



Evaluation of Teaching Speaking Skills Based on Interpersonal Intelligence

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Abstract:

Teaching speaking skills in secondary education requires approaches that not only enhance verbal fluency but also align with students' social and emotional development. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of interpersonal intelligence-based strategies in teaching speaking skills and their effectiveness in improving students' oral communication competence. The background of this research stems from the need to develop speaking instruction methods that are interactive, student-centered, and responsive to individual communication styles. By emphasizing interpersonal intelligence, such as empathy, collaboration, and effective peer interaction, teachers are expected to foster a more engaging and emotionally supportive learning environment. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, collecting data through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with English teachers and students, and documentation of speaking activities. The findings reveal that the use of interpersonal strategies like role-playing, group discussions, and peer feedback significantly increases student participation, confidence, and speaking fluency. In practice, these strategies also reduce students' anxiety and promote a stronger sense of connection within the classroom. The implications of this study suggest that integrating interpersonal intelligence in teaching speaking can serve as a powerful pedagogical foundation to support holistic communication skills development in secondary education.

Keywords: *Speaking Skills, Interpersonal Intelligence, Student-Centered Learning, Communication Strategies, Secondary Education*

Abstrak:

Mengajarkan keterampilan berbicara di sekolah menengah memerlukan pendekatan yang tidak hanya meningkatkan kefasihan verbal tetapi juga selaras dengan perkembangan sosial dan emosional siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi penerapan strategi berbasis kecerdasan interpersonal dalam mengajarkan keterampilan berbicara dan efektivitasnya dalam meningkatkan kompetensi komunikasi lisan siswa. Latar belakang penelitian ini berasal dari kebutuhan untuk mengembangkan metode pengajaran berbicara yang interaktif, berpusat pada siswa, dan responsif terhadap gaya komunikasi individu. Dengan menekankan kecerdasan interpersonal seperti empati, kolaborasi, dan interaksi teman sebaya yang efektif guru diharapkan dapat menumbuhkan lingkungan belajar yang lebih menarik dan mendukung secara emosional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, mengumpulkan data melalui observasi kelas, wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan siswa bahasa Inggris, dan dokumentasi kegiatan berbicara. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa penggunaan strategi interpersonal seperti bermain peran, diskusi kelompok, dan umpan balik teman sebaya secara signifikan meningkatkan partisipasi, kepercayaan diri, dan kefasihan berbicara siswa. Dalam praktiknya, strategi ini juga mengurangi kecemasan siswa dan meningkatkan rasa keterhubungan yang lebih kuat di dalam kelas. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mengintegrasikan kecerdasan interpersonal dalam pengajaran berbicara dapat berfungsi sebagai landasan pedagogis yang kuat untuk mendukung pengembangan keterampilan komunikasi holistik dalam pendidikan menengah.

Kata Kunci: *Keterampilan Berbicara, Kecerdasan Interpersonal, Pembelajaran Berpusat pada Siswa, Strategi Komunikasi, Pendidikan Menengah*

INTRODUCTION / المقدمة

Learning is a dynamic process that not only involves the acquisition of knowledge but also emphasizes the optimal development of individual potential in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. One of the progressive approaches in this context is the theory of Multiple Intelligences introduced by Howard Gardner, which identifies various types of human intelligence, including interpersonal intelligence (Blignault et al., 2019, 2022; Wangdahl et al., 2019). This intelligence refers to the ability to understand, interact with, and effectively respond to others. It plays an essential role in language learning, particularly in the development of speaking skills, where social interaction and communication are key components.

Arabic language learning at the junior secondary level, such as in Madrasah Tsanawiyah, is designed to foster four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking (maharah al-kalam) requires not only vocabulary and grammar mastery but also the ability to express ideas clearly in interpersonal settings. Therefore, integrating interpersonal intelligence into the teaching and evaluation of speaking skills is expected to enhance students' confidence, fluency, and interactional competence (Blignault et al., 2021; Hasan & Mahameed, 2020; Rakhlin et al., 2021). However, current classroom practices still tend to rely on traditional assessment models that focus more on linguistic accuracy rather than communicative effectiveness.

