

Enhancing Speaking Skills through Performance Assessment: A Study in Junior High School

Wulan Fadila¹, Edi Trisno²

¹ Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; wulanfadila66@gmail.com

² Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; edi.trisno@fbs.unp.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Performance Assessment;
Assessment;
Speaking skill

Article history:

Received 2024-11-03

Revised 2024-12-17

Accepted 2025-03-26

ABSTRACT

The implementation of performance assessment, particularly in speaking skills, presents significant challenges for teachers. Many still rely heavily on traditional paper-based tests, which may not effectively measure students' oral proficiency. This study aims to explore the types of speaking assessments used by junior high school teachers and to identify the challenges they face in applying performance-based assessments. This research employed a descriptive qualitative design, focusing on four junior high school English teachers as informants. Data were collected through classroom observations and in-depth interviews, then analyzed thematically to uncover assessment practices and implementation barriers. Findings revealed that teachers primarily used three types of speaking assessments: intensive, responsive, and interactive. However, the implementation process presented several challenges. One major issue was related to the purpose of assessment, as teachers often struggled to clearly identify and align assessment tasks with specific learning objectives. Fairness also emerged as a concern, particularly in managing the wide range of student speaking abilities and ensuring that all students were evaluated equitably. Additionally, grading posed difficulties, with teachers expressing uncertainty in applying consistent and objective assessment criteria, which led to subjective and sometimes inconsistent scoring. These findings suggest a gap between the intended use of performance assessment and its practical execution. The lack of clear guidelines and assessment training contributes to inconsistencies and challenges in evaluating students' speaking skills effectively. Performance assessment in speaking remains underutilized due to practical barriers. Professional development focusing on assessment literacy and standardized grading rubrics is recommended to support teachers in implementing fair and effective speaking assessments.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Wulan Fadila

Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; wulanfadila66@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the lessons that require performance in English language skills. In assessing students, teachers can use performance assessment. According to Salma and Entika (2021: 171) Performance-based assessment is considered as one of the effective alternative and authentic assessment for evaluating students' English competence. This type of test has more potential to motivate students than other types of tests because authentic assessment, in practice, involves students directly using language according to the situation. This assessment is carried out by the teacher by observing students' activities during learning. Brown (2004:11) stated that each type of classroom speaking performance should be practised as usual in order to make the speaking good in function. This is effective for teachers because they can see the students' process directly. According to Nitko in Enger & Yager (2001:18) explains that performance assessment is a procedure for using tasks that aim to find out how well students have learned.

According to Brown (2019), performance assessment in speaking can be categorized into five distinct types: imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive. The imitative type involves students repeating or imitating words, phrases, or sentences, focusing primarily on pronunciation. In contrast, the intensive type shifts focus toward grammatical and lexical control through activities such as reading aloud, sentence completion, or structured dialogue. Responsive speaking tasks involve brief exchanges, such as answering questions or participating in short conversations, whereas interactive speaking requires more extended and complex discourse, such as role plays, interviews, or debates. Lastly, extensive speaking involves longer monologues or presentations, often incorporating interaction with an audience (Brown, 2019, p. 157).

Despite the emphasis on communicative competence in modern language education, classroom assessments are still predominantly oriented toward traditional written tests, such as multiple-choice questions, matching exercises, and essays. These methods do not adequately capture the authentic language use that occurs during verbal communication. As Zaim, Refnaldi, and Anwar (2020) point out, many teachers lack sufficient knowledge and training in conducting authentic performance assessments, particularly in speaking. As a result, they continue to rely heavily on pencil-and-paper tests that may be effective for assessing grammar, reading, and listening skills but are inadequate for evaluating speaking and writing abilities (Zaim et al., 2020, p. 588). Similarly, Knight (1992) noted that teachers often hesitate to assess speaking due to a lack of familiarity with oral testing techniques and concerns about subjectivity and logistical complexity. However, effective speaking assessment requires direct, real-time interaction between the speaker and interlocutors, emphasizing spontaneous language production.

