

TEACHER' ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILL

Nur Qonita Aulia¹
Nurul Intan Saputri²
Albiansyah³

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how the teacher designs and assesses young learners' speaking skill test. This research applied qualitative descriptive method by interviewing 17 teachers of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Tajurhalang. This research revealed that the skills assessed by the teachers are storytelling (8), picture talks (2), oral presentation (2), description (2), and question and answer (3). The techniques used by the teachers in assessing young learner speaking skill further, most of teachers Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Tajurhalang district used fluency (6) and some of them used comprehension (5), vocabulary (5), and pronunciation (1) as a criterion in assessing the students' speaking skill. Above all, as a language teacher, we have to know the characteristics of young learners and design the proper test to make sure young learners' language speaking skill and components because it will be an important role for teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Young Learners, Speaking Skill, Designing Test

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana guru merancang tes keterampilan berbicara untuk pelajar muda dan bagaimana guru menilai pelajar bahasa muda dalam keterampilan berbicara. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan untuk mendapatkan data, para peneliti menggunakan dokumentasi wawancara dan video untuk mengumpulkan data. Ada 17 guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah di Tajurhalang sebagai peserta. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa sebagian besar guru di Tajurhalang menggunakan storytelling (8) dan beberapa di antaranya juga menggunakan picture talks (2), oral presentation (2) description (2), dan juga question and answer (3) sebagai teknik yang digunakan oleh para guru dalam menilai keterampilan berbicara pelajar muda lebih lanjut, sebagian besar guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah di Kabupaten Tajururhalang menggunakan kefasihan (6) dan beberapa di antaranya menggunakan kefasihan (6) dan beberapa di antaranya menggunakan komp, kosakata (5), dan pengucapan (1) sebagai kriteria dalam menilai keterampilan berbicara siswa. Di atas segalanya, sebagai guru bahasa, kita harus mengetahui karakteristik pelajar muda dan merancang tes untuk memastikan keterampilan dan komponen berbicara bahasa pelajar muda karena itu akan menjadi peran penting untuk proses belajar mengajar kepada peserta didik muda dengan lebih baik.

Kata Kunci: Pelajar Muda, Keterampilan Berbicara, Merancang Tes

INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, English is a prominent part in order to interact worldwide. Therefore, English has been taught since childhood from kindergarten or primary in Indonesia. The world of childhood varies country to country. It means that when in other countries children are still protected within their school but in some parts of the world, they take on adult responsibilities at their ages. Nunan (2018) states that the chronological span time of young learners from birth to the beginning of puberty. Age is the important role to define who the young learner are, starting from category of ages for becoming young learner to the end phase of young learners.

Young learners are defined as children aged of six to twelve. According to Penny (2006) young learner is children attending seven years of formal schooling. It means that young learners are children who learn in elementary or primary school in education system between five until twelve years old (Phillips, 1993;Rixon, 1999). Pinter (2011) divided young learners into three groups; preschoolers aged of three years old, primary school students aged five to seven years old and elementary school or primary school children aged eleven to twelve years old. On the other hand, Suyanto (2007) divided young learners into two groups; younger (six to eight years old elementary school students) and older (nine to twelve years old elementary school students). Six is the youngest age to start formal school in many countries, while twelve is the oldest age when children begin to be more mature in emotion and already develop their cognitive ability.

Unlike adults, young learners are unique and special because they have their own characteristics which need to be understood by language teachers of young learners. Scoot & Ytreberg (2001) divided two language learning characteristics of children; the first group is five to seven years old students who understand language slowly, have short attention and concentration span. The second group is eight to ten year old who already develop the ability to tell the difference between truth and fiction; the third group is eight to ten year old who are able to tell the difference between fact

and fiction, ask questions all the time, rely on the spoken word and convey the physical world as well as understand the meaning, and have the ability for working with and learn from the others.

The characteristics of young learners listed by Brumfit (1991) describe young learners as more enthusiastic; relate ideas and concepts, and have ability in physical movement and activity needed as much as stimulation for their thinking. Meanwhile, Halliwell (1992) states that young learners are students who have interpreted meaning without having to understand words, using limited creative language, having imagination, taking pleasure in finding and creating fun that they do, and learning more indirectly than the directly. Penny (2006) added there characteristics of young learners in general: growth, literacy, and vulnerability. The characteristic of growth consists of the attention span of young learner and developing abilities to be creative. Young learners develop understanding about how reading and writing work. In addition, young learner's self-esteem is strongly affected by experiences at school. Young learners are egocentric, have short attention span, imaginative and active, active and storytelling, enjoy learning through playing, like imitating and get bored easily. Teachers of young learners' study about the characteristics of young learners should be learned so the success of language learning can be decided. Thus, an understanding of the characteristics of young learners can be used as a starting point for determining educational goals in elementary school, and the right time in providing education in accordance with the development needs of the child himself.

