

An Analysis of Speaking Skill Assessment Activities in Contemporary English Language Teaching

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Abstract

This study analyzes the methods used by English teachers in assessing speaking skills in current blended and digital learning environments. The focus is on the variety of speaking assessment strategies adapted to suit post-pandemic educational settings, including both face-to-face and online learning models. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through structured interviews with ten secondary school English teachers. The findings highlight the integration of technology in speaking assessments, the challenges faced, and the benefits experienced by teachers. This study aims to provide insights into effective speaking assessment practices suitable for modern classrooms.

Kata Kunci

Berbicara; Kegiatan
penilaian;
pembelajaran
campuran;
perspektif guru.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis metode yang digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris dalam menilai keterampilan berbicara di lingkungan pembelajaran campuran (blended) dan digital saat ini. Fokus utamanya adalah pada beragam strategi penilaian berbicara yang diadaptasi untuk menyesuaikan dengan konteks pendidikan pasca-pandemi, termasuk model pembelajaran tatap muka dan daring. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara terstruktur dengan sepuluh guru Bahasa Inggris tingkat sekolah menengah. Temuan penelitian ini menyoroti integrasi teknologi dalam penilaian berbicara, tantangan yang dihadapi, serta manfaat yang dirasakan oleh para guru. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wawasan mengenai praktik penilaian berbicara yang efektif dan sesuai untuk diterapkan di ruang kelas modern.

Introduction

Over the past few years, education systems worldwide have experienced a significant transformation due to the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the global shift toward hybrid and online learning models. While the COVID-19 pandemic initially triggered an emergency response that included distance learning, many of the digital tools and pedagogical practices developed during that period have since evolved into long-term educational strategies (Zhao, 2022).

Today, schools and universities are increasingly adopting blended learning—an approach that combines face-to-face classroom interaction with online learning activities. In Indonesia, this shift has been supported by the Ministry of Education through initiatives such as the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) policy, which

emphasizes curriculum flexibility, teacher autonomy, and student-centered learning (Kemdikbudristek, 2022).

The integration of learning management systems (LMS), video conferencing tools, and interactive applications like Google Classroom, Zoom, and Flipgrid has become commonplace in many schools. These tools allow teachers to create more dynamic and accessible learning environments while also enabling personalized assessment methods, especially for skills such as speaking.

However, the transition to blended learning continues to present challenges. Issues such as inconsistent internet access, unequal digital literacy, and limited infrastructure in rural or underserved areas remain significant obstacles (Putri et al., 2023). Despite these hurdles, the use of digital platforms for assessment—particularly in speaking skills—has gained traction among English language teachers who seek more flexible and student-centered evaluation methods.

Assessing speaking skills in the context of modern blended classrooms requires both pedagogical adaptation and technological proficiency. Teachers must design assessment activities that are authentic, interactive, and feasible within both in-person and online settings. Recent research supports the use of performance-based tasks, interactive speaking activities, and digital recordings as effective tools for capturing students' oral communication abilities (Nurrahmah & Basri, 2023).

Speaking remains one of the most complex skills to teach and assess in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia. Many learners struggle with fluency, pronunciation, and confidence when expressing themselves orally (Sari & Rahmawati, 2022). As speaking is considered the highest-order skill in language mastery, ensuring that students are effectively assessed in this domain is essential to the success of the overall English learning process.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the speaking skill assessment activities currently implemented by English teachers in Indonesian secondary schools. It focuses on identifying best practices and ongoing challenges in assessing speaking within hybrid and technology-supported classrooms.

Literature Review

1. Online Learning

Recent developments in education have witnessed a paradigm shift toward blended and technology-enhanced learning environments. Rather than being a temporary solution during a crisis, online learning has evolved into a strategic component of modern education. Blended learning, which integrates online instruction with traditional face-to-face learning, is now a dominant model in many Indonesian schools (Putri et al., 2023). Teachers commonly utilize platforms like Google Classroom, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams to manage assignments, facilitate discussions, and assess student progress.