Speaking is a core component of language proficiency and deserves rigorous assessment strategies. As Luoma (2004) emphasizes, speaking is a crucial part of language education and must be evaluated through thoughtfully designed, performance-based tasks. In line with this, Chaney (1998) defines speaking as the construction and sharing of meaning through verbal and non-verbal communication in various contexts. Similarly, Fulcher (2003) characterizes speaking as the use of spoken language to communicate with others. Among the four primary language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is widely regarded as the most complex to assess due to its multifaceted nature (Brown, 2004). A comprehensive evaluation of speaking should consider several components, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

However, the implementation of performance-based speaking assessments is not without challenges. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) identified three core issues teachers face in using authentic assessment methods: defining clear assessment objectives, ensuring fairness, and establishing consistent grading practices. These concerns are echoed in the study by Salma and Entika (2021), who found that teachers often struggle with complex rubrics, uncooperative students, and the heavy time commitment required for preparation and execution. The process demands not only clear criteria and structured rubrics but also classroom management strategies that can accommodate the diverse abilities and participation levels of students.

In summary, while performance assessment provides a more accurate and meaningful evaluation of students' speaking abilities, its effective implementation requires careful planning, teacher training, and institutional support. Addressing issues such as subjectivity, time constraints, and rubric clarity is essential for improving both the validity and reliability of speaking assessments in the classroom.

Several researchers have conducted research on the assessment of speaking. In Soliha's (2019) research, not all teachers met standards, role performances were used in assessing students' speaking skills, teachers' perceptions of speaking assessments were very good, and they considered that these assessments could be a solution to their problems in assessing students' speaking skills. Meanwhile, Zaim et al. (2020) show the problems faced by teachers regarding the assessment of certain language functions, teachers' needs for authentic assessment of language functions, activities, and rubrics for assessing speaking skills, as well as authentic assessment models. Garnace (2021) revealed that the speaking assessment methods that are considered the most effective are debate and argumentation, social surveys, task-based language teaching, individual oral presentations, informative speeches, and role-playing. Marlenie, R. Dedi, S. & Syafrayadin (2022), shows that teachers use three basic types of speaking assessment, namely intensive, responsive and extensive speaking. The most dominant technique used by teachers is reading aloud assignments. The challenges faced by teachers are lack of study time, taking turns learning, declining students' speaking skills, and difficulties in getting students to talk.

There are also some previous studies related to performance assessment. In research by Menggo & Tobias (2022), performance-based assessment is one of the right choices for measuring overall fulfillment of criteria in English classes. The findings show that performance-based assessment has an effect on improving speaking abilities, and students' perceptions of the use of performance-based assessment in speaking are mostly positive. This type of test has more potential to motivate students than other types of tests. In Novitasari's (2020) research, it was revealed that the obstacle that emerged was time, especially in presentations, speeches and debates.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that many researchers have researched speaking assessment and performance assessment. Some of these studies are about perceptions, how performance assessments are carried out, how speaking assessments are carried out, difficulties faced by teachers, rubric development, and test development. The difference between this research and previous research is that researchers want to know the problems faced by the teachers. The researcher focused on junior high schools in Kecamatan Payakumbuh. With the many problems that arise in assessment, as a result, without adequate and appropriate knowledge and skills, continuous problems will arise among teachers in implementing assessment. Therefore, this research will be conducted to find out type of performance assessment used by teachers and the problems faced by teachers' in assessing students' speaking skills.

2. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive research design aimed at examining how teachers implement speaking assessments and identifying the challenges they face in evaluating students' speaking skills. The research was conducted in classroom settings at junior high schools located in Kecamatan Payakumbuh. The population consisted of seventh-grade teachers in these schools.

The sample was selected using purposive sampling, a non-random technique that involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics aligned with the objectives of the study (Arikunto, 2006, p. 58). The sample included four teachers from four different junior high schools: SMP N 1, SMP N 2, SMP N 3, and SMP N 4 in Kecamatan Payakumbuh. Each teacher represented one of the selected schools.

Data collection involved classroom observations and structured interviews. An observation checklist was used to record the types of performance assessments employed by the teachers. The interviews, guided by a set of structured questions, explored the challenges teachers encounter when

assessing students' speaking performance. During classroom visits, the researcher observed both assessment procedures and teaching activities, documenting findings through descriptive field notes based on what was seen, heard, and experienced.