To determine the appropriate teaching learning process, usually techers do the test or assessment at the beginning or at the process of teaching and learning. According to Ebel & Frisbie (1991), Test is a measure containing a set of questions, each of which can be said have a correct answer and the purpose of a series of tests used and planned is for obtaining observation (Sax, 1997). It can be concluded that test is a question or assignment that planned to obtain information about the object of the test that each item of question or assignment has an answer that is considered

correct to obtain observation, and it can be said that a language test is a tool or procedure used in conducting assessments and evaluations in general on language skills by measuring language skills, for instance speaking, listening, writing and reading skill.

According to Inayah et, al. (2019), the success of learning English not only seen from students achievements but also is evaluated from learning process. With assessing students, it can be the one of teachers' effort to motivate students to success in the lesson (Amalia, 2017), because with assessing students, teacher will know that are students understand with the material that already taught or not and it also determine that the learning objectives already achieved or not. In line with Alberta (2007), he stated that assessment can give the teachers insight if students learning process needs to modify or not. Papp (2019) stated that in assessing children's skills, we can use face to face to assess oral skill and using traditional paper and pencil tests for another skill.

When designing a test to measure the learner language skills teachers also need to carefully and remember that between children and adult are have different characteristic. Brester et al., (2002) stated that children are different from adult, because children like to have various physical activities with lot of movements and changes. In addition, teachers also should remember that there is a big different between six years old child can do eight years old can do. In conclusion, when assessing the children, teachers should consider things that they can at their age. Assessor cannot assess a five-year-old child with a same test with twelve years old children.

In this study, the researchers focused on assessing young learner speaking skills. Speaking is one of productive skills and it is important skill if we want to master the language. According to Kosar & Bedir (2014), Speaking is an integrated process for building definitions consisting of data generation and receipt. Meanwhile, Irawati (2014) stated that speaking is an activity to produce words in form of words and sentence orally in order to communicate with other. So, it can be concluded that speaking is the way to

express and communicate verbally with others. To assessing young learner speaking skill Penny (2006) mention some techniques there are:

- News telling

News telling can be done in the whole class, small group or in pairs. Using news telling make students can tell one another to involve them to tell what they have done recently, and if children are commanded to ask, the activities will be more interactive. This test can assess the children ability by seeing them do this task by conveying detail and appropriate information to the audience/friends.

- Story telling

Children's ability to tell a story can be supported with pictures. It can be assessed with the use of illustrations cut away and laminated into a book. According to Carpenter, Fujii and Kataoka (1995) the best way is we show the entire sequence of the picture to the students first, after that ask them for the story, because children tell the story from page to page, they tend to regard and treat each picture as a separate unit and losing the sense of the connected story in their storytelling. If children know the story or may hear the story before they might know the vocabulary and language they need when they do the story telling, but if the story sequence is new and they do not know yet about the story, they may need help to practice the vocabulary first.

- Picture talks

The teacher gives a picture to the students or teacher display a picture in front of the class, after that they can be given one or two minutes to look at the picture before they describe it and Children can be asked to describe a picture after that.

- Oral presentations

Oral presentations are also extended speaking tasks and it can support with pictures or objects. The teacher can ask the children to talk about their own experiences without preparation, or they may be delivering a report on a project that has been prepared over a number of weeks. The task will also be easier if an adult is available to assist them

when they need help and also the task will be easier if children are able to hold and show objects or pictures or other.

- Categorization tasks

Categorization tasks can assess children's descriptive language, and language of comparisons, as well as abstract explanations and academic talk and content. A categorization task involves children sorting and finding patterns. For the example children could divide pictures of animals into two groups – those which pets and those that wild. These tasks can integrate learning from other school lessons such as science. The teachers choose the pictures according to the level of the children.

- Debate

Debates in some countries has become learning method, some researchers show that debate is a method that can promote students' oral communication skills and critical thinking (Doody & Condon, 2012; Hartin et. al, 2017).

