# A DESIGN OF SPEAKING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR ENGLISH IMMERSION CAMP

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this mix-method study is to design a speaking assessment rubric for an English Immersion Camp (EIC) program in Muhammadiyah University of North Maluku called UMMU English Immersion Camp (UEIC). In UEIC, there were seven activities applied for triggering the participants to continuously speak English during the program (see Syahidah, Umasugi, & Buamona, 2019). However, the program did not have a proper assessment form to measure the UEIC participants' speaking development. Therefore, this study was administered to design the assessment in the form of a speaking rubric. Three instruments were used to gather the data for designing the rubric. Interviews were adminstered to two experts of English language assessment who have been having years of experince in teaching English at the university. Document analyses were done to analyze the UEIC syllabus from previous studies and speaking rubrics from various sources to make a match between the design of the assessment instrument with the UEIC achievement targets, objectives, materials, and learning techniques. Observations were conducted by four observers who were fasilitators at the UEIC to measure the participants' speaking progress. Data from obervations were used to test the validity and reliability of the rubric. The speaking assessment rubric was designed based on the steps of designing speaking assessment proposed by O'Malley and Pierce (1996) which are identifying the purposes of speaking assessment, planning speaking assessment, developing speaking test rubric and setting standards. The rubric contained ten items divided into six aspects of speaking assessments namely (1) grammar, (2) vocabulary, (3) pronunciation, (4) fluency, and (5) comprehenesibility respectively represented into two items, and (6) accuracy measured by three items. Moreover, the validity and reliability analyses showed that the rubric containing 10 items were valid and reliable because all values needed have reached the theoretical standard value for validity and reliability of a speaking test instrument.

Keywords: English Immersion Camp, Speaking Rubric, Validity, Reliability, Authenticity

#### INTRODUCTION

Every English learning instruction needs assessment to measure learners' learning progress and the instruction effectiveness. Various experts state that assessment is important in second language learning due to its function as a reference for making decision about learners' learning progress (Bachman, 1990; Davies, 1990; Brown, 2004; Harmer, 2007; Douglas, 2010; Berry and Adamson, 2011) in all skills. In terms of English speaking skill, assessment comes to the forefront since the results of the assessment may reveal the latest level of learners' speaking ability by which the decision for next learning instruction can be predicted and designed.

There are many English instructions or programs designed to develop learners' ability in speaking. One of the program is English Immersion Camp *Volume 10 (1) May 2021, page 31-46* 

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(EIC) designed and held by Syahidah et al (2018) for students of English department at Muhammadiyah University of North Maluku. EIC is an outdoor activity where students are set to stay at a camp and English is used as the main language for the interaction of participants and facilitators during the implementation of camp. EIC is designed and implemented to create an English-speaking environment to help students at the university who want to learn English but have limited access to an English-speaking environment. Referring to its implementation at Muhammadiyah University of North Maluku, EIC was named the UMMU English Immersion Camp (UEIC).

Before implementing UEIC, Syahidah et al conducted a needs analysis on prospective UEIC participant students to find out their English language needs and an analysis of EIC characteristics. The results of both analyzes were used as a primary data to design the UEIC syllabus. However, despite having made a UEIC syllabus design and implementing it in a UEIC activity, the syllabus design still focuses more on developing learning materials and strategies, while the assessment and evaluation are still not described in detail. During the implementation of UEIC, the assessment was carried out by observing participants with specific assessments on speaking, listening, vocabulary mastery, and English grammar without using or referring to an assessment rubric which assessment results can be accounted for and concretely proven. Therefore, to complete the UEIC syllabus design, this study is conducted focusing on developing a speaking assessment instrument containing assessment principles in accordance with three assessment criteria, namely authenticity, validity, and reliability.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