Data analysis involved reviewing the observation checklists to identify recurring events and behaviors, which were then coded systematically to support conclusion drawing. For the interview data, recorded responses were transcribed into written text. The analysis followed the stages of data reduction, data display, verification, and conclusion drawing to interpret key patterns and themes emerging from the teachers' responses and classroom observations.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Types of performance assessment used by teachers in assessing student speaking skill

3.1.1 Intensive type

The intensive speaking assessment type is intended to develop specific phonological or grammatical features of language use. Examples of this type include directed response tasks, read-aloud tasks, sentence or dialogue completion tasks, oral questionnaires, picture-cued tasks, and translation of short passages. During classroom observations, the read-aloud task was identified as the intensive assessment method employed by several teachers. In this activity, students were asked to read their assignments aloud in front of the class, taking turns, while their peers listened attentively.

This method was implemented by Teachers B, C, and D. Teacher B used the task in the context of a lesson on class schedules. Meanwhile, both Teachers C and D applied the read-aloud activity to assess students' understanding of descriptive texts, using the same topic as the basis for their evaluation.

Teacher B

Students are asked to the front of the class to read Activity 1 about the class schedule. The teacher will ask students to read the schedule with randomized days. It can be seen as follows.

- T : Please, read our material. Today's material is about schedules. Read the schedule text in front of the class. Later, you will take turns reading the schedule in the book.
- S : Okay mam
- T : What did mam tell you to do? Read schedule okay, please those who are brave can get a hundred points today. Let's go! Mam wants to take the speaking test
- S : Is it okay doing together mam?
- T : Together? okay
- S : Students pair up with their friends to take turns reading the text about the schedule in front of the class.
- T : The teacher observes the students' performance. Every time there is a mistake, the teacher gives a correct example. The teacher gives comments on the pronunciation of the students. Ananda, I have seen your performance earlier, so my comment on this performance is very good, you are willing to go to the front of the class even though you have to do it in twos. Regarding understanding and pronunciation of the schedule, it is almost correct even though there are still some mistakes, so let's try to read this schedule again. Are you ready?
- S : Ready mam

The data above shows that teacher B gave instructions for the speaking scoring process. Before the score was taken, the teacher explained the lesson about the class schedule. The teacher taught students the correct way to pronounce it. After the teacher explained the lesson about the class schedule, the teacher and students read together before taking the score. Teacher B gave instructions to students, where students were asked to practice in front of the class. In this case, the teacher still gave instructions in Indonesian. Students were asked to read the class schedule in their textbooks. Students read in front

of the class, and the teacher observed them. Then, the teacher gave an assessment to the students. The teacher assessed students based on their understanding. The teacher paid attention to each student's speaking and did not forget that the teacher also provided feedback to the students. Students read the class schedule in front of their friends, which is an easy and practical way to measure students' speaking scores. Where the teacher asks students to read and the teacher pays attention to every student's statement.

Teacher C

Teacher C asked students to describe a person, animal or something that students like. Students are free to choose the sections they are interested in. It can be seen as followed.

- T : Okay, now we take the speaking assessment regarding descriptive text. Last week I explained and gave you assignments. So now read in front of the class your assignment. If you not memorized, you can bring the text.*
- S : Yes sir*
- T : So, read the descriptive text in front of the class. And Please the other, listen to your friend*
- S : Okay sir*
- S : Students are called in turns to read descriptive text based on the attendance list. Students read the descriptive text and the teacher and other students listen.*
- T : Teacher C gives comments on the overall performance of his students. After all students have read their assignments, Teacher C comments to his students. Well, from all of your performances, I have given an assessment. I saw in the text that you took an interesting topic. Some described their pets, some described their older siblings. Well, from all of that, I saw that it was very good because they were about to perform, in pronunciation there were still some mistakes that could be studied later. I also see that in terms of understanding, you already understand descriptive text, and the way you describe it is good.*

The data above shows that teacher C used an intensive type. The intensive type used by the teacher is read aloud. Where Teacher C gave instructions to students to read their assignments, namely to create descriptive texts about a person, animal, or something. They are free to choose in creating texts. The previous week, teacher C explained the material about descriptive texts. Students were free to choose to create texts such as descriptive person, animals or thing. The teacher also explained the assessment process. Students were asked to come to the front of the class to read their texts, and the teacher observed each student's utterance. The teacher also provided examples of correct pronunciation if there were errors in student pronunciation. The teacher assessed students by paying attention to the correctness of the student's pronunciation and understanding about the text. After the assessment took place, the teacher provided feedback by giving

Teacher D

Teacher D asked her students to describe their idols accompanied by photos. It can be seen as followed.

