A Case Analysis of the Assessment Practices of Oral Communication Teachers in a Private School in the Philippine Setting

Ma. Pamela A. Capacete

De La Salle University Manila
ma_pamela_capacete@dlsu.edu.ph

Abstract

With the recent entry of the Senior High School program in the Philippines, success of it may be viewed to lie in the teachers’ ability to manage the whole teaching-learning process, including their means of assessing their students. It is for this reason that a focus on teachers’ Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) comes essential. Hence, the present study aimed at conducting a case analysis of the assessment practices of three Senior High School teachers in one of the private schools in the Philippines. Recognizing the crucial role classroom assessment has in a language classroom, the case analysis sought to provide focus on the purposes of assessment realized by oral communication teachers, the belief towards assessment that they hold, and their unique assessment practices. The case analysis employed interview and document analysis to gather data. After careful analysis and reflection, it was concluded that, first, despite the individuality observed on the primed purposes of assessment of the teacher-participants, the influence of the institutional character of assessment to the teachers was still observed. Second, the teachers’ beliefs and attitude towards assessment were noted to follow a personal stance, realizing their personal interpretive framework. Lastly, the two prior conclusions generated provided explanations to the observed cornerstone violations in the practices of teachers. Hence, the paper highlights the need for an understanding of teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and perceived purposes of assessment to make sense of the actual assessment practices they employ. In turn, this understanding may be used to effectively design a program for teachers’ continuous LAL development.

Keywords: language assessment literacy; language assessment; classroom assessment; cornerstones of testing

Introduction

Classroom assessment has always been regarded as a crucial component of the teaching-learning process (Lam, 2015; Saefurrohman & Balinas, 2016). In fact, Acar-Erdol and Yıldızlı (2018) emphasized in their survey of literature that research has strongly shown how assessment methods utilized inside the classroom affect significantly students’ performances, ranging from their achievements up to their self-beliefs and motivations. In addition, Mellati and Khademi (2018) reiterated that in ensuring learners’ fulfilment of instructional goals, it is the proper assessment procedures that come vital. Moreover, Berry, Sheehan, and Munro (2019) strengthened that what advances students’ learning are effective assessments. Hence, it may be viewed that the teaching-learning process will not be complete in the absence of classroom assessment. Furthermore, a teacher’s failure to provide appropriate and ample assessment procedures may entail failure of instruction as well.

Leung (2005, as cited by Wang, 2017) defined classroom assessment as the procedures of assessment done in classroom settings, apart from the standardized testing usually done in wide-scale. Further, Acar-Erdol and Yıldızlı (2018) explained classroom
assessment as procedures prepared or set by the teacher which convey what is actually learned by students. These procedures inform teachers of students’ knowledge and tendencies, and also reveal to them how effective their instruction and methodologies were. Özdemir-Yılmazer and Özkan (2017) noted that regard for classroom assessments came after the shift of focus of education and assessment in general, now giving prime on utilizing “constructive methodologies (p.324)” aimed at student development. In sum, classroom assessment may be understood as teachers’ means not only to gauge students’ learning, but also to guide better the teaching-learning process, therefore ensuring students’ construction of their own meanings. This view of classroom assessment strengthens its significant role in the teaching-learning process.

With this importance given to classroom assessments, the need to ensure teachers’ readiness and knowledge of providing appropriate and ample classroom assessments also come. Considering the potential of assessments to affect all educational stakeholders like teachers, students, institutions, and society (Fulcher, 2012 as cited by Giraldo, 2019), language teachers are, therefore, given the expectation of being equipped with skills to interpret, design, evaluate, and recognize implications of classroom assessments (Scarino, 2013). Here, LAL, particular for language teachers, is deemed critical.

Mellati and Khademi (2018) referred to assessment literacy as the preparedness of a teacher, a language teacher for example, “to design, implement, and discuss the assessment strategies, measurement tools, evaluation criteria, decision making milestones as well as formative and summative tests” (p.2). In the same light, Xu and Brown (2017) reported that assessment literacy allows teachers to generate insights about student progress, relay these insights to stakeholders, and apply these insights in teaching practice and curriculum design. Moreover, assessment literacy is defined to be the necessary knowledge and skill one can utilize in collecting data about learners’ performance and achievement (Campbell, Murphy, & Holt, 2002; Popham, 2005; as cited by Tajeddin, Alemi, & Yasaei, 2018).