## **Immersion in Second Language Acquisition Theory (SLA)**

Immersion is a method or approach applied in bilingual learning. As a method, immersion allows a person to learn a second language or target language where the environment and all learning instructions use the language being studied. In other words, in the application of the immersion method, a person is like being "immersed" in the environment where the target language is used (FPHLCC Language Program Handbook Development Team, 2010). The

emergence of the immersion method in bilingual learning is based on the theory of Second Language Acquisition developed by Stephen D. Krashen. In the translation of the Language Input Hypothesis in SLA theory, Krashen argues that language is obtained by a person from the environment in two ways, firstly by learning the language consciously (learning) and secondly by learning the language unconsciously or naturally (acquisition) because it is formed by the environment in which language interactions happened (Krashen, 1982). Based on this SLA theory, the immersion method is then developed in language learning, either by implementing it directly in the native land or in the environment surrounded by the language being studied.

The implementation of the immersion method in language learning was initially applied to immigrants in a country who had difficulty communicating daily and academically using the native language that they visited. To overcome these communication difficulties, immigrant recipient countries then create language learning programs using the immersion method for a specified period of time. Generally, the implementation of this immersion program runs in a few months, even several years, depending on the target of achieving the second language proficiency has been defined in the curriculum or learning syllabus. The immersion method can not only be implemented for learning English, but in all languages. Several countries such as Canada, the United States, and China have implemented immersion programs to help immigrants in their countries to be able to communicate in the country's language well (See Rossell, 2000; Siano, 2000; Luan and Guo, 2011).

As previously mentioned, immersion programs are generally applied with a long duration such as in months or years in the environment where the second language is used. However, in this study, the immersion program was only applied for a maximum of three days at the campsite (English Immersion Camp) as a learning supplement for English learners who are EIC participants. The results of this study provide new information about the application of the immersion program with a short day duration and adapt to the environment in which English is used and its effectiveness in helping students improve their English skills, particularly speaking skill.

## The Design of English Immersion Camp Syllabus

The design of the English Immersion Camp (EIC) syllabus entitled UMMU English Immersion Camp (UEIC) has been created and implemented in previous research (Syahidah et al, 2018) by adapting the order of designing the syllabus from Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Brown (1995), Richards (2002), and Nation and Macalister (2010). The picture from the UMMU English Immersion Camp (UEIC) design shown as follows:

**Table 1.** The Syllabus of UEIC

UMMU ENGLISH IMMERSION CAMP (UEIC)							
Goal		Developing the Participants' Communicative Competence					
Objectives	2. To trigge	<ol> <li>To provide English environment where participants can practice their English ability incontext</li> <li>To trigger participants to be more active and be confident in expressing their thought using English</li> <li>To create participants' togetherness and stimulate participants ability to work in group</li> </ol>					
Materials	Intronight	Searching for Treasure	Argument Battle	Bucket Story	Harmony Night	Spelling Bee	Words for UEIC
Learning Strategies	(See Syahid	(See Syahidah et al, 2018)					
	Observatio n:	Observation:	Observation:	Observation:	Observation:	Observation:	Observation
Assessment	Speaking, Listening, Vocabulary, And Grammar	Reading, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Speaking.	Vocabulary, Grammar, Speaking, And Listening.	Speaking, Listening, Vocabulary, And Grammar.	Listening, Speaking, Vocabulary, And Grammar.	Listening and Vocabulary.	Speaking, Vocabulary, And Grammar.
Evaluation		The Stages of English Language Acquisition Proposed by Goldberg (2000)					

This UEIC design is used in this paper by focusing on developing the design of the assessment instrument. This means that at the end of this study, there will be some changes in the assessment items of the design from observation the learners' all skills and language components to just speaking skill

#### **Components of Speaking Assessment**

There are several components of speaking skill that should be considered in designing a speaking assessment. Brown (2004) states that speaking assessment has to cover pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and task. Hughes (2005) mentions accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension as the components of speaking. Meanwhile, Mazouzi (2013) summarize the components into two namely fluency and accuracy where comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation have been included within. To take these experts' views into consideration, the speaking assessment

of EIC is designed by applying six components of speaking which are grammar mastery, accuracy, fluency, vocabulary mastery, comprehension, and pronunciation.

