not to allow the using of *Bahasa*. Although, most students did not understand. One way that the teachers engaged their students in instructing better of the target language.

Most teachers focused on the assessing the fluency, coherence, pure of language, word choice, vocabulary, and grammar. In short, all that had been mentioned above were included into speaking aspects (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and competence). In addition, they cared about the quality of their assessment. In the same way, they always considered the principles of assessment while conducting an assessment. However, not all principle was considered, the most important considerations were practicality, usefulness, washback and authenticity of assessment.

Furthermore, the traditional assessment method were most likely not valid and reliable in assessing oral performance, but alternative assessment or authentic assessment was more appropriate to practice. Nevertheless, their assessment also served formative and summative purposes. However formative assessment more often applied since it helped them to recognize and make the necessary changes to improve their teaching practices, but summative assessment only in the middle or at the end of a unit of work. In addition, they practiced informal and formal assessment in the classroom.

Major female teachers in this case identified apply rubrics as instructions for grading and scoring the assessment. Both types of rubric (analytic and holistic) were made and used in the classroom, but analytic was more appropriate since it had specific aspect of the criteria. Nevertheless

holistic rubric was also good and suitable for some conditions. In conclusion, the two models of rubrics depended on the task given.

Furthermore, the summary of the interview that there is no significant different perspective between all two teachers. The basic differences were about the most motivating lesson to teach to students, time consuming in giving speaking activities. However, there was a slightly different of motivating ways between male and female teachers. Therefore, they engage with their students through instructions to achieve the target language. Holistically, for other questions teachers had similar answer and had the same respect even there was little bit difference.

The activities of discussion; debate, reporting (oral presentation); speech, picture describing, and role play were believed those activities help the students to demonstrate and promote their ability and really reflect their speaking skill. Moreover, the teachers became easier to engage their students in instruction and got them to use the target language by doing those activities which enhance the students' skill. However, those were just few activities, there were many other activities that teacher should adapt in their classroom in order to make student familiar with various kinds of speaking activities.

In facts that regarding constraints in speaking, both male and female teachers assessed them and found that vocabulary and grammar (structure) were major problems. The discussion of how the teachers assess their students indicated that using rubric was one of the best ways to assess student speaking skill. Indeed, there were many benefits of using scoring rubrics in performance assessment, such as increased consistency of scoring, the possibility to facilitate valid judgment of complex competencies, promotion of student learning and/or the quality of teaching (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007 cited in Howell, 2011). Therefore, most female teachers always create a rubric instruction or grading for each speaking performance where less male teachers performed well.

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