

College Student's Perception of Performance-Based Assessment Use in Boosting Speaking Ability

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Received: 11 August 2021

Reviewed: 26 April 2022 – 4 July 2022

Accepted: 27 December 2022

Published: 30 December 2022

Abstract

Assessment is one component of a learning process that cannot be excluded by an English teacher in the teaching-learning process. The form and type of assessment applied in the teaching-learning process are adapted to the orientation of learners' target outcomes. It is a space of reflection for teachers and students in the awareness of shortcomings and achieving such learning goals. Performance-based assessment is one of the possible appropriate options for measuring all criteria fulfilment in the English-speaking class. The present study aims to analyze the implementation of performance-based assessment and disclose students' responses to this assessment in the speaking class. This research is a quantitative descriptive study administered between November 2020 and January 2021 for three months. Participants (N=49) in this study were selected from two first-grade English Education Study Program classes, Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng. Speaking rubrics and questionnaires were the instruments used in collecting data. The data taken from these instruments were then analyzed with the Excel Chart Data Series software program's aid, accompanied by a qualitative interpretation of the data provided. The research findings show that the performance-based assessment affects increasing speaking ability (the post-test average = 76), and college students' perception of performance-based assessment use in speaking was primarily included in positive perception. The lecturers are encouraged to apply this assessment to their speaking class.

Keywords: assessment; language teaching; performance-based assessment; speaking

Introduction

Assessment plays a vital role in the teaching-learning process. The assessment makes teachers, pupils, school administrators, and other stakeholders aware of the expected learning outcomes. An English teacher's form and type of assessment should be aligned with such instruction competencies' characteristics. By applying suitable types and assessment forms, teachers and students can identify their weaknesses in learning English. The weaknesses served as a reflection space for teachers and students to reflect on how to improve the following teaching-

learning process. Therefore, teachers are highly recommended to understand and choose the most appropriate assessment type to improve the following teaching-learning process.

When assessment principles are correctly employed, it helps teachers and students realize the effectiveness of the curriculum, instructional resources, and learning models that have been implemented in the teaching-learning process. Applying the correct and proper assessment forms also impacts student and teacher feedback on their learning progress and their understanding of how well the learning objectives have been met (Menggo et al., 2021; Nitko, 2001; Tosuncuoglu, 2018). This view is in line with an educator's primary task in the education field, namely informing, teaching, guiding, directing, preparing, assessing, and evaluating the learning achievement of early childhood education students through formal education, primary education, and secondary education (Law No.14 of the year 2005; Syarifuddin, 2015).

As Suastra and Menggo (2020) and Yulia (2018) argue, performance-based assessment is the correct assessment used by educators and practitioners in measuring the achievement of specific skills in learning English. Suastra and Menggo (2020) and Yulia (2018) affirmed that performance-based assessments could encourage students to demonstrate some of the concepts they have learned in particular language skills. This assessment encourages students to think critically, solve problems, have creativity, maintain objectivity, and be receptive to their insufficiency in the process of language acquisition (Kirmizi & Komec, 2016; Lynch, 2003). This assessment will assess the student's ability to meet language learning needs both verbally and in writing (Espinosa, 2015; Prastikawati, 2018). Although a performance-based assessment might measure students' oral skills, this assessment is primarily feasible to apply in speaking classes. Speaking skill is the speaker's ability to convey thoughts, feelings, notions, and ideas to the interlocutor (Harmer, 2007; Menggo, 2017). In this study, speaking ability is understood as a speaker's verbal ability to convey a particular intention to the interlocutor.

Previous research results have shown that performance-based assessment is valuable for student proficiency in English. Moneva and Bolos (2020) and Murphy (2017) found that the performance-based assessment promoted critical thinking skills, students' objectivity to consider shortcomings, and resolve weaknesses on the criteria of such English language skills. The performance-based assessment has its strengths because it can evaluate the ability of students in an integrated way, such as the ability to show something, think critically, solve problems, be authentic and realistic, encourage motivation and interest, and can increase the confidence of students in language learning (Anix & Fauziyah, 2018; Griffith & Lim, 2011).

