

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Improving English language skills of children is one important thing in English learning. Teachers are required to have a learning strategy and ability to measure young learners' achievements so they understand well how far the ability of their students is. Teachers would agree if the evaluation of young learners' learning is one important factor in English language learning (Linn & Grunlund, 1995). Thus, the assessment would be one of the important foundations in learning English. Another important factor of assessment is the importance of teachers' knowledge about the precise form of measurement for their students. So far, many assessment methods have been applied by teachers to measure young learners' abilities, but not many teachers are familiar with the form of modern assessment to assess the ability of students.

There are two forms on assessing young learners' ability which were divided into two parts, namely the traditional and the modern assessment or often called as an alternative assessment (Brown, 2001:405). Traditional assessment is a form of conventional measurements that have long been applied in nearly all assessment activities in the classroom. On a national scale, for example, the traditional assessment was more often used in assessment activities and the national exam in the

form of paper and pencil test, multiple choice, true false answer, product oriented etc. Modern assessment is used in the form untimed-free response format, an open-ended, creative answer, and focusing on process oriented (Armstrong, 1994 & Bailey, 1998: 207) in Brown (2001). Both of assessment choices have obvious advantages and disadvantages of each others. Although the modern assessment usage seems more time-consuming but students will be tested in accordance with what has been performed and the form of judgments tends to be natural and objective for students.

Performance based assessment is considered as a meaningful form of measurement in assessing young learners' speaking ability. This is indicated by its spread of use which has been crowded applied in variety of ability measurement. Several studies have shown that the performance based assessment is considered effectively applied in measuring young learners' abilities. Performance based assessment used to measure young learners' ability to speak or write well and valued in the form of linguistic character (Brown, 2004: 92).

Teacher's concerning toward the importance of speaking in English learning should be increased. By concerning the speaking skills, students are able to share meaning using verbal and nonverbal symbols in various contexts (Chaney, 1998: 13). Speaking also made extensive reference of one's knowledge of the language, yet speaking is considered as one of the most important parts of learning a language that must be mastered for the ability to communicate in a second language. To speak clearly and efficient can contribute to the success of students at the school and in

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society. Thus, teachers need to pay a great attention to the importance of speaking skill in learning the English language.

In assessing young learners' speaking skill achievement, some linguistic characteristics of students will be demonstrated to determine the extent of young learners' speaking skill achievement using performance based assessment. This type of assessment requires students to demonstrate their ability in speaking, so this type of assessment will clearly measure and monitor the success of students in order to identify the outcomes achieved by students (<http://www.pgcps.org/~ELC/clt.html>). It is said that performance based assessment is more contextually applied, when the assessor or teacher does not impose their wish to students, but rather students are asked to apply knowledge in their favored context so that teachers can determine which is the preferred learning for students and which one they do not like (Brualdi, 1998 & Wiggins, 1993).

This research will focus on how the performance based assessment contributes positively to the ability of young learners speaking skill achievement. It has described previously that the performance based assessment is one form of modern assessment that measures young learners' skills in speaking directly (considering that young learners' speaking skill will be appropriate being assessed orally). The next interesting thing is how children become the main subject of the research. Children learn something of course different from the adult learners, they are different from the way of obtaining knowledge. Children are active learners, they

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built their knowledge based on their experiences (Bredenkamp & Rosegrant, 1992). Some research suggests that language is an important part in children's cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1983). Introducing language learning for children as early as possible will allow the growth of the cognitive ability of children at an early age and will be beneficial for them in the future when grew up. Teaching speaking skill for children is very important in the early stages of children's cognitive development in order to achieve the competencies in English learning specially the speaking skill achievement. Another interesting aspect why this study focused on Young Learners is that performance based assessment advocated the performance of students, and young learners are characterized as faster, active learners and have many interactions with the object of learning. They are very different from adult learners who seem more embarrassed if talking in a new language, so they are considered as passive learners (Cameron, 2001: 1).

Some studies in the field of performance-based assessment (Brualdi, 1998; Elliot and Stephen, 1995; Moskal 2003) showed that the performance based assessment is one meaningful form of assessment. Although many research have been conducted even the result have shown that performance based assessment is good for today's evaluation system also its use have broadened in many countries, but there are still many teachers who are still hesitant to apply it in the classroom. This is possibly caused by the lack of teacher competence in understanding the performance based assessment and its contributions that can be generated if implemented properly.

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Another possible thing is the teacher's lack of understanding of how they should measure young learners' performance (Airasian, 2004).

Based on the researcher's observation, through scientific and documentation studies, performance based assessment has not been widely applied in Indonesia, especially for speaking in English learning. Whereas, as has been described previously that speaking is an important part of English learning, and the assessment must be based on the spoken performance of students. While, performance measurement would be very appropriate if using a performance based assessment guide. This encourages the researcher's curiosity about performance based assessment and its contribution to the achievement of students speaking skill. Not much different from other areas, the Ternate city as one of the main town in North Maluku province has organized an international education unit start at the elementary school level, so this intriguing author's curiosity to identify what is the effect of performance-based assessment to young learners' speaking skill and how is the teacher's perception towards young learners' speaking skill achievement after using performance based assessment.

1.1 Research Question

1. What is the effect of performance based assessment to young learners' speaking skill achievement in English?
2. How does the teacher perceive the young learners' speaking skill achievement in English after using performance based assessment?

1.2 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the performance based assessments of students in one RSBI Elementary School in Ternate and their achievement in speaking skill and how does the teacher perceive this achievement.

1.3 Objective of the study

1. To find out the effect of performance based assessment in enhancing young learners' speaking skill achievement.
2. To describe how the teacher perceives the young learners' speaking skill achievement in English after using performance based assessment.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Many factors can affect the language teaching especially in a classroom situation, but performance based assessments should be taken into consideration. However this study only focuses on performance-based assessment and its implications towards young learners' speaking skill achievement and teacher's perception towards this achievement in learning English.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will highlight the effect of performance assessment on young learner's speaking skill achievement and how does the teacher perceive the young learner's speaking skill achievements. These will offer some theoretical basis for the performance assessment in the classroom application.

1.6 Assumption

The assumptions in this study will be:

1. The performance based assessment is one of meaningful assessment for students. This type of assessment will help teacher to conduct better instruction and assessment at school.
2. A good performance based assessment will contribute to student learning achievement specially to speaking skill achievement.

1.7 Hypothesis

Based on the research question and the assumption of the research above, the hypothesis in this study is:

H0 : There is no difference on speaking skill achievement after using performance based assessment between control and experimental group of students in one RSBI elementary school Ternate-North Maluku.

H1 : There is a difference on speaking skill achievement after using performance based assessment between control and experimental group of students in one RSBI elementary school Ternate-North Maluku.

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

- **Performance based assessment** (sometimes refer to Performance assessment or PBA) A performance assessment is an assessment that presents a task requiring students to do an activity that requires applying their knowledge and skill from several learning targets and uses clearly defined criteria to evaluate how well the student has achieved this application (Nitko, A.J., Brookhart, M.S, 2007).
- **Speaking** is the verbal use of language to communicate with others (Fulcher, 2003)
- **Young Learners** are learners in Elementary School are aged 9-10 years old

who are learning English as a foreign language.

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- **Achievement** can be defined as the final accomplishment of young learners' effort in spite of discouragements.
- **Perception** at least defined as the process of information extraction.