## **Criteria for Designing Speaking Assessment Rubric**

Making an English learning assessment instrument according to Bachman and Palmer (1996) requires six criteria, namely reliability, validity, authenticity, interactive, impact, and practicality (reliability, construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, impact and practicality). In this study, three criteria are used to test the assessment instrument designed for the UMMU English Immersion Camp (UEIC) activities which are authenticity, validity, and reliability. An assessment instrument is called authentic if the it is carried out based on the proper context or the target language context (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Brown Abeywickrama, 2010).

As for validity, an English assessment instrument is considered to be valid if the instrument used assesses what should be assessed (Harmer, 2007; Hughes, 2003). Validity has several types, but in this research content validity and construct validity are used. Content validity is the type of validation of an assessment instrument based on the content or skill being assessed (Hughes, 2003). Construct validity is the validation type of assessment instrument based on the correlation between test scores and the theoretical construction of the test items (American Psychological Association, 1954; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). In terms of reliability, an assessment instrument is reliable seen from the accuracy and consistency in the assessment rubric to the assessment results (Douglas, 2010; Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010).

#### RESEARCH METODOLOGY

# Research Design

The study employed mix-method as research design. The data were gathered through qualitative method by which interviews, questionnaire and observation were administered. Meanwhile, quantitative method was applied to analyze data from obervations of learners' speaking perfomance during the UEIC program. The UEIC assessment was designed based on data analysis of the needs

of nine UEIC participants, two experts in English assessment in North Maluku, and speaking rubrics from various sources.

## **Data Collection Techniques**

To obtain research data, the data collection technique used in this research is triangulation, namely:

- 1. Document analysis, used to analyze the UEIC syllabus from previous studies and speaking rubrics from various sources to make a match between the design of the assessment instrument with the UEIC achievement targets, objectives, materials, and learning techniques. Furthermore, the results of the analysis of this document were functioned to compile an authentic, a valid and reliable assessment rubric for UEIC assessment.
- 2. Interview, used to support questionnaire data from prospective UEIC participants and to obtain their self-assessment. Interviews were also adminstered to two experts of English language assessment. These two experts are faculty members of Khairun University who have been having years of experince in teaching English at the university.
- 3. Observation, used to observe the speaking skill of UEIC participants as the object of direct assessment during the implementation of UEIC. Participants were observed in all seven UEIC activities. Observations were done by four observers who were fasilitators at the UEIC who have reached advanced level of English proficiency. These fasilitators had been trained to be the observers for filling in the UEIC assessment rubrics based on the participants' speaking perfomance. The training was administered before the UEIC was conducted in order to avoid misunderstanding and bias during the assessment process.

#### **Data Analysis**

After obtaining the required data from data collection techniques, data analyses were carried out with a systematic description from the results of interviews and document analyses containing the identification of speaking assessment purposes and the planning of speaking assessment content. This description was used as considerations to design the authentic assessment rubric

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following O'Malley and Pierce's (1996) stages of developing an assessment rubric. After the assessment rubric was designed, it was used for UEIC in all seven UEIC activities through which the four raters would fill in the rubric based on the participants' speaking performance. Data from observations were then analyzed through quantitative approach to check the validity and the reliability. Validity of the rubric was confirmed through *V Aiken Coefficient* (Aiken, 1985). The content validity was analyzed through Aiken's V formula as follows:

$$V = \Sigma_S / [n(c-1)]$$

s = r - lo

r =the value given by expert

lo = lowest validity score

c = highest validity score

n = number of experts who gave the score

Based on Aiken's V value table, the minimum standard for this research where 5 rating scales and 4 raters were used was 0.88 with probability value 0.24.

