

THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES OF SPEAKING FLUENCY USING RETELLING TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to describe the implementation of speaking fluency assessment using Retelling Technique to the tenth graders of Senior High School students and its procedures. This is based on a study performed by 20 students in the speaking class. Through the implementation of the speaking fluency test and questionnaire given to the students, it can be found that the retelling technique was impractical one to assess fluency since it spent much more time than the conventional technique but was fun to be applied. It is recommended to teacher who wants to apply this method using intensive or interactive kind of speaking to gain more practical, reliable and valid fluency scoring.

Keywords: *Speaking Fluency, Retelling Technique, Assessment*

INTRODUCTION

English has been taught in Indonesian school as a foreign language includes 4 main things; *listening, speaking, reading, and writing*. The other elements that are also taught are *vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation* according to the indicator of learning objectives. Nation (2009:163) explains that in the classroom English learning, fluency development is often neglected over the others. Teacher sometimes does not develop it in the learning process so that there are still many students who know English well but do not fluent in producing it orally. Whereas, fluency is important at all levels of proficiency as the measurement of how far the students accomplish their learning progress. Even a beginner needs to become fluent with the view items of language they know to be able to step forward the highest level.

Measuring fluency in speaking is considered to be a complex one. Teachers prefer to do analytic scoring to get a little more washback rather than the holistic one. There had been a study conducted relate to speaking fluency and retelling technique by Rachmawaty and Hermagustiana (2010). The study concerned with the Storytelling technique impacts towards students accomplishment in speaking fluency. It results students' speaking fluency improvement. These facts led the writer's idea to conduct a further research to see how speaking fluency can be evaluated independently regardless the other speaking categories. The writer tries to find out an alternative procedure of fluency assessment by applying the same technique, Retelling Story.

The results of the research are expected to give information to anyone who wants to

evaluate students' speaking ability. It can be used as the reference for the other researchers in conducting such research. The results of the research are also practically beneficial to help teachers in case of speaking fluency assessment

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LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Speaking Fluency

Fluency in term of skill has different meaning based on what skill it is dealing with. Fluency in speaking is the ability to produce utterance or oral production which can be understood either the listener or the speaker himself. As cited in Hughes (2002:67-112), Byrne (1986:9-10) defines fluency as the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without too much hesitation. Lennon (1990:389) further adds that there are two senses of fluency, broad sense and narrow sense. In the broad sense, fluency is as a cover term of oral proficiency which represents the highest point on a scale that measures someone's speaking ability of a foreign language as well as a mark of social accomplishment. In the narrow sense, it refers to the one of components or aspects of measuring oral proficiency.

Summarizing the explanation above, fluency is as the measurement to assess how far students or language learners good at learning skill, especially speaking. Developing speaking fluency can be implemented by considering students' speech condition. According to (Schmidt, 1992) as cited in Nation (2009:151), fluency has three characteristics, as follows:

1. Fluency is demonstrated when learners take part in meaning-focused activity and do it with speed and ease without holding up the flow of talk.

2. Fluent language use does not require a great deal of attention and effort from the learner.
3. Fluency is a skill. It comes by constant repetition of familiar feats.

From the characteristics previously described, it is concluded that a person is said to be fluent in speaking if he or she has ability or skill to speak at an appropriate speed without any hesitation because of repetition action, and the speech itself is meaningful or can be accepted by the listeners. Based on these characteristics, the writer determined related aspects to ensure speaking fluency judgment in the research.

B. Speaking Fluency Measurement

Fluency is typically measured by speed of access or production and by the number of hesitation. There are some aspects that can be used to measure changes in fluency according to Thornbury (2008:7):

1. Speech rate

In term of speaking fluency speed is a factor, but it is not the most important one. A speaker is categorized as a fluent speaker if he moves at an appropriate rate of speech considering the speech intonation and intention stressing. It is depending on the purpose of speaking itself. In retelling story, speaking at lower rate is accepted to get the listeners' sense in understanding the story read.

