Research Article

The Use of Interview as a Technique to Assess Students' Speaking Skills of Senior High School

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Abstract: Speaking is a crucial component of communication. Speaking employed various tasks, expressing emotions or demands, requesting, and providing information. However, many students encounter challenges in speaking as a result of various difficulties. To address this, teachers can use interview techniques; interview techniques help to assess students' speaking skills to see and improve students' speaking skills. The objectives of this research are to explore the use of interview techniques to assess students' speaking skills and the difficulties and the benefits of using interview techniques. This research used basic interpretative qualitative research. This research was conducted on four English teachers in Surabaya, Indonesia, who had experienced an interview before. In collecting data, the researcher used interview and semi-interview guidelines. The findings indicate that the teachers used different types of interview techniques. The result showed interview technique can assess the students' speaking skills adapted to the teacher's need in English teaching. However, this technique also has difficulties and benefits that teacher and students may face. This study offers significant insights into teachers' perceptions and applications of interview techniques to assess students" speaking skills. The findings of this research are anticipated to serve as a reference point and contribute pertinent data regarding teachers' experiences.

Keywords: assess; interview; interpretative qualitative; interview technique; speaking skills.

1. Introduction

Speaking is an essential component of communication that enables individuals to express emotions, requests, information, or identify objects and people effectively. As a deliberate and free use of language, speaking facilitates the creation and conveyance of ideas, emotions, and thoughts, making it crucial in various contexts, including the workplace. With globalization and technological advancements, speaking has gained prominence, especially in corporate settings where English is often the preferred medium of communication. The ability to speak English fluently has become a necessity for students aspiring to succeed in their careers. Therefore, learning effective communication techniques, particularly speaking skills, is critical in English classes. Teachers play a vital role in addressing the challenges faced by English language learners by employing diverse instructional strategies.

Richard (2008) emphasizes that mastering english speaking skills is a priority for many language learners, as it enables them to communicate effectively in real-life situations. To achieve fluency, students must practice expressing their ideas and emotions through speech.

This requires consistent practice in the target language, both in and outside the classroom. Speaking lessons should provide students with opportunities to enhance their communication abilities independently. By encouraging self-practice and interactive learning, educators can help students build confidence and proficiency in speaking English, thereby equipping them to thrive in a globalized world.

The use of interviews as a teaching method has been explored by several researchers. Dandoli and Haning (2001) found that interviews encourage students to share their thoughts, feelings, and challenges, making it an effective strategy for language learning and assessment. They concluded that interviews are one of the best methods to evaluate students' speaking abilities. However, to reduce the pressure on students and enhance their performance, educators should allow ample practice time before public performances. Similarly, Hook and Evan (2001) highlighted that interviews are a successful method for gathering data and promoting classroom discussions, further reinforcing their effectiveness in teaching speaking skills.

Rahayu (2010) examined the impact of interview techniques on students' speaking skills using action research. Conducted across three grade levels, the study aimed to address challenges in English education during classroom teaching and learning processes. Findings indicated that the interview technique helped improve teaching methods, school operations, and students' learning outcomes. Rahayu emphasized the importance of employing practical techniques, such as interviews, to enhance students' speaking abilities, especially in diverse educational settings.

Hasriani (2019) conducted a study titled "Interview as a Learning Technique in Speaking Subject: Students' Perspective" to explore students' views on the use of interviews as a teaching tool. Using a qualitative and descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. The research focused on sixth-semester students of the English Education program at Universitas Negeri Makassar. Results revealed that students perceived interviews as a valuable method for improving speaking skills. The study underscored the significance of interviews in fostering language proficiency and highlighted students' positive experiences with this instructional technique.

The current study builds upon previous research by examining the use of interview techniques to improve speaking skills in greater detail. It focuses on various aspects, including the interview's implementation, preparation, and challenges encountered during the process. Key considerations include the planning of interview durations, preparation of questions and forms, the conduct of interviews, and identifying difficulties faced by both teachers and students. Challenges such as logistical issues, the complexity of questions, and alignment between skills and assessments are explored. This study seeks to provide practical guidelines for implementing interview techniques effectively in resource-limited educational contexts.