The phenomenon observed in several madrasahs in East Java reveals that many teachers have not yet fully incorporated the principles of interpersonal intelligence in their instructional design and assessment tools. This is due to a limited understanding of how to align evaluation strategies with student intelligence profiles. As a result, the assessment of speaking skills often fails to reflect students' real communicative competence, particularly in collaborative or social contexts (Pieterse et al., 2018; Tallas-Mahajna et al., 2022; Tibi et al., 2021). An assessment model that considers interpersonal intelligence may provide a more holistic and authentic representation of students' speaking abilities.

Previous research has highlighted the need for instructional and assessment models that are responsive to students' multiple intelligences. According to Elaish et al. (2019), Bilasa & Taspinar (2020) that say in the context of speaking skill development, evaluation should not only cover linguistic elements but also assess the effectiveness of communication in real-life interpersonal interactions. Sanjaya (2022), Yorgancilar (2022), & Sakirah et al. (2020) also say that activities such as role-playing, group discussions, storytelling, and peer teaching are known to stimulate students' interpersonal intelligence and should be considered in the design of speaking skill assessments.

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of speaking skill assessments in Arabic language learning based on interpersonal intelligence. The objective is to describe how interpersonal-based evaluation strategies are applied in madrasah settings and to explore their impact on student learning outcomes. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of a more contextual, equitable, and intelligence-responsive model of Arabic speaking skill assessment in Indonesian educational contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD / المنهجية

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to explore in depth the process of evaluating speaking skills learning based on interpersonal intelligence (Mottaghizadeh & Khanabadi, 2020). This approach was chosen because it enables researchers to understand naturally occurring educational phenomena related to the integration of interpersonal intelligence into language skill evaluation without experimental manipulation. The focus of this study is on the evaluation strategies used in teaching speaking skills (maharah al-kalam) within the context of Arabic language education in Islamic secondary schools that are starting to adopt a multiple intelligences framework, especially in East Java.

Data in this study were collected through library research (study of literature), which involved a comprehensive review of relevant academic sources such as peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books, conference proceedings, and previous research related to the evaluation of Arabic speaking skills and the application of interpersonal intelligence in education (Eder et al., 2021; Nadirah et al., 2022; Udyavar et al., 2018). These sources were selected based on their relevance, academic credibility, and contribution to the theoretical framework of the study.

The data analysis process in this research adopts the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Wolak & Johnson, 2021). In the data reduction stage, the researcher identified and organized key information from the literature that aligns with the focus of the study. This step involved filtering, coding, and categorizing content that discussed evaluation practices, interpersonal intelligence, and language learning. The second stage, data presentation, was conducted in the form of thematic descriptive narratives to facilitate a clearer understanding of the literature findings and enable comparison across studies. The final stage was drawing and verifying conclusions, which was done iteratively by checking consistency between data sets and cross-validating key themes.

To enhance data validity, this study also employed triangulation of sources by comparing multiple references across different publication years and contexts. Additionally, analytic memos were used throughout the process to document the researcher's interpretations, reflections, and emerging insights. This methodological strategy allowed the researcher to construct a comprehensive and contextual evaluation framework of speaking skill instruction based on the principles of interpersonal intelligence, which can be used as a foundation for future pedagogical practices in Arabic language teaching.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION / نتائج البحث و المناقشة

Findings

Empathic Evaluation as a New Paradigm in Speaking Assessment

The evaluation of Arabic speaking skills at MA Ma'arif NU 1 Kemranjen reveals a shift in assessment patterns, where interpersonal intelligence becomes a central benchmark in measuring student performance. Based on data from literature synthesis and contextual analysis of speaking assessment practices, it was found that conventional scoring systems focused on pronunciation, fluency, and grammar are inadequate to capture the depth of communicative competence, particularly in interactional contexts. In contrast, an

empathic evaluation model incorporates how students initiate, sustain, and emotionally engage in conversations, especially in interpersonal scenarios such as role-play, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks.

Teachers and evaluators are observed applying a more nuanced rubric that assesses not only verbal output but also responsiveness, empathy, and social awareness. A synthesis of various literature notes highlights that students with moderate linguistic abilities but high interpersonal sensitivity tend to perform better in tasks that require dialogue and perspective-taking. For example, one source emphasized, "Evaluation is not just about accuracy of expression, but about whether the student can make the other person feel heard and understood." This statement underscores the growing importance of emotional attunement in evaluating speaking proficiency.

