DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING ASYNCHRONOUS SPEAKING ASSESSMENT: ENGLISH TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

Asynchronous learning started to be frequently used to carry out school teaching and learning activities since COVID-19, including for the speaking classroom. This issue changed the speaking assessment used into the asynchronous type to fit the learning method. This study aims to investigate English teachers' challenges and opportunities in designing and implementing asynchronous speaking assessment. This research use narrative inquiry with semi-tructured interviews as the data collection technique and voice recorder as the documentation. The participant for this research was two English teachers at one of the Vocational High School in Jakarta. The findings showed three challenges and two opportunities while designing and implementing the asynchronous speaking assessment. The challenges were idea and inspiration, authentication of students' submissions, and more time needed. As for the opportunities, the implementation was flexible, and the need to be more IT-minded. In conclusion, there were both challenges and opportunities while English teachers were designing and implementing the asynchronous speaking assessment.

Keywords: Asynchronous Learning; Speaking Assessment; Teachers' Experience

INTRODUCTION

Learning speaking in English has been huge challenges for some non-english students. This skill was considered as the most difficult skill to assess since students still need many requirement aspects to do it. Based on the research, about 70% of the teachers agreed that speaking is the most difficult skill to assess among the four skills (Ahmed, 2017). This is in line with Bachore & Satenaw (2018) that stated English teachers do not give much attention on assessing students' speaking skill and that speaking skill did not properly assessed. In addition, in Indonesia, the assessment of English-speaking skill is not assessed as frequent as the other skills due to the unavailability of time to assess individual's speaking skill and the school schedule that is not adequate to do that. Therefore, the asynchronous learning started to be frequently used to carry out the teaching and learning activities in schools since the appearance of COVID-19 in the early 2020. The teachers chose to mostly conduct the teaching and learning activities asynchronously due to the bad network connection that may disturb the deliverance of the materials if it is done synchronously. In this way, the assessment is also being done asynchronously, including the speaking assessment. If this skill assessed asynchronously, then the teachers need to design it in different way to fit it to be carried out asynchronously. Kusumawati (2020) conducted a study that investigated how a new learning design applied in speaking classroom and focus on the implementation of change from formerly face-to-face speaking assessment into full online speaking assessment. In addition, Forrester (2020) also finished a research that focused to find out the challenges and solutions from the changes of face-to-face speaking assessment to online speaking assessment during the corona-virus pandemic.

While the researchers on the previous studies are study on implementation, challenges, and solutions of the asynchronous speaking assessment that mostly had university students as the participants, the researcher decided to study on Vocational High School English teachers' challenges and opportunities in designing and implementing their asynchronous speaking assessment. Assessment given in the asynchronous learning surely different with the one given in face-to-face classroom because it carried out at different times and require different preparation (Bearman, et al., 2016). If the classical assessment tool used in the traditional face to face learning are such as quizzes, mid-term, final-term, portfolio, assignment, and others; then the asynchronous learning has online assignment, asynchronous exams (writing and speaking), videos project, and others (Ipek & Ustunbas, 2021). The types of assessment might be similar, but how those assessments conducted are completely different.

METHOD

This research used narrative inquiry, which studies someone's experience as a story (Kim, 2016) where the researcher personified the teachers' challenges and opportunities in designing and implementing their asynchronous speaking assessment.in the form of narrative text. The participants of this study were two English teachers at one of the Vocational High School in Jakarta. The data for this research were collected through semi-structured personal interview where the researcher read the questions one by one to the participants directly and recorded the answers from the participants using the voice recorder. In addition, the researcher also asked for further information if the participants' responses could be further investigated. The researcher analyzed the data based on Creswell (2014) about analyzing data for qualitative research. Therefore, here are the researcher's data analysis steps for this research: prepared and organized all the data that had been collected; checked all the data and carefully understand all the information; coded the data by bracketing, coloring, and writing a word or two representing each code category on the transcribed recording; studied the information that had been coded to ensure everything was in its place; determined how the information would be represented; wrote an interpretation of the findings that have been analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Results

1. **The challenges they faced.**
The first one was idea and inspiration to design the asynchronous speaking assessment, which sometimes stuck since they needed to consider the suitable learning media.

