

## Implementation of Speaking Assessment in Primary Grade 3

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**Abstrak:** Studi ini mengeksplorasi implementasi strategis penilaian berbicara untuk siswa kelas 3 di sekolah dasar. Namun, tantangan utama dalam penilaian berbicara meliputi hambatan psikologis seperti kecemasan penampilan dan kurangnya instrumen penilaian yang autentik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merumuskan strategi implementasi penilaian berbicara yang efektif, suportif, dan sesuai untuk siswa pada tahap perkembangan operasional konkret. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode tinjauan pustaka dan observasi kelas. Data dikumpulkan melalui analisis kurikulum, tinjauan literatur psikologi perkembangan anak, dan evaluasi berbagai teknik penilaian formatif. Analisis data dilakukan secara deskriptif untuk menentukan kesesuaian teknik penilaian dengan karakteristik siswa usia delapan hingga sembilan tahun. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa implementasi penilaian berbicara di kelas 3 paling efektif bila menggunakan penilaian berbasis kinerja yang terintegrasi ke dalam kegiatan sehari-hari, seperti "Show and Tell," bermain peran, dan deskripsi berbasis gambar. Penggunaan alat bantu yang bermanfaat, seperti kalimat dan petunjuk visual, secara signifikan mengurangi "filter afektif" dan mendorong produksi lisan yang lebih kompleks. Penilaian berbicara yang efektif di kelas 3 harus memprioritaskan pemahaman daripada kesempurnaan, memastikan bahwa penilaian dapat menjadi alat untuk membangun kepercayaan diri siswa daripada menjadi masalah komunikasi.

**Kata kunci:** Penilaian Berbicara, Evaluasi Formatif, Kompetensi Komunikatif, Pendidikan Dasar

**Abstract:** This paper explores the strategic implementation of speaking assessments for the students of grade 3 in primary school. However, the primary challenges in speaking assessment include psychological barriers such as performance anxiety and a lack of authentic assessment instruments. This study aims to formulate an implementation strategy for speaking assessments that are effective, supportive, and appropriate for students in the concrete operational stage of development. This study employs a qualitative approach using literature review and classroom observation methods. Data were collected through curriculum analysis, a review of child developmental psychology literature, and an evaluation of various formative assessment techniques. Data analysis was conducted descriptively to determine the suitability of assessment techniques with the characteristics of eight to nine-year-old students. The findings indicate that the implementation of speaking assessment in Grade 3 is most effective when utilizing performance-based assessment integrated into daily activities, such as "Show and Tell," role-playing, and picture-based descriptions. The use of useful tools, such as sentence and visual prompts, significantly reduces "affective filters" and encourages more complex oral production. The effective speaking assessment in Grade 3 should prioritize comprehensibility over perfection, ensuring that the assessment can be a tool for building students' confidence rather than a problem of communication.

**Keywords:** Speaking Assessment, Formative Evaluation, Communicative Competence, Primary Education

### Submission History:

Submitted: January 21, 2026

Revised: January 25, 2026

Accepted: January 26, 2026

## INTRODUCTION

Oral communication is an important skill of primary education, serving as a prior bridge to advanced literacy and social integration. In Grade 3, students get a significant cognitive transition. According to Piaget (1952), children at this age (8–9 years old) enter the concrete operational stage, where they begin to demonstrate logical thought and a more structured approach to problem-solving. However, the students' cognitive readiness is often not shown in their oral performance. The primary problem identified in classrooms is high anxiety in students' performance. This issue is important to be investigated because if psychological barriers are not solved early, students may have difficulties achieving communicative competence in higher grades, potentially hindering their overall academic success (Santrock, 2021).

Previous research has evaluated language assessment methods, but many models remain focused on purely cognitive or written aspects, often neglecting the affective dimension of speaking. Wiratmoko et al. (2023), suggest that authentic assessment helps students practice speaking in real-world contexts. Past studies have highlighted a weakness in speaking skills, that students face two primary categories of challenges in English speaking: linguistic and psychological (Muamaroh & Rahayu, 2022). While De Jong (2023) for speaking proficiency, there is no direct measurement possible. No tape measure or stopwatch can gauge someone's speaking abilities. This article describes the construct of speaking proficiency to be measured in an assessment.

According to Brown (2004), the types of speaking assessments for young learners contain five points. First is imitative. It is repeating words or phrases to assess basic sound production. Second is intensive. It focuses on specific linguistic components like grammar or individual sounds. Third is responsive, which is giving short, factual answers to questions. Fourth is interactive participation in conversations and discussions. Fifth is extensive, delivering longer, more structured speeches or presentations on a given topic.

