



Assessing Young Learners' Listening and Speaking Performance

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56855/ijcse.v2i3.624>

Received June 24, 2023; Accepted July 27, 2023; Available online November 20, 2023

Abstract: This study aims to investigate the types of oral language assessment tasks which is used by the teacher in assessing EYL speaking and listening performance. The national curriculum also decides to introduce English since elementary schools as include in local content subjects. However, some English teachers still find some difficulties in forming the teaching methodology and its assessment. Some debates coming whether English for young learners should concern on productive skills or receptive skills or cover all skills. Besides, some problems also arise from how to assess the young learners since it is as local subject and they also still learn the second language (Indonesian). Therefore, this article concerns on speaking and listening assessment since the writer think that speaking and listening are the key points for young learner to study further.

Keywords: Assessment, speaking, listening, young learner

1. Introduction

One of the appropriate strategies to determine the students' skill in teaching learning process is by assessing. According to Arifin (2013 :4), assessment is a systematic and long-term activity that collects information about the learning process and achievement and uses it to make decisions based on particular criteria and considerations. Assessment can be as simple as an exercise in which a teacher gathers information from students, interprets it, and makes judgments about their performance.

The guidelines of the National Education Minister Number 16 of 2007 regarding academic qualification standards and course instructor competency stated that teachers should design assessment instruments for learning outcomes. Students' learning outcomes were directly influenced by a qualified assessment tool of learning outcomes. The position of the assessment instrument provides information for teachers to use in making decisions and achieving school learning outcomes.

Susilaningsih & Amalia (2014) stated that assessment instruments are not only to test recall and comprehension but also test skills. Speaking skill, for example, is an assessment test that was not devised by a teacher. Speaking skill is the ability to articulate sounds or pronunciation to convey, appreciate, and deliver ideas, conceptions, and sentiments (Apriani et al, 2018:282). Speaking is one of the productive skills and it is

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an 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 the form of words and sentences orally in order to communicate with others. Speaking ability is intended to prepare students to be more courageous in presenting arguments and ideas in official situations in which they are adjusted to proper speech contexts. For YLs, the spoken language is usually the medium through which a new language is encountered, understood, practised and learnt. Therefore, we are social beings who live in groups and engage through language, it is crucial to have a speaking talent.

However, listening is also the initial stage in first and second language acquisition, and the skill that children acquire first (Scott and Ytreberg: 1990). Listening skill is needed to understand the auditory message in inadequate conditions may detract from other kinds of cognitive activities, and this can result in an overall worsening of cognitive performances. This is the case for young learners who must select and interpret information that comes from auditory and visual clues to define what the speakers are trying to express with a focus on meaning (Cameron: 2001).

Because of the mix of speaking and listening activities that may be involved, assessing oral language can be difficult: sometimes there is more speaking than listening (as in extended speaking tasks like newstelling), and sometimes there is a combination of both (as in conversations), and sometimes there is more listening than speaking (as in teacher-led class discussions). Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the types of oral language assessment tasks which is used by the teacher in assessing EYL speaking and listening performance.

2.1 Theory

2.1.1 Assessment and Young Learners

Young learners are defined as children aged six to twelve. According to Penny (2006), the 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 the education system between five and twelve years old (Phillips, 1993; Rixon, 1999). Pinter (2011) divided young learners into three groups; preschoolers aged 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.

The characteristics of young learners listed by Brumfit (1991) describe young learners as more enthusiastic; relate ideas and concepts, and have the 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, use limited creative language, have imagination, take pleasure in finding and creating fun that they do, and learn more indirectly than directly. Penny (2006) added some characteristics of young learners in general: growth, literacy, and vulnerability. The characteristic of growth consists of the attention span of young learners and developing abilities to be creative. Young learners develop an understanding of 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 spans, are imaginative and active, active and storytelling, enjoy learning through playing, like imitating and get bored easily. Teachers of young learners study 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 by the development needs of the child himself.

The most decisive factor in primary assessment is the age of pupils which is why assessment of young language learners (YLLs) is highly relevant. Assessment of YLLs has been, particularly from the 1990s on-wards, an independent, definite area within language assessment research, and it pertains to approximately 6 to 13-year-old pupils learning a foreign or second language (Hasselgreen 2005; McKay 2006, 1; Rea-Dickins 2000). YLLs exhibit special characteristics as language learners because they are still growing in more senses than just

physically; they are developing literacy skills and new identities in addition to being vulnerable to criticism or failure (McKay 2006, 24, 30).

