



TYPES AND WAYS OF SPEAKING ASSESSMENT USED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS

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Abstract

Many English teachers have been trying to expand CLT in their classrooms. However, although they are interested in CLT, communicative assessment has received little attention. So, they do not assess students' oral proficiency from the perspective of language use and communication. Thus, there is a contradiction between their communicative language teaching and their assessments of speaking which do not reflect authentic oral interaction. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the types and ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. In acquiring the data, this study used qualitative descriptive approach. The data needed were gained through two qualitative data collection instruments: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. In relation to the data gained, the data findings show that there are several types of such non-authentic speaking assessment tasks used by the English teachers. Furthermore, there are certain ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. It can be categorized into three main categories: knowledge (giving explanation), comprehension (drawing conclusion), and performance (conversation).

Keywords: *Communicative Language Teaching, English, Speaking Assessment.*

Abstrak

Banyak guru Bahasa Inggris telah mencoba untuk memperluas pengajaran bahasa komunikatif (Communicative Language Teaching – CLT) di kelas mereka. Namun, meski tertarik dengan CLT, penilaian secara komunikatif kurang mendapat perhatian. Jadi, mereka tidak menilai kecakapan oral siswa dari perspektif penggunaan bahasa dan komunikasi. Jadi, ada kontradiksi antara pengajaran bahasa komunikatif mereka dengan penilaian speaking. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis dan cara penilaian pembelajaran yang digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris. Data penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Data yang dibutuhkan diperoleh melalui dua instrumen pengumpulan data kualitatif: kuesioner dan wawancara semi terstruktur. Berkaitan dengan data yang diperoleh, temuan data menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa jenis tugas penilaian berbahasa non-autentik yang digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris. Selanjutnya, ada beberapa cara penilaian speaking yang digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris. Jenis dan cara ini dapat dikategorikan menjadi tiga kategori utama: pengetahuan (mampu menjelaskan), pemahaman (membuat kesimpulan), dan performa (percakapan).

Kata kunci: Pengajaran Bahasa Komunikatif, Bahasa Inggris, Penilaian Speaking.

I. INTRODUCTION

Testing the ability to speak is a most important aspect of language testing.

However, it is an extremely difficult skill to test, as it is far too complex a skill to permit any reliable analysis to be made for the purpose of objective testing. Moreover, testing oral proficiency has become one of the most important issues in language testing since the role of speaking ability has become more central in language teaching with the advent of communicative language teaching. Hereby, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. CLT has become a term for methods and curricula that embrace both the goals and the processes of classroom learning, for teaching practice that views competence in terms of social interaction and looks to further language acquisition research to account for its development (Savignon, 1991).

Many English teachers have been trying to expand CLT in their classrooms. However, although they are interested in CLT, communicative assessment has received little attention. So, they do not assess the students' oral proficiency from the perspective of language use and communication. Besides that, they find it difficult to assess the students' oral

proficiency in a way which reflects authentic interaction. Thus, there is a contradiction between their communicative language teaching and their assessments of speaking which do not reflect authentic oral interaction. Therefore, this study aims to identify the types and ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) starts with a theory of language as communication. Here, the classroom goal of instruction is focused on developing learners' communicative competence. Thus, learners are encouraged to communicate with target language through interaction from the beginning of instruction.

This part will be focused on the theoretical background of communicative competence, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and speaking assessment.

It is aimed because the materials that are going to be observed are those aspects.

2.1 Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is a linguistic term which refers to a learner's L2 ability. It not only refers to a learner's ability to apply and use grammatical rules, but also to form correct utterances, and know how to use these utterances appropriately. The theory of communicative competence is an

explication of the principles that can operate in the situation where speakers use and interpret sentences (James, 1969). For my understanding, communicative competence is the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals. The desired outcome of the language learning process is the ability to communicate competently, not the ability to use the language exactly as a native speaker does. Moreover, Canale and Swain (1980) define communicative competence in terms of four components:

1. Grammatical competence: words and rules.
2. Sociolinguistic competence: appropriateness.
3. Discourse competence: cohesion and coherence.
4. Strategic competence: appropriate use of communication strategies.

Through the influence of communicative language teaching, it has become widely accepted that communicative competence should be the goal of language education, central to good classroom practice. Particularly, communicative competence has some implications for foreign and second language teaching. In other words, communicative competence has had a great impact on the second and foreign language teaching field. The theory of

communicative competence has been taken as an aim within the communicative approach, an aim of making a non-native communicatively competent in the target language.