Three prominent learning theories relevant to online education include:

a. Community of Inquiry (CoI)

Originally developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), the CoI model remains relevant in today's hybrid learning environments. The framework consists of teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence, which

collectively support meaningful learning through digital interaction and critical thinking. This theory underlines the importance of teacher facilitation and student engagement in online discussions and collaborative activities.

b. Connectivism

Proposed by Siemens (2005), connectivism emphasizes learning through networked technologies and social connections. In the current context, students access information from diverse online sources, interact via digital tools, and build knowledge collaboratively. This theory supports the digital literacy and adaptability required in modern classrooms.

c. Online Collaborative Learning (OCL)

Linda Harasim's OCL theory (2017) highlights the value of discourse-based learning in online environments. It encourages problem-solving through group interaction and shared digital spaces, with teachers acting as facilitators. This aligns with current instructional practices using breakout rooms, discussion forums, and collaborative documents.

1.1 Characteristics of Modern Online Learning

Contemporary online learning exhibits the following characteristics (Nurrahmah & Basri, 2023; Sari & Rahmawati, 2022):

- Flexibility in time and pace, allowing personalized learning experiences.
- Integration of multimedia and simulations to enhance engagement.
- Accessibility across various devices and platforms.
- Opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous interaction.
- Adaptability to different learning styles and intelligences.
- Emphasis on learner autonomy and digital competence.

1.2 Advantages and Challenges of Online Learning

The benefits of online and blended learning include increased access to resources, individualized instruction, and opportunities for lifelong learning (Zhao, 2022). However, challenges such as digital inequality, insufficient infrastructure, and varying levels of teacher preparedness persist, especially in rural or underfunded areas (Putri et al., 2023).

1.3 Post-Pandemic Online Learning

Post-pandemic, many institutions have integrated digital learning as a core instructional component. Initiatives such as Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar policy advocate for flexible curricula and encourage technology use in classrooms (Kemdikbudristek, 2022). While the initial transition during the pandemic was abrupt, schools have since evolved toward more sustainable and planned implementations of technology-enhanced learning.

2. Assessment

Assessment continues to be central to effective educational practices. It not only measures student learning but also guides instructional improvement. In modern classrooms, assessment strategies must reflect real-world skills and promote student growth (OECD, 2022).

a. Online Assessment

Digital tools have transformed assessment by enabling multimedia responses, instant feedback, and diverse task formats (Nurrahmah & Basri, 2023). Teachers use platforms like Kahoot!, Quizizz, and video submissions to evaluate

performance. Online assessment supports critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity but requires careful design to ensure fairness and validity.

b. Speaking Assessment

Speaking is a key communicative skill that requires authentic and contextual evaluation. Current best practices emphasize the use of analytic rubrics to assess fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and interaction (Sari & Rahmawati, 2022). Performance-based tasks such as interviews, oral presentations, and storytelling remain effective when supported by video recordings or live assessments.

Rubrics play a vital role in providing consistent and transparent evaluation criteria. They also offer formative feedback, helping students understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

c. Speaking Assessment Activities

Updated frameworks categorize speaking tasks into:

- Intensive: Controlled tasks like sentence completion or repetition.
- Responsive: Short replies or simple instructions.
- Interactive: Dialogues, discussions, and role plays.
- Extensive: Speeches, presentations, or storytelling.
- Imitative: Repetition or mimicry of phrases for pronunciation practice.

Technology enables all these formats, allowing students to submit recordings asynchronously or participate in real-time assessments through video platforms.

Research Method

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore teachers' perspectives on speaking assessment practices in blended learning environments. Qualitative descriptive research is suitable for providing straightforward descriptions of phenomena based on the lived experiences of participants (Sandelowski, 2010). This approach allows the researcher to capture authentic narratives and practical insights from educators actively engaged in implementing assessment strategies. It is particularly effective for exploring current practices in dynamic educational settings like hybrid classrooms.