The objectives of this research are to explore how English teachers implement interview techniques to assess students' speaking skills, identify the difficulties they encounter while applying these techniques, and categorize the benefits of using interviews as an assessment method. This study aims to provide insights into the practical application of interview techniques, addressing challenges such as logistical issues and skill alignment, while highlighting the advantages, including flexibility and comprehensive data collection, to improve students' speaking abilities effectively.

2. Method

This study employed a basic interpretive qualitative research design, a method focused on understanding how individuals make meaning of their experiences or phenomena, as described by Creswell (2018). This approach emphasizes describing, analyzing, and interpreting participants' perspectives and the meanings they assign to specific situations. The research method is inductive, with findings presented descriptively, and the researcher serves as the primary tool to mediate meaning. Often used in educational fields, this method explores participants' perceptions and beliefs, particularly the\ir interpretation of experiences. It provides a nuanced understanding of how participants make sense of their environments or specific phenomena, offering rich, qualitative insights.

In this study, interviews were used as the primary data collection tool to explore how participants perceive and implement interview techniques to assess students' speaking skills. Researchers analyzed data inductively, identifying recurring themes and patterns related to the use of interviews, the challenges faced, and their benefits. The findings emphasized the subjective experiences of teachers and students, presenting a descriptive account of their perspectives. Conducted at a private senior high school in West Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia, the study highlights the role of interviews in assessing speaking skills and provides a deeper understanding of this technique's effectiveness and challenges in an educational context.

In this study, data were collected through interviews based on Kvale's (1996:34) framework, which emphasizes the importance of data sources. The participants were English teachers with prior experience conducting interviews. To gather the necessary information, the researcher used semi-structured questions, allowing for a descriptive and evaluative approach to the data. The semi-structured interview format was employed to explore how interviews can be utilized as a data collection method by English teachers. This approach provided insights into the challenges teachers face when using interviews to assess students' speaking skills, as well as the difficulties and benefits associated with this method. The data obtained served as the primary material for analyzing and understanding the effectiveness of interviews in measuring students' speaking abilities.

The researcher utilized thematic analysis as the primary data analysis technique, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. This process began with data familiarization, where the researcher immersed themselves in the qualitative data to understand its content and nuances, identifying patterns and insights. Following this, initial codes were generated by labeling data segments to organize unstructured information into a systematic format, enabling the identification of themes and connections. The next step involved identifying themes, which go beyond individual codes to represent broader patterns or relationships relevant to the research objectives. This iterative process included moving back and forth between codes to find commonalities and ensure the themes captured meaningful insights.

The identified themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure clarity, uniqueness, and alignment with the data. This step included evaluating data extracts to confirm that the themes accurately represented the data and uncovering any overlooked patterns. Finally, the findings were interpreted and presented as an organized report, supported by quotes from participants to enhance credibility. This process ensured that the themes told a coherent story while maintaining a strong connection to the research purpose. By using thematic analysis, the

researcher provided a systematic and insightful examination of the data, enabling a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives and the study's key objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

Result

This section discusses the findings from the semi-structured interviews regarding the research questions: (a) How do English teachers implement the interview technique to assess students' speaking skills? (b) What are the difficulties faced by English teachers while applying the interview technique to assess students' speaking skills? (c) What are the benefits of using the interview technique to assess students' speaking skills? The following section provides detailed narratives and quotes to highlight these findings.

The Implementation of the Interview Technique to Assess Students' Speaking Skills

According to the data, there are three teachers who used structured interview technique while during an interview to the students. Here are the statements of the participants.

1. Structured Interview

According to the data, there are three teachers who used structured interview technique while during an interview to the students. Here are the statements of the participants.

T2: *"One by one direct interview or face to face structured interview, I think that's called"*

T1: *"Yeah, it was a person-to-person interview. So between students and me, there are some questions that they have to answer. It's umm structured one."*

T3: *"Yeah. Actually, face to face structured conversation"*

2. Unstructured Interview

The researcher also found there is other on teacher who not using any interview technique used which is unstructured interview while during an interview. The statement of participant is below.

T4: *"Because I don't have so much time to do some structural interview. I only do, like so I just was throwing some random question about them. Like, when I think some about something, I ask them just to meet the requirement about my class."*

3. The Reason of Conducting the Interview

Regarding to the data that the researcher was collected all four English teachers has their own reasons to conduct an interview, in this part there are two main reasons that related to the method in this research which are placing students, finding out about proficiency here are statements

Conducting an interview helps determine the appropriate placement for students in academic programs or courses. Teachers or administrators can use interviews to assess a student's abilities, interests, and prior knowledge to place them in the right level or program that aligns with their needs and potential for success.