- Anecdote

According to Bandele et. al, (2014) anecdote record is students records that used to record students' skills, attitudes and behavior and it can be used by the teacher to assess students' outcomes in the program of study.

Furthermore, to assess young learner speaking and listening skill Penny (2006) mention some techniques. There are:

- Oral interview
- Mini role plays.
- Partner and group discussion
- Oral information gap tasks

Based on the theory, the questions for this research are:

1. What kind of technique that is used by the teacher in assessing EYL speaking skill?
2. What kind of media and platform that are used by the teacher in assessing EYL speaking skill?

Meanwhile, the purposes of this research are to explore the kind of technique that is used by the teacher in assessing EYL speaking skill and to investigate kind of tools that are used by the teacher in assessing EYL speaking skill. This study is also expected to provide a knowledge about teachers' technique in assessing EYL speaking skills and this study also provides a description to the next researcher that want to investigate the same case, so this study can become a reference for the next study.

There are some previous research assessing young language learner in teaching and learning process, among others is Amalia (2017) who looked for the teachers' assessments of the English productive abilities of young learners. The finding is that the teachers need to assess the examination format, marking criteria and rating scheme used by teachers to determine the effective skills of students. This research was conducted under descriptive design and with two English teachers as a participant. The results of this study are (1) interview, picture description, and presentation including the evaluation formats used by the teachers to evaluate speech ability while composition, bride description, writing the interview result writing the phrase were used to evaluate writing abilities. (2) Pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency for speech evaluation, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics for writing evaluation were the requirements used by teachers. (3) The teacher grades the students' effective skills using a scoring scale. The scale is calculated by the parameters or language components being measured, and each score scale has its own definition.

METHOD

In this research, the researchers use qualitative descriptive method to describe and analyze the data. In order to systematically describe a situation area of interest factually and accurately, the descriptive method is used. This research was conducted in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah English teachers in Tajurhalang sub-district. The researchers chose English teachers in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Tajurhalang because they educate Young Learner.

There are 17 teachers in this research as participants. The writer uses purposive sampling technique in choosing the data. Arikunto (2013) says that purposive sampling is taking subject not based on group, area, stratified, or randomized, but based on certain purpose. It means that purposive sampling technique is used to take respondents purposes like this research that aimed for assessing speaking to young learners.

Next, the researchers used interview and video documentation for collecting the data. The language used in the interview combining Bahasa and English to ensure comprehension of question and self-expression of the interviewees. In addition, all the interviews gathered by phone call and recorded for further information. Sugiono (2010) states that a two-person meeting to share knowledge and ideas through questions and answers, resulting in collaboration and shared construction of meaning on specific subjects. Meanwhile, video documentation used to gather the data from the teacher when they assess the students for doing speaking skill and for adding more information in this research. Video documentation also sent by *WhatsApp* as social media. The researchers used Interview by phone call and video documentation by social media to gather the data because during the current pandemic situation, teaching and learning activities are carried out at home using e-learning.

The researchers use interview and video documentation to gather the data. First, the researchers interviewed the English teachers who teach in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Tajurhalang. It is to explore the data about the kind of technique that is used by the teacher in assessing EYL speaking skill and to investigate kind of tools that they used in assessing EYL speaking skill. The result of interview is transcribed and summarized by the researcher. Next, the researcher analyzed the video documentation to get more information. After gaining the data, the researchers are analyzed through the instruments result. Above all, researchers compared the result of instruments used to check the validity of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The test technique used by the teachers in assessing English young learners in speaking skills

The findings toward test technique used by English teachers Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Tajurhalang were collected by interview and documentation. After analyze the data researcher found that the technique that used by the techers are presented on the table below :

Table 1
The test technique used by the teachers in assessing students english speaking skill for young learners

No	Technique	Total
1	Story Telling	8
2	Picture talks	2
3	Oral Presentation	2
4	Description	2
5	Question and Answer	3

Based on the table above most of teachers in Tajurhalang are used story telling. Eight teachers used story telling as a technique to assessed students speaking skills. Story telling can give students a chance to express themselves. As one of the teachers said, *"I use story telling because the students become more expressive, and we can see their expression when they tell the story"*. In line with Gebhard (2000), providing students a chance to express their self in meaningful ways, it potentially we give a contribution to makes an interactive class.

