

Student Attitudes Toward the Implementation of Scoring Rubric in Speaking Class

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Abstract:

The teaching of speaking has been challenging for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially, in higher education level. This can be affected by both internal factors like student interest and motivation and external factors like the influence of learners first language influence. One alternative that teachers can use in helping students to perform better in speaking class is by using scoring rubric. This descriptive qualitative study was designed to elaborate and describe students' attitude toward the use of scoring rubric in speaking performance class. This study involved 25 students attending English Speaking Class in higher education level. To gain the data from those twenty-five students, observation check list was used to detect students' behaviour during the student performance and interview guide was used to dig student thoughts on the distributed scoring rubric. The observation checklist indicated that the students looked more confident in their speaking performance. Besides, their speaking performance were more organized. These findings were confirmed by the result of the interview revealing that students felt more confident in presenting their project as the scoring rubric, which were distributed in advanced, gave them hints what to do. Also, the presented points for each criteria motivate them to fulfil the criteria so that they could achieve their intended score. The findings of the study informed us that the use of scoring rubric in teaching speaking contributed positive impact on students' performance and attitudes. Consequently, the distribution of scoring rubric as a tool to stimulate student's speaking performance is greatly advised.

Key words: EFL, scoring rubric, speaking, student attitude

Introduction

The teaching of speaking has been challenging for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially, in higher education level. This can be affected by both internal factors like student interest and motivation and external factors like the influence of learners first language influence or else. A study carried out by Zan & Goh (2011) confirmed that teachers in China encountered many challenges in the attempt of developing their students' speaking competence; one of which is the student's resistance to speaking participation. Furthermore, the research conducted by Rezeki & Dalimunte (2024) promoted that one of the major difficulties in teaching speaking was student anxiety. This problem aligns with the idea of becoming a good speaker who is required to endeavour speaking fluency and accuracy (Kusumawardhani & Lestari, 2022). This leads to students facing speaking anxiety.

One alternative that teachers can use in helping students to perform better in speaking class is by using scoring rubric. Scoring rubric is known as a tool displaying certain criteria to differ levels of quality (Moskal, 2000). Displaying assessment criteria of different level of quality is believed to be able to facilitate teachers to assess their students objectively. Some also believe that the use of scoring rubric does not only facilitate teacher to do assessment but also allow students to improve their performance. As pointed out Ailliam (2011) in Penadero & Jonsson (2013), the use of scoring rubric allows the students to record their performance so that they can develop their performance better. Classroom Action research by Ismalia (2021) also reported that student speaking performance was increased after the teaching and learning process implemented scoring rubric.

Many research has addressed the issue of enhancing students' speaking performance using scoring rubric. Yet, there is still few of them which concerns on higher education EFL teaching context especially in Indonesia. Consequently, this descriptive study commits to contribute in discovering the student attitudes and stances on the use of scoring rubric to escalate students' speaking performance. It is a novel contribution as prior research focus on the implementation of scoring rubric and teacher perspective.

Literature Review

Scoring Rubric

A rubric is an instrument used to assess student competences and performances. Wolf and Steven (2007) describe that scoring rubric is a tool containing observable criteria that differentiate certain levels of achievement. The presented criteria provide guides for instructors to calculate and determine how the students accomplished their projects and performances.

Advances of Scoring Rubric

The use of scoring rubric has been believed to contribute advances for several parties like teachers and students. As it is mentioned previously, scoring rubric helps teachers to score the students' performance consistently and objectively. In addition to teachers, a scoring rubric also shares advantages for students. The given feedback in comment section facilitates students better in understanding the given project or assignment (Johsson & Panadero, 2016). Still according to Johsson & Panadero (2016), the criteria stated in a scoring rubric help the students to elevate their self-regulated learning. To this, it can be summed up that scoring rubrics facilitate teaching and learning process.

Scoring Rubric Components

In order to gain the ultimate advances of scoring rubric, experts state that a scoring rubric needs to accommodate several components. Those components, according to Pinkerton (2022) cover task descriptions, criteria, level of performance, score and comment. Further, Pinkerton (2022) explains that task description is used to make sure that student performance is aligned with the assigned job. The criteria section allows assessors to decide the level of student performance before the final score is given. Also, the comment section allows the assessor to give students feedback and encouragement.

Previous Research

In addition to previous research stated in introduction, research conducted by Andrade and Du (2005) also discussed scoring rubric. In their research, Andrade and Du (2005) investigated the perspective of fourteen under-graduated students on the use of rubric as road map to accomplish their assignment. The result showed that scoring rubric helped them to keep their work on track so that they felt less anxious. The research also revealed that the given rubric also encouraged students to earn better scores. Similar to

research conducted by Andrade and Du (2005), this current study is also meant to elicit students thought in the use of scoring rubric. By involving different subjects in different settings of the study, the researchers believe that this particular study can enrich the insights of the use of scoring rubrics in teaching and learning process.

