

Teachers' Perceptions of the Platforms Used for Assessing Learners' Speaking Performance: Types, Benefits, and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

In the teaching and learning process, one of the roles and responsibilities of teachers is to assess the skills and what is taught to students. In the assessment activity, the teacher can get feedback on the extent to which students understand what the teacher teaches. Even though the learning is done virtually, the assessment still has to be done. This study investigates teachers' perceptions of the types, benefits, and challenges of platforms used to assess young learners' speaking performance. The research data was obtained by conducting interviews with respondents through Google Meet and adopted the interview questions by Mpungose (2020) about the online assessment platforms. The researcher determined the respondents by using a purposive sampling technique where respondents used an online platform in assessing young learners' speaking performance during distance learning. After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed it using an interactive model by Miles et al. (2014). This study indicates that there are various platforms that teachers can use to assess young learners' speaking performance, including Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube. The five platforms were revealed to be very useful to make it easier for teachers to assess learners' speaking performance. Teachers can easily assess aspects of their pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary through these five platforms. Besides helping assess learners' speaking performance, this study also shows various challenges in its implementation, such as connection problems, assignment submission, and poor video and audio quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, the world is being attacked by a disease called Coronavirus. Indonesia is one of the countries affected by this virus for months. Due to the outbreak of this virus, the Indonesian government has implemented a stay-at-home policy that allows people to carry out activities virtually from home. Schools from kindergartens to universities are also held virtually so that learners still have the opportunity to learn, especially to learn English as a foreign language.

Teaching English from a very young age is a great way to introduce children to a foreign language. Learning a foreign language at an early age will have the potential to be more successful than adults in language production and language comprehension (Çagac, 2018). According to Long & Khoi, (2020); Jaekel et al., (2022), there are many benefits of teaching a foreign language at a young age, such that learners can learn naturally how to listen and pronounce words.

Although the teaching and learning process is carried out online, teachers still have to ensure that young learners master the learning materials and skills taught by the teacher. To determine the mastery of the material and skills, the teacher gives appropriate tests and assessments to the young learners. Sabrina et al., (2022) state that assessment is a process of gathering information that can be done on individuals or groups for specific purposes, such as to determine students' understanding and skills. In assessing students, teachers must have clear goals and must conduct an assessment of the aspects being taught (Khan & Khan, 2019). Assessment is an activity carried out to assess student assignments and performance involving teachers and students (Bachore & Satenaw, 2018). In addition, assessment is used to find student needs in learning that need to be improved (Nieminen, 2022). Performance-based assessment is an assessment that requires the learners to produce or demonstrate an activity (Ajjawi et al., 2020). Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 assessment process was also conducted online. The online assessment provides flexibility which can be done anytime and anywhere even though educators and students do not meet in person (Khan & Khan, 2019). There are four primary skills in English language teaching that teachers can assess: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Speaking is a productive skill that requires learners to produce a spoken product. Based on Jaya et al., (2022), speaking is a way of expressing intentions or feelings by using the language actively so that others can understand it. Speaking is not just an activity of opening the mouth and producing words and sentences with sound, but people do it to interact with a specific purpose and consider the cultural context and social status (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Speaking is an important skill that people can use to share information, communicate, and express feelings (Ningias & Indriani, 2021; Nova, 2020). Based on its function, speaking is very important to be mastered to interact with others formally and informally. However, speaking is not an easy skill to master; to master it, learners must have many opportunities to practice (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Since online learning relies on technology, a lot of research has been carried out to uncover the benefits of using platforms to facilitate the teaching process and assess the assignments or performance of young learners. Khusniyawati (2020) revealed that video conferencing platform effectively supports the smooth running of teaching and learning activities during distance learning. Video conferencing platforms are great for teachers to assess learners' language skills (Nova, 2020). The use of an attractive platform has also been shown to increase learners' interest, motivation, and participation (Yulia et al., 2019). In addition, research conducted by Nova (2017) also reveals that teachers face challenges such as bad connections in using online platforms for distance learning. Since online learning keeps teachers and students from having direct contact, this makes teachers feel unsure that they can measure students' actual learning abilities using online platforms (Perwitasari et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Sabrina et al., (2022) revealed that it is very difficult to assess the originality of student performance during online learning using online platforms. Although there are challenges in their implementation, online platforms are also helpful for continuous learning. Because of its usefulness and challenges in learning activities,

especially performance assessment, this study focuses on teachers' choices regarding the type of platform used by teachers to assess young students' speaking performance and the benefits and challenges that are obtained. Therefore, this study investigates teachers' perceptions of the use of technology platforms to assess young learners' speaking performance during online learning.

