

# INDONESIAN EFL SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND PREFERENCES ON AUTHENTIC SPEAKING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

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## Abstract

A major challenge faced by English language teachers is to enable their learners to use speaking skills for effective communication and to assess it. The best way to evaluate it would be through assessing students' ability in real tasks of written and spoken communication as it can improve their speaking skill. However, today's foreign language teachers rarely assessed students' speaking skill and they have relied on traditional pencil and paper evaluation format. Curriculum 2013 addressed to bridge the gap through authentic assessment. The present study thus attempted to address the phenomena by studying EFL secondary school teachers' perception and preferences on authentic speaking performance assessment in qualitative research method. Eighteen participants from various junior and senior high school in Indonesia have answered an online questionnaire on authentic speaking performance assessment (ASPA). The study revealed that Indonesian EFL secondary school teachers have perceived adequate knowledge and practice on ASPA, it was proved by the existed implementation of ASPA in their classroom practice. Role play dedicated as the most preferred ASPA regardless teachers' gender, school level or certification status. Time was main obstacle in conducting ASPA. Self-reflection was suggested to be initial respond to decide appropriate adjustment. Colleagues' best practice, a talk with EFL expert via blog or other modes, and related online materials were ways to take as teachers' techniques enhancement for handling and maintaining students' motivation and engagement during ASPA.

**Keywords:** authentic assessment, speaking skill, curriculum 2013

## Introduction

Speaking skill is the second language skill that people learn. People have to master good speaking skill prior to good reading and writing skill. As a matter of fact, a major challenge faced by English language teachers is to enable their learners to use speaking skills for effective communication and assess it. Huxham et al (2012) elucidate that the best way to evaluate it would be through assessing students' ability in real tasks of written and spoken communication as the use of oral assessment motivates students to practice and improve their speaking skill. However, up to present time, some researches (Al.Nouh et al, 2014; Frey & Schmitt, 2010; Wubshet & Menuta, 2012) manifest that foreign language teachers rarely assessed students' speaking skill and they have relied on traditional pencil and paper format to evaluate students.

Traditional written tests are not appropriate indicators of the students' ability to use the language in real life communication. As research by Colley (2008) reveals that these types of assessment do not always demonstrate what student really know and based on Wiggins' (1990) view traditional assessment tend to reveal only whether the students can recognize, recall or "plug in" what was learn out of context. Likewise, Mueller (2013) states that while traditional forms of assessment (multiple choice, true or false, fill in the blanks, and others) measure how much of the content the learner be able to recall, these types of assessment, though not at all ineffective, should be complemented with authentic assessment, that is, "a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real world tasks that demonstrate meaningful

application of essential knowledge and skills” (Mueller, 2013).

Curriculum 2013 is appeared to accommodate the existing phenomena. It comes along with major changes or reformation in almost every National Educational Standard. A thorough attention are given by Ministry of Education and Culture recently by releasing its decree No 22 in June 2016 emphasized and declared its previous decree No 65 in 2013 about Process Standard in Primary school and Secondary school. It is stated that process based assessment should be conducted through authentic assessment in which assess students’ readiness, process, and achievement (Depdikbud, 2016).

Authentic assessment refers to the procedures for evaluating learner achievement or performance using activities and tasks that represent classroom goals, curricula and instruction, and in real life situation (Atac, 2012). Frey, Schmitt, and Allen along with other scholars (Bergen, 1993; Gronlund, 2003; Newman, Brandt & Wiggins, 1998; Wiggins, 1989) have fully agreed toward the decision to award authentic assessment as best classroom assessment for its valid and real world engagement of task (Frey et al, 2012, p. 2).

O’Malley and V. Pierce have listed several authentic assessment of oral language, later on called Authentic Speaking Performance Assessment (ASPA), namely oral interview, picture cued descriptions or stories, radio broadcast, video clips, information gap, story/text retelling, improvisations, role play, simulation, oral reports and debates (O’Malley & V. Pierce, 1996, p. 77). ASPA should focus on students’ ability to interpret and convey meaning and of course in authentic purposes in interactive contexts. In this case, as Porter and Roberts (1987) in O’Malley and V. Pierce conveys that teachers are supposed to use ASPA in classroom setting. It means: (1) using authentic language in listening/speaking activities; (2) setting real world tasks; (3) giving students opportunities to use language in situation

based on everyday life (O’Malley & V. Pierce, 1996, p.62).