However, no research results from the above findings reflect on implementing performance-based assessment in the speaking class for the three evaluation domains in the English learning process, such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities. To understand the challenges and differences in students' abilities stated, these three assessment components should be carried out in an integrated way by an educator. Throughout this study, this gap may be disclosed.

Speaking lecturers are required to determine and choose speaking assessment types that help achieve college students' speaking targets and affect their positive perceptions in maintaining or even increasing college students' English speaking excitement. The appropriate type of speaking assessment influences positive and negative perceptions. Speaking lecturers must be aware of college students' perceptions of the application of speaking assessment type since the results of these perceptions serve as reflection tools for speaking instructors to update their learning components, such as media use, teaching strategy, assessments type and form, and other learning (MacLellan & Soden, 2007; Prastikawati, 2018).

Some studies have confirmed that performance-based assessments have several impacts on the speaking class (Rukmini & Saputri, 2017; Soto et al., 2017; Sumardi, 2017). These scientists' conclusions lead us to believe that performance-based assessment has strengthened students' oral skills, both individually and in groups, recognizing holistic language awareness, communication strategies, the courage to talk in front of the class through many teaching techniques, and improved self-confidence, and encouragement to speak English. When this performance-based assessment can be implemented appropriately in a speaking class, college students can gradually understand the micro-linguistic components (morphology, syntax, phonology, and semantics) and macro-linguistic components (communication strategies, functional competence, and discourse analysis) that are often reciprocal in everyday communication (Menggo, Suparwa, & Astawa, 2019).

Referring to the gaps and empirical findings set out above, it is evident that this study is very urgent. Given this clarity and urgency, this study aims to include two fundamental issues: the analysis and disclosure of the effect of implementing performance-based assessment in the speaking class. Therefore, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Does performance-based assessment boost students' speaking ability?
- 2) How do students perceive the use of performance-based assessment in the speaking class?

Literature review

Speaking skill

Language is a means of communication that conveys feelings, beliefs, ideas, messages, or information in mind on others, whether conveyed orally or in writing. On this basis, each speaker must have the ability to understand and use language appropriately and adequately, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Speaking skills are mandatory for any student today, as this ability ensures the quality of the student's linguistic skills (Menggo et al., 2019; Tarigan, 2015).

A speaker is said to have the right English speaking skills if he or she can use the micro and macro components of speaking skills proportionally in conveying thoughts, feelings, ideas, data, or information in a particular communication context. This idea is strengthened by the concept provided by Larsen-Freeman (2003), who argues that the speaking ability of the speaker cannot be separated from the micro-component (linguistic competence) and the macro-component (communication competence), i.e., the use of language following their social context. The description affirmed by Larsen-Freeman (2003) confirms that the speaker's speaking ability is reflected by fulfilling the micro and macro components of the speaking skills.

English speaking skills have an enormous impact on different areas of Mankind's life. By possessing strong speaking skills, a speaker may express ideas understood by the interlocutor to positively impact their profession, business, or other workplaces (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014; Rao, 2019). However, it is not easy in the learning process to encourage students to become qualified English speakers (Umar, 2018). Students should comply with all components of speaking skills, such as comprehension, pronunciation accuracy, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. Fulfilling all of these components ensures that speaking skills as a platform for helping other language skills, such as listening, reading, and writing, as well as language components, such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Abbaspour, 2016; Bahrani & Soltani, 2011; Mart, 2012). Due to the advantages and challenges of achieving complex speaking skills, a performance-based assessment is the best option for a speaking instructor to be implemented.

Speaking courses in Indonesia

The specification and distribution of courses in tertiary institutions in Indonesia refer to the National General Course characteristics, the institutions' standard courses, and specific courses of

study program competence. Various speaking subjects, such as speaking for everyday communication, debate and argumentation, academic purposes, and specific purposes, have their respective learning outcomes (Menggo, Suastra, & Padmadewi, 2019). These courses are compulsory and truly necessary to promote the speaking skill of students studying English in Indonesia. The Indonesian Government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, defines the legal guidelines for implementing and achieving several courses (Kemenristekdikti, 2012).