Furthermore, there is also two teachers that used picture talks as a technique to assessing students speaking skills. One of the teachers said that, *"With picture talks, students have more imagination"*. According to Amalia (2017), picture talks makes students describing a pictures or a series of pictures and it suitable for young learners or beginners.

There is also oral presentation that used by two teachers to assessing students speaking skills. As one of the teachers said, *"I use oral*

presentation as a technique of assess because it easy for them to present they daily activities, hobby and so on". According to Shaaban (2001) presentation are important because it can give a teacher insight into students interest, habit and so on. Presentation also can help teachers to have a students' record through their abilities on the subject.

There are two teachers that assessing students speaking skill through description technique. One of the teachers said that, *"I use description technique because it attacks students' attention with describe something that they like"*. The last there are three teachers that use question and answer technique. As one of the teachers said that *"with questions and answer technique, students do not feel being assessed, they are not feeling stress and also, the answers from students are more natural"*. This technique can be an effective informal way to assess students' progress in language learning. This technique can help teachers to learn about students' communicative abilities, and emotional (Shaaban, 2001). According to Asniatih et al (2020), EFL speaking classroom problem, especially in Indonesia context, students are unwilling to speak or used English in the classroom. So, teachers can help students to give the stimulus especially in early age so that the students can be stimulated to use English in a classroom.

Further, the researchers also investigate the criteria that used by the teachers in Tajurhalang district and were done through interview. The criteria used by teachers in evaluating students' English speaking skills are listed in the table below:

Table 2
The criteria used by the teachers in assessing students' english young learners speaking skill

No	Item	Total
1	Comprehension	5
2	Fluency	6
3	Vocabulary	5
4	Pronunciation	1

Based on the data above, can be conclude that most of teachers Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Tajurhalang are use fluency as criteria in assessing students speaking skills. According to Mairi (2016), fluency in a speaking skill makes English proficiency sounds better and more natural for the listener, fluency also makes a more effective communication because there is no speaking disturbances.

Besides fluency, students' comprehension also is important variable in speaking skills, because there will be no communication if the interlocutors do not understand what is talking about. Furthermore, in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Tajurhalang, there were five teachers that used comprehension as criteria in assessing students speaking skills.

Furthermore, there were also five teachers that use vocabulary to assessing students speaking skills. Because, vocabulary is a central if the students want to be able to learn foreign language or use English in communication (Cameroun, 2001). And the last, there is one teacher that assessing students' speaking skills through their pronunciation.

2. Teachers tools that are used by the teacher in assessing English Young Learners speaking skill

In 2019, world was attacked by a virus called covid – 19, the spread of Covid-19 is very quick, and it has become a pandemic that attack much country in the world. Because of the current pandemic situation, all of teaching and learning activities are converted into online learning. According to Alchamdani et al., (2020), online learning facilitates students to participate in a class wherever they are.

Therefore, beside teaching and learning process, students' assessments also carried out through online learning. Most of teachers are used video recording when assessing students speaking skill, one of the teacher said that, *"I use video recording to assess students because students can do it anytime when the parents can oversee them and after they finish they can send it to me (teacher) by WhatsApp"* and some of them use video call by application for instance *WhatsApp* to assess students. One of the

teachers said, *"I use video call by WhatsApp to assess speaking skill because it is familiar for them"*.

The teachers who assess use video recording are ask to their students to record their self and do it according to the teachers' instructions. While do the assessment some of teachers are found problem for instance, the teachers who assessing use videocall sometimes get a trouble because of a signal but, the teacher can solve it by waiting for a good network. While, teachers who use video recording to assess the students also find problems, for instance when the students are late to collect the assignments because there is no adult who guide them so teachers should give them the extra time, and sometimes teachers also find a problem from the quality of the video such as from audio. So teacher need to ask students to send it again through another application.

Some teachers who are not familiar with assessing using digital tools also get some problem but, all problems that found from video calls to video recording are can be overcome by the teacher in several ways such as communicate with parents and providing interesting material in order to make students high learning motivation.

CONCLUSION

As we know young learners are unique and can easily imitate something like imitate a language. Young learners have their own characteristics so when designing a test to measure the learner language skills teachers need to carefully. Assessor cannot assess five years old children with a same test with twelve years old children. Above all, when teachers design a test to measure the young language learner skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), teachers should underline that children still interest and like a fun activity. So, the teachers can try to make a fun test if possible.

It can be inferred from the results and discussion that teachers use a range of test methods, but the majority of them use story telling. Both of

them also use some criteria to assess students speaking skill and most of them are choose students speaking fluency.