Berry et al., (2019), on the other hand, noted that assessment literacy has been viewed to be limited by definition as it was used to cover the knowledge a teacher should have about assessment. In this context, Berry et al. (2019) cited Malone (2011) in elaborating how assessment literacy extends to a more encompassing, yet specific definition for LAL emphasizing how the latter concerns itself on issues confined in language classrooms.

A number of studies extending the literature on LAL refers to Davies’ (2008) seminal work for its definition (Berry et al., 2019; Giraldo, 2018; Sultana, 2019; Xu & Brown, 2017). In Giraldo’s (2018) reflective article review on LAL, it was concluded that LAL is indeed collectively defined as comprised of a language teacher’s knowledge, skill, and principles towards assessment. However, he pointed out that although the three components are similarly cited by literature, there is an observed extension and discrepancy of coverage of what is assumed to be within a teacher’s knowledge, skill, and principles in LAL. With this, Pill and Harding (2013) categorized LAL to be in line with other emerging literacies like computer literacy, media literacy, etc. Nevertheless, the two simplified that although there are still varying definitions for LAL, the gist points out to it as the range of competencies that allow language teachers to use, evaluate, create, and analyze assessment data.

Scarino (2013) indicated in her study that for the past decade, strong regard for LAL has been explored by researchers, following the notion that the teacher’s role is most crucial especially in the assessment of second language learners. Similarly, Kremmel and Harding (2019) confirmed this idea, stating that language teachers are indeed at the forefront of designing and utilizing assessment tools and procedures. Hence, the two concluded observed how LAL studies have mostly focused on teachers, compared to other stakeholders (Kremmel & Harding, 2019). In relation to this, Pill and Harding (2013) stressed that given the diversity of stakeholders expected to develop LAL, it is necessary to pursue studies on LAL.
description and development depending on groups of practitioners. As a result, studies focused on the LAL of administrators, non-practitioners, students, curriculum designers, and of course, of teachers, are highly encouraged (Pill & Harding, 2013).

However, Scarino (2013) pointed out that although there are studies focusing on teachers’ LAL, there is an observed limitation on the existing take on what LAL is. Giraldo (2019) seconded this idea when he emphasized that although LAL may cover the knowledge of teachers concerning testing and evaluation, LAL should also put into consideration the “local realities” of teachers to further understand what shapes their assessment practices and overall LAL. With this, Scarino (2013) argued that “teacher beliefs, practices, attitudes, and experiences—what she calls their interpretive frameworks—should be part of LAL as a construct (p. 37, as cited by Giraldo, 2019).” Furthermore, Sultana (2019) concluded on her study with English language teachers in Bangladesh that, indeed, understanding of LAL should be founded on the “beliefs, values, education, background, and previous training of the teachers” (p.13).

Hence, the present study aims to provide a qualitative-quantitative exploration of the assessment practices, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of three language teachers in the senior high school department of a private school in the National Capital Region, Philippines. The exploration aims to investigate in depth the crucial role that teachers play in language assessment, and in line with this, describe these teachers’ LAL, considering their interpretive frameworks. Drawing on the study of Giraldo (2019), the present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What beliefs and attitudes do the senior high school oral communication teachers have towards assessment?
2. How do the senior high school teachers prepare, implement, and evaluate their assessment tools for an oral communication class?

Framework of the study

The present study is framed after the works of Scarino (2013) and Giraldo (2019). Specifically, it adopts the argument of Scarino (2013) noting that LAL should not only cover the technical knowledge and skills of teachers regarding language assessment, but instead also consider the interpretive framework of LAL. This interpretive framework is comprised of the teachers’ preconceptions, beliefs, attitudes, practices, personal experiences, and knowledge on language assessment. In following this framework, the necessity of exploring teachers’ LAL on a personalized level come, combining an exploration of the teacher’s knowledge base and interpretive understanding. Incidentally, Looney, Cumming, van Der Kleij, and Harris (2018) maintained that the teachers’ beliefs and perceptions regarding assessment are essential factors affecting their actual assessment practices. More so, Giraldo (2019) named the works of Fulcher (2012) and Taylor (2009) to be in support of Scarino’s (2013) interpretive framework, believed to play a crucial part in shaping teachers’ LAL.