There are many ways to calculate speaking rate. Cross (2005:2) states in his article that speech rate can be found by calculating the words per minute (WPM) inclusively and exclusively. An inclusive rate reflects the rate of communication that includes all dis-fluencies, pauses, hesitations, etc which occur on the on going speech.

While, exclusive rate is calculated by omitting all typical pauses, durations of disfluencies, hesitations, etc. It shows more how fast the speaker produces the movements of speech. It is said to be more represents the speaking rate if all utterances were naturally fluent.

2. Pauses

All speakers need to pause to take breath or to catch up the utterance conceptualization. But frequent pausing shows a sign of speaking disturbance. There are six factors should be considered in this case:

- a. The use of pause fillers
There is common trick in order to disguise pauses in speaking, that is by filling them using pause fillers. The most common pause fillers are *uh*, *um*, and *er*. Some expressions are also used to fill paused are *I mean*, *sort of*, etc.
- b. The placement of pauses
Natural pauses occur at the intersection of clauses, after groups of word that form a meaningful unit, or between two sentences. The other placement indicates unnatural speech pauses.
- c. The frequency of pausing
In normal speakers, if pause occurs too often, listeners will not catch the meaningful unit of utterance delivered perfectly.
- d. The length of pauses
All speakers pause to take breath and adjust its punctuation. Speakers may pause deliberately to check the listener's attention, but the length of pauses gives significant means of the speech fluency.
- e. The use of repeats
Some speakers use repetition of a single word at a point where part of

point paused to disguise length of pauses. Too often use repetition does not indicate fluency.

- f. The length of runs
It is related to the number of syllables between pauses. The longer the runs, the more fluent the speaker sounds. The term 'run' refers to the runs of syllables and words between pauses.

According to Lennon (1990) in Hughes (2002: 113) there are three main factors which seemed affect judgments of fluency are:

- (1) Words per minute (excluding repetitions),
- (2) Filled pauses,
- (3) Percentage of 'thought unit' followed by a pause

In this research, Retelling was the technique expected to develop and encourage students to speak as a habit through drilling treatment. Overall, the writer used such aspects to test students' fluency in speaking. In the -test, the students were asked to create a spontaneous monolog based on a given topic to measure how fluent they speech will be after being used to retell. They were only given 5 minutes to think about what they are going to say. There was no more stimulating text before speak. They were asked to produce monolog speech and elaborate their vocabulary items with limited preparation.

In this research, it was assumed that the more students speak through retelling activities, the more fluency degree they could obtain. Considering the assumption, the writer determined the required aspects to collect speaking fluency measurement into the following rubric evaluation table adjusting the procedure which has been written by Cross (2005:1-4).

Table 1. The Measurement Aspects of Speaking Fluency

| No | Student's Name | TWA | TST | FST | TWD | Speech Rate | | TWD (%) |
|----|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|----------------|---------|
| | | | | | | Inclusive Rate | Exclusive Rate | |
| | | | | | | | | |

The abbreviations on the table can be described as follows:

- (1) TWA or Total Words Attempted referred to the total number of words which are completely spoken during the monolog.
- (2) TST or Total Speaking Time was total the length of speech duration counted in seconds included all disfluent parts.
- (3) FST or Fluent Speaking Time was the total length of speech duration counted in seconds excludes all disfluent parts. So that the writer stopped the stopwatch each time the disfluencies observed and restarted the stopwatch as soon as students' speech resumed. If it happened in less than one second, it would be tolerated.
- (4) TWD or Total Words Disfluent was the total number of disfluencies during the monolog. To calculate TWD in percent, the writer divided the Total Words Disfluent (TWD) by the Total Words Attempted multiplied by 100%.

$$TWD (\%) = (TWD/TWA) \times 100\%$$

- (5) Speech rate

- (a) Inclusive rate

To calculate Inclusive Speaking Rate, the writer divided the TWA by the TST (in seconds) and finally multiplied the result by 60 to convert the time to words per minute (WPM).

$$WPM = (TWA/ TST) \times 60$$

- (b) Exclusive rate

If it happens in less than one second, it is tolerated. Then the exclusive rate is found by counting the same way as inclusive rate.

$$WPM = (TWA/FST) \times 60$$

Those items were expected representing the measurement of speaking fluency regardless the grammatical structure and other language features.