Some assessment tasks are more appropriate than others for YLLs. Brown and Hudson (1998, 658) differentiate three broad categories of language assessment: 1) selected-response assessments referring to true-false, multiple-choice and matching assessments, 2) constructed response assessments which are, for example, fill-in, short-answer and performance assessments and 3) personal-response assessments including conferences, self- and peer assessments and portfolios. The last is most appropriate to start with YLLs, and as pupils' proficiency level increases, teachers could shift from the second category to the first (Shabaan 2001, 18). On the whole, Shabaan proposes using informal alternative and non-threatening assessment techniques with YLLs, such as nonverbal responses, oral interviews, role plays, written narratives, presentations, student-teacher conferences, self-assessment, dialogue journals, peer and group assessment and student portfolios – but not exclusively, because pupils should be familiar with all kinds of methods to sketch the most multidimensional picture of the child's skills and knowledge.

2.1.2 Characteristics of Assessment

Hasselgreen (2005, 338) lists widely accepted characteristics of assessment tasks for YLLs (boldfacing mine): Tasks should be appealing to the age group, interesting and captivating, preferably with elements of game and fun.

- a. Many types of assessment should be used, with the pupils', parents' and teachers' perspectives involved.
- b. Both the tasks and the forms of feedback should be designed so that the pupil's strengths (what he or she can do) are highlighted.
- c. The pupil should, at least under some circumstances, be given support in carrying out the tasks.
- d. The teacher should be given access to and support in understanding basic criteria and methods for assessing language proficiency.

The assessment activities should be good learning activities.

A young age does not prevent a pupil from using technology-based assessment methods. Indeed, "computer assessment tasks that give immediate responses (with sounds and visual effects) and teachers responding kindly to the child's efforts, are ideal for young learners" although the provision of immediate feedback can decrease with time and age of pupils (McKay 2006, 9–10). More demanding assessment tasks and methods could be introduced in upper-primary classes.

2.1.3 Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio is a collection of the work (work) of a student in one specific period. This collection of works illustrates the level of ability competencies that a student has achieved. Thus, the portfolio can show the progress of student learning progress. Such developments are not It can be seen from the test results. The collection of student's work is a reflection Development of various competencies Portfolio according to Tierney et al (1991: 41) is " Systematic collections by both students and teachers." Or a systematic collection or collection of works developed by students and teachers. The collected works can be drawings, essays, poems, and so on. The collection of works can be used as a basis to examine students' efforts, improvements, processes, and achievements. Through Reflection on collections of students' works, teachers and students can work together to determine students' strengths and progress.

according to Kosadi et al. (1994) is as follows. (a) Obtain data on the level of speed and accuracy students absorb the information conveyed, (b) Obtain data about the level language and literary abilities and skills after teaching and learning activities, (c) Measure the efficacy and accuracy of the teaching program implemented (d) Obtain feedback that will be used as material for making changes and changes to subsequent programs, (e) Obtaining data which will be used as a guideline for grouping students according to language abilities and skills, (f) Determine the level, talents, interests, and students' attention to English Language and Literature lessons, (g) Determining majors/programs that match the talents and abilities of English language students.

3 Discussion

I focused on assessing young learners' speaking and listening skills. Speaking tasks with children should provide plenty of support in terms of structure to enable them to use language confidently and effectively. In the following game, children describe cartoon characters in short oral texts that are scaffolded through stem sentences. First, the teacher prepares cards with cartoon characters and their features and calls on a student to pick up one card and describe it to the class. To assess young learner speaking skill Penny (2006) mention some techniques there are:

3.1 Dialogues and role play

Dialogues and role play based on real-life conversations are oral activities that can be used to bridge the gap between guided and free tasks. Learners can find them entertaining and motivating as they take on the role of an imaginary character. The use of puppets, and physical movements can make a dialogue come alive for YL78s, giving them a communicative purpose (Brezigar 2010).

3.2 News telling

Newstelling can be done in the whole class, in small groups or pairs. Using news telling 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's ability by seeing them do this task by conveying detailed and appropriate information to the audience or friends.

3.3 Storytelling

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 and, 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 storytelling, 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.

3.3.1 Picture talks

The teacher gives a picture to the students or teacher displays 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.