2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. CLT makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. The real-life simulations change from day to day. The students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics. Belchamber (2007) states that CLT implies the lessons are more student-centered. This does not mean that they are un-structured. Here, the teacher has a very important role in the process, and that is setting up activities so that communication actually happens. There is a lot of preparation; accuracy practice is the bridge to a fluency activity. By implication, CLT involves equipping students with vocabulary, structures and functions, as well as strategies, to enable them to interact successfully.

Savignon (1997) as cited in Moss (2005) explains that the goal of CLT is to

increase communicative competence, which means being able to understand and interpret messages, understand the social contexts in which language is being used, apply the rules of grammar, and employ strategies to keep communication from breaking down. Furthermore, the primary principle underlying CLT is that language learners need opportunities to use the language in authentic conversations. After all, daily life requires people to communicate in a wide range of contexts for many diverse purposes.

2.3 Speaking Assessment

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1991:398), *speaking* can be defined to have a conversation with somebody and to be able to use a particular language. Meanwhile, *Assessment* is defined as the way a person performs; how well or badly a person does something. Based each definition above, it can be concluded that *speaking assessment* is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information.

Davis (2006) in his writing about *Ten Keys to Effective Speaking Assessment* explains that accessing speaking skills in both small and large classes remains an elusive challenge for many teachers because of the complexity of the speech act itself. In many classes, oral testing (if done at all) is

sometimes reduced to simple one-dimensional interviews. Thus, if we view speaking as a multidimensional process, then we can begin to break down the components and analyze them more effectively. Since the speech act is almost never linear (i.e., speech is often not very organized from one point to the next), our assessment process must take this into account. Furthermore, communicative competence is made of various elements that should be considered in the assessment process including: Linguistic competence (grammar, pronunciation), Sociolinguistic competence (language appropriate for the situation), Discourse competence (logical order), Functional competence (accomplishing the assigned task), Strategic competence (questions, circumlocution), Non-verbal competence (gestures, gaze, proxemics). Because of the multi-faceted nature of speaking, a multi-dimensional approach to assessing students' skills can be taken in the form of alternative, on-going assessment, which is discussed in this presentation: Fieldwork and questionnaires, Video-recorded presentations, Vocabulary notebooks, Weekly digital voice journals, Peer assessments, Discussion, Conversation, Justify and support statements or opinions of other speaker, Give explanation, Make comments, Draw conclusion, etc.

Furthermore, assessment needs to be theory driven. The concept of validity,

reliability, and efficiency affect assessment design. In this section the various types of validity will be discussed:

2.4 Validity

Hughes (2003) explains that the teachers create language test in order to measure such essentially theoretical constructs as ‘fluency in speaking’, ‘control of grammar’, and so on. A test is said to have content validity if its content constitutes a representative sample of the language skills, structure, etc. with which it is meant to be concerned. A test of speaking ability in a classroom setting is usually an achievement test. An achievement test should have content and face validity. Hereby, the greater a test’s content validity, the more likely it is to be an accurate measure of what it is supposed to measure. The content validation should be carried out while a test is being developed: it should not wait until the test is already being used.

Also, face validity is a must in a classroom speaking test, because the students’ motivation is promoted for speaking if a test has good face validity. Hughes (2003:33) cites that a test which does not have face validity may not be accepted by candidates, teachers, and education authorities. It may simply not be used; and if it is used, the candidates’ reaction to it may mean that they do not perform on it in a way that truly reflects their ability.

2.5 Reliability

To be valid a test must provide consistently accurate measurements. It must therefore be reliable (Hughes, 2003:50). A reliable test, however, may not be valid at all. To make tests reliable, the teachers must be wary of reducing their validity. There will always be some tension between reliability and validity. The tester has to balance gains in one against losses in the other.

2.6 Authenticity

It is defined as a quality of the relationship between features of the test and those of the non-test target-use context. Particularly, it refers to the relationship of features of the test method to particular features of the target-use situation.

2.7 Backwash Effect

According to Hughes (2003:1), it is the effect of testing and teaching and learning. It can be harmful and beneficial. If a test is regarded as important, if the stakes are high, preparation for it can come to dominate all teaching and learning activities. And if the test content and testing techniques are at variance with the objectives of the course, there is likely to be harmful backwash. However, backwash can be positively beneficial. It occurs when students study and learn those things which teachers intend them to study and learn. By assessing communicatively, the teachers would expect the backwash to be beneficial. If the teachers

wish students to learn to communicate effectively in a variety of practical situations, the teachers should test them on these skills.

