ABSTRACT

Wijaya, Amelia Dina (2026). **Teachers' Experiences of Using Rubrics and Professional Judgement in Senior High School Speaking Assessment: A Narrative Inquiry.**

This study aims to explore how two EFL teachers at SMAN 21 Bandung use speaking rubrics to assess and evaluate students' speaking performance, examine how the teachers use professional judgement when interpreting assessment results and making evaluative decisions about students' speaking skills, and identify the challenges experienced by the teachers and their reflections on combining speaking rubrics with professional judgement in speaking assessment.

This qualitative study employed Narrative Inquiry. Data were collected through document analysis of two speaking assessment rubrics, semi-structured interviews, and guided reflective journals completed by the two participating teachers. The integrated dataset was analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis and interpreted through the narrative dimensions of temporality, sociality, and place.

The findings revealed that both teachers used rubrics as flexible reference frames rather than fixed scoring rules. Teacher 1 embedded assessment in classroom interaction and emphasised responsiveness, relevance, elaboration, and participation, while Teacher 2 followed a more explicit analytic procedure but supplemented the rubric with task fulfilment, effort, and confidence-related considerations.

Professional judgement enabled both teachers to interpret ambiguous performances by drawing on students' previous performance, progress, participation, nervousness, and communicative initiative. However, several challenges affected transparency and consistency, including vague descriptors, mismatches between written and enacted criteria, limited assessment time, large classes, unequal opportunities to produce speaking evidence, institutional score expectations, and limited moderation among teachers. The teachers' reflections highlighted the need to balance rubric criteria with contextual understanding while maintaining fairness in assessment decisions.

The study concludes that professional judgement is indispensable in speaking assessment, but it should remain task-relevant, evidence-based, transparent, documented, and supported by shared professional calibration. Clearer rubric descriptors and the separation of language achievement from effort or participation are necessary to strengthen fairness and score interpretability.

Keywords: Speaking Assessment, Speaking Rubric, Professional Judgement, Narrative Inquiry, EFL Teachers