Several researches have been conducted by several scholar regarding the use of authentic assessment. A study conducted by Al Nouh, A.Taqi and Abdul Kareem (2014) investigated 342 Kuwaiti female EFL primary school teachers reveals that teachers perceived themselves knowledgeable and skillful in alternative assessment, yet, it still need for workshops and training courses on alternative assessment. While, a study conducted by Hidayati (2016) investigated Vocational High School English teacher reveals that the teachers face four problems in applying authentic assessment: (1) overburden with too many assessment formats; (2) inconsistency in regulation cause confusion to teacher; (3) insufficient learning facilities caused ineffectiveness; (4) insufficient IT system. Frey and Schmitt (2010) study reveals that female teachers choose performance based assessment more often than male teachers. Wubshet&Menuta, (2015) report that the teachers did not give room for alternative assessment in the classroom practice.

However, the existing literature reveals that there has been no study pertaining to Indonesian EFL secondary school (junior and senior high school) teachers’ assessment preferences specifically on authentic speaking performance assessment. In this regard, this study is significant since it is believed that the findings of the study will shed light on future studies and provide feedback to teachers, assessment professional and decision makers on curriculum development. The following research questions guided this study such as 1) What are Indonesian EFL teachers’ perception and preference on ASPA? And 2) Are there any significant differences in the EFL teachers’ ASPA preferences according to their gender, school level, and certified/uncertified status?

## Methodology

This study was conducted toward EFL secondary schools (junior and senior high school) teachers in Indonesia. The aim of the study was to investigate English teachers' perception toward ASPA and their ASPA preferences in the context of Indonesian secondary schools, using qualitative research design and quantitative representation for solid evidence.

An adapted questionnaire from Stiggins (1992) for demography instrument (gender, age, educational background, school level workplace, teaching experiences, school status, and class size) and add with teachers' certification status item, continued to open ended questions regarding EFL teachers' perception toward speaking skill, ASPA, impact of ASPA and obstacles in conducting ASPA, and combined with ASPA instrument from O'Malley & V. Pierce (1996) (assessment procedure and selection of ASPA). The instrument are written in mode of *googleform*, then shared through few social media group (*Whatsapp*) of EFL teachers in Indonesia. There were 12 female teachers (66.7%) coded as coded as F1, F2, F3...F12) and 6 male teachers (33.3%) coded as (M1, M2, M3...M6), working at junior and senior high schools in Indonesia, age ranged from 23 to 45 with different EFL teaching experience as the research participants.

Descriptive analyses were used to summarize the bio-demographic information provided by the participant. These analyses revealed that it was not possible to cross any of the bio-demographic with setting due to small size of sample. Consequently, it used comparative analyses.

## Findings

### 1. EFL Teachers' Perception toward Speaking

Most of the participants had similar position in viewing speaking skill as a very important skill for foreign language learners. It is a mode to express and convey ideas for communication purpose especially in the

global world we lived in where English is the mostly used language. The following quotes support previous statement:

"Really important, since it is a mode where students can express and convey their ideas for communication purposes." (F8)

"Speaking skill is very important to see how good you are in mastering the language and how capable you are in communicating with other people."(M4)

### 2. ASPA (Perception, Selection, and Procedure)

It might seem that ASPA, regardless the premature implementation, had been in a close sight of Indonesian EFL teachers. They did not treat it as newcomer but they did acknowledged ASPA quite well. Therefore, more than half of the teachers (55.6%) asserted ASPA as a good or even great kind of assessment that was conducted through real performance or real world task in order to make students get used to it in their actual life. The statements of the participants about ASPA are the following.

"... ASPA is the assessment that applied by the teacher through real performance."(F2)

"Good. It trains students how to conduct the real speaking as occurs in daily life."(M1)

Besides, there were 16.7% of the teachers claimed ASPA as hard kind of assessment to be applied but it also implied that the teachers have conducted such kind of assessment in their classroom practice and faced difficulties during the application. The following was the statement.