At the age of eight to nine years, students have a significant cognitive transition. According to the theory proposed by Piaget (1952), children at this age are in the concrete operational stage, during which they begin to develop logical thinking related to physical objects and real-world situations. According to cognitive development theory, children in this age range enter the concrete operational stage (Santrock, 2021). At this stage, students begin to demonstrate logistical thinking and a more structured approach to problem-solving (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). However, this cognitive readiness often does not translate directly to their oral performance in the classroom, as language development is influenced by factors beyond mere logical ability (Vygotsky, 1986). Haro & Soriano (2024) support the idea that even if students have the cognitive potential, they need specific assessment strategies and holistic support to actually improve their oral communication.

The first barrier is linguistic aspects, as stated by Thornbury (2005), the dominant issues include limited vocabulary, lack of grammar mastery, and inaccuracies in pronunciation. The insufficient mastery of these linguistic elements significantly hinders students' communication fluency (Nation & Newton, 2009). Next is psychological aspects. Emotional factors such as a lack of self-confidence, passivity in

class, and performance anxiety act as major inhibitors (Horwitz et al., 1986). Moreover, Krashen (1982) argued that these issues are closely related to the concept of the affective filter. Then Gobena (2025) found that psychological barriers contribute to students' poor English language speaking skills. He investigated the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills. The items that delivered from the lowest to the highest mean scores were shyness, fear, anxiety, lack of interest, lack of motivation, and lack of self-confidence (the major psychological barriers) contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities.

The importance of formative and authentic assessment in speaking skills is significant, as research indicates that traditional assessment models often focus excessively on written aspects while neglecting the affective dimensions of learners (Young, 1991; Horwitz et al., 1986). As a solution, the use of authentic assessment is recommended because it helps students practice speaking in more meaningful, real-world contexts (Wiggins, 1998; O'Malley & Valdez, 1996). Furthermore, assessment in speaking skills is unique because it cannot be measured directly through physical metrics; instead, evaluation must be based on proficiency constructs that include fluency and comprehension (Fulcher, 2003). Therefore, continuous formative evaluation is more effective than a single high-stakes exam, which carries the risk of increasing student stress and anxiety (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Furthermore, Isaacs (2006) explained that the goals of speaking assessments for young learners are to measure the ability to use spoken words by watching or listening to the students. The speaking rating system is designed to assess the extent to which communicative goals have been achieved in the assigned tasks, with the main objective that the score results can be used to predict a person's speaking ability in real-world language use situations.

To mitigate emotional barriers, the implementation of assessment in the third grade must be supported by tools such as visual aids and sentence stems (sentence frameworks). The use of these tools aims to lower students' affective filter, allowing them to be more courageous in experimenting with the language without the fear of making rigid grammatical errors (Krashen, 1982; Echevarria et al., 2017). The primary goal of this strategy is to shift the focus of assessment from "error-finding" to a tool for building students' self-confidence and communicative competence (Scrivener, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Based on the literature above, this study limits the focus to the implementation of formative assessments that use visual aids and sentence stems to lower students' affective filters. The research does not aim to measure grammatical perfection, but it has a primary objective to obtain a detailed and accurate account of the speaking assessment process, emphasizing the perspectives of the participants and the contextual factors that influence the implementation in a Grade 3 setting. Ultimately, the goal is to transform the difficulties into a tool for building self-confidence.

Specifically, this research aims to describe the implementation process of formative assessments based on visual aids and sentence stems in enhancing students' courage to speak. Furthermore, it seeks to analyze the perceptions of both students and

teachers regarding the use of these strategies in reducing affective barriers, particularly anxiety. Finally, the study intends to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors involved in transforming speaking difficulties into a strategic tool for building students' self-confidence.

## **METHOD**

account of the speaking assessment process (Sandelowski, 2000). This study is a qualitative descriptive research design. The primary objective is to describe the implementation of the speaking assessment in primary grade 3. This approach focuses on obtaining a detailed and accurate account of the speaking assessment process, emphasizing the perspectives of the participants and the contextual factors that influence the implementation in a Grade 3 setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants are divided into primary participants of Grade 3 English teachers and secondary participants of the third-grade students. As the architects of the classroom assessments, the teachers function as key informants (Gilchrist & Williams, 1999). The students' responses and 'affective' reactions are also analyzed, as they offer critical evidence regarding the real-world application and success of the assessment tools (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

The study utilizes purposive sampling, defined by Creswell (2014) as the selection of specific participants who are best suited to address the research goals. Consequently, the research focuses on a sample of one to two teachers and their classes, comprising roughly 20 to 30 students.