The construct validity was analyzed through correlation of Pearson Product Moment in SPSS version 26 software to measure the correlation between each item score and the total scores. The value of coeficient correlation was interpreted by comparing the value of r and r critic with significance value 0.05. If the r value is more than r critic (r > r critic), it means that the item is valid. The value of r critic for 9 participant (df = N-2) is 0.666. Moreover, the more the value is near the value of 1, the stronger the validity is. Meanwhile, the reliability was calculated through  $Cronbach \ Alpha \ Coefficient$  test in SPSS version 26 software. The value of reliability was interpreted by comparing the value of  $Cronbach \ Alpha$  with the following table:

**Table 2.** The Alpha Cronbach Value (Konting et al, 2009)

Alpha Cronbach Value	Interpretation
0.91 - 1.00	Excellent
0.81 - 0.90	Good
0.71 - 0.80	Good and Acceptable
0.61 - 0.70	Acceptable
0.01 - 0.60	Non Acceptable

The results of these data analysis procedures are then described at the following section.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section is presented into two sub-sections. The first is presented by following the steps of designing an authentic speaking assessment proposed by O'Malley and Pierce (1996) which are identifying the purposes of speaking assessment, planning and developing speaking assessment rubric, and setting standards. The second is presented by describing the analysis of validity and reliability of the speaking assessment rubric.

## **Steps of Designing EIC Speaking Assessment**

Identifying the Purposes of EIC Speaking Assessment

At the beginning, the English Immersion Camp program was planned and administered in order to answer the needs of English students in North Maluku regarding the English environment where they have chance to practice their receptive and productive skills, particularly speaking skill. Answering the needs, the EIC program were designed with seven variations of speaking activities. Therefore, it is written in its design that the goal of EIC is "Developing the Participants' Communicative Competence" by which the objectives are formulated into three, namely:

- 1. To provide English environment where participants can practice their English ability in context.
- 2. To trigger participants to be more active and be confident in expressing their thought using English.
- 3. To create participants' togetherness and stimulate participant's ability to work in group.

Based on the goal and objectives, the purpose of the EIC assessment was determined focusing more on speaking skill in which the purpose of assessment was to identify the participants' speaking progress during the program. In other words, the assessment was not administered for initial identification and placements of the students in need of a language based program, for movement from one level to another program within a given program, and for placement out of an ESL/bilingual program in to a grade-level classroom as explained by O'Malley and Pierce (1996). Hence, the purpose of the EIC assessment was just

limited on the collection of information about the participants' progress in developing their speaking skill throughout the program.

#### Planning the EIC Speaking Assessment

Following the goal and objectives, activities in UEIC were designed to assist the participants to be able to learn and practice their English skills in context where the environment was surrounded by English instructions. Of four skills in English, speaking is the main skill because the target of UEIC is to guide participants to be able to express their ideas and thoughts orally. Therefore, the assessment for the UEIC activities must be developed to measure the participants' competence in speaking. Interviews with two experts of English assessment reveal that in assessing speaking skill, there are several aspects that have to be considered. Expert 1 stated that assessment for speaking should be designed by containing fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, comprehensive, and accuracy as the items in the assessment rubric. The same line also delivered by Expert 2 who said that,

Assessing speaking is quite complicated since we have to combine so many aspects in one measurement like pronunciation, grammar,.. vocabulary is also important and fluency, and accuracy. So, it needs carefulness,... particularly for those who assess.

The aspects of speaking assessment revealed by these two experts are in accordance with Heaton (1991), Nunan (1999) and Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) who expained that speaking assessment has to contain the measurement of students' grammar and vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, fluency, comprehensibility, and accuracy.

