

## **STUDENTS' OPINION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PEER ASSESMENT**

**Gartika Pandu B**  
gartikapandu@gmail.com

STKIP SILIWANGI BANDUNG

### **ABSTRACT**

As alternative assessment, peer assessment offers some advantages for teaching and learning process. Some experts believe that it can enhance students' motivation, autonomy, and responsibility. This study aims to investigate students' opinion to the implementation of peer assessment. This study was qualitative. The respondents of this study are second semester students at one of University in Bandung. The collected data is obtained through questionnaire. The data gained is categorized and analyzed based on the some theories relating to peer assessment. Regarding the result, it is found that basically the students have positive response to the implementation of peer assessment. This is because of the potential benefits offered from peer assessment. Students perceive that it helps them to evaluate their ability in speaking English, enhance their intrinsic motivation, improve their critical thinking, and recognize the assessment criteria. This finding indicates that peer assessment is worthwhile to be conducted in assessing students' oral skill.

*Keywords:* students' opinion, peer assessment, oral skill

### **A.INTRODUCTION**

According to Marsh (2008: 292), assessment is a term typically used to describe the activities undertaken by teachers to obtain information about students' knowledge skill and attitude. He also adds that assessment is used to predict students' future achievement, motivate students, and diagnose of teaching (Marsh, 2008; 292). In line with this statement, Belk and Calais (1998 cited in Nasri, 2010) propose that assessment enables the teachers to gather information about the students' progress, program goals and objective. In conclusion, assessment is the process of evaluating the extent to which the students have developed their knowledge, understanding, and abilities.

A type of assessment that is commonly used in English language classroom is peer assessment. It is defined as the evaluation process in which the students assess their peer works by using applicable criteria (Li, 2011). This is supported by Peng (2010) who says that the process of peer assessment ought to involve students grading and/or giving feedback on their peer' word and being judges for the quality of the appraisals they made. Simply defined, peer assessment is the process whereby students grade their peer performance or assignment based on the benchmarks given by the teachers.

The benefits of peer assessment have been discussed in number of studies. One of them is that peer assessment is believed to enable students to develop abilities and skills denied to them in learning environment in which the teachers alone assess their work (Cheng and Warren, n.d). In other words, it provides students the opportunity to take responsibility for analyzing, monitoring, and evaluating aspect of both the learning process and product of their peer. In addition, peer assessment also helps the students to be more autonomous and involved (Karra, 2009)

Concerning to the learning and teaching process, students' opinion has a crucial role. As Horwitz (1988 in Park,2010) notes that teachers need to know students' opinion about language learning in order to foster more effective learning strategies in their students. This is because severe disappointment caused by a mismatch between students' expectations about language learning and the realities they encounter in the classroom can impede language acquisition. Teachers, therefore, need to explore their students' opinion and expectations to close the gap and maximize the effects of teaching (Park,2010)

Based from the above explanation, this study aims to investigate students' opinion toward the implementation of peer assessment in speaking.

## **B.LITERATURE REVIEW**

Hughes (2006) simply defines peer assessment as students assessing students. Topping (1998) states that peer assessment is an arrangement in which individual consider the amount level, value, worth, quality of success of the product or outcomes of learning of peer in similar status. According to another definition, peer assessment is assessment of students by other students which provide formative review of both feedback and summative grading (Karaca, 2009). This is supported by Fachikov (in Spiller, 2009) who asserts that peer assessment requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product or a performance, based on criteria of excellent for that product or event which students may have been involved in determining. In short, peer assessment is a kind of assessment by which the students are asked to rate their friend performance by using some criteria.

According to Brown (2004:270), peer assessment is based on cooperative learning principle, and it is an arm of plethora of task and procedures within the domain learner centered and collaborative education. There are five types of peer assessment (Brown, 2004). Those are: 1) direct assessment performance, a types of assessment in which the students give evaluation immediately or very soon after the performance. Thus, having made an oral presentation, the students fill out the checklist that rates performance on a defined scale. Peer editing is also an excellent example of direct assessment of a specific performance. 2) Indirect assessment, a type of assessment that is targeted to view general ability, and thus it is done after the students have completed the whole course. 3) Metacognitive assessment, a type of assessment that is done to set a goal. 4) Socio-affective assessment, an assessment that is done to examine the affective factor in learning. 5) Students-generated assessment, a type of assessment that engages students

in a process of constructing the test. This can be productive and intrinsically motivating for the students. Besides, it builds autonomy process.