RESERACH METHOD

This is a descriptive qualitative research based on experiment by involving students in its implementation. Because of the consideration that the of students' speaking fluency can be probably measured by a reliable scoring rather than subjective judgment, the writer examined the data of each aspects related of the research subjects taken from trusted sources. The procedures had been implemented towards a 20-student class to find out its practicality. They were taught using Retelling Technique in which it would also used to be the assessment technique. Recording was used to help the writer in the assessment procedures.

To collect data, the writer used some techniques in collecting data in the research: *observation* and *speaking test*. Questionnaire was also provided to analyze whether or not the assessment technique appropriate to be applied.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The students were asked to perform their story through retelling. They only had to speak for less than two minutes about the topic of “My Favorite Story Book” which they had prepared 20 minutes before. The content of speech and the achievement progress were varies among the high achievers and low achievers students. To ensure every student pay attention to their friends performance, the writer provided questions related to the story delivered. They

got explicit explanation through examples, in this case was their friends’ performance. It motivated them to make self correction. The overall steps allowed them to receive useful strategies in preparing their speech such as summarizing, note taking, remembering keywords, imagine, guessing, and doing *top-down* and *bottom-up* learning. The following table shows the test result of the students in speaking fluency.

| No | Name of Experiment Students | Total Word Attempted | Total Speaking Time (in second) | Pauses | Total Fluent Time (in second) | Total Word Disfluent | Exclusive Rate (word per minute) | Total Word Disfluent (%) |
|----|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Annisa | 83 | 51 | 14 | 37 | 9 | 120 | 11 |
| 2 | Suci Astanti | 55 | 27 | 2 | 25 | 0 | 132 | 0 |
| 3 | Arfan | 96 | 38 | 0 | 38 | 0 | 152 | 0 |
| 4 | Laeli | 88 | 48 | 9 | 39 | 6 | 126 | 7 |
| 5 | Nelatul | 75 | 32 | 0 | 32 | 2 | 137 | 3 |
| 6 | Teman | 65 | 46 | 3 | 43 | 0 | 91 | 0 |
| 7 | Yoshua | 67 | 32 | 0 | 32 | 0 | 126 | 0 |
| 8 | Zumaroh | 83 | 35 | 0 | 35 | 0 | 142 | 0 |
| 9 | A. Rifai | 48 | 33 | 10 | 23 | 8 | 104 | 17 |
| 10 | Clara | 51 | 35 | 9 | 26 | 7 | 102 | 14 |
| 11 | Fahmi | 97 | 81 | 42 | 39 | 26 | 109 | 27 |
| 12 | Faizurr | 63 | 50 | 26 | 24 | 0 | 158 | 0 |
| 13 | Ghina | 64 | 24 | 0 | 24 | 3 | 153 | 5 |
| 14 | Miratus | 47 | 20 | 2 | 18 | 2 | 150 | 4 |
| 15 | M. Nighwan | 58 | 31 | 9 | 22 | 0 | 158 | 0 |
| 16 | Rizki Adi | 84 | 41 | 5 | 36 | 4 | 133 | 5 |
| 17 | Tara | 57 | 31 | 1 | 30 | 4 | 106 | 7 |
| 18 | Mutiara | 95 | 44 | 0 | 44 | 4 | 124 | 4 |
| 19 | Puji | 98 | 62 | 7 | 55 | 18 | 87 | 18 |
| 20 | Nurul | 111 | 42 | 2 | 40 | 0 | 167 | 0 |

Table 2. Stuedents Speaking Fluency test result

The data were used to be judgment consideration for speaking fluency assessment using this criteria:

- >130 = very good
- 91 – 130 = good
- 51 – 90 = fair
- 0 – 50 = poor

While doing the test, most of students were nervous to speak and did many pauses and

repetition. In measuring the result, the writer tolerated their grammatical mistake and pronunciation since the focus is on fluency. Measuring high school student's fluency is quite difficult since the writer had to count every second they made for the scoring consideration. See one of students' transcripts, *Ahmad Rifai* below.