"It is really hard to apply."(M3)

Dealing with teachers' further view about ASPA effect, most of them (88.9%) agreed that ASPA have given positive effect. First, ASPA made students' more motivated to do speaking assessment. With regular activity, the students might not have interest to do the speaking because it was less natural but conversely by conducting this kind of assessment. Some participants gave their following statements.

"...by conducting such assessment, my students are more motivated and used to try to use some



simple utterances not only for facing oral test but also in their daily life at school.”(F3)

“...students seem more natural in speaking English.”(M1)

Second, ASPA was significant means of speaking ability measurement. 22.2% of teachers agreed that it gave objective measurement of students’ ability in speaking. As a result, teachers knew the real ability of their students in oral language.

“...we can measure students’ communicative skill as the goal of English teaching and learning.” (F4)

“... with ASPA, I will know my students’ ability in English.” (F1)

Third, ASPA was a tool for teachers’ reflection. As other kinds of activity conducted by teachers in their classroom practice either teaching method, teaching techniques, classroom management or assessment procedure would eventually made the teachers to reflect on what they have done.

“...it is a device to reflect ourselves for better improvements.”(M4)

Two types of ASPA are found to be most commonly used, they were role play and story/text retelling (77.8% and 72.2%). Following the two in decreasing order are oral reading, oral discussion, oral interview, oral report, and public speaking (55,6 %, 44.4%, 38.9%, 33.3%, and 27.8%). Most of the teachers (83.3%) have used their self-developed test items for carrying out speaking assessment. Scoring rubrics is the most used scoring procedure that have been used (88.9%) by the teachers.

### 3. ASPA Preferences

Table 1. Gender

	Male	Female
1	Oral reading 83.7%	Role Play 83.3%
2	Story/Text Retelling 83.3%	Story/Text Retelling 66.7 %

Table 2. School Level

	JHS	SHS
1	Oral reading 88.9%	Role Play 77.8%
2	Story/Text Retelling 77.8%	Story/Text Retelling 66.7 %

Table 3. Certified/Uncertified

	CT	UT
1	Role Play 77.8%	Role Play 77.8%
2	Story/Text Retelling 66.7 %	Story/Text Retelling 77.8 %

### 4. Obstacles in Conducting ASPA

Another open ended questions on the questionnaire questioned teachers’ difficulty in conducting ASPA were answered with two kinds of difficulties. The first obstacle or could be said as main obstacle was that teachers need more time allocation/more meeting time to conduct ASPA. The participant gave two examples of ASPA that was carried out in more than one meeting, they were public speaking and drama. The following statement came from the participants.

“...time, speaking assessment is limited by time.”(M6)

“... public speaking or drama take many meetings to occur.”(F2)

The second obstacle was how to increase students’ motivation and engagement during ASPA. Most of Indonesian EFL students were not an active speaker of English, they found to be nervous, reluctant, and shy when they were asked to engage in speaking activity. Following statements have proved them.

“...the hard thing is getting the students ready to speak.”(F9)

“Most of my students are too shy to say in English.”(F1)

“Some students get stuck while speaking.”(M1)

### 5. Ways to Overcome the Obstacles in Conducting ASPA

Any obstacles would remain be obstacles if one did not manage to face it. Then following remark would address on ways that teachers took to overcome any difficulties they faced during their ASPA implementation in the classroom. Some of them were that they did self- reflection after they conducted ASPA in order to adjust the assessment plan or procedure for upcoming



ASPAs implementation, they consulted to a senior colleague who have had adequate experience on ASPA so that they find out that an EFL teacher should give them trigger questions or leading questions to make students speak, and they searched for the answer from the internet by looking for related material and related blog concerning ASPA. The following were their statement regarding loopholes to their ASPA obstacles.