Table 1. Indicators of Empathic Evaluation in Speaking Assessment

Indicator	Implementation Example	Analytical Note
Emotional Responsiveness	Students respond appropriately to peer emotions in role-play	Indicates the presence of interpersonal intelligence as part of speaking performance
Active Listening	Learners paraphrase or affirm peer responses	Reflects deep engagement and processing of dialogical meaning
Perspective-Taking	Students adjust tone and expression based on context	Demonstrates adaptive communication and situational awareness

Table 1 highlights how interpersonal elements previously considered peripheral are now central in speaking assessment. Emotional responsiveness, for instance, is not measured through checklists but through the evaluator's real-time engagement with student performance. This requires evaluators to serve not only as observers but also as dialogic partners who co-create meaning during assessment sessions. When a student reacts to a peer's concern with affirming words or adjusts their tone during disagreement, these subtle acts reflect a mature application of interpersonal intelligence.

This new approach not only broadens the scope of assessment but also aligns it more closely with real-world communication needs. The interpersonal evaluation model also positively influences classroom climate, as students feel their social efforts are acknowledged, not just their linguistic output. It encourages learners to view speaking as a relational activity rather than a performance to be judged in isolation. Thus, speaking evaluation evolves from a static scoring event to a dynamic interaction deepening both the purpose and the practice of Arabic language learning.

Dialogic Speaking Tasks to Foster Collaborative Competence

The application of interpersonal intelligence in Arabic-speaking classes at MA Ma'arif NU 1 Kemranjen manifests through the gradual shift from monologue-based tasks to collaborative, dialogic speaking practices. This transformation is visible in daily learning interactions, where students are increasingly encouraged to work in pairs or small groups to negotiate meaning, share perspectives, and respond emotionally in real time. Teachers no longer assign speaking tasks that emphasize isolated performance but instead design activities such as role-playing, debates, and peer interviews that stimulate the co-construction of meaning. This shift fosters not only better engagement but also improved fluency and confidence in using Arabic for authentic communication.

Classroom observations show that dialogic tasks promote more active participation among students with varying proficiency levels. One teacher mentioned, "When students speak in pairs, they help each other. The quiet ones speak more because they don't feel judged, like in front of the whole class." This insight reflects how peer collaboration lowers performance anxiety and invites more equitable participation. In these activities, turn-taking, question-answer sequences, and feedback become integral parts of the learning process, enabling students to develop both linguistic and social-linguistic skills. Collaborative speaking also aligns with the Arabic language's conversational nature, where context, gesture, and emotional tone carry meaning beyond vocabulary.

The interview above shows how speaking activities are structured to foster mutual communication rather than one-way delivery. The process of dialoguing encourages students to not only express ideas but also to listen actively, reformulate responses, and show verbal empathy. This dynamic engagement contrasts sharply with traditional speaking tests, where the student speaks and the teacher merely scores. In collaborative formats, however, both the teacher and peers become co-constructors of learning. Evaluators are encouraged to observe interactional cues such as how students build on peer contributions, manage turn-taking, and handle disagreement respectfully.

The collaborative model also contributes to more inclusive learning outcomes. Students with limited vocabulary find it easier to express themselves when supported by peers, while advanced students refine their skills by explaining concepts or rephrasing for clarity. This creates a balanced learning environment where language is not merely performed but lived through interpersonal exchange. Thus, Arabic-speaking classes evolve into social laboratories for communication where learners not only practice language but also experience its relational essence. Overall, shifting from monologue to dialogue in Arabic learning represents more than a methodological change; it reflects a pedagogical reorientation toward human connection and shared meaning-making. This strategy nurtures empathy, cooperation, and linguistic adaptability skills that are essential in both language acquisition and real-world communication.