2. Research Participants

The participants in this study were English language teachers from secondary schools in Indonesia who actively teach in blended or technology-supported classrooms. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who have relevant teaching experience and are capable of articulating their assessment practices clearly (Palinkas et al., 2015). Teachers were chosen based on their willingness to participate and their involvement in assessing speaking skills using both online and face-to-face modalities.

3. Research Instrument

Data were collected using semi-structured interview protocols. This instrument was developed to guide conversations with open-ended questions that

allow participants to express their experiences freely while ensuring alignment with the research objectives. The protocol included items related to types of speaking assessments, platforms and media used, perceived challenges and benefits, and evaluation strategies. The interview design followed guidelines by Kallio et al. (2016) to ensure clarity, coherence, and relevance.

4. Data Collection Technique

The interviews were conducted individually, either via video conferencing or in-person meetings, depending on participant preference and availability. Each session was audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Data collection focused on capturing detailed descriptions of teachers' current speaking assessment practices. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe deeper into specific responses while maintaining a flexible conversational flow (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Results and Discussion

This section presents findings from interviews with six secondary school English teachers in Indonesia regarding their current practices in assessing speaking skills in blended or technology-supported learning environments.

Respondent 1

The teacher reported that their school is now implementing online learning through platforms such as Google Meet and PowerPoint. For speaking assessment, students were asked to create and perform short dialogues. The teacher used synchronous meetings and slides to facilitate the activity. One benefit was the ability to assess students' vocabulary and grammar skills directly. A challenge noted was the difficulty in developing suitable listening materials to support speaking tasks.

Respondent 2

This teacher also utilized Google Meet and Google Classroom for teaching and speaking assessments. Activities included narrating a comic strip sequence. Google Meet's recording feature allowed the teacher to replay students' performances for more accurate assessment. However, unstable internet connectivity was mentioned as a common challenge.

Respondent 3

Instruction was conducted via Google Classroom for assignments and Google Meet for virtual lessons. Speaking assessments included reading passages and pictorial comprehension tasks. Students submitted voice recordings, which were uploaded through Google Classroom and assessed using a digital rubric. Flexibility in playback allowed for more thorough evaluation. Obstacles included difficulties in uploading audio files and poor recording quality due to background noise.

Respondent 4

This teacher implemented a blended learning model, alternating between online and face-to-face sessions. Students were divided into smaller classroom groups for in-person learning. Speaking assessments included self-introductions and presentations, submitted as video recordings. The ability to replay recordings was a key advantage, while the primary challenge was the longer time required for individual assessment.

Respondent 5

Online learning was conducted through Zoom and Google Meet, supported by various tools including Google Classroom, Flipgrid, Quizziz, Peardeck, and Nearpod. Speaking tasks involved miming dialogues from films, giving health-related suggestions, and describing cooking processes. Flipgrid enabled private video submissions, visible only to the student and teacher, which helped reduce peer pressure. Challenges included students' reluctance to speak during live sessions and hesitancy to upload video assignments.

Respondent 6

This teacher used Google Meet for synchronous instruction. Speaking assessments consisted of student presentations based on individual research projects. Assessments were facilitated using a scoring rubric in Microsoft Excel. A noted benefit was the ability to mute other students during presentations, minimizing distractions. The main issue encountered was internet connectivity problems during assessment sessions.

Across all respondents, speaking skill assessments are being conducted using a mix of synchronous and asynchronous methods, with a heavy reliance on digital platforms. Teachers highlighted various advantages, such as flexible review of recordings, reduced student anxiety through private submissions, and efficient time management during online assessments. However, they also faced technical challenges, particularly related to internet access and students' digital readiness. These insights provide valuable implications for designing more inclusive and effective speaking assessment strategies in blended learning environments.