“after doing such thing, I should think about it to decide what to do or not to do for my next assessment activity.”(M4)

“...my colleague told me that I should give them trigger questions to make them speak.”(M1)

“...by reading online material about ASPA, I know now that I should set everything clearly before doing the assessment.”(F6)

### Discussion and Conclusion

By stating speaking skill as very important skill, it implies that the teachers have put significant attention toward it and it was proved by devoting their EFL classroom time for speaking class, the elevation got higher when they did also assess their students' speaking skill with adequate frequency of speaking assessment with the range of one up to six times within a semester. It was parallel to O' Malley& Pierce (1996) who state that oral language should be assessed for each student at least twice during each quarter or semester and it should be conducted regularly and be ongoing. This study also supported Wilde's statement that there is worldwide recognition that oral skills need to be assessed. (Wilde et.al, 2009).

More than half of teachers have acknowledged ASPA very well that ASPA is as kind of assessment to measure speaking ability through real world task (Atac, 2012; Bergen, 1993; Gronlund, 2003; Mueller, 2013; Newman, Brandt & Wiggins, 1998; Wiggins, 1989). It was proved that ASPA implementation could foster motivation on students to do speaking assessment for its real like situation that

may trigger their interest, Underhill (1987) asserts that assessment should be instructive, challenging, engaging, and even enjoyable. To drive teenagers or learners interest in learning or in assessment, teachers should offer a student based special package of learning and assessment by selecting and deciding as close theme/topic as possible with their ongoing interest or in other means an “Aha” moment theme/topic and also through up to date techniques.

Role Play awarded as the most preferred ASPA among Indonesian secondary school teachers regardless gender, school level or certified/uncertified teachers' status. This result is supported by previous research (Han & Kaya, 2014; Sinwongsuwat, 2012). Since there are several numbers of ASPA exactly twelve kinds of ASPA involving in this study, teachers are suggested to equalize the use of each in order to vary the assessment activities and take the most out of it. The array of ASPA from O'Malley and V. Pierce were already become top suggestions with its respective advantages and proved to be ready for teachers to take into as their ASPA consideration.

Male teachers are found to use eight out of twelve kinds of ASPA optimally than female teachers who just use two out of twelve, but the female teachers are found to show more bold to conduct debate as their ASPA in their classroom. Debates are most appropriate for intermediate and advanced learners (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). The use of debate on this study especially by female EFL senior high school teachers showed that teachers do pay attention to students' language proficiency and classroom readiness in deciding kinds of ASPA to be conducted. In this case based on the surface layer, we may say that female teachers were bolder to take risk in deploying high stakes ASPA (read=debate) in their classroom practice than male teachers regardless the deep layer which address actual and accurate classroom' readiness since the researcher did not discuss further details with the participant. Frankly, even junior

high school classrooms may apply debate as their assessment practice as long as they can fulfilled debate requirements.

This study also revealed the significant use of rubrics as ASPA scoring procedure. Johnsson and Svingby stress that “effective design, understanding and competent use of rubrics is crucial, no matter they are used for high stake or classroom assessment”. (2007, p. 131). According to Andrade (2000) rubrics are useful for teachers and learners for they are useful as tools of teaching and assessment; they help students become more thoughtful judges of the quality of their work and those of their peers; they save teachers’ time spent on evaluating students work; they accommodate heterogeneous classes; they are easy to use. There was no preference difference between certified to uncertified teachers, both party have chosen role play and story/text retelling as their most preferred ASPA and as well as with other kinds of ASPA which gain almost equal percentage.

The main obstacle of conducting ASPA is on time allocation (Al.Nouh, Taqi & Kareem, 2014). In conducting a single ASPA, a teacher will need more meeting to accomplish it. Therefore, teachers need to practice ASPA more, accompanied by their self- reflection on their assessment practice, they can adjust the assessment procedure and manage the time as well to mostly fit the classroom. Another obstacle is to increase students’ motivation to speak, here teachers did need to profoundly find related applicable technique from colleagues’ best practices, online material reading or even a talk with EFL expert by subscribing to their blog.

By large, the participant teachers have showed adequate knowledge and practice toward ASPA. Their classroom practice on implementation of ASPA significantly showed that Indonesian EFL secondary school teachers did have “rooms” for ASPA. Hence, there will be a slight of hope in the betterment of further ASPA implementation in Indonesia.

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