Hello... My name is Ahmad Rifai. You can call me Rifai...(1 second)... I want to tell about my favorite story book...(3 seconds)... yeah.... I...I don't like story book because I prefer...(1 second)..... I prefer I prefer playing games online because make me very very happy...(2 seconds)...very very happy...(3 seconds)...No cry.....

Description

- TWA : 48 words
- TST : 33 seconds
- Pause : 10 seconds
- TWD : 8 words
- In. Rate: 80 words/minute
- Ex. Rate: 104 words/minute

From the script, the total speaking time was 33 seconds, and total fluent time (TFT) was 23 seconds. He was able to utter 48 words in 33 seconds or in other words, his exclusive

speaking rate is 104 words per minute. See another example of the students' speaking script. It was taken from *Nurul Faiqoh's* work.

My name is Nurul Faiqoh Fitrianti. Now I want to tell you about a story book. Please listen to me carefully. I like a story book. I would describe my favorite book. My favorite book is a princess story because this story is very good. This story is a Cinderella, Snow White, Beauty and the Beats, and other. A story Cinderella is about girl is very beauty and prince is very handsome. If Snow White is about girl is very beauty but she had a bad experience...(2 seconds)....because she is torture her step mother two stepdaughter. After that, she is e.. happy because Snow White meet with a prince. Thank You.

Description

- TWA : 111 words
- TST : 42 seconds
- Pause : 2 seconds
- TWD : 0 word
- In. Rate: 159 words/minute
- Ex. Rate: 167 words/minute

From the script, the total speaking time was 33 seconds, and total fluent time (TFT) was 23 seconds. He was able to utter 48

words in 33 seconds or in other words, his exclusive speaking rate is 104 words per minute. See another example of the students'

speaking script. It was taken from *Nurul Faiqoh's* work.

Compared with the previous student, the later result is considered better in fluency. Nurul did a 42-second monolog and gained 111 words. Her exclusive speaking rate was 167 words per second. The arrangement of her words is also better and there is no repeated word. She is considered a high proficiency level of ability in fluency. From these comparison, teacher can consider the student scoring on fluency. Even so, these scoring steps were practical for a small class students. The teacher can objectively give fluency score by looking at their exclusive speaking rate.

The next step, the writer provided questionnaire to fill to students to find out their response towards the assessment technique. Based on data calculated by dividing the total degree of feeling for each response item to the total students' response in all items multiplied by 100%, it has been concluded that 33% of students strongly agree, 41% agree, 20 % neither agree nor disagree, and the rest do not agree that Retelling Technique is effective, fun and useful to be apply in the classroom assessment to test students speaking fluency even though it spend much more time than the conventional technique of fluency assessment.

CONCLUSION

The overall procedure of assessment using retelling technique allowed the students to receive useful strategies in preparing their speech such as summarizing, note taking, remembering keywords, imagine, guessing, and doing *top-down* and *bottom-up* learning. As well as the students, teacher also learns how to maximize the effectiveness of strategy to build up students'

motivation and students' courage in speaking through step by step starting from brainstorming, giving material, getting students' prepared, evaluating and reinforcing. By implementing the assessment technique in the classroom, it assists the students to build up their confidence in speaking up their mind. At first, students were nervous and did not want to speak in front of their friend, but after being used to retell and be motivated by the writer, students express their mind freely through retelling. By implementing the technique, teacher can also find out an effective approach to work closely with the students and give feedbacks such as helping them in diction, pronunciation practice, and share about interesting things. So, the classroom condition will be fun and exciting.

On the other hand, the technique works only on students who have high level in proficiency. Producing oral performance in front of class was considered to be something scaring by some low achievement students as it is fun and challenging for the other ones. It needs more effort from teacher to build a fun environment so that the test result would be more valid and reliable. The other weakness of the assessment technique using retelling is that the technique was impractical for the large number of students. It spends very longer time than the conventional assessment technique. it is probably more suitable for the intensive and interactive kind of speaking which rely on the shorter length of speech.

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