T1: *"It's like one of the requirements for all the students who have to finish their studies to join the English practical exam. Actually, it's like an obligation for them."*

T3: *"To examine the students in speaking aspects for school extracurricular."*

Besides, Interviews are used to evaluate the student's proficiency in a certain subject or skill, such as or mathematics. This allows the teacher to gauge the student's level of

understanding, identify strengths and weaknesses, and provide insights into the appropriate level of instruction or further learning support needed.

T4: *"To finding some requirement to do the teaching. Like, what the kind of background that the study have. So I can adapt my teaching model. So I conducted some interview just to gain some information about, the study to, like, enhance my teaching"*

Interviews can serve as a motivational tool, allowing teachers to offer praise, guidance, and constructive feedback. By discussing students' work and achievements, teachers can encourage them to stay engaged and motivated in their studies, fostering a positive learning environment.

T2: *"because I have a topic to give a lesson for them. Maybe sometimes I explain about opinion. I need interview with them and I explain about agreement and disagreement. And i need interview with them."*

According to the data three English teachers has conducted the preparation of interview question yet one English teacher has not prepared for the interview question. Here is statement below.

T1: *"Well, there was a topic named seeking a job. That's one of the topics in the last so I create a list of the questions that perhaps might be useful for all of them when they face the interview."*

T2: *"I prepare it before I give the lesson."*

T3: *"Oh, I actually maybe read the books before because we have some   lesson plan. I took the question from the lesson plan that I have before."*

T4: *"I did not write the question"*

Also, regarding to the data that the researcher was collected there are three English teacher applied interview process during an interview yet there is one English teacher that has not apply any interview process. Here are statements.

T1: *"Well, there will be some stage. It's like an introduction and then the main questions and the last questions, which is consist of personal opinion"*

T2: *"First, I decide the topic. And then I find out the picture to support the topic. And then I make interview form. And then I make a question to ask the students."*

T3: *"Oh the process is like yeah maybe one by one student or sometimes we do in a group then we take apart a different part so maybe this group is about circulation system digestion system it's like that its different method"*

T4: *"Yeah. Just direct interview."*

The Difficulties Faced by the English Teacher to Apply on Interview to Assess Students's Speaking Skills

Based on the data collected from participants, the researcher found during an interview there are 4 teachers faced 3 mains of the difficulties on interview to assess students' speaking skills. Teachers reported several difficulties which are Insufficient Confidence and Anxiety in Students, language transfer issues and time preparation and procedural issues based on their experiences. Related to the difficulties aspects in this research, here are the explanations.

1.   Insufficient Confidence and Anxiety in Students

This part the researcher found that two English teachers faced this difficulty which students experience anxiety and a lack of self-assurance during interviews, which complicates the task for educators in helping them develop essential interpersonal skills. Here is statement

T2: *"And then maybe they are afraid of things, not confident. I think that's the difficulties to the student to answer my question"*

T3: *"the student will as like uh how to say afraid nervous with the answer on interview so they just say it not too confident to have the answer or not sure for the answers sometimes."*

2. Language Transfer Issues

In this part regarding to data collection, the researcher found that there are two English teachers has faced on this difficulty related to the difficulty that students struggle to transition from their source language (e.g., Indonesian) to the target language (English). This includes challenges in constructing sentences and expressing themselves. Here are the statements.

T1: *"I think that will be the same as the other ESL students when they have to speak from the original language, I mean source language into the target language, which means that source language is Indonesia and the target language is English. Then some of pupils, they still have a problem to construct the sentences and express"*

T4: *"So some students like, have some trouble to express their opinion. Like, defending hard time to speak they own opinion. Like, they always think too hard. So they're not easy to answer my question."*

3. Time Preparation and Procedural Issues

In this part regarding to data collection, the researcher found that there are one English teacher has faced their own struggle with preparation of time to conduct the interview or improvising prepare beforehand. Here is the statement.