The results of this study reveal that speaking skill assessments have undergone significant changes as teachers adapt to hybrid and digitally enhanced classroom environments. Rather than returning to entirely traditional methods, English teachers in Indonesian secondary schools continue to integrate a variety of digital tools to support speaking tasks—indicating a long-term shift in pedagogical practice.

Teachers have adopted both synchronous and asynchronous strategies to assess speaking. Synchronous platforms like Google Meet and Zoom allow real-time interactions, whereas asynchronous tools like Flipgrid and audio submissions through Google Classroom offer flexibility in participation and evaluation. This combination provides opportunities for personalized learning and more equitable assessment conditions—especially for students who may experience anxiety or connectivity issues during live sessions (Nurrahmah & Basri, 2023).

One of the key benefits emphasized by the respondents is the ability to replay and re-assess student performances using digital recordings. This not only improves the reliability of scoring but also enables teachers to offer more targeted feedback (Sari & Rahmawati, 2022). Additionally, platforms that allow private submissions help reduce peer pressure, thereby encouraging more authentic speaking performance from students who may be hesitant in live group settings.

However, the integration of technology is not without its challenges. Connectivity issues, varying levels of student motivation, and difficulties in

managing digital submissions were common across respondents. These issues align with previous research highlighting digital inequity and the need for improved infrastructure and digital literacy training in Indonesian schools (Putri et al., 2023).

Furthermore, teachers noted time management as a concern, especially when reviewing and assessing video or audio recordings one by one. This suggests that while digital assessments offer flexibility, they may also require additional planning and support to maintain efficiency without overwhelming educators.

The diversity of speaking assessment activities reported—including dialogue creation, storytelling, presentations, pictorial narration, and situational responses—reflects a more performance-based, communicative approach aligned with current language assessment theory. These methods allow for a more holistic and authentic evaluation of learners' communicative competence.

In summary, this study shows that speaking assessment practices have evolved from reactive online adaptations into intentional, integrated components of modern English language teaching. The continued use of digital tools points to a broader transformation in how speaking skills are evaluated—one that emphasizes learner-centeredness, flexibility, and multimodal engagement.

Conclusion

This study has explored how secondary school English teachers in Indonesia currently assess speaking skills within blended and digitally enhanced learning environments. The findings indicate that speaking assessment is no longer confined to traditional face-to-face methods but incorporates a range of synchronous and asynchronous digital tools that support flexible, student-centered evaluation.

Teachers employ platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Flipgrid to facilitate speaking tasks like dialogues, presentations, storytelling, and role-plays. These digital tools enable greater accessibility, allow for recording and replaying student performances, and reduce anxiety through private submissions, contributing to more authentic assessments of speaking proficiency.

Despite these advantages, challenges remain. Infrastructure limitations, inconsistent internet connectivity, and varying digital competencies among students and teachers affect the smooth implementation of digital speaking assessments. Additionally, the time demands of reviewing recorded submissions require educators to balance thorough assessment with workload management.

Given these findings, several recommendations emerge:

Professional Development: Schools and education authorities should prioritize ongoing training for teachers to enhance their digital literacy and assessment design skills. This will equip educators to leverage technology effectively and manage their assessment workloads efficiently.

Infrastructure Improvement: To reduce inequity, investment in stable internet access and digital devices is essential, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Ensuring all students can participate fully in digital assessments will enhance fairness and inclusivity.

Assessment Innovation: Teachers are encouraged to explore diverse speaking assessment formats, integrating both formative and summative approaches that promote student engagement and provide actionable feedback.

Policy Support: Educational policies should continue to support blended learning models and incorporate flexible guidelines that allow teachers to adapt assessment strategies to local contexts.

In conclusion, the integration of digital tools into speaking assessment represents a progressive evolution in English language education in Indonesia. By addressing current challenges through targeted support and resources, stakeholders can foster an assessment environment that is equitable, effective, and responsive to the demands of 21st-century learning

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