In serving the validity and depth of the findings, this study has a triangulation of data collection methods (Miles et al., 2014). It means using multiple methods to cross-verify the information and provide a "thick description" of the classroom reality. The study observed how the teacher introduces the visual aids, how often students use the sentence stems, and the physical signs of student anxiety or confidence (the affective filter). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), observation in a natural setting is essential for understanding the context and the actual behaviors of participants. Interviews were conducted with the primary participants (the teachers) to understand the "why" behind their actions. It contains questions about their challenges in assessing 8-9-year-olds, why they chose specific visual aids, and how they perceive the shift from "error-finding to "competence-building. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that semi-structured interviews allow for a conversational flow while ensuring all research objectives are met through a predefined interview guide

This involves reviewing the physical materials used during the assessment process. It analyzed the rubrics (to see if they prioritize fluency over grammar), the sentence stem posters, and any visual media used to prompt speaking. Prior (2003) notes that documents are social facts that provide stable, objective evidence of what was intended during the instructional process.

The data in this study are analyzed using the qualitative interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014). This model consists of three activities, such as data condensation, data display, conclusion, drawing and verification. Firstly, in

the stage of data condensation, the researcher filters out irrelevant information and focuses strictly on data that highlights students' difficulties, such as frequent fillers, grammatical errors, or long pauses. Secondly, in the stage of data display, the researcher organizes and assembles the information into an accessible form. The data is presented using narrative text, tables, or matrices. Finally, in the stage of conclusion, drawing and verification, the researcher begins to decide what things mean by noting patterns, explanations, and causal flows. The conclusions are taken by re-checking the triangulation data (comparing interview results with observation data) to ensure that the findings are valid and robust.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Based on the results of classroom observation, interviews, and document analysis, the implementation of speaking assessment in primary grade 3 will be described as the following results. The speaking assessment that is used for the third-grade students are: responsive speaking. This method focuses on students giving short, factual answers to specific questions during the assessment process, Interactive Speaking. This technique involves students participating in active conversations and discussions, allowing for a more comprehensive evaluation of their communicative competence. For more details, it will be shown in a picture including the learning objectives, activities, and the rubric, as stated by Priyono et al. (2021).

#### Capaian Pembelajaran

- **Menyimak-Berbicara**

Peserta didik mampu menggunakan Bahasa Inggris untuk berinteraksi dalam lingkup situasi sosial dan kelas yang makin luas namun masih dapat diprediksi (rutin). Peserta didik menggunakan bahasa formula untuk berpartisipasi dalam rutinitas kelas dan aktivitas belajar seperti menyampaikan perasaan, menyampaikan kebutuhan, dan meminta pertolongan. Peserta didik memahami ide pokok dari informasi yang disampaikan secara lisan dengan bantuan visual dan menggunakan kosa kata sederhana. Peserta didik mengikuti rangkaian instruksi sederhana yang berkaitan dengan prosedur kelas dan aktivitas belajar dengan bantuan visual.

(Figure 1. Learning outcomes)

Table 1. Activities of speaking assessment

Types of speaking assessment	Activities	Explanation	Examples	Targets
Responsive speaking	1. Direct question and answer	The teacher gives simple question, the students answer in short answer.	What color is your book? Where do you live?	The student responds with one or two sentences containing the requested information.

	2. Giving Commands (Instructional Response)	The teacher gives instruction to the students	The teacher says: "Sit down!" "Stand up!" "Open the book!"	The student provides a brief verbal acknowledgment (e.g., "Yes, Teacher" or "Okay") while performing the requested action.
	3. Guided Picture Description	The teacher asks specific questions about a visual aid to elicit a factual response.	The teacher points to an image of books and asks, "How many books are there?"	The student provides a factual answer based directly on what they observe in the image
Interactive Speaking	1. Information Gap Activities	Students work in a group. They must talk to each other to complete a task.	Student A has a picture of a classroom with a ball under the chair; Student B has a similar picture but the ball is missing. Student A must describe the room so Student B can draw the ball in the correct spot.	The students can give clear description
	2. Role play	Students act out every day social situations	A "library" scenario. Where one student is the students an the other is the librarian.	The students can use social formulas (greetings, requests, thanking) and reacting to the partner's choices.

Table 2. Rubric of speaking assessment

Aspect	Score	Description
Fluency	1	Long pauses in communication
	2	Slight pauses in communication
	3	Communicates without long pauses
Completeness / Clarity	1	Difficulty communicating
	2	Slight difficulty communicating
	3	Communicates well
Pronunciation	1	Difficulty pronouncing
	2	Slight difficulty pronouncing
	3	Fluent pronunciation

## Discussion

The implementation of speaking assessments in Grade 3 demonstrates a strategic shift from traditional testing to a supportive, competence-building process. The following sections discuss the pedagogical implications of these findings.