3.3.2 Oral presentations

Oral presentations are also extended speaking tasks and they can be supported 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 several weeks. The task will also be easier if an adult is available to assist them.

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

3.3.3 Listen and do

TPR focusing on the use of physical activity is a useful approach for YLs, who listen to their teacher's instructions generally in the form of commands and then follow those instructions by moving their bodies, drawing, writing or gap-filling. As noted by Ur (1984) a good listening task is one with 'active responses occurring during, or between parts of, the listening passage, rather than at the end' (p. 4). The following YouTube clip gives an example of a 'listen and do' activity in which the teacher performs a TPR activity by engaging the children through commands on the topic 'shapes': www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZNLBonSXpA

3.3.4 Listen and repeat

Listen-and-repeat activities give the learners a chance to practice parts of the language the sounds, stress, rhyme and intonation to promote effective pronunciation. When performed in combination with movements, objects or pictures, chants, songs and story refrains, they help learners establish a link between words and meaning (Scott and Ytreberg 1990).

3.3.5 Learning the Correct Pronunciation

Mastering the correct pronunciation will be able to be done if you have heard a lot, read, and tried to apply it in English conversation. You have to learn to pronounce every word and sentence correctly because otherwise, it will affect your speed of speaking. While talking, try to think about whether the pronunciation of the words and sentences you use is correct or not

It's been quite helpful in terms of smoothing his English skills! To learn English you can do it in various ways, one of which is reading articles or watching movies in English. Surely it is not cool if you are seriously paying attention to the English used in the film You watch suddenly the internet slows. You can use the cheapest internet package promo. You can also enjoy special promos for your city, such as internet provider Jakarta and many other city promos!

3.3.6 Listen and draw

This task can be done in any age group to help learners practice listening and language in context, e.g., prepositions. For example, the teacher describes three objects (e.g., a present, a clock and a box) without saying any of these words in his or her description. The descriptions should be about size, shape and details, not naming the object or saying what it does. Learners listen carefully and draw their version of the picture. To illustrate, the teacher describes a monster, and children draw it after the instructions, as in the given example:

Let's draw a monster!

- 1) The monster has one eye.
- 2) The monster has three arms.
- 3) The monster has four legs.

3.3.7 Listen and colour

Since children love colouring, in such tasks, instead of letting children simply colour the picture, teachers can make it into a language activity, as illustrated in the following sample story, which can be used with eight- to 10-year-old learners. The teacher passes out colouring sheets, on which there is a picture of what she or he will describe to YLs, and tells the purpose of the activity. The teacher reads the instructions below one at a time. When the activity is finished, she or he checks the pages together with the students. Figure 11.2 below shows a picture of the shopping trip

3.3.8 Performance Appraisal

The curriculum listed many learning outcomes that describe the process, activities, or performances. To assess these learning outcomes, observations are needed towards students when doing so. Performance appraisal is an assessment based on the results Observer of student activities as they occur Valuation is Performed on Shiva's performance, behaviour, or interaction. This way of assessment is more authentic than a written test because what is assessed better reflects ability The fact is that the more often the teacher observes the performance of students, the more reliable the results of student ability assessment Assessment in this way is more appropriately used to assess students' abilities in speeches, poetry readings, discussions, problem-

solving, student participation in small group discussions, reading aloud, plays, questioning skills, the ability to speak pronunciation and intonation, and the process of listening or listening.

Performance appraisal requires assessment tools. This tool should be structured in such a way. So that it can capture the performance of students.

4 Conclusion

According to Inayah et, al. (2019), the success of learning English is not only seen from student achievements but also is evaluated from the learning process. Assessing students, can be one of teachers' efforts to motivate students to succeed in the lesson (Amalia, 2017) because by assessing students, the teacher will know whether are students understand the material that has already taught or not and whether it also determines 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 be modified or not. Papp (2019) stated that in assessing children's skills, we can use face-to-face to assess oral skills and use traditional paper and pencil tests for other skills.

Indeed, young learners are unique and can easily imitate something like a language. Young learners have their characteristics so when designing a test to measure the learner's language skills teachers need to carefully. Assessors cannot assess five-year-old children with the same test as twelve-year-old children. Above all, when teachers design a test to measure the young language learner's skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), teachers should underline that children are still interested and like a fun activity. Therefore, the teachers can try to make a fun test if possible.

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