- T : So, have you all done last week's assignments that mam asked you to do? Mom told you to make a descriptive text about each of your idols.)*
- S : Done mam*
- T : Who wants to come first, and don't forget to bring a photo of their idol.*
- T : Read a descriptive text about your idols in front of the class and show a photo.*

- S : Students take turns to read their assignments in front of the class. The teacher asks students randomly to come to the front of the class. The teacher and other students observe the performance of the students who appear
- T : Teacher D gives comments on her students' performances after everyone has performed.
 Mom has seen all of your performances. Your performances are already good, even earlier there were some who didn't use books, they memorized the text. That's very good. Your idols are very diverse, there are singers, there are also presidential candidates. Even though some of the pronunciation is wrong, it's okay, it's called learning. I see that your understanding of this descriptive text is good. Please maintain it in the future.

The data indicate that Teacher D employed an intensive speaking assessment by implementing a read-aloud activity. Students were instructed to read their assignments aloud in front of the class while their peers listened attentively. This activity was conducted as a follow-up to the previous week's lesson on descriptive texts. For the assessment, students were asked to write a descriptive text about their idol and bring a corresponding picture. Each student took turns presenting their text orally.

Teacher D evaluated students based on the accuracy and clarity of their spoken language. The assessment focused on pronunciation, fluency, and overall comprehension. Throughout the activity, the teacher actively observed each student's performance and provided constructive feedback. Although the instructions were still given in Indonesian, the assessment itself was conducted in English, allowing students to demonstrate their speaking ability in a structured and supportive setting. This method proved to be both practical and effective for evaluating students' speaking proficiency.

3.1.2 Responsive type

The responsive type involves interaction with the person you are talking to. Responsive speaking can help students develop oral language abilities, self-expression, and social-emotional skills related to social interactions. Examples of this type include question and answer, giving interaction and direction, and paraphrasing. In observation, Teacher B used the responsive type, namely with questions and answers. It was found that Teacher B assessed students by asking about their favorite subjects. The teacher asked each student in sequence according to absence and the students answered enthusiastically. It can be seen as follows.

Teacher B

- T : How many subjects do we have 10 right?
- S : Ten
- T : I want to assess all of your speaking. I will call your name, please. Just mention three subjects that you like, okay. Just three subjects that you like. Mention the English, ready? I want to see how you all pronounce it. Ready?)
- S : ready mam
- T : Mention your 3 favorite lessons.
- S : yes mam
- S : Teacher B asks students in turn to ask about their favorite subjects. Students answer the teacher's questions with short answers
- T : Nashwa, what are your favorite subjects?
- S : Social, project, math
- T : Okay, Martin, what are your favorite subjects?
- S : Math, social, Indonesia

The data indicate that Teacher B conducted a speaking assessment using a responsive type, specifically through a question-and-answer format. The teacher asked each student about their favorite school subjects, and students responded in turn. This method allowed for the assessment of short, spoken responses, with a focus on pronunciation accuracy and basic interaction.

Teacher B paid close attention to the clarity and correctness of each student's pronunciation. When errors occurred, the teacher provided corrective feedback by modeling the correct pronunciation. The questioning was conducted sequentially based on the students' attendance list, with each student asked to name three of their favorite subjects. The teacher engaged with each response, ensuring that all students received individual attention and support during the assessment process.

3.1.3 Interactive types

The interactive speaking assessment type involves extended exchanges such as interviews, role plays, discussions, conversations, and games. This type encourages students to engage in longer, more meaningful interactions, allowing teachers to assess not only linguistic accuracy but also students' ability to communicate effectively in context. During classroom observations, both Teacher A and Teacher B implemented the interactive type through pair-based conversation tasks.