### **Lowering the Affective Filter through Structured Scaffolding**

A primary finding of this study is that the consistent use of sentence stems and predictable Direct Q&A patterns significantly lowered the students' affective filter. According to Krashen (1982), language acquisition is most effective when a student's anxiety is low and their confidence is high. By providing structured "Responsive Speaking" opportunities, the teacher created a "safe" environment where linguistic expectations were clear and manageable. This foundational confidence is essential for young learners, as it transforms the assessment from a high-pressure hurdle into a successful communicative experience.

### **The Role of Visual Aids in Reducing Cognitive Load**

The use of visual aids in "Guided Picture Description" and "Information Gap" tasks proved to be crucial for Grade 3 learners. These tools provided a concrete visual reference that helped bridge the gap between a student's internal thoughts and their spoken English. By having a clear stimulus to talk about, students did not have to rely solely on mental imagery, which effectively lowered their cognitive load. This support encouraged more active participation, reduced speaking anxiety, and allowed students to focus their mental energy on vocabulary retrieval and basic sentence construction rather than abstract conceptualization.

### **Prioritizing Factual Accuracy over Grammatical Perfection**

A key observation during the responsive speaking phase was the teacher's prioritization of factual information over rigid grammatical rules. This pedagogical choice aligns with building communicative competence at the primary level. By allowing students to successfully communicate facts through short, simple responses, the teacher built the self-confidence necessary for students to progress. This approach reinforces the idea that the primary purpose of language is to convey meaning, thereby encouraging students to experiment with the language without the paralyzing fear of making grammatical errors.

### **Developing Interactive Competence through Authentic Communication**

The transition from responsive tasks to Interactive Speaking (such as Role-Plays and Information Gap activities) marks a vital shift toward authentic communication. In these settings, Grade 3 students moved beyond simple answering to the negotiation of meaning with their peers. Utilizing social formulas in role-play scenarios—such as making requests or expressing gratitude—is particularly significant. It teaches students the functional use of English in real-world social contexts, ensuring that they do not just learn the language as a set of rules, but as a dynamic tool for social interaction.

The implementation of speaking assessments in this study is structured around specific pedagogical elements designed to foster a supportive learning environment. As shown in the research framework, the use of sentence stems is strategically intended to lower the students' affective filter, which ultimately leads to increased speaking confidence. To further support the learners, visual aids are integrated to reduce cognitive load, facilitating faster vocabulary retrieval during speech. The assessment also maintains a factual focus that prioritizes meaning over grammatical perfection to

build foundational fluency, while role-play activities encourage the negotiation of meaning to develop functional communicative competence.

To evaluate these elements effectively, a structured speaking rubric is employed, focusing on three core aspects: Fluency, Completeness/Clarity, and Pronunciation. Each aspect is measured on a 3-point scale. Fluency: Measures the flow of communication, ranging from long pauses (1), to slight pauses (2), and finally to communicating without long pauses (3). Completeness / Clarity: Assesses the effectiveness of the message, moving from difficulty communicating (1), to slight difficulty (2), and achieving clear communication (3). Pronunciation: Evaluates phonetic accuracy, starting from difficulty pronouncing (1), to slight difficulty (2), and reaching fluent pronunciation (3).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study describes the implementation of speaking assessments for Grade 3 students, focusing on the transition from responsive to interactive communication. Based on the findings and discussion, several key conclusions are drawn regarding the effectiveness of the instructional approach. First, the use of sentence stems and visual aids serves as a critical pedagogical "bridge" that allows young learners to produce language with reduced cognitive strain. Furthermore, by structuring assessments around predictable "Responsive Speaking" tasks—such as direct questions, answers, and commands—the teacher successfully lowered students' affective filters and anxiety levels, thereby fostering a "safe" environment for linguistic experimentation.

This progression into "Interactive Speaking" activities, including role-plays and information gap tasks, effectively shifted the instructional focus from rote memorization to the active negotiation of meaning. Ultimately, prioritizing factual accuracy and meaning over grammatical perfection in these early stages builds the necessary self-confidence for students to engage in more complex social interactions.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Allah for His blessings and grace that allowed me to complete this research. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisors for their invaluable guidance, patience, and constant encouragement throughout the development of this thesis. Their insights have been instrumental in shaping this work. My deepest thanks go to the English teachers where the study was held, for their support in finishing this research.

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