Research Method

This research was aimed at describing students' attitude and thoughts toward the implementation of scoring rubric at speaking class in higher education level. Therefore, the design of this study is descriptive qualitative. Before gaining the data, the researcher distributed the scoring rubrics to the students before they were performing the assigned project. During the performance, two researchers observe the student behaviors by using observation checklist containing criteria of confidence performance. Meanwhile, the teachers used the scoring rubric to assess the students' performance and gave the scoring results to the students immediately after they accomplished the assign project. After all the presentations were accomplished, the two researchers interview each student by using interview guide to elicit their thought and attitude toward the scoring rubric which were distributed previously. The results of the interview were noted and recorded before they were transcribed, coded, and reduced. Next, the data were triangulated by comparing the results of observation check list and interview. The extracted data were then triangulated once more by comparing and contrasting them with previous related literature and studies.

The scoring rubric criteria for the speaking assessment which was distributed to 25 students attending English Speaking Class in higher education level consisted of 4 components, namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency as shown in the following table.

Criteria	Score	4	3	2	1
<i>Pronunciation</i>		Speech and pronunciation is understandable despite the accent	Pronunciation is sometimes defect which sometimes causes problems in understanding	Pronunciation problems often lead to difficulty to understand the speech	Problems in pronunciation occur along the speech; leading to difficulty in understanding
<i>Grammar</i>		Speech is grammatically accurate	Grammar is sometimes troubled but does not interfere meanings	Many grammatical errors which interfere meanings and therefore speech is often repeated.	Grammar is too problematic, making the speech difficult to understand.
<i>Vocabulary</i>		Using the proper and appropriate expression.	Some vocabulary is not appropriate	Using inappropriate vocabulary, which confuses meanings.	Vocabulary is limited, which making him/her hard to follow conversation.
<i>Fluency</i>		Dialog/speech is fluent	Fluency is hindered by some language problems	Frequently hesitate and eventually stop due to language limitations.	A lot of pauses and stops during the dialog, barely speaks.

According to the scoring rubric above, there are main components that become the focus. The first one is pronunciation. Pronunciation is the way in which a language is spoken (Hornby, 1995); the way in which speech and pronunciation is understandable despite the accent. Referring to Hornby's statement, pronunciation is fundamental because it may determine the meaning of the word. If a speaker pronounces certain word with inappropriate pronunciation, the meaning might be different. Second, grammar, in Oxford

Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995:516), is defined as the rules in the language for changing form of words and combining them into sentences. Grammar is also used to learn constructing speech with accurate structure. Next is vocabulary which is defined as the total number of words in a language. Vocabulary is crucial for students to enrich their banks of word so that they can speak English fluently. Mastering vocabulary is the first step to speaking English using the proper and appropriate expression. Last but not least is fluency. We are required to speak fluently so that listeners are able to respond to what we say.

Findings

The findings of this descriptive study were based on the data obtained from two research instruments, namely observation checklist and interview guideline. The followings are the data acquired from the observation on students' speaking performance and interview with students to gain data on their thoughts regarding the use of scoring rubric.

The Results of the Observation Checklist

The findings revealed from observation check list indicated that the students perform better both in verbal communication and non-verbal one. The results of observation are presented in Table.1

Table 1 The Results of the Observation Check List

Student	Able to use varied vocabulary and pronounced correctly	Minor grammatical errors	Able to speak in an organized manner	Able to speak without hesitation	Able to speak without shyness	Able to speak confidently
S1		V	V	V		V
S2	V		V	V	V	V
S3		V	V	V		V
S4		V	V	V	V	V
S5	V		V		V	V
S6	V	V	V	V		V
S7		V	V	V	V	V
S8	V		V		V	V
S9		V	V	V		V
S10	V		V	V	V	V
S11		V	V	V	V	V
S12	V		V			V
S13		V	V	V	V	V
S14	V		V	V		V
S15	V	V	V		V	V
S16		V	V	V		V
S17	V		V	V	V	V
S18		V	V	V	V	V
S19	V		V		V	V
S20		V	V	V	V	V
S21		V	V	V		V
S22	V		V	V	V	V
S23		V	V	V	V	V
S24	V		V		V	V

S25	V	V	V	V	V
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According to the results of the observation checklist above, most of students were able to speak in an organized manner although some of them were unable to use specific vocabulary. Further, they showed that they were able to pronounce words correctly and the sentences were grammatically correct. Most students were able to speak in an organized manner can be proven by the way they expressed one idea in a grammatically correct sentence. Moreover, the sentences were arranged into ideas that supported each other. The distributed scoring rubric made them prepare in conveying ideas so that they can be delivered smoothly.

The majority of the students were able to speak confidently can be proven by the way they present themselves and the material. They were able to present material supported by firm eye contact, solid gestures, and appropriate body language that support their speaking performance. They were able to manage eye contact with the lecturer and friends while delivering the ideas. They also used appropriate hands and body movements while presenting what they wanted to convey.

In conclusion, by distributing scoring rubric in advanced before the students' speaking performance made students' speaking more organized and students felt more confident in delivering their ideas. Consequently, the students achieved better compared to when they did not use scoring rubric.