Teacher A asked her students to work in pairs to create and perform short dialogues in front of the class. Prior to the assessment, she provided clear instructions and guided the students through the textbook activity. The topic focused on greetings and leave-taking expressions. Students were first asked to observe a sample dialogue in their textbook before constructing their own. Teacher A emphasized that students should develop their dialogues based on an image and the previously introduced material. During the performance, the teacher carefully observed each pair, focusing on vocabulary usage, fluency, and pronunciation accuracy. After all students had presented, the teacher provided individual and general feedback. She praised their willingness to participate, acknowledged their ability to apply appropriate greetings and farewells, and encouraged them to maintain their progress. This interactive method allowed the teacher to assess two students simultaneously in a time-efficient manner while promoting collaborative learning and peer interaction.

Similarly, Teacher B employed a pair dialogue activity as a form of interactive assessment. In this session, students were asked to create dialogues centered on asking and answering questions about their class schedule. Before beginning the task, Teacher B reviewed the relevant material, provided an example dialogue, and wrote it on the board as a reference. Students were then instructed to construct short dialogues in pairs and perform them in front of the class. As students presented, Teacher B observed their performances, evaluating their vocabulary use, fluency, and pronunciation. She provided immediate feedback, corrected errors, and modeled accurate expressions when necessary. The teacher noted that most students were able to construct coherent dialogues and demonstrated a good understanding of the material. She acknowledged that pronunciation had improved, even though minor errors persisted, and that students' vocabulary choices were appropriate for the task.

Both Teacher A and Teacher B effectively used the interactive assessment approach to evaluate students' speaking abilities. This method not only facilitated the assessment of linguistic elements such as fluency and accuracy but also encouraged active student participation, confidence building, and meaningful communication practice in the classroom. Moreover, assessing students in pairs allowed for efficient time management while still providing opportunities for individual evaluation and feedback.

3.2 *Teachers problems in implementing performance assessment for assessing students' speaking skill*

This section focused on the problems teachers faced when assessing student performance in speaking class. In this second research question, the researcher used interviews to obtain information. Interview items relate to problems teachers faced in using performance assessment.

Table 1. Problems Faced by Teachers during the Implementation of Performance Assessment

No	Problem	Assessment				Total
		T.A	T.B	T.C	T.D	
1.	Purpose of assessment	√	√	√	√	4
	Placement	√	√	√	√	4
	Monitoring	√	√	√	√	4
2.	Fairness	√	-	√	√	3
3	Grading	√	-	-	√	2

Note:

T.A : Teacher A
 T.C : Teacher C
 T.B : Teacher B
 T.D : Teacher D

The table highlights three key challenges commonly encountered during performance assessments. The first issue relates to the clarity and alignment of the assessment's purpose. The second concerns the fairness of the assessment process, and the third involves the complexity of assigning accurate and consistent grades.

3.2.1 Purpose of assessment

The objective of speaking performance assessment generally encompasses three key functions: identification, placement, and monitoring. However, teachers in this study reported several challenges in achieving these objectives effectively.

One of the primary issues relates to time constraints and limited resources. Teacher A noted that the lack of sufficient time made it difficult to conduct frequent and comprehensive assessments for each student. Additionally, the diversity of student abilities and learning styles presented another challenge, as it was difficult to design assessments that were both fair and accurate for all learners. Teacher C echoed this concern, emphasizing that the large number of students and the limited time available created obstacles in closely observing and evaluating each individual student's performance. Teacher D also acknowledged the time limitation as a persistent issue, even though no specific elaboration was provided.

In terms of student engagement, Teacher B pointed out that a lack of active participation from students hindered the effectiveness of performance assessments. Some students were unwilling to speak or participate in class activities, which complicated the process of accurately identifying their speaking abilities.

When specifically asked about problems related to identification, placement, and monitoring, several additional concerns were highlighted. Teacher A mentioned student anxiety as a key factor that negatively affects performance during assessments. In her experience, some students did not perform to their full potential due to nervousness. Furthermore, a lack of motivation was also observed—students who failed to see the relevance of the assessment to their learning tended to put in minimal effort.

Teacher B reinforced these observations, noting that students often refused to practice in front of the class due to feelings of embarrassment. The limited time available for speaking tasks further exacerbated the issue, preventing in-depth observation and evaluation.