METHODS

This research is qualitative research using the purposive sampling technique where the sample is selected based on certain criteria. The researcher conducted this research on 10 English teachers in elementary schools in Denpasar who used several platforms to assess students' speaking performance during online learning, such as the Zoom platform, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube. This research only used 10 elementary teachers due to the limited time in conducting this research. Four steps have been done by the researcher in conducting this study. In collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher used the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014).

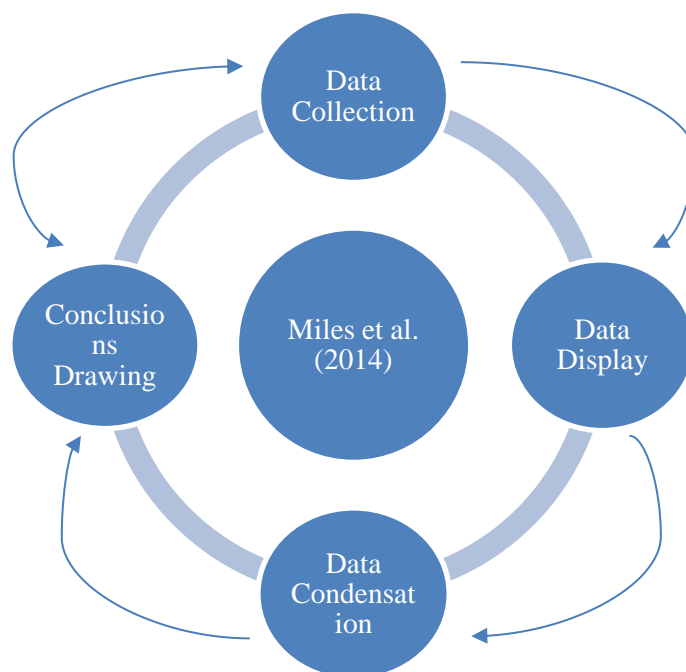


Figure 1: Interactive Model Analysis

First, the researcher conducted an interview using the Google Meet application to interview the elementary teachers to collect the teachers' perceptions about speaking performance online assessment. Perceptions refer to the way each individual delivers the meaning of an object based on how they perceive it (Rosyida, 2016). The researcher designed three questions related to the use of multiple platforms to assess the speaking performance of young learners adopted from Mpungose (2020), where the type of questions used was open-ended. The first question is about the platforms teachers often use to assess young learners speaking performance. The second question is about the benefits of teachers' platforms for assessing young learners' speaking performance. The third is the challenges faced by teachers in using the platforms to assess young learners speaking performance. After the data was collected, the researcher condensed the data by transcribing the teachers' perceptions recorded through interview meetings. This process aims

to remove invalid data that is not relevant to the research problem. Then the researcher proceeds to display the data, where the data is collected, organized, and condensed to help the researcher understand, conclude, and act. Finally, the researcher draws and verifies the conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Platforms Used During Distance Learning

This study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions in elementary schools in Bali regarding the use of platforms to assess learners' speaking performance. From the results of interviews related to platforms for the educational process during distance learning for assessing students' speaking performance, researchers identified five platforms often used by teachers, including Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Figure 1 below describes the platforms that teachers often use to facilitate online learning based on interviews with ten teachers.

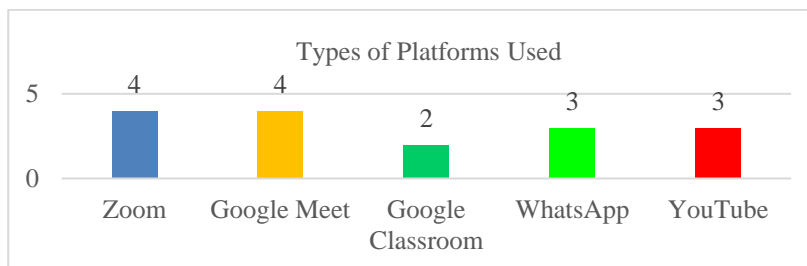


Chart 1: Types of platforms used to assess young learners' speaking performance during online learning

Five platforms were used to facilitate teachers to assess the speaking performance of young learners. Five out of ten teachers used only one platform to assess young learners' speaking performance, while another five used more than one platform to assess learners' speaking performance. Based on figure 1 above, it is shown that four teachers use the Zoom platform, then four teachers use the Google Meet platform, three teachers use the WhatsApp platform, three teachers use YouTube, and two teachers use Google Classroom to assess their speaking performance of young learners. Technology plays a dramatic role in the educational process (Deed & Edwards, 2010). The implications of using technology such as these platforms greatly facilitate the teaching and learning process, especially during distance learning.