Teachers also prefer to use video recording and video call to assess students speaking skill in this pandemic. Therefore, in digital era teacher need to get familiar with technology, especially technology that can help teaching and learning process. Further, in the collecting the data, the researchers have a limitation because of the pandemic. Therefore, for the next researchers to get more and clearer information it will be better if the study also uses observations as an instrument, such as how teachers assess students and is there any criteria that teachers use in assessing students.

In assessing students' speaking, it would be better if the teacher provide learning outcomes and clear assessment. By doing this, the students are able to maximize their efforts to achieve more. Teachers need to let the students know their mistakes so that they will learn from their mistakes.

REFERENCES

- Alchamdani, A., Fatmasari, F., Rahmadani Anugrah, E., Putri Sari, N., Putri, F., & Astina, A. (2020). The Impact of Covid19 Pandemic on Online Learning Process in the College at Southeast Sulawesi. *Jurnal Kesehatan Lingkungan*, 12(1), 129. <https://doi.org/10.20473/jkl.v12i1si.2020.129-136>
- Alberta. (2007). *English as a Second Language*. Canada: Alberta Education.
- Amalia, N. S. (2017). Teachers' Assessment of Young Learners' English Productive Skills. *English Language and Literature International Conference*.
- Arikunto, S. (2013). *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Rhineka Cipta.
- Asniatih, S., Ahmed, A., Iqbal, G., Dool, Z. H., & ... (2020). Teaching Speaking through Storytelling: a Case Study in the Tenth Grade Students of Islamic High School in Kendari. *Journal of Language ...*, August. <https://doi.org/10.33772/jleet.v5i1.9883>
- Bandele, O. S., Omodara, F. M., Oluwatayo, A. J. (2014). Anecdotal Records as Tools for Assessing Learners' Progress in the Universal Basic Schools in Ekiti and Oyo States, Nigeria. *Education Journal*. Vol 3 (3).
- Brester, J., Ellis, G., & Girard, D. (2002). *The Primary English Teacher's Guide*. Penguin.
- Brumfit C., & et al. (1991). *Teaching English to children: from practice to principle*. Collins ELT.
- Cameroun, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Doody, O., & Condon, M. (2012). Increasing student involvement and learning through using debate as an assessment. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 12, 232-237. doi:10.1016/j.nepr.2012.03.002
- Ebel, R. ., & Frisbie, D. . (1991). *Essentials of Educational Measurement* (5th ed.). Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- Gebhard, J. G. (2000). *Teaching English as a foreign or second language: A teacher self -development and methodology guide*. The University of Michigan.
- Halliwell, S. (1992). *Teaching English in the Primary Classroom*. Longman.
- Hartin, P., Birks, M., Bodak, M., Woods, C., & Hitchins, M. (2017). A

debate about the merits of debate in nurse education. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 26, 118-120. doi:10.1016/j.nepr.2017.08.005.

- Inayah, N., Komariah, E., Nasir, A. (2019). The Practice of Authentic Assessment in an EFL Speaking Classroom. *Studies in English Language and Education*. Vol 6 (1). 152-162
- Irawati, I. (2014). Improving students' speaking ability through communicative language games. *Magistra*, 87(XXI), 25–36.
- Kosar, G., & Bedir, H. (2014). Strategies-based instruction: A means of improving adult EFL learners' speaking skills. *International Journal of Language Academy*.
- Mairi, S. (2016). An Analysis of Speaking Fluency Level of The English Department Students of Universitas Negri Padang (UNP). *Lingua Didatika*, 10(2).
- Nunan, D. (2018). Teaching speaking to young learner. In *The Tesol Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching, first edition* (First Edit). Jhon Willey and Sons.
- Papp, S. (2019). *The Routledge Handbook of Teaching English to Young Learners*. Routledge.
- Penny, M. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Phillips, S. (1993). *Young learners*. Oxford University Press.
- Pinter, A. (2011). *Children Learning Second Languages*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rixon, S. (1999). *Young learners of English: some research perspectives*. Longman.
- Scoot, W., & Ytreberg. (2001). *Teaching English to Children*. Longman.
- Shaaban, A. K. (2001). Assessment of Young Learners. *FORUM*, 39(4).
- Sugiono. (2010). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Alfabeta.
- Suyanto, Kasihani, K. E. (2007). *English for Young Learners*. PT. Bumi Aksara.