Teacher C elaborated on the practical difficulties of implementing individualized assessments in a crowded classroom. She noted that with so many students and such limited time, the assessment

process could not be maximized. The varying levels of ability among students added to the complexity, as some students demonstrated strong speaking skills while others struggled significantly, making standardized evaluation difficult.

Teacher D provided additional insight into the challenges associated with speaking assessments. She reported that students were often reluctant to perform dialogues or presentations in front of the class due to shyness. Many came unprepared, focusing merely on completing the task rather than delivering a well-structured performance. Furthermore, students often spoke too softly, making it difficult for the teacher to hear and assess their pronunciation and fluency accurately. These issues collectively hindered the teacher's ability to identify students' skill levels, assign appropriate placements, and monitor progress effectively.

In summary, teachers reported that limitations in time, student engagement, class size, and performance anxiety significantly impacted their ability to fulfill the core objectives of speaking assessment—identification, placement, and monitoring. These findings underscore the need for more practical, flexible, and student-centred assessment approaches that can accommodate diverse classroom realities.

3.2.2 Fairness

An important issue that emerged from the data is fairness in assessment, particularly in relation to the varying levels of student ability. Two teachers, in particular, reported significant challenges in maintaining fairness when assessing students with diverse competencies in speaking skills.

Teacher A emphasized that unclear assessment criteria often lead to inconsistency, making it difficult to provide fair and accurate evaluations. She also highlighted the lack of appropriate assessment tools capable of measuring all dimensions of students' speaking proficiency, which is inherently complex. These limitations can hinder the ability to capture a comprehensive picture of each student's abilities. Furthermore, she noted that the pressure to meet institutional or curriculum standards may unintentionally push teachers toward assigning grades that do not accurately reflect student performance, compromising fairness.

Teacher B acknowledged the natural variation in students' competencies, especially in English language learning, and regarded it as a common classroom reality. She explained that addressing this issue requires additional support and repetition for students with lower proficiency levels. To ensure fair assessment, she provides extra explanations and opportunities for struggling students to revisit learning materials and demonstrate improvement over time. By conducting reassessments, she attempts to track individual progress, ensuring that students are evaluated not just on a single performance, but on their development throughout the learning process.

Teacher C also pointed to the challenge of meeting all assessment criteria due to the diverse range of student abilities. She found it difficult to design a uniform set of evaluation standards that accommodates every student, especially when the gap in proficiency is wide. This discrepancy, she implied, complicates the fairness and reliability of assessment outcomes.

Similarly, Teacher D described the difficulty in creating balanced assessment instruments—tools that are neither too simple for high-performing students nor too difficult for those still developing their skills. Striking this balance is essential to ensure that all students are evaluated equitably and are given a fair opportunity to succeed.

Overall, the findings reveal that fairness in performance assessment is closely tied to the diversity of student abilities, the clarity of evaluation criteria, and the suitability of assessment tools. Teachers recognize the importance of adjusting their approaches to accommodate individual learning needs, but often face systemic and practical barriers that complicate the implementation of equitable assessment practices.

3.3 Grading

The final challenge identified by teachers in this study relates to scoring and grading students' speaking performance. This stage of assessment requires teachers to make judgments based on established criteria, yet various issues were reported that affect the objectivity and consistency of the process.

Teacher A highlighted several significant concerns. First, she noted that speaking assessments are inherently subjective, relying heavily on the teacher's interpretation of student performance. This subjectivity can lead to inconsistencies in grading, which may result in unfair outcomes for students. She also mentioned the difficulty in comparing students' performances, especially when they possess varying levels of proficiency, as there is often no clear benchmark to guide such comparisons. Additionally, teacher workload was cited as a factor that limits the ability to conduct careful and comprehensive assessments, further complicating the grading process.

In contrast, Teacher B expressed that scoring and grading were not particularly problematic. She viewed student performance as highly dependent on the teacher's role in motivating and supporting learners. From her perspective, fostering engagement and encouragement was more influential in shaping performance than the technical aspects of scoring.

Teacher C similarly reported no significant difficulties in scoring and grading, stating that assessments were naturally based on each student's individual ability. She appeared confident in her ability to assign grades fairly according to observable performance without being hindered by external factors.