The Benefits of Platforms Used to Assess Young Learners' Speaking Performances

One of the benefits of technology is providing teachers and learners with many platforms that include many features to support teaching and learning (Eamer, 2010). In addition, the use of technology can develop students' communication and collaborative skills (Deed & Edwards, 2010). It gives them a chance to students to hone their creativity (Atkins, 2013; Deed & Edwards, 2010). It helps teachers improve student learning with exciting tools and features (Colomo-Palacios et al., 2010). It helps teachers and students to gather information quickly and easily (Alier et al., 2010). Teachers and students can carry out any activity through it, such as doing an assessment (Eamer, 2010). Technology is helpful to use to assess the speaking performance of young learners. The data in Table 1 presents the results of interviews with teachers regarding the benefits of the platforms used to assess young learners' speaking performance. The benefits of related platforms for assessing the speaking performance of young students include making it

easier for teachers to assess the originality of their performance, hone creativity, fluency, pronunciation, use of grammar.

Subjects	Platforms Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube	Benefits				
		Originality	Hone Creativity	Fluency	Pronunciation	Grammar Usage
Respondent 1	WhatsApp			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Respondent 2	Zoom	<input type="checkbox"/>				
	WhatsApp			<input type="checkbox"/>		
	YouTube			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Respondent 3	WhatsApp			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Respondent 4	Zoom	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Google Meet	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respondent 5	Zoom				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respondent 6	Zoom			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Google Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Respondent 7	Google Meet			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Respondent 8	Google Meet	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Respondent 9	Google Meet			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	YouTube		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Respondent 10	YouTube		<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Google Classroom			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Table 1: The benefits of platforms used in assessing young learners' speaking performance

Based on the teachers' responses, the use of the platform as a medium facilitates the teaching and learning process during the pandemic, where its use is a bridge to convey and receive knowledge between teachers and learners. There are various interesting platforms that teachers often use to teach learners, especially to assess their speaking performance: Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, and YouTube platforms. These platforms greatly facilitated the teaching and learning process, especially for assessing young learners' speaking skills. Digital teaching using platforms can be beneficial for honing students' communication skills, as revealed by (Knie et al., 2020).

Some of the teachers stated that Zoom is one of the platforms that is often used to assess young learners speaking performances. Teacher four revealed that the Zoom platform is also a platform that is easy to use to assess young learners speaking performance in the aspect of grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and authenticity because they just need to click the unmute to perform. Then teacher six also expressed that Zoom is a friendly use platform to assess learners speaking performances in terms of their pronunciation and their fluency. While teacher two states that they often used Zoom to assess their learners' speaking performances because this platform allows them to see and know their originality. In other words, they can know whether their learners are cheating or not by reading a text when their speaking skills are assessed. In addition, teacher five also states that this platform facilitates the speaking performance assessment because they can perform naturally when the teacher calls their name. Here the teacher can directly assess learners'

pronunciation and grammar used. The utilization of Zoom during this online learning facilitates the teacher to assess young learners speaking performances as how it does in offline classes by using the breakout room feature; this feature allows learners to perform directly in front of their teacher and friends (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020). Various features promoted by the video conferencing platform facilitate the distance learning process. There are whiteboards, pooling, break-out rooms, document sharing, chat features, sign language features such as raising your hand, and so on (Eamer, 2010).

Four out of ten teachers used Google Meet as their platform to assess young learners' speaking performances. Teacher four expressed that the Google Meet platform is a great platform to assess young learners' speaking performance during this distance learning. Through this platform, teachers can assess learners' grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and authenticity because the teacher can see eye contact directly when they speak. In addition, teacher seven also revealed that Google Meet makes it easier for teachers to assess young learners' fluency and pronunciation in role play. While teacher eight showed that through Google Meet, learners could perform their ability to tell stories or work in pairs to do short dialogue. Through these activities, the teacher can assess their originality and pronunciation. In addition, teacher nine also revealed that Google Meet allows teachers to assess some speaking aspects such as pronunciation and fluency. They can also check students' understanding of the content. To conduct speaking assessments using this platform, teachers usually use techniques such as one-to-one, paired interviews with the teachers, and questions and answers tasks. According to Fakharudin (2019), through Google Meet, teachers can assess the speaking performance of young students from the aspects of their grammar, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and even vocabulary. Video conferencing has been seen as a significant step in learning as it facilitates two-way communication with audio, video, and other facilities (Eamer, 2010).