Peer assessment offers various advantages. Peer assessment, for instance, can encourage collaborative learning through interchange about what constitutes a good work (Race, 1998; Bostock in Majdoddin, 2010; Spiller, 2009). It also helps to lessen the power imbalance between teacher and students (Spiller, 2009). Besides, it can be a part of students' learning process (Spiller, 2009 & Bostock in Majdoddin, 2010). In this assessment, the students will learn of how to receive and give feedback. They will also learn of how to clarify, review, and edit their ideas (Spiller, 2009). Thus, students engaged commentary on the work of other can heighten their own capacity for judgment and making intellectual choice. In the other sides, students receiving feedback from their peer can get a wider range of ideas about their work to promote development and improvement (Spiller, 2009). They will recognize the strength and weaknesses point of their work (Majdoddin, 2010 & Karaca, 2009). This indirectly will improve their self-assessment capabilities. In addition, the students will be familiar with assessment criteria. They will know of how to assess well. Meanwhile, for the teachers, peer assessment helps them to reduce their marking load. It also saves time as it can be conducted without teachers' presence (Karaca, 2009).

Apart from the positive impact of peer assessment, there are also some disadvantages and difficulties that should be taken into account. Brown (2004) states that subjectivity becomes the main problem on peer assessment implementation. In this case, the students may not accurately assess themselves or other. Besides, the students probably do not want to correct their peers' error because it can threat the harmony of their relationship. This is in line with Bostock (2000) and White (2009) in Majdoddin (2010) who state that students may not like peers' marking because of the possibility of being negatively or unfairly evaluated by their peers, or being misunderstood. Another problem that may arise here is that since teachers are not involved in the evaluation process, students may provide each other with false information (Majdoddin, 2010).

To minimize the above drawbacks, Brown (2004) offers some guideline that should be followed by the teacher in conducting peer assessment:

1. Tell students the purpose of the assessment. Peer assessment is the process that many students will initially find quite uncomfortable. They need to know the concept. Therefore, it is essential for the teacher to carefully analyze the need that will be met in offering peer assessment, and then convey this information to the students.
2. Define the task clearly. Teacher should make sure that the students know exactly what they are supposed to do. If the teacher offering a rating scale or questionnaire, the task is not complex. Guideline or model, in this case, will be of great help in clarifying the procedures.
3. Encourage impartial evaluation of performance or ability. One of the greatest drawbacks of peer assessment is the threat of subjectivity. By showing students the advantage of honest, objective opinion, the teacher can maximize the beneficial washback of peer assessment.

4. Ensuring beneficial washback through follow-up task. It is not enough to simply toss a self-checklist at students and then walks away. Systematic follow up can be accomplished through further self-analysis, journal reflection, written feedback from the teacher, conferencing with the teacher, purposeful goal-setting by the students, or any combination of the above.

### **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed qualitative research design. It was used since its ability to investigate the social phenomenon occurred in natural setting, such the implementation of peer assessment in the classroom setting. Creswell (1994) states that qualitative study is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed view of informant, and conducted in natural setting.

The study was conducted in one of faculties at a university in Bandung. This faculty offered an English course as the obligatory subject. The aim was to enhance students' ability to communicate in English. Meanwhile, the respondents were second semester students. They were chosen since they had to do classroom presentation in which their performance was scored and judged by their peers. This was in line with the purpose of this study that was intended to investigate the implementation of peer assessment in oral skill.

In collecting the data needed for this study, questionnaire was used. It was employed to investigate the students' view toward the underpinning issues based on their knowledge and experience. Eight questions developed from White (2009) questionnaire should be answered by the respondents. Question number 1-7 concerned to their opinion toward the implementation of peer assessment, whilst question number 8 focused on students' opinion of the advantages of peer assessment implementation.