However, Teacher D acknowledged some challenges, particularly in determining precise scores for specific assessment criteria. She noted that there were occasional doubts when assigning points, especially when attempting to maintain full objectivity. She emphasized the importance of avoiding personal bias or favoritism, recognizing that these factors could inadvertently influence grading outcomes.

In summary, while some teachers found scoring and grading to be straightforward and manageable, others identified it as a complex process affected by subjectivity, lack of clear benchmarks, and external pressures such as workload. These findings highlight the need for clearer rubrics, training in objective assessment practices, and institutional support to ensure fair and consistent evaluation of students' speaking skills.

Analysis of this research data showed that teachers in assessing students' speaking performance used intensive type, responsive type and interactive type. In the intensive type, the teacher used read aloud. The teacher asked students to read their assignments in front of the class. In the responsive type, the teacher used questions and answers. The teacher asked the students to answer. Meanwhile, for the interactive type, the teacher asked students to create a dialogue and practice it in front of the class.

Discussion

There are various types of assessments that can be employed by teachers to evaluate student learning outcomes, one of which is performance assessment. This type of assessment is particularly effective in evaluating students' speaking abilities, as it involves tasks that require students to demonstrate their language skills in real or simulated communicative contexts. Performance assessment is often categorized as an authentic assessment, as it emphasizes real-world application over traditional testing formats. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996), performance assessments enable teachers to gain a comprehensive understanding of what students have mastered by observing them perform or produce something in relation to specific skills or competencies.

This perspective aligns with the findings of Zaim et al. (2020), who emphasized that junior high school students learning English are expected to engage in simple communicative activities related to familiar, everyday contexts. Performance assessment facilitates this expectation by allowing students to practice language in relevant situations. Furthermore, such assessments allow teachers to directly

observe and evaluate student abilities, thus improving the quality of teaching through the design of targeted learning activities. Assignments in performance assessment are intentionally crafted to elicit student responses—either oral or written—and often require the production of a product or demonstration of knowledge in action.

In addition to benefiting students, performance assessments also positively influence teachers. Through direct observation, teachers gain clearer insights into student abilities, which in turn enhances their instructional strategies. This benefit is supported by Salma and Entika (2021), who found that performance-based assessments significantly contribute to improving the quality of the teaching and learning process.

However, despite its advantages, the implementation of performance assessment presents several challenges. Based on interview data, teachers reported difficulties in three main areas: assessment objectives, fairness, and grading.

The first issue pertains to assessment objectives, particularly in identifying students' speaking proficiency. Several teachers expressed that their students had limited English proficiency, as it was their first experience learning the language. This lack of foundational skills, coupled with low motivation, made it difficult for teachers to identify and classify students' abilities accurately. These findings are consistent with those of O'Malley and Pierce (1996), who noted that performance assessments require additional time to manage and coordinate and that consistency in assessment can be difficult to achieve—especially when dealing with large classes. The need for detailed observation and progress monitoring becomes even more challenging under such conditions.

The second challenge involves fairness, especially when assessing students with varying levels of language proficiency. Teachers reported that while some students performed well, others struggled significantly, which made it difficult to apply uniform criteria in a fair and objective manner. Latipah and Purnawarman (2019) highlighted similar concerns, noting that although performance rubrics exist, they often fail to fully ensure fairness and objectivity. Teachers frequently find it challenging to assess students equitably when criteria are applied uniformly across diverse ability levels. Furthermore, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) emphasized that performance assessments require complex cognitive engagement, which may disadvantage students with lower proficiency.

One potential solution to address this issue is the use of differentiated assessment. By tailoring assessments to match students' varying abilities and providing rubrics that can be adjusted accordingly, teachers can create a more inclusive and equitable evaluation process. Differentiated assessment fosters greater student engagement and recognizes individual strengths, allowing all learners to demonstrate their abilities in ways that are appropriate for their level.

The final issue relates to scoring and grading. Teachers noted that evaluating speaking performance was particularly challenging due to the subjective nature of the task. For students at a basic proficiency level, assigning accurate and consistent scores was difficult. These findings align with Latipah and Purnawarman (2019), who observed that teachers often struggle to maintain consistency across students and across different aspects of performance assessment—particularly when assessing group tasks.