The speaking subject for daily communication is the focus of this research, which learning outcomes orientation encourage college students to communicate in English for everyday life needs. This course is designed for beginner-level students in the English language education program. All themes and topics given are related to the context of college student's daily life, such as formal and informal expressions, self and other introductions, daily activities, English-speaking learning strategies, and many more. In achieving this goal, speaking lecturers can apply several techniques, such as personal presentations, role-playing, group discussions, debating, and other relevant techniques (John, 2017; Khan, 2013). By implementing these strategies, college students will dramatically improve their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities.

Performance-based assessment in speaking class

Performance-based assessment is a type of assessment that requires learners to create or produce something to demonstrate their abilities. An assessment is a crucial part of the learning process. It shall be conducted to measure the achievement of the skill of such a learning process. The assessment might be a more general concept than the test. Testing is a particular way to evaluate. In other words, all tests are assessments, but not all are tests (Brown, 2004, pp. 3-4). Of course, all subjects apply various forms of assessment, even in the learning of English courses. Various assessments can be carried out based on their context and objectives, such as language aptitude tests, proficiency tests, placement tests, diagnostic tests, and achievement tests (pp. 43-47).

The achievement test aims to assess the achievement of learning activities in the classroom, including the speaking class. Performance-based assessment is one of the appropriate options for speaking lecturers to measure this achievement. A performance-based assessment has many benefits in assessing college student speaking skills, such as motivating students to have higher-order thinking skills, being objective, holistic (measuring language knowledge, skills, and attitudes), self-assessment, being practical, having a positive effect on students' ability to practice speaking, and encouraging the application of learning to real-life situations (Abualrob & Al-Saadi, 2019; Soto et al., 2017). These advantages also enable college students to think objectively and creatively, appreciate diversity, commitment, integrity, and work together in different groups, all of which are in line with the demands of 21st-century education skills (Menggo, 2020; Ndiung & Jediut, 2020).

Train interviews in English (examples: English job interview, Radio/TV host), be a good moderator (lead conversation in English), product propaganda (promote the particular product in English), explain something using visual or audio-visual media, and many more. These are all learning experiences intended to facilitate performance-based assessments in speaking classes (Espinosa, 2015; Harizaj, 2015). By applying these exercises, college students and lecturers will focus on the speaking skills assessment components that have not been fulfilled to strengthen or improve the next performance.

When a student is asked to demonstrate something in front of the class, the lecturer is advised to prepare a speaking evaluation consisting of the evaluation aspect, indicators, weights,

scores, and descriptors of the existing scores. A variety of components must be included in this evaluation, such as understanding the topic, proper grammar, accurate pronunciation, fluency, and appropriate word choices (Menggo, Suastra, & Padmadewi, 2019; Rahmawati & Ertin, 2014; Shatroval et al., 2017).

Research method

Design

This research is a descriptive quantitative design since the main objective to be addressed to analyze and disclose the effect of implementing a performance-based assessment in speaking for a daily communication course. This course's weight is two credits, a compulsory subject for English Language Education program beginners. Performance-based assessment is applied to the three-month learning process from November 2020 to January 2021. However, the score taken in this research is the final semester score, which is the accumulation of performance-based assessment during the speaking process.

Population and sample

The research population was 135 college students from five classes who took the speaking for daily communication course in the English Language Education Program, Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng. The researchers only took a sample from two classes, totaling 49 college students. Researchers used the purposive sampling technique in determining the research sample.

Instruments

Two types of instruments are used to collect research data, namely, test and non-test data. The test was in the form of a speaking evaluation component. At the same time, the non-test was in the form of a questionnaire distributed through Google form at the end of the semester to the respondents. A questionnaire was given to investigate the students' impressions of the application of performance-based assessment during the three-month speaking process. Expert validation of these two types of instruments was not carried out since all components in the speaking rubric and statements in the questionnaire were adapted from experts' concepts. In measuring students' speaking ability, the researchers used a speaking rubric developed by Brown (2014), which covered five dimensions, i.e., grammar, vocabulary, understanding, fluency, and pronunciation accuracy. Students' responses toward implementing performance-based assessment, adjusted from the concept proposed by Schunk et al. (2008). Six items were made up of closed-ended questions with four options. College students were asked to choose one of the four options given.