T4: *"Because I don't have so much time to do some prepare interview. I only do, like so I just was throwing some random question about them."*

What are the challenges of teaching writing narrative text using storyboard? The Benefits of Using Interview as a Technique to Assess Students' Speaking Skills.

Based on the data collected from participants, the researcher found during an interview there are 4 teachers obtain the several benefits of using interview to assess students' speaking skills regarding to teachers' experiences. Related to this research there are five of benefits aspect. Here are the statements

1. Encouraging Expression

This part the teachers found that students demonstrated their capacity by expressing thoughts and transitioning and fluency and accuracy development when transitioning from native (Indonesian) to target (English) language. Here are the statements of the benefits.

T1: *"Especially delivering something that comes to their mind orally. Then the next, which would be the pupils or the students, especially ESL, they able to express from the source language"*

T2: *"the student can answer, give opinion, I think, oh, he understands the topic."*

2. Understanding Student Achievement

In this part of benefit, the teachers found on Interview revealed whether students understand the topic and can relate discussions to real-world contexts or current events. Here is statement.

T2: *"If the student can answer, give opinion. I think, oh, he understands the topic. I will know the achievement of the student. I think the student can understand what we discussed about the problem and fixed for it I know they will... What is it? Can know how related to the topic"*

3. Assessing Critical Thinking and Speaking Skills

In this part Interviews offer a more personalized understanding of each student's feelings about the lesson and teaching methods, helping adapt teaching approaches. Here is the statement.

T3: *"I think the benefit is we have to know each student that we teach more privately and we also know how they're feeling about in our lesson what they feeling in our how we teach and are they actually fine to adept in our lesson method is like this or they just like another method."*

4. Building Teacher-Student Rapport

This part is engaging in highlights students' speaking skills to articulate opinions and solve problems, providing insights into their critical thinking abilities and readiness to apply learning. Here is the statement.

T4: *"speak about their opinion when they solve some problems. It will be some plus point for me. So when I do, like, interview them about the materials or something that have correlation with, our learning, it is very beneficial for me if they have some speaking skill, and my interview kind of cannot afford, we're more about have an easy going open minded interview before or after the class"*

Discussion

The Implementation of the Interview Technique to Assess Students' Speaking Skills

The findings revealed that English teachers implemented the interview technique following specific steps tailored to their needs and objectives. The first step involved determining the purpose of the interview, aligning with Brown (2004:151), who emphasized interviews as effective methods for assessing oral proficiency through interactive and meaningful dialogue. This approach evaluates pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic competence within authentic contexts. The second step identified the types of interview techniques used, specifically structured and unstructured interviews. As noted by Rubin and Rubin (2011:31), structured interviews follow a rigid format with predetermined questions for consistency, while unstructured interviews allow flexibility and adaptability based on the discussion flow.

Preparation played a critical role in the interview process. Teachers prepared for interviews by allocating sufficient time and crafting questions aligned with their goals, as suggested by Creswell (2014:195). These preparations ensured effective time management and facilitated meaningful discussions with students. Additionally, crafting interview questions helped elicit maximum information by addressing academic achievements and interpersonal skills, as highlighted by Kvale (1996:19) and Seidman (2013:13). Teachers also developed structured interview forms to maintain organization and ensure alignment with research objectives. This framework supported the collection of relevant and valuable information, as emphasized by Kvale (2007:17).

The study also examined the interview process itself, where creating a structured environment and pacing the interaction were critical, as suggested by Gubrium and Holstein (2002:115). Notably, the research uncovered unique findings not emphasized in prior studies. Among the four teachers studied, three utilized structured interviews, while one relied on unstructured interviews. The latter approach involved direct and natural questioning without following predefined steps, allowing flexibility to meet teaching requirements. This variation highlighted the adaptability of interview techniques in assessing students' speaking skills while addressing diverse teaching and learning needs.

The Difficulties Faced by the English Teachers to Apply on Interview to Assess Students' Speaking Skills

The findings revealed several challenges English teachers faced when using interviews to assess students' speaking skills. One significant difficulty was students' insufficient confidence and anxiety during interviews, which hindered their ability to develop essential interpersonal skills. Harmer (2007:54) noted that such anxiety often arises from inadequate preparation, unfamiliarity with the interview setting, and fear of judgment. These emotions

manifest as hesitation, unclear articulation, or avoidance of eye contact, making the assessment process challenging for teachers. To address this, Harmer emphasized creating a supportive environment and providing students with sufficient preparation and practice to reduce their anxiety and enhance their performance.