To mitigate subjectivity and enhance consistency in scoring, Brualdi (1998) recommends the use of collaborative evaluation strategies, where teachers work together to identify key behaviors and elements to be assessed in a task. The use of detailed scoring rubrics is also essential. Rubrics should be provided to students in advance, helping them understand the expectations and enabling them to prepare more effectively. Key elements typically included in speaking assessment rubrics are vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency, all of which provide a structured basis for more objective evaluation.

In conclusion, while performance assessments offer significant benefits for evaluating speaking skills in authentic contexts, their implementation must be supported by appropriate tools, differentiated strategies, and structured rubrics to ensure fair, consistent, and meaningful assessment for all learners.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, this study concludes that junior high school English teachers employ various types of performance assessments to evaluate students' speaking skills, including intensive, responsive, and interactive approaches. In the intensive type, teachers asked students to read their written assignments aloud; in the responsive type, students answered short questions in a question-and-answer format; and in the interactive type, students performed dialogues in pairs. Despite effectively implementing these assessment types, teachers encountered several challenges, particularly related to the purpose of assessment, fairness, and grading. Teachers reported difficulties in accurately identifying students' speaking abilities due to limited time, large class sizes, and varying student motivation. Fairness was another concern, as teachers struggled to assess students with differing proficiency levels using standardized criteria. Grading also posed challenges, with teachers noting the subjective nature of performance assessment and the lack of clear, consistent scoring rubrics. One limitation of this research is that it only involved a small number of teachers in one region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research is encouraged to involve a more extensive and more diverse sample across different educational contexts and to explore the development and implementation of differentiated rubrics and collaborative assessment models to support fairer and more consistent performance evaluations in speaking assessment.

REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. Longman.
- Brown, H. D. (2019). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Brualdi, A. (1998). *Implementing performance assessment in the classroom*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation.
- Chaney, A. L. (1998). *Teaching oral communication*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Enger, S. K., & Yager, R. E. (2001). *Assessing student understanding in science*. Corwin Press.
- Flojo, O. O. (2013). *Curriculum and instruction: The teacher of English*. The Education Council, Department of Education.
- Fulcher, G. (2003). *Teaching second language speaking*. Pearson Longman.
- Garnace, X. R. E. (2021). Speaking assessments in multilingual English language teaching. *The Asian EFL Journal Professional Teaching Articles*, 25(3), 40–65.
- Knight, B. (1992). Assessing speaking skills: A workshop for teacher development. *ELT Journal*, 46(3), 294–302.
- Latipah, Y., & Purnawarman, P. (2019). EFL teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of performance-based assessment in assessing students' speaking ability. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 25(5), 290–295.
- Luoma, S. (2004). *Assessing speaking*. Cambridge University Press.
- Marlenie, R., Dedi, S., & Syafryadin. (2022). Teachers' techniques of assessing English speaking skill in limited face-to-face learning. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 5(2), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.33650/jeel.v5i2.2471>
- Menggo, S., & Tobias, G. (2022). College students' perception of performance-based assessment use in boosting speaking ability. *International Journal of Language Education*, 6(4), 423–436. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v6i4.22910>
- Nitko, A. J. (2001). *Educational assessment of students* (3rd ed.). Prentice-Hall.
- Novitasari, P. (2020). Language teaching and evaluation: An analysis on students' speaking performance assessment. *Jurnal Koulutus: Jurnal Pendidikan Kahuripan*, 3(2), 252–261. <https://doi.org/10.37728/koulutus.v3i2.318>
- O'Malley, J. M., & Pierce, L. V. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners*. Addison-Wesley.

- Salma, N., & Entika, F. N. (2021). Performance-based assessment in the English learning process: Washback and barriers. *Getsempena English Education Journal*, 8(1), 164–176.
- Soliha, I. A. (2019). Speaking assessment based on the 2013 curriculum from English teachers and their perception. In *Proceedings of MELTC* (pp. 53–70).
- Zaim, M., Refnaldi, & Arsyad, S. (2020). Authentic assessment for speaking skills: Problem and solution for English secondary school teachers in Indonesia. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(3), 587–604. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13340a>