2.8 Elicitation

There is a great range of test types, depending on the content of instruction. For instances, some tests use a simple question and answer procedure to assess communicative matters such as amount of information conveyed, comprehensibility of vocabulary, and fluency. Other formats include the guided interview, evaluation during group interaction, oral reports, dialogues and role play, and drama. While the latter five are high in communicative face validity, they are difficult to assess with any consistency.

2.9 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Speaking Assessment

In applying a communicative speaking performance, speakers have to master some competencies to support their speaking performance. Here, communicative competence is needed to make communicative speaking becomes real. According to Davis (2006), he explains that communicative competence is made up of four competence areas: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Each of those components of communicative competence is extremely

important as a goal in the foreign language classroom. A student who has failed to develop competence in anyone of these components cannot truly be said to be proficient in the foreign language.

In the early stages of language learning, instructors and students may want to keep in mind the goal of communicative efficiency in which learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message (due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary; and to use strategies for recognizing and managing communication breakdowns.

2.10 Previous Study on the Issues of Speaking Assessment

There was a study of *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): Practical Understandings* conducted by Sato and Kleinsasser (1999). It reported about the views and practices of communicative language teaching (CLT) by Japanese second language teachers. Compared to theoretical developments of CLT little is known about what second language teachers actually understand by CLT and how they implement CLT in classrooms. Using multiple data sources including interviews, observations, and surveys, the article reports how teachers defined CLT and implemented it in their classrooms. The study identified how teachers actually dealt with CLT in their

classrooms teaching Japanese. It is interesting to note that their views and actions dealt little with the academic literature pertaining to CLT or their education in learning about CLT. Instead, the teachers resorted to their personal ideas and experiences, solidifying their notions of foreign language (L2) teaching in further pursuing their evolving conceptions of CLT.

Practical challenges are reported from numerous countries when the teachers have been asked to implement CLT, where the classes are often large and resources are limited (Carless, 2004 in Hongkong; Hiep, 2007 in Vietnam; Nishino and Watanabe, 2008 in Japan; Jeon, 2009 in Korea)

III. METHODOLOGY

In this study, there is no effort to manipulate or control the exciting phenomena of the research subject. This study describes and presents the natural condition of the subjects of research. Consequently, this study belongs to the descriptive design. The research site is an educational institution (Senior High School) in Garut, West Java. The population is always exposed as a matter of the data sources. In this study, the target population is three English teachers. Meanwhile, sample is defined as a part of population, that represents all the population and it's also referred to be a part of individuals who are

being investigated. This study involves only two English teachers as the sample of this research.

The instrumentation is referred to the way of how the writer arranges the instrument of the research. A questionnaire was used as the instrument for this study. The questionnaire consisted of several speaking assessments. It's purposed to identify the types and ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. Also, a recorder was used to record the responses of participants that related to the obstacles of assessing speaking.

The research was carried out using a questionnaire and interview method. In relation to the type of the objective of this study, the questionnaire was given to investigate the types and the ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. Then, the teachers' responses toward the statements attached in the questionnaire. Then, they were collected and analyzed. The reasons why the questionnaire was used to get the data collection, because the knowledge needed could be controlled by the questions. Therefore, it affords a good deal of precision and clarity. Next, two English teachers were invited to be interviewed so that their perceptions of speaking assessment could be further explored. The interview was conducted in a systematic order, but sometimes digressed

from the prepared questions. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian so that both the interviewer and participants might understand more easily. The interview was recorded and transcribed later on.

Data analysis is paramount to interpret or to give depth meaning of data collected. In analyzing data, the questionnaire and the interview transcripts were read repeatedly. Recurrent themes and comments were identified based on the ideas provided by the participants and interview informants. In this process content analysis were performed by listing the range of responses by the participants, and then grouping common features and recurrent themes. Using this information, English teachers' perceptions of speaking assessment were identified.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present chapter describes the data findings and its interpretation to find out the result of the study as a whole. This chapter is a main part of the paper because it determines the writer to get the main purposes of the study that is to interpret the data gathered.