On the other hand, two out of ten teachers utilize Google Classroom to assess young learners' speaking performances. Teacher six expressed that Google Classroom is also one of the platforms often used to assess young learners' speaking performance in terms of their authenticity and fluency. Through this platform, teachers can facilitate learners with learning material in documents and videos. Meanwhile, teacher ten stated that in assessing young learners' speaking performance through this platform, teachers usually ask learners to make a video and submit it on Google classroom. The teacher usually told the learners the aspects to assess, such as pronunciation and fluency. Google Classroom is one of the easily accessible platforms that helps teachers to assess learners' speaking performance, requiring students to submit their video performance on this platform (Salam, 2020).

Three out of ten teachers use WhatsApp to assess young learners speaking performances. Teacher one expressed that WhatsApp allowed learners to record their performances using the voice note feature. This feature help teacher assesses young learners' performance by checking their pronunciation and fluency. In addition, teacher two also stated that the use of the WhatsApp platform could assess learners' speaking performances by sending videos; through video, the teacher can assess their pronunciation. Meanwhile, teacher three states that WhatsApp is an easy platform that can assess young learners' pronunciation and fluency by asking learners to make a video, present a topic given, and then send it to the group or personally. According to Nurazizah et al. (2019), WhatsApp is a familiar and easy platform to use. One of its features is voice note,

which facilitates teachers to assess learners speaking performance in terms of pronunciation fluency and grammar. So, WhatsApp is a great platform that helps teachers to assess young learners' speaking performances through voice notes and video features.

Moreover, three out of ten teachers also used the YouTube platform as an exciting way to assess their learners' speaking skills. According to teacher two, through the YouTube platform, teachers ask learners to make a short video about the material given or a certain topic they are interested in. Then, they ask them to upload that video on the YouTube platform. The teacher can watch the video repeatedly to assess aspects of pronunciation and fluency in speaking. In addition to teacher nine, YouTube is an authentic platform that facilitates learners to upload their speaking performance, by using this kind of platform, learners will also hone their creativity in making a great video. In line with teacher nine, teacher ten also expressed that making and editing video to be uploaded on YouTube give learners' a chance to explore their ideas in producing a good video of their speaking performance. YouTube hones learners' creativity in creating videos to talk about topics they are interested in. In addition, YouTube allows teachers to assess students' overall speaking performance because teachers can watch a video more than once (Rajulain, 2020; Syafiq et al., 2021).

So that's all several platforms that teachers often use to assess young learners' speaking skills. Those platforms were engaging because some were explicitly made for education needs, which provides several features that can support the teaching and learning process. However, some were authentic platforms whose beliefs will affect their interest and motivation during the class or the assessment. Those platforms were found beneficial for the teaching and learning process.

Teachers' Challenges in Using Platforms for Assessing Young Learners Speaking Skills

Table 2 shows the platform challenges teachers face during distance learning to assess young learners' speaking performance. Based on the interview results, there are three main obstacles in using these platforms, including unstable internet connections, assignment submissions, and the quality of videos delivered by young learners. According to Negash et al. (2008), Distance learning becomes difficult because it is required learners to have access to a computer, laptop, or smartphone. In addition, technological problems such as unstable networks also affect the effectiveness of continuous teaching and learning. An unstable connection can cause video and audio to freeze.

Subjects	Platforms	Challenges		
	Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube	Unstable Connection	Task Submission	Quality of Video
Respondent 1	WhatsApp			✓
Respondent 2	Zoom	✓		
	WhatsApp	✓		✓
	YouTube			✓
Respondent 3	WhatsApp			✓
Respondent 4	Zoom	✓		
	Google Meet	✓	✓	
Respondent 5	Zoom	✓		

Respondent 6	Zoom	✓	
	Google Classroom	✓	✓
Respondent 7	Google Meet	✓	
Respondent 8	Google Meet	✓	
Respondent 9	Google Meet	✓	
	YouTube		✓
Respondent 10	YouTube		✓
	Google Classroom		✓

Table 2: The challenges of platforms used in assessing young learners' speaking performance

The teaching and learning process mainly assesses young learners in distance learning, which involves integrating multiple platforms. The method of assessing students' speaking performance using those platforms is beneficial and presents challenges for teachers. The five media used are Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube provide challenges in terms of technical issues, task submission, less interaction, and quality of audio submitted.