Another challenge was related to language transfer issues, where students struggled to transition from their native language (Indonesian) to the target language (English). This difficulty included constructing sentences and expressing thoughts effectively during interviews. Ringbom (2007:59) highlighted that differences in word order and sentence structure between the two languages often lead to errors in sentence formation. Gudykunst (2004:123) further explained that non-native speakers frequently face challenges in choosing appropriate expressions due to their unfamiliarity with cultural nuances, resulting in unnatural or awkward communication. These issues reduced students' fluency and confidence, complicating the assessment process.

The third difficulty stemmed from time preparation and procedural issues faced by teachers. Some teachers struggled with managing their time effectively to prepare for interviews, often feeling overwhelmed by their teaching responsibilities. Hall (2016:92) observed that the urgency of balancing classroom duties with interview preparation left teachers with insufficient time for thorough planning. Additionally, Whitehead (2017:65) noted that procedural challenges, such as adapting to various interview formats or handling unforeseen questions, heightened stress levels among teachers. The ambiguity of certain procedural elements and the unpredictability of the interview process further exacerbated anxiety, impacting teachers' ability to conduct interviews effectively.

The Benefits of Using Interview as a Technique to Assess Students' Speaking Skills

The research findings revealed several key benefits of using interviews as a technique to assess students' speaking skills. First, interviews help encourage student expression by creating a secure and welcoming environment that allows students to articulate their thoughts. This not only enhances their communication skills but also fosters stronger teacher-student connections. As Brown and Hirst (2018:56) noted, encouraging expression helps students develop critical thinking and communication abilities, which can be applied across various academic areas. Teachers benefit from seeing these skills develop and being able to collect valuable feedback from students.

Second, the use of interviews provides teachers with insights into their students' needs, motivations, and challenges, which can significantly improve their teaching practices. Hattie (2009:173) argued that teachers can gain valuable feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching, allowing them to make necessary adjustments and tailor their instruction to better meet students' needs. According to Tomlinson (2001:45), understanding students' learning styles through interviews enables teachers to differentiate their instruction, enhancing student engagement and achievement. This approach ensures more individualized and focused teaching, which ultimately benefits both students and teachers.

Lastly, interviews serve as an effective tool for building strong teacher-student rapport and assessing students' critical thinking and speaking skills. Dobransky and Frymier (2004:216) emphasized that strong interpersonal connections enable teachers to adapt their teaching methods to diverse student needs. Furthermore, Abeywickrama (2010:174) highlighted that interviews provide an opportunity for teachers to observe students' critical thinking abilities

in real time, while Paul and Elder (2014:89) emphasized the importance of oral communication in assessing higher-order thinking skills. Teachers can assess not only language accuracy but also students' ability to articulate ideas, formulate arguments, and engage in meaningful discussions. By implementing interviews effectively, teachers can enhance their students' speaking skills and critical thinking while fostering a positive and supportive learning environment.

4. Conclusion

English teachers can implement various interview techniques to assess students' speaking skills, with three main types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews ensure consistency by using predetermined questions for easy comparison of responses. Semi-structured interviews offer a balance, allowing for flexibility while maintaining some structure. Unstructured interviews provide more natural, open-ended conversations, enabling teachers to gather information that might be missed in structured formats. Most teachers prefer structured interviews for their effectiveness in data collection and consistency. However, some teachers incorporate both structured and unstructured interviews based on their teaching style and assessment needs. The interview process involves several steps, such as defining the purpose, planning time, preparing questions and forms, and conducting the interview.

While the interview technique presents certain challenges, such as student anxiety, language transfer issues, and time management difficulties, these obstacles can be overcome with careful planning and motivation. Despite these challenges, the interview technique offers significant benefits. It encourages student expression, provides insights into student achievements and learning styles, helps build teacher-student rapport, and allows teachers to assess critical thinking and speaking skills. By creating a supportive environment, teachers can foster stronger connections with students and gain a deeper understanding of their needs, motivations, and abilities. The interview technique ultimately enhances the effectiveness of assessing students' speaking skills and supports more tailored and engaging instructional methods.

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