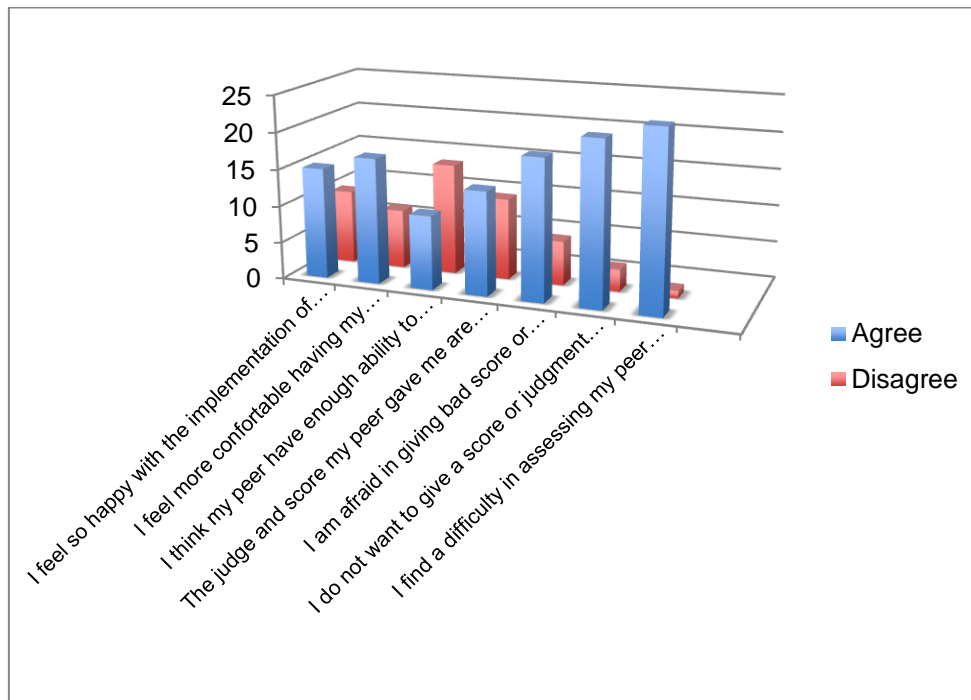
Meanwhile, for data analysis, it was conducted into two steps. Firstly, questionnaire data was categorized based on the problems mentioned on this study. Then, all the data gained were analyzed based on the related theories.

### **D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The following findings and discussions are provided to answer the problem of study mentioned in the background. This section is divided into two parts. The first discusses the students' opinion to the implementation of peer assessment in general. Lastly, it talks about the students' opinion of the advantages to peer assessment implementation.

#### **1. Students' opinion to peer assessment implementation**

To gain the students' response to peer assessment, the questionnaire was distributed to collect the data needed for the issues. As previously mentioned, the questionnaire is developed from White (2009) questionnaire format. The collected data is shown in the following chart:



From the above chart, it can be seen that most of the students, exactly 15 (60%) students, are interested to the implementation of peer assessment as their classroom assessment. Whilst, there is only 10 (40%) students who are disagree to its implementation. This finding is strengthened by the answer from the second question in which there are 17 (68%) students willing to be corrected by their peers. They (15 (60%) students) think that their peers have enough ability to judge and score their oral skill ability. It is proved by the fair and reasonable score that their peers gave to them. On the other hand, there are only 8 (32%) students who are not comfortable with their peers' judgments. In this case, they (10 (40% students) believe that their peers will not be able to mark their presentation. At least 11 (44%) students realize that they get unfair and unreasonable score from their peers.

The above statement indirectly indicates that students have positive response to the implementation of peer assessment. Unfortunately, students' ability in assessing their peers' oral skill becomes an issue here. According to Mown and Pain (1995 cited from White, 2009), students are generally capable and conscientious self- and peer assessors as long as they are adequately prepared and reassured about the value of exercise. The fact that most students are satisfied to the score given by their peers indicates that this group of students may be more skillful or capable than other. In contrast, there are two things that may cause students dissatisfaction with the score given by their peer. First, their peers elevate the assessment criteria. Thus, it leads to unfair score. As proposed by Harlen (2006 quoted from White, 2009) that it is worth remembering the simple truth that because assessment involves making judgments, it will inevitably be subject to some error and bias. Second, their peers are incapable to evaluate each other.

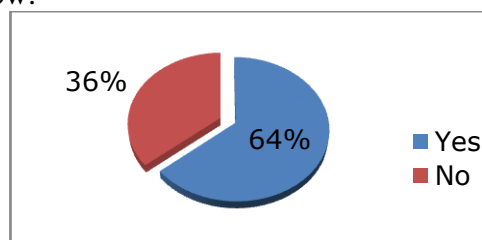
Move to the fifth question, most of the students (19 or 76%) are afraid in giving a bad score to their peer presentation. Twenty two (88%) students feel that the implementation of peer assessment has an impact on their relationship with other. On the contrary, there are only 6 (24%) students who are willing to give a bad score on their peer presentation. Three (12%) of them believe that it will not influence their relationship.