The Results of the Interview Guide

The research findings of student attitudes and thoughts on the previously distributed scoring rubric were implied in some conversation samples:

Conversation 1:

Interviewer : *"What do you think of the advanced distribution of the scoring rubric for your speaking performance?"*

Student 1 : *"I think, by referring to the scoring rubric, I know what to prepare before speaking assessment. It helps me managing myself and building up my self-confidence."*

Conversation 2:

Interviewer : *"What do you think of the advanced distribution of the scoring rubric for your speaking performance?"*

Student 2 : *"In my opinion, this scoring rubric is very useful for me. It gives me some hints about what to do in my speaking performance. Also, I feel like it is a fair tool to assess my speaking performance as the components that I should focus on are presented in the rubric."*

Conversation 3:

Interviewer : *"What do you think of the advanced distribution of the scoring rubric for your speaking performance?"*

Student 3 : *"I guess this scoring rubric presents points that I have to fulfil in my speaking performance. So, I acquire some confidence in performing as I know what I should focus on."*

Conversation 4:

Interviewer : *“What do you think of the advanced distribution of the scoring rubric for your speaking performance?”*

Student 4 : *“To me, by knowing the points in scoring rubric, I understand what should be prepared and fulfilled in speaking activity to get my best score. Even though I care about the score, this scoring rubric helps me to regulate my progress on the speaking performance. It is so meaningful for me.”*

Conversation 5:

Interviewer : *“What do you think of the advanced distribution of the scoring rubric for your speaking performance?”*

Student 5 : *“In my opinion, the points in scoring rubric let me know some aspects scored by the lecturer. I can prepare those aspects before my presentation. As the result, I can feel much more confident in speaking.”*

The conversations above are just a few examples of the results of interviews that have been conducted with students. The overall results of interview are presented in the following Table 2:

Table 2. Students Thoughts in the Distribution of Scoring Rubric before Speaking Performance

Student Thoughts	Number of Students (Percentage)
The hints/criteria in scoring rubric make students feel more confident in speaking performance.	18 (72%)
The presented points in scoring rubric motivate students to fulfill the criteria to achieve the best score.	20 (80%)
Students focus more on how they can regulate their progress instead of focusing on the final result.	15 (60%)
Students think that assessing their speaking using scoring rubric is fair and transparent.	17 (68%)

Discussion

From the research findings, we can point out some note-worthy aspects. From the results of the observation, the majority of the students in this study is the living proof that scoring rubric is a powerful tool to help students maintain self-confidence and keep tracks on what aspects/criteria they need to focus on to achieve high score in speaking performance. Andrade (2001) addresses this finding as he promotes that the use of rubric-referenced assessment helps students to reflect on the quality of their performance based on the standards articulated in the rubric. It is expected that from the assessment, students can revise accordingly when they show flaws.

Referring to the results of the interview with students, there are four main findings that should be addressed. First of all, it is interesting, not surprising though, that the prior distribution of scoring rubric motivated students to acquire higher self-confidence. This point is in line with the finding of Herawati (2011) that scoring rubric helps students to manage the expectations of the speaking performance so that they feel more secure about the aspects that are assessed. The security that the students acquire contributes to build their self-confidence.

The second point that needs to be highlighted is that the criteria presented in the scoring rubric give clear guidance for the students to achieve high score. It is illustrated as if they go to a war with full arms; the chance of winning is definitely greater. This point aligns with the study conducted by Phan & Phuong (2017) who found that students revealed positive perceptions on the use of analytic scoring rubric for their speaking assessment. The students greatly value the use of scoring rubric because they clarify the performance targets.

The third point is related to the finding that scoring rubric helps students to focus more on how they can regulate their progress instead of focusing on the final result. Even though students also care about their score, students put their focus on how to prepare for the speaking performance through the points/criteria in scoring rubric. Even if they lack on some aspects, they can find the way to improve them in advanced. This finding is supported by the study of Bolton (2006) who found that rubric stimulates students in crucial processes including spotting the issue/problem and encouraging the more constructive efforts for an assessment. It is meaningful if students are dedicated to the works instead of the mere result.

The fourth point highlights that students think that assessing their speaking performance using scoring rubric is fair and transparent. The circumstances might be different if students are assessed without knowing the criteria. This finding is in line to research conducted by Andrade & Du (2005) that scoring rubrics emphasizes fair and transparent grading system. It avoids subjective judgment which is considered as unfair and bias. By knowing that their speaking assessment is clearly standardized, students are rest-assured that they can do excellently as long as they fulfil the criteria.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reflect that the distribution of scoring rubric prior to the assessment of students' speaking performance shed positive light as it not only improves student's performance but also motivates students to perform better. Despite the challenges that teacher face in teaching speaking in higher education EFL context, scoring rubric is proven to be effective in leading the student attitudes and thoughts in higher quality oral performance. They showed higher level of confidence as they know what aspects should be addressed if they want to achieve high speaking performance. This research contributes to propose scoring rubric to be used in motivating students to perform better in speaking assessment. Future researchers are encouraged to discover the wider use of scoring rubric related to speaking score in other teaching contexts and circumstances to enrich theoretical and practical significances.

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