The procedure of data collection

Data were collected through two procedures: (1) the rater or lecturer used the speaking rubric for each teaching-learning process for three months. A speaking rubric, assessment components socialized toward students so that in every process, the student focuses on the evaluation components in the rubric stated, and (2) the questionnaire in Google form was distributed at the end of the semester to all research respondents. The questionnaire in Google form was conducted since the rate of COVID-19 cases was increasingly worrying at the research locus. The questionnaire's instructions were also apparent: college students filled out the questionnaire honestly and openly because there were no consequences for college students' scores.

Data analysis

The excel program assisted the researchers in analyzing the data. This software helps display various diagram models in the form of a percentage according to the questionnaire's data. The researchers then interpret the work of this software in a logical and reliable narrative form.

Findings

Statistical analysis

Referring results of the comparison of the mean score for each dimension of the speaking evaluation between the mean score at the beginning of the semester (before the performance-based assessment was applied) and the semester examination for 49 students, the effect on the progress of the student's speaking skills on the mean score of the final semester exams are pronounced. The semester examination's average score is the mean accumulation scores from daily performances (process scores), mid-term, and semester tests. The comparison of the average scores referred to can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 below.

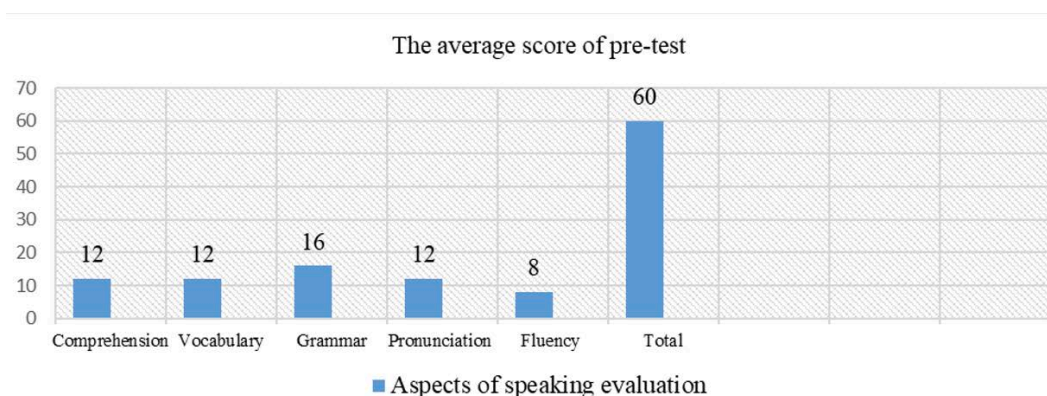


Figure 1. The initial mean results before the performance assessments were applied.

Data Figure 1 above confirms that the average student's ability to speak for each evaluation before implementing a performance-based assessment in an appropriate or adequate category means it needs to be improved again. The average aspect of fluency in the failed category. The average aspect fluency is 8. This number is obtained by multiplying the score by the weight. This figure illustrates that the average score for the fluency component of the pre-test was 2, indicating that students frequently hesitate, speak quickly, and mispronounce some words. Each component of the evaluation of speaking skills is assigned a weight of 4, and scores range from 1 to 5 with proper descriptors. An average score of 2 indicates that respondents' speaking skills, particularly fluency, require improvement. However, the mean in this aspect has changed, in the post-test, as shown in Figure 2 below.