The fact that students are afraid of giving a bad score is also supported by the observation data that shows a small number of students participating in giving comments. The subjectivity issue is emerged here. As it has been known, the observed students have been together for almost a years. They have well known each other. They also definitely have a good relationship. Thus, they may be reluctant to make judgments on their peers' performance. Another possibility is students who make a group. It is not possible that the students will offer a good comment on their group members and a bad comment on the other group members. Teacher intervention should be included to handle this problem. At this point, teacher has to give additional comment or feedback on students' performance since they still pretend it as the source of input. Thus, the subjectivity can be avoided.

The last question is related to the students' difficulty on the implementation of peer assessment. It is found that most of the students (24 or 96% students) admit that an unclear criterion has become their main obstacle. It is strengthened by the observation data that show the absences of rating sheet or questionnaire. As mentioned before, the success of peer assessment stays on the simply rating sheet or questionnaire. It helps the students to determine what to access. Thus, its absence can make the confusions on the students' mind, which finally leads to subjectivity.

## 2. Students' opinion of the advantages of peer assessment implementation

The information of students' opinion of the advantages to peer assessment implementation is obtained from the open question. The result of their answer is provided in the chart below:



The questionnaire data reveals that most of the students (16 or 64%) agree toward the benefit offered from peer assessment. Various reasons underlie their statement. First, feedback or comment given by their peer provides the information about their ability in English, whether their strong or weak points. This is in line with Majdoddin's (2010) statement who says one of the peer assessment advantages is to help the students to identify the weak and strong points. This may occur because their peers are able to give an accurate score. Hence, it helps them to evaluate their selves. The samples of their statement are given below:

***R: Membantu mengetahui kekurangan dan kelebihan di dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris.***

***R: Masukan yang dikasih temen membuat kita tau kekurangan dalam bahasa Inggris.***

Secondly, they feel that peer assessment implementation motivate them to perform a good presentation. Intrinsic motivation, motivation coming from inside, becomes the main point here. Brown (2004) states that peer assessment can develop students' intrinsic motivation. The students will do some efforts to do their best in delivering the presentation. They will make some preparations (such as reread and recheck their power point; reread the material they were presented, etc) in order to get a good comment from their peers. The following data presents their statements:

***R: Memotivasi untuk nampilin yang terbaik***

***R: Memotivasi untuk mempersiapkan segalase suatunya dengan baik karena takut dapet komen jelek.***

Thirdly, they feel that peer assessment has given new knowledge for them, especially in assessment process. At this point, they learn how to assess their peers accurately. They cannot assess their peers' performance ineptly since some considerations should be taken into account. It indicates that peer assessment indirectly helps the students to be a part of learning process (Spiller, 2009 & Majdoddin, 2010). It also indicates that peer assessment can help the student to enhance their critical thinking ability in assessing their peer performance. Below are their statements:

***R: Menjadi tau proses penilaian seperti apa, ga bisa asal-asalan.***

***R: Belajar untuk bisa member ipenilaian yang objek f dan benar.***

On the other hand, nine (36%) students find this assessment techniques is useless. It does not give any advantages for them. The reason behind their dissatisfaction is that it is very subjective. Friendship and solidarity become the main problem at this point. They do not want give a judgment to their peer performance because it can threat the harmony of their relationship. They are afraid if their peers will be offended. Besides, they believe, as the source of knowledge, teacher assessment is more reliable than their peers. The following data shows their statements.

***R: Kurang objektif. Terkadang canggung memberi penilaian pada teman sendiri, takut tersinggung.***

***R: Saya rasa guru lebih bisa menilai kemampuan kita. Selain memiliki ilmu yang lebih tinggi, penilaian pun lebih objektif dan lebih bisa dipercaya.***

## **E.CONCLUSION**

The present study provides the information students' opinion toward the implementation of peer assessment. Basically, students have positive response to its implementation as it offers various advantages for them. Unfortunately, subjectivity still becomes the main problem in the implementation of peer assessment. It is caused by students' inability to evaluate each other, unclear assessment criteria, and students' relationship with their peer. To handle these problems, teacher's feedback or comment should be provided. It

is needed as in Indonesian context; teacher still has a crucial role in teaching and learning process. The knowledge they had is pretended as the source of input for the students. Thus, feedback given by them is assumed to be more important and meaningful than their peer feedback or comment. Besides, a clear and simply rank sheet or questionnaire also should be provided in order to be a guideline for them of how to access. Hence, the confusion as well as the subjectivity can be avoided.

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