Zoom turns out to be the most popular platform commonly used to conduct a teaching and learning process during this pandemic. However, during the implementations, it is found that teachers face some challenges in using this platform, primarily when it is used to assess learners' speaking performance. Teacher two, who used the Zoom platform, expressed that in assessing young learners' speaking performance teacher found that a bad connection turned out to be one of the challenges. Connection is an essential part of online learning, teachers and students must have a good connection before joining the online meeting. In line with teacher two, teacher four also revealed that the process of assessing learners' speaking performance was hampered because of an unstable connection where the teacher could not hear clearly; this made the teacher and students not connect. Salieva (2020) supported this finding, who revealed that technical problems such as inadequate internet connection became the main obstacle in assessing students' speaking performance using Zoom.

As with Zoom, the use of Google Meet to facilitate the process of assessing young learners' speaking performance was also found to have problems with the connection. Four out of ten teachers stated that the use of Google Meet to assess young learners' speaking performance was hampered by poor teacher-student connections. Teacher four noted that the connection problem dramatically affects the smoothness of the speaking performance assessment process. Then teacher seven stated that it was difficult to assess learners' pronunciation via Google Meet because the unstable Internet connection made it unclear. In addition, teachers 8 and 9 expressed that the poor connection also makes the teacher unable to listen to the student's overall performance due to intermittent sound, unstable video images, etc. Due to an internet network error, teachers and students are not appropriately connected. Besides that, both students and teachers often automatically exit the Google Meet application (Aswir et al., 2021).

Tasks submission turns out to be the following challenges teachers face in using the Google Classroom platform. According to teacher four, some learners cannot create a video because they lack video-making ability. The lack of ability to make videos certainly makes students unable to convey their work. In addition, teacher ten also revealed that students could not speak, so they did not submit their speaking performance assignments. On the other hand, teacher six also stated that

some of their students did not submit their videos to assess learners' speaking performance because they found it challenging to use the platform. This finding is supported by Syifa (2021) who revealed that Google Classroom is difficult to use due to learners' lack of understanding to operate it, so students cannot collect assignments. However, Salam (2020) revealed that Google Classroom is one of the most accessible platforms to use.

Besides, the quality of audio and video submitted by learners also becomes a challenge teachers face in assessing young learners' speaking performance by using YouTube. Based on teacher two, the teacher cannot hear learners' voices and pronunciation clearly because some of them do not speak loud enough, so it is pretty hard for teachers to assess their speaking performance. Meanwhile, teachers nine and ten argue that teachers find it difficult to assess the speaking performance of some students because they take videos in crowded situations that affect their audio performance. Taking videos in inappropriate places makes the video look dark, students' faces are not visible, and the sound quality is not good and clear (Rajulain, 2020).

In line with the problems found on YouTube, there are also similar problems related to video and audio quality in the use of the WhatsApp platform. According to teacher one, the videos students sent on WhatsApp showed poor audio quality where students recorded videos in a crowded place. Besides teacher one, teacher two also revealed that students often send videos with low audio quality. Meanwhile, teacher three stated that learners often send noisy audio when using the voice note feature, so it is quite difficult for teachers to assess their speaking performance. Poor audio and video quality is certainly a challenge for teachers in assessing students' speaking performance (Sari, 2020).

Based on the teachers' responses, this study revealed that teachers' challenges were caused by the technical problem of using these platforms to assess young learners' speaking performance. During this distance learning, the teacher discovered those technical challenges because facilitators needed media to facilitate the teaching and learning process, especially for the speaking performance assessment process. However, using technology platforms requires digital devices to access them and an internet connection, which requires teachers and students to have a sufficient internet quota.

CONCLUSION

Online learning is the primary key to optimizing the educational process during this pandemic. During this distance learning, teachers can use many types of platforms and five of them, including Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and YouTube, to assess learners' speaking performance. It has been found that the use of various platforms is beneficial in assessing learners' speaking performance. This study also revealed that these five platforms are easy to use even for young learners. These platforms provide various exciting features that teachers can use to assess learners' speaking performance in grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. Besides being functional, this research also found that using those platforms provides problems or challenges such as poor internet connection problems, learners' lack of understanding of the use of multiple platforms that hindered the collection of assignments, and poor video and audio quality. However, this research was conducted on a limited number of subjects. Therefore, future

researchers interested in using platforms to facilitate online learning to assess the speaking performance of young learners can explore in more detail by involving more subjects.

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