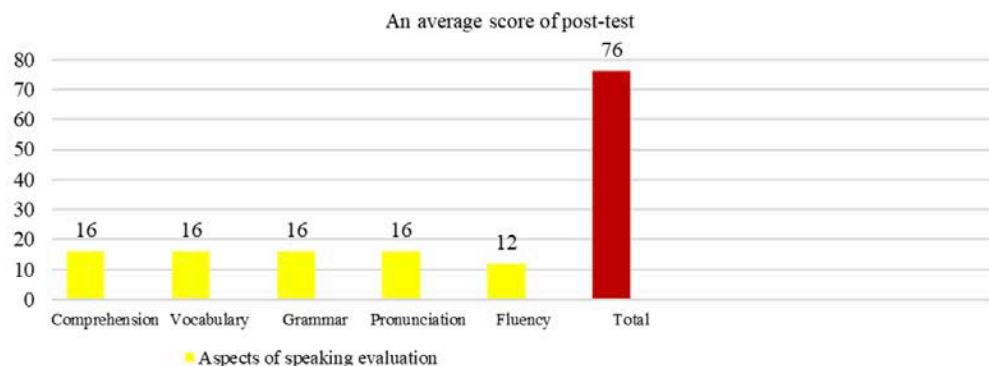


Figure 2. Post-test results

The mean score in Figure 2 (76) is classified as fair, indicating differences from the mean score in Figure 1 (60). The difference in mean scores, both the overall aspects, the mean score of each aspect showed a positive effect on the development of the speaking skills of 49 students. The mean grammatical aspect score may not change before and after this performance-based assessment has been carried out. The inclusion of the average in the fair category shows that the average score for comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation was 4, indicating that the respondents' utterances are easily understood by their interlocutors. Except for the fluency aspect, the average score was 3, indicating that the speaker is fluent in producing utterances in conversations but with unexpected pauses. The implementation of performance-based assessments also affects affective aspects, namely self-confidence, learning autonomy, and change in speaking study habits, which positively impact the students' psychomotor responses to speaking for the daily communication course. The percentage of improvement in this influential factor can be seen in Figure 3 below.

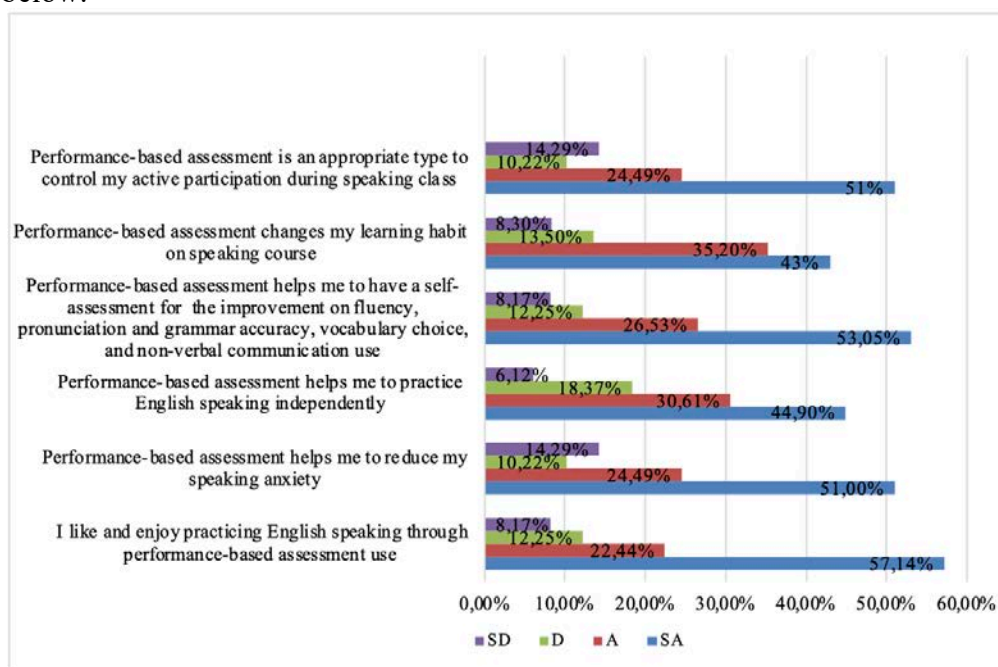


Figure 3. College students' perception of performance-based assessment use
 Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