Aligning the experts' inputs and analysis from related document, the writers tried to design the EIC assessment rubric by accommodating the aspects of speaking assessment stated above. The following table shows the analysis of aspects of speaking assessment in EIC assessment:

Table 3. Analysis of Speaking Assessment Components of EIC

Aspects of Speaking Assessment	Description in the Rubric
Grammar	Speaks no grammatical error (speaker self-correct without hesitation).
Grammar	Applies a variety of grammatical structure in the

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	speaking.	
Vocabulary	Uses sufficient but varied vocabulary to express idea clearly.	
Vocabulary and Comprehensibility  Uses compund and complex sentences in speaking Uses compund and complex sentences in speaking		
Comprehensibility	Comprehends and responds in detail of other people's talk.	
Fluency	Speaks in smooth flow, quick, and continuous flow as well as natural pauses.	
Pronunciation and Fluency	Is phonetically correct in speaking and awareness of accent.	
Accuracy	Uses strategies as needed when she/he meets with difficulties in finding words to say.	
Accuracy Is able to deliver a presentation and to respond audiences with appropriate verbal cues and eye		
Pronunciation and Accuracy	Speaks clearly and can imitate accurate pronunciation.	

The descriptions of EIC rubric above were designed and used in UEIC seven activities namely (1) intronight, (2) seeking for treasure, (3) argument battle, (4) bucket story, (5) harmony night, (6) spelling bee, and (7) words for UEIC.

## Setting Standard for EIC Assessment

Once EIC assessment rubric has been designed, the writers then set the standard of participants' speaking performance. For the rubric, the writers decided to set the standard by adapting the form of analytic oral language scoring rubric (see O'Malley and Pierce, 1996: 68). The description of the rubric with its standard is seen below:

Table 4. The Standard Criteria of EIC Assessment Rubric

<b>Description in the Rubric</b>	1	2	3	4	5
Speaks no grammatical error (speaker self-correct without					
hesitation).					
Applies a variety of grammatical structure in the speaking.					
Uses sufficient but varied vocabulary to express idea clearly.					
Uses compund and complex sentences in speaking.					
Comprehends and responds in detail of other people's talk.					
Speaks in smooth flow, quick, and continuous flow as well as					
natural pauses.					
Is phonetically correct in speaking and awareness of accent.					
Uses strategies as needed when she/he meets with difficulties					
in finding words to say.					
Is able to deliver a presentation and to respond to the					
audiences with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact.					
Speaks clearly and can imitate accurate pronunciation.					

The standard criteria for participants' speaking performance in UEIC at the rubric above was set by ranging the scoring from 1 to 5. Scores of 1 and 2 required basic level. Score of 3 indicated the intermediate level. Meanwhile, scores of 4 and 5 requires advanced level. This analytic form was used not for relocating participants of UEIC at certain level, but for gathering information about their speaking progress during participating in the UEIC. Therefore, at the end of the assessment, there was only a report about the implementation of EIC and its effect of participants' speaking development.

# Analyses of Validity and Reliability of EIC Assessment Rubric

## Validity

Analysis of validity was done through two types of validity namely content validity and construct validity.

# Content Validity

As stated by Hughes (2003) that content validity is the type of validation of an assessment instrument based on the content or skill being assessed, the following table captures the result of EIC assessment based on the analysis of V Aiken Coefficient.

**Table 5.** The Analysis Result of V'Aiken Coefficient

Rubric Item	V	Criterion
Speaks no grammatical error (speaker self-correct without	0.905	Valid
hesitation).		
Applies a variety of grammatical structure in the speaking.	0.885	Valid
Uses sufficient but varied vocabulary to express idea	0.887	Valid
clearly.		
Uses compund and complex sentences in speaking.	0.895	Valid
Comprehends and responds in detail of other people's talk.	0.887	Valid
Speaks in smooth flow, quick, and continuous flow as well	0.907	Valid
as natural pauses.		
Is phonetically correct in speaking and awareness of accent.	0.912	Valid
Uses strategies as needed when she/he meets with	0.907	Valid
difficulties in finding words to say.		
Is able to deliver a presentation and to respond to the	0.912	Valid
audiences with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact.		
Speaks clearly and can imitate accurate pronunciation.	0.897	Valid

Table 5 above shows that all items in the EIC assessment rubric have reached the minimum standard of V value where 5 rating scales and 4 raters were

used was 0.88 with probability value 0.24. This result indicates that the content of the items have been in line with the skill being measured.