Empathy-Based Evaluation Rubric in Maharah Kalam Assessment

Documentation in the form of an assessment rubric and teacher evaluation notes at MA Ma'arif NU 1 Kemranjen shows a new approach in assessing speaking skills (maharah al-kalam), namely by including dimensions of empathy, emotional expression, and the ability to establish social relations as the main indicators in the evaluation. In the rubric developed by the teacher, not only are linguistic aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, and sentence structure assessed, but also how students convey ideas inclusively, adjust their tone of voice to the context, and provide space for responses from the other person.

The evaluation is carried out holistically, especially in tasks such as telling experiences, expressing opinions, or having dialogues in small groups. The rubric used includes indicators such as "ability to affirm friends' feelings," "empathetic response to different opinions," and "ability to build dialogue that involves each other." Teachers not only assess what students say, but also how students form emotional connections through language. For example, a student who states his opinion in a polite tone while acknowledging his friend's opinion will score higher than a student who states his opinion dominantly without paying attention to the dynamics of the interaction.

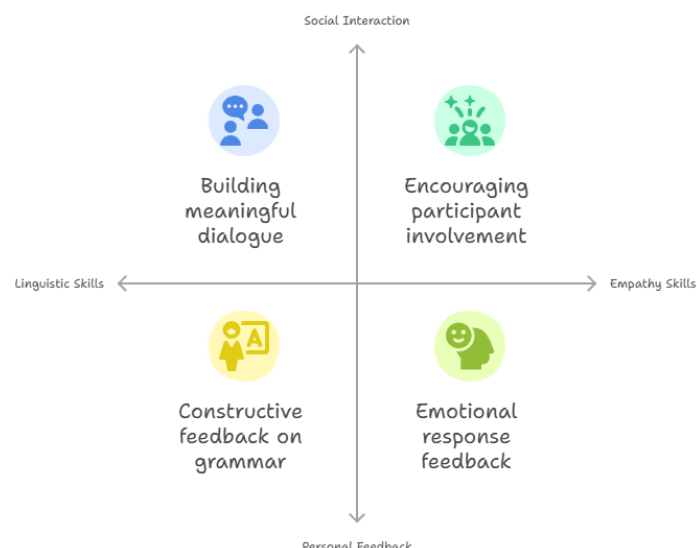


Figure 1. Empathy-Based Evaluation Rubric in Maharah Kalam Assessment

Figure 1 shows how the evaluation rubric used by the teacher reflects the transformation from a technical score-based assessment approach to one that takes affective and interpersonal aspects into account. Each rubric category includes three dimensions: verbal accuracy, emotional engagement, and dialogic interaction. Thus, the teacher can comprehensively assess whether students are not only speaking correctly, but also building ethical, empathetic, and collaborative communication.

The documentation also shows that the teacher added a special notes column at the end of the rubric containing observations of students' social behavior during speaking, such as whether students invite their interlocutors to participate, or how they respond to disagreement. This shows that the evaluation is not static, but formative and aims to shape students' communicative character. The teacher also includes personal feedback based on empathy, such as "the way you greeted your friend earlier was very warm" or "try to give your friend a chance to explain first."

Overall, this empathy-based rubric not only reflects students' progress in Arabic but also serves as a tool for developing 21st-century life skills, especially in multicultural and multilingual contexts. When empathy is used as a standard and as an assessed skill, the language learning process changes into a process of forming students' social identity. With this kind of evaluation model, Maharah al-kalam learning at MA Ma'arif NU 1 Kemranjen becomes more relevant, meaningful, and in line with developing interpersonal intelligence.

Discussion

The implementation of empathic evaluation in Arabic-speaking instruction at MA Ma'arif NU 1 Kemranjen presents a pedagogical paradigm shift that reframes assessment as a relational and emotionally attuned process rather than a purely technical measurement of linguistic output. Drawing from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, particularly interpersonal intelligence, this model redefines what it means to "speak well" in a language classroom (Afsah et al., 2022; Mekki et al., 2020). The findings demonstrate that fluency, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy, while important, are insufficient to capture the full scope of communicative competence, especially in dialogic and collaborative learning settings. Instead, speaking performance is evaluated through students' ability to engage, respond, and co-construct

meaning in socially meaningful ways.