The variation in perceptions or responses of college students about the use of performance-based assessment in speaking courses is visualized in Figure 3. Variation in the percentage of responses from college students correlates to what they experience throughout the use of this type of assessment during the speaking course's learning process. In essence, however, the use of performance-based assessment affects students' affective and psychomotor aspects, thereby altering their learning habits and styles in speaking courses. College students' psychological influences on performance-based assessment use in speaking courses are addressed in several of the statements in Figure 3 stated. Statements 1 and 2 come to terms with aspects of self-confidence. Most college students perceive performance-based assessment in speaking courses positively, as indicated by statement number 1, namely college students like and enjoy practicing English through a performance-based assessment. Statement 1 is also strongly intertwined with the answers Disagree and Strongly Disagree. However, most college students dominantly perceived that performance-based assessment helped to boost college students' self-confidence in practicing their English speaking. Positive responses also occur in statement number 2; namely, the performance-based assessment can reduce college students' English speaking anxiety. As seen in Figure 3, the percentage of those who disagree and strongly disagree is significantly lower.

Statements also give college students positive responses in numbers three and four. Number three is performance-based assessment enables college students to practice English speaking autonomously, and number four is performance-based assessment enables college students to self-evaluate to improve their fluency, pronunciation, grammar accuracy, vocabulary choices, and non-verbal communication skills). The statements of these numbers related to practicing English speaking independently and performance-based assessment assist college students in having a self-assessment to improve their micro-macro linguistic components. Additionally, the answer options for statements numbers five (performance-based assessment improves college students learn manners in a speaking class) and six (Performance-based assessment is a suitable way for managing college students' participation in class discussions) showed a positive reaction to performance-based assessment use. Finally, performance-based assessment motivates college students to improve their study habits and actively participate in scheduled speaking classes.

Discussion

This part highlights the relevance of performing a performance-based assessment in the speaking class. This assessment has been shown to affect cognitive aspects by increasing students' speaking ability and their affective and psychomotor aspects. The improvement in these three aspects was observed through the research instruments provided, namely the test using the speaking scoring rubric and the non-test in the form of the questionnaires related to students' perceptions of the application of this performance-based assessment in the speaking class.

Speaking analytical scoring rubric

Implementing performance-based assessments positively affects students' cognitive aspects, especially at the application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels. The improvement is also illustrated by the mean score results for the final semester test (post-test average = 76). The grammatical aspect was not changed (the same mean score = 16 before and after the performance-based assessment was carried out). This stagnation does not mean that speaking according to grammar is not essential, but students emphasize other aspects of the evaluation. Besides, fluency is the lowest average score (8). This issue tends to occur because it is quite rare to practice speaking

English outside the classroom. After the performance-based assessment, the average score is that the improvement in this aspect is not so significant (12).

Meanwhile, mean scores for other evaluation elements (Figures 1 and 2) have improved. This improvement shows the effectiveness of using performance-based assessment for speaking for a daily communication course. A performance-based assessment provides space for students to reflect on several assessment components that have not been maximally achieved (Kirmizi & Komec, 2016; Qutaishat & Bataineh, 2014).

The mean score improvement (Figure 2) above is measured by the speaking scoring rubric, including evaluation aspects, indicators, weights, scores, and descriptors. The student's final score is obtained from the score multiplied by the weight of each element of the assessment. This speaking rubric is appropriate to use as it addresses all aspects of measuring the performance of students' speaking skills (Andrade & Du, 2005; Latifa et al., 2015; Outeiral, 2014). This speaking rubric allows the rater or lecturer to make the evaluation smoother, more rational, and observable. Students are also encouraged to be more aware of the shortcomings of fulfilling all aspects of speaking skills assessment.

This performance-based assessment also encourages the achievement of the micro-component needs of speaking competence and the macro-components, both of which are reciprocal. The micro-component facilitates students to be able to produce differences in phonemes and allophones in English, to produce differences in long and short sounds, to produce intonation, and rhythm, accent every word in English, paraphrase, produce appropriate phrases (pauses, stress, sound clarity), to use grammar, and to show coherent phrases between sentences. At the same time, macro skills are capable of using socio-pragmatic attributes, non-verbal language, and are capable of using communication techniques, such as the focus on keywords, substance, and understanding the interlocutors (Ahmad, Qasim, & Khushi, 2019; Brown, 2004; Canale & Swain, 1980; Fromkin, 2003). These two components can be carefully monitored in the speaking class by implementing a performance-based assessment. The consistency of assessment can ensure acceptable language and language attitudes, contributing to students' optimal learning outcomes (Menggo & Suastra, 2020; Yürekli & Afacan, 2020).