## Construct Validity

Construct validity is analyzed to validate EIC assessment rubric based on the correlation between test scores and the theoretical construction of the test items. The following table describes the result of constuct validity of the rubric items.

**Table 6.** The Analysis Result of *Pearson Product Moment* of 10 Items of the Rubric (N = 9)

Rubric Item	R	Criterion
Speaks no grammatical error (speaker self-correct without hesitation).	0.840	Valid
Applies a variety of grammatical structure in the speaking.	0.857	Valid
Uses sufficient but varied vocabulary to express idea clearly.	0.933	Valid
Uses compund and complex sentences in speaking.	0.847	Valid
Comprehends and responds in detail of other people's talk.	0.883	Valid
Speaks in smooth flow, quick, and continuous flow as well as natural pauses.	0.965	Valid
Is phonetically correct in speaking and awareness of accent.	0.956	Valid
Uses strategies as needed when she/he meets with difficulties in finding words to say.	0.929	Valid
Is able to deliver a presentation and to respond to the audiences with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact.	0.969	Valid
Speaks clearly and can imitate accurate pronunciation.	0.929	Valid

As seen in Table 6, the analysis of *Pearson Product Moment* of EIC assessment rubric reveals that the r value of all items in the rubric are bigger than the r critic which is 0.666. This interpretation means that all items are valid. Besides, the result indicates that the scores of all 10 items of the rubric have strong correlation with the total scores since the r values are more than 0.70.

The analysis results of content validity and construct validity above concludes that all 10 items of EIC assessment rubric are valid. Therefore, the proposed rubric is acceptable to use as a way for assessing EIC participants' speaking skill.

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## Reliability

Douglas (2010) and Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) state that an assessment instrument is reliable when there are accuracy and consistency of the assessment rubric and the assessment results. By applying *Cronbach Alpha Coefficient* test in SPSS version 26 software, the reliability of EIC assessment rubric was analyzed. The following table shows the result of the analysis.

		N	%
Cases	Valid	9	100,0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	,0
	Total	9	100,0

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's			
Alpha	N of Items		
,974	10		

Based on the reliability statistics, it is indicated that the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.974. Comparing the value to the table of The Alpha Cronbach Value (Konting et al, 2009), the Cronbach's Alpha value is interpreted as excellent reliability since the value 0.974 lies between 0.91 and 1.00. This indication means that the proposed EIC assessment rubric is reliable and has strong possibility to use.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that the participants' of English Immersion Camp (EIC) speaking progress could be measured using EIS Speaking Assessment Rubric designed by following O'Malley and Pierce's (1996) steps of designing authentic speaking assessment which are identifying the purposes of speaking assessment, planning speaking assessment, developing speaking test rubric and setting standards. The rubric contained ten items divided into six aspects of speaking assessments namely (1) grammar, (2) vocabulary, (3) pronunciation, (4) fluency, and (5) comprehenesibility respectively represented into two items, and (6) accuracy measured by three items. Besides, the validity and reliability analyses showed that the rubric containing 10 items were valid and reliable. At content validity test, all items in the EIC assessment rubric have reached the minimum standard of *V' Aiken* value where 5 rating scales and 4 raters were used

was 0.88 with probability value 0.24. For construct validity, the analysis of *Pearson Product Moment* showed that the r value of all items in the rubric are bigger than the r critic which is 0.666. Meanwhile, the reliability test indicated that the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.974 interpreted as excellent reliability since the value 0.974 lies between 0.91 and 1.00. These results imply that the proposed EIC speaking assessment rubric is acceptable to use at the program.

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