The first major dimension of the empathic evaluation model lies in its emphasis on emotional responsiveness and interactional awareness. As indicated by both literature synthesis and teacher observations, effective speaking is increasingly defined by a student's ability to emotionally resonate with peers during dialogue. This is supported by the rubric indicators such as "active listening," "empathetic response," and "perspective-taking," which serve to measure not only linguistic competence but also interpersonal sensitivity. This approach aligns with current communicative competence frameworks, which highlight socio-pragmatic abilities as essential components of language use (Bahar Özvarış et al., 2021; Sakirah et al., 2020). By engaging in role-plays, peer discussions, and problem-solving dialogues, students are not merely demonstrating language recall but are actively navigating the emotional and social layers of conversation. Such evaluative focus underscores that interpersonal intelligence, once seen as peripheral, is now central to modern speaking pedagogy (Gottardo et al., 2020).

Secondly, the dialogic speaking tasks implemented in the classroom show strong alignment with collaborative learning theory, which posits that language is acquired most effectively through social interaction and shared meaning-making. By shifting from monologue tasks to peer interactions, the teaching model fosters not only greater learner autonomy but also equitable participation across proficiency levels. Data from teacher interviews and classroom observations reveal that lower-achieving students benefit from reduced anxiety in smaller group settings, while more advanced learners are allowed to scaffold peer understanding through clarification and reformulation. This dynamic echoes the principles of the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978), in which learners achieve more with support than alone. Furthermore, the collaborative format transforms the role of the teacher from sole evaluator to co-participant in communicative learning, allowing a more humanistic, dialogic form of assessment to take place.

The third and most systematic manifestation of this paradigm appears in the empathy-based evaluation rubric. The rubric not only incorporates cognitive-linguistic indicators but also explicitly foregrounds emotional and social dimensions, such as the ability to affirm peer feelings or engage respectfully in disagreement (Basilakos, 2022; McTigue et al., 2020). The inclusion of teacher notes and personalized comments reflects a formative assessment approach that prioritizes student growth over static scoring. This aligns with current trends in human-centered assessment, where formative feedback and student reflection are used to build long-term communicative competence and self-awareness (Agorastos et al., 2021). The practice of integrating affective feedback, e.g., comments on the warmth of greetings or encouragement to allow peers to speak, suggests that teachers at MA Ma'arif NU 1 Kemranjen view speaking not merely as a skill but as a moral and social act.

Overall, the empathic evaluation approach offers a compelling alternative to traditional speaking assessment in Arabic language classrooms. It not only broadens the definition of communicative competence but also nurtures values such as empathy, cooperation, and ethical dialogue traits that are increasingly vital in 21st-century multilingual and multicultural contexts. In this model, speaking becomes a vehicle for relationship-building, not just information delivery. The findings from MA Ma'arif NU 1 Kemranjen contribute to a growing body of evidence that assessment practices should evolve alongside pedagogical goals, placing equal weight on how language is used and how relationships are formed through its use.

In conclusion, the empathic evaluation model in Arabic-speaking instruction not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also fosters interpersonal and emotional development among learners. The integration of interpersonal intelligence into assessment practices repositions the speaking classroom as a space for human connection, cultural sensitivity, and collaborative communication. As this paradigm gains traction, it holds promise for reimagining language education as a holistic process, one that values not only what is said, but how it is said, and to whom.

CONCLUSION / الخلاصة

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the evaluation of teaching speaking skills based on interpersonal intelligence shows a significant influence on the effectiveness of the learning process and the improvement of students' oral communication competencies. The integration of interpersonal intelligence, emphasizing empathy, active listening, cooperative interaction, and peer-based communication, creates a dynamic classroom atmosphere that encourages students to express themselves more confidently and interactively. Teachers who apply interpersonal-based strategies, such as group discussions, role-playing, and collaborative projects, have succeeded in fostering students' motivation, social sensitivity, and speaking fluency. Furthermore, the use of interpersonal communication techniques allows students to build meaningful connections with both the material and their peers, thus supporting the development of contextual and situational language use. This approach not only enhances students' speaking skills but also promotes emotional engagement and reduces speaking anxiety, especially for those who are typically reserved or reluctant. Overall, teaching speaking through an interpersonal intelligence-based approach contributes effectively to building students' communicative competence in a holistic and student-centered manner.

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