Performance-based assessment on affective and psychomotor aspects

Data from questionnaires confirm that performance-based assessment activates students' affective and psychomotor dimensions. Positive responses to statements 1-6 indicate that performance-based assessment use affects college students' psychological components (self-confidence, initiative to be an independent English speaker, reducing speaking anxiety, and changing speaking study habits). This psychological impact is essential in assuring college students' speaking achievement. These positive responses and initiative values can help college students become more confident with the accuracy of the English-speaking articulation and their psychological therapy space, be more responsive, brave, confident in asking questions in English, and lose anxiety in participating in the classroom. The response attitude to be actively engaged in the learning process is one of the implementations of the response to the phenomenon level (A.2) from the affective domain, while the attitude of the initiative to adapt to the current situation is the implementation of the psychomotor dimension at the guided response level (P.3), the mechanism (P.4), and adaptation (P.6) (Kasilingam, Ramalingam, & Chinnavan, 2014; Noor, Saim, Alias, & Rosli, 2020). When this performance-based assessment is implemented correctly and appropriately, the effectiveness of the three dimensions of the assessment (cognitive, affective,

and psychomotor) becomes a reality. These three assessment components are urgent and crucial in the current assessment since they cover all students' potential.

Undoubtedly, the success of learning outcomes when students can demonstrate these three domains of assessment proportionally, although they still focus on cognitive aspects only, in the sense of speaking class, the integration of these three domains is the primary indicator of student success. The instructor is challenged to provide an evaluation sheet covering all three domains, particularly the demands for the achievement of specific competencies that require learners to demonstrate something as evidence of their proficiency (Guntur, 2014; Hoque, 2016). Performance-based assessment in the speaking class as a practical guide for instructors to design assessment sheets that meet these three assessment domains.

The above description clarifies and highlights that performance-based assessment contributes to the cognitive development of college students, as seen by respondents' average post-test speaking course results. However, this study's findings differ significantly from those of earlier research. Previous research findings (Espinosa, 2015; Kirmizi & Komec, 2016; Prastikawati, 2018; Qutashat & Bataineh, 2014) focus on the analysis of performance-based assessment use that only affects cognitive aspects, whereas the results of this study are more holistic, indicating that performance-based assessment use contributes to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor factors of the respondents. Today's college students are in great need of these three domains, particularly in the context of speaking classes. College students are required to demonstrate not only the comprehension aspect of the speaking skill but also other aspects, such as the ability to practice producing speech sounds that can be understood by the speech partner fluently and clearly, according to English grammar, and the ability to use diction (vocabulary choice) in the appropriate context. This demand can only be met if cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects become the primary focus of the speaking instructor's grading, and performance-based assessment can be used to meet this requirement. The type of instrument employed reveals a further distinction. If earlier research findings relied on a single instrument, namely a test, this study used two types of instruments: test and non-test. The test measures speaking abilities using a speaking rubric, and the non-test measures college students' perceptions using a questionnaire. The utilization of these two tools gives legitimacy to the conclusion.

Conclusion

The data findings in this study conclude that the application of performance-based assessment in the speaking class could strengthen college students' speaking ability (the post-test average = 76). Second, performance-based assessment use aids college students in strengthening their self-confidence and initiative to become independent English speakers, as well as in lowering speaking anxiety and changing speaking study habits. This conclusion is supported by respondents' positive response toward performance-based assessment in the speaking class. Third, the performance-based assessment also promotes achievement in affective and psychomotor reinforcement in the speaking class. Integrating these two assessment domains is the best strategy for the rater or lecturer. Fourth, other researchers might examine and explore similar or slightly related variables with different scopes of analysis, looking at this study's results.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The researchers confirmed no conflict of interest in publishing this study's findings in the International Journal of Language Education (IJOLE).

Funding acknowledgment

This study is an independent project, so the researchers are in charge of all operating costs.

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