4.1 Data Findings

The purposes of this research are to identify the types and ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. This table below is the data to answer the research question:

NO.	Speaking Assessment	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
1.	Discussion	√	√
2.	Conversation	√	√
3.	Video-recorded presentations	x	x
4.	Peer assessments	x	x
5.	Justify and support statements or opinions of other speaker	x	x
6.	Give explanation	√	√
7.	Make comments	x	x
8.	Draw conclusion	x	√
9.	Show and tell	√	√
10.	Role play	√	√
11.	Rote memory of text dialogue	√	√
12.	Picture description	√	√
13.	Analyses	x	x
14.	Interview	x	x
15.	Attempt to persuade others	x	x

Table 1: Speaking Assessments

4.2 Data Interpretations

From the table 1: Speaking Assessment, it shows that there are a lot of ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. It can be categorized into

three main categories: *knowledge, comprehension, and performance*. The knowledge includes giving explanation and discussion. Then, drawing conclusion and show and tell include comprehension. Meanwhile, conversation, role play, rote memory of text dialogue, and picture description include performance.

Furthermore, as stated earlier, this part comes to explore the responses of participants got from the interview transcripts. First, it talked about ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. Here, the participants were asked all about what they had filled in the questionnaire in advance. From the responses of participants, this general conclusion can be reported as follows: Firstly, it is about discussion. The teachers provide the interesting topic. Then, it's discussed by their students so that they can share their ideas. Unfortunately, the discussion does not run well because almost the students are passive. They are reluctant to share their ideas. It may be caused the topic that does not relate to their real life. Hereby, the teachers get difficulties to assess their oral interaction. The next is conversation. For example: the candidate is given information about a play. The candidate is told to talk to a friend on the telephone. Furthermore, for the show and tell, the students are usually asked to bring real objects such as pictures or their favorite

personal belongings to the classroom from home. Then, they show them to the teacher and described them in English. As the teachers, they only score their performances. Meanwhile, for the role play, the teachers ask the students to make their own dialog and they have to memorize the scripts to be acted in front of the class. The students should have cooperative learning because this task can not be done by only one student. However, this way indeed can be beneficial for the student who has good acting but the teachers find it difficult to balance between their action and language proficiency when they want to score speaking assessment. For the rote memory of text dialogue, this way of speaking assessment is often applied to practice the students' in speaking English. Although, the teachers realize that this way is not effective one because the topic is not in real condition. Besides that, they only memorize the text dialogue without having their good understanding into the text dialogue.

From the participants' responses also can be known that the English teachers have little confidence in ensuring reliability of scoring. Also, it is difficult for them to consider validity of speaking assessment. It is more burdensome for them to conduct speaking assessment if they are required to consider reliability. The participants' perception towards authenticity of speaking assessment by asking if they assess students'

communicative competence, they explained that speaking assessment did not assess students' authentic communicative competence. For example: although they used conversation and discussion ways, there's no interaction between the teachers and the students. To sum up, the teachers have not satisfied toward their efforts in having types and ways in conducting speaking assessment. Honestly, they really want to try to get their best and creative method in assessing students' English speaking. So, it may lead to communicative assessment.

4.3 Discussion

Assessment can be used to improve instruction and help students take control their own learning. That is to be more likely accomplished when assessment is authentic and tied to the instructional goals of the program. However, in this study it seems that the speaking assessment conducted by the English teachers did not reflect authentic interaction between the teachers and the students. Several types of such non-authentic speaking assessment are identified through this study. Firstly, the teachers use speaking assessment tasks which give the students less psychological burden. As beginners, most students have a very limited vocabulary and English structures. Secondly, the teachers try to lower student' affective filter by announcing tasks in advance to minimize the

unpredictable factors. Here, the students likely feel intimidated by unfamiliarity with the test type and also lack of preparation for the test seemed to lead them not to reflect in their performance the best that they are capable of. The last one is the teachers use time-saving speaking assessment tasks designed for the administration because they teach large classes for relatively short periods of time.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

There are several types of such non-authentic speaking assessment tasks used by the English teachers. Furthermore, there are a lot of ways of speaking assessment used by English teachers. It can be categorized into three main categories: knowledge, comprehension, and performance. Thus, assessing speaking skills in both small and large classes remains a hard challenge for many teachers because of the complexity of the speech act itself. Therefore, the teachers should focus on learner-centered activities within communicative context so that it makes language learning more relevant, interesting, enjoyable, and effective.

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