> *Of course, ideas and inspiration were the main challenges when designing this asynchronous learning, …I had to look for ideas on how to compile assessments according to the learning media.*
>
> Participant 02

The second challenge was that assessing speaking skills asynchronously was less satisfactory for the participants since some factors made them unsure about the authentication of the submitted assessment and the difficulty in thoroughly assessing students' submission.

> *… However, it is difficult to know the authenticity of the assessment they sent because many things can be taken directly from the internet.*
>
> Participant 01

…for example, if through a voice note, I can only hear the sound and asses only the intonation and pronunciation. Then if through video, we also cannot know whether they are really fluent because they memorize it, or if they actually read the text they have prepared.

Participant 02

The last challenge was the time needed to implement the asynchronous speaking assessment, which was more tiring than face-to-face learning for students and teachers.

… Then if asynchronously, the teaching and learning hours become unclear, it could be 24 hours per day non-stop for both the students and the teacher.

Participant 02

2. The opportunities they had.

The opportunity they had while designing and implementing the asynchronous speaking assessment was that the asynchronous learning allowed both teachers and students to access the materials and assessments flexibly whenever they had an internet connection.

…with this asynchronous method, the positive side is that teachers can upload learning materials on the media used and students can access them whenever they have an internet connection. However, the teacher still has to be firm and give a deadline for collecting assignments.

Participant 02

In addition, another opportunity they have while designing and implementing the asynchronous speaking assessment is that teachers need to be more active and creative in finding and using technology to design and implement the speaking assessment.

What I feel the most when designing and implementing an asynchronous speaking assessment is that we have to start learning to use and master technology.

Participant 01

But for asynchronous learning in general, the opportunities lie in the fact that both teachers and students must become more IT literate or IT minded. Everyone has to start learning using existing technology, then look for new information that can be used to support online learning.

Participant 02

Discussion

Based on the findings, the teachers' perception was divided into three challenges they faced and two opportunities they had while designing and implementing the asynchronous speaking assessment. The first challenge was the idea and inspiration needed to design the asynchronous speaking assessment. This challenge was caused since the teachers needed to choose a proper speaking assessment for a particular learning media as the speaking assessment was carried out asynchronously. In addition, Tosuncuoglu (2018) also stated that teachers need to choose the right type of assessment to decrease students' anxiety in completing the assessment and also consider the suitability of the learning media used for the assessment. The second challenge was the students' authentication of the speaking assessment submission, which made the teachers less satisfied while assessing their speaking skills. The teachers thought assessing students' speaking skills asynchronously was less satisfactory since it is hard to define their actual speaking proficiency due to the inability to directly assess their facial expressions and body language (Rahmawati & Ertin, 2014). In addition, the submissions' authenticity was also sometimes doubtable since they might practice the speaking assessment while reading a prepared note. The third challenge was implementing asynchronous speaking assessment which was more tiring than face-to-face learning since the asynchronous learning required different

preparation on the implementation (Bearman, et al., 2016). This was also caused due to the flexible timing where students and teachers could do the teaching and learning activities anytime and anywhere, which may be a 24-hour learning activity. Therefore, the third challenge was also related to the first opportunity, where the teachers stated that given the speaking assessment asynchronously, the students could access the assessment anytime they had an internet connection and submit the assessment within the time limit that had been set (Susanto, Miftakh, & Al-Baekani, 2021). With this opportunity, the students had more time to do the speaking assessment and increased their self-confidence since it gave them flexibility while completing the assessment (Alkan & Bümen, 2020). The second opportunity lay in the fact that teachers needed to be more active and creative in using the existed technology. By actively utilizing the existing technology, teachers will discover many new things that can help them find new things to design and implement the speaking assessment (Benjamin Luke Moorhouse & Kevin M. Wong, 2022). Thus, by knowing various asynchronous learning media, teachers will be able to adjust the suitable media for the learning process (Rachmawati, Miftakh, & Fitriyana, 2021).

CONCLUSION

While the teachers were designing and implementing the asynchronous speaking assessment, they faced three challenges and two opportunities. The challenges they faced were the idea and inspiration to design the asynchronous speaking assessment with a suitable learning media, students' speaking assessment submission authenticity, and 24-hours teaching and learning activities due to the asynchronous learning. As for the opportunities they had, there were flexible times to implement the asynchronous speaking assessment, which made the students less anxious; and the fact that teachers need to be more active and creative in discovering new ways to design asynchronous speaking assessments through the existing technology.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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