Additionally, the present study founded its exploration of LAL in the cornerstones of testing discussed by Brown (2004), and more recently, by Rogier (2014) and Introduction to issues in language assessment and terminology (n.d.). In his book, Brown (2004) elucidated on five cornerstones of testing, namely: practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback. In relation to this, Rogier (2014) identified seven key concepts as part of the cornerstones of testing adding usefulness and transparency on Brown’s (2004) list. Furthermore, Introduction to issues in language assessment and terminology (n.d.) enumerated eight cornerstones of testing, adding security as another concept on Rogier’s seven key concepts. Although the three references declare different numbers of cornerstones of testing, it may be observed that each is merely adding from the first list, and the
descriptions for each concept remain consistent. Hence, the present study collectively framed its analysis of the teachers’ assessment practices on the three references.

Specifically, for Brown (2004), Rogier (2014), and Introduction to issues in language assessment and terminology (n.d.) practicality is understood in the study with an assessment tool or procedure being friendly for teachers in terms of preparation, administration, and checking. Second, reliability briefly refers to how consistently a test or assessment can generate the same results given other forms or methods of testing. Validity, on the other hand, concerns itself with how exactly a test or an assessment procedure is measure what intends to measure. Next, authenticity involves how an assessment reflects or represents real-world tasks or issues for meaningful context for student learning. Additionally, the concept of washback looks into the effects of testing towards its main stakeholders, who are the students and teachers. In Rogiers (2014) additional two concepts, usefulness is described to see how a test or an assessment procedure come helpful in fulfilling the purpose or objective of a course, a subject, or a program. In addition, transparency refers to how information for the procedures and grading methods of testing is relayed to students. Finally, the concept of security is concerned with how safe and probable it is to recycle a test given the different threats in the learning environment (Introduction to issues in language assessment and terminology, n.d.).

Overall, the study is founded on the objective of exploring the interpretive framework of language teachers (Scarino, 2013) together with their actual practices analysed using the cornerstones of testing. This decision was adopted from Giraldo’s (2018) reflective article review which cited Inbar-Lourie’s (2013) components for LAL, involving an understanding of the dilemmas surrounding testing and its cornerstones. With all these, the present study followed a qualitative-quantitative case analysis, adopting the procedures of Giraldo (2019). An in-depth interview was done with three Oral Communication SHS teachers, partnered with a conduct of an adapted survey questionnaire, and a content analysis of sample assessment tools utilized by the teachers. Through these triangulated methodologies, Scarino’s (2013) interpretive framework is aimed to be realized from the analysis of the SHS teachers’ cases. With this, a more encompassing understanding of teachers’ assessment practices and cornerstone violations, which by technicalities represent their LAL, is offered.

Description of the Three Cases

The local setting

The present study was done in a private school in Alabang, city of Muntinlupa, NCR, Philippines. The Senior High School unit of the school is part of the Integrated Basic Education, which caters to a large number of students, ranging from about 1,500 to 2,000 Grade 11 and Grade 12 students. The SHS Department started functioning since 2015-2016, following the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum. Presently, the school offers programs under the Academic Track, particularly the strands of General Academic (GA), Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). With this, the school houses about 70 faculty members, with an estimate of 8 language teachers. From this number of 8 language teachers, three (3) teachers who handled Oral Communication classes in the A.Y. 2018-2019 were taken.
The Teacher-Participants

Teacher A. Teacher A is a male Oral Communication instructor in the SHS Department who has already been teaching for less than 15 years. He belongs to the age range of 41-45, and is teaching a total of six classes per week. The size of his class is in average, with 40 students. Particular for the Oral Communication class for SHS, he has already handled it for three years, although his prior teaching experiences also include having taught Public Speaking class. His background in assessment and evaluation includes completing a course in which assessment and evaluation topics were covered, and attending a workshop on the same topic.

Teacher B. Teacher B is a female Oral Communication instructor who belongs to the age range of 26-30. In her six years in the teaching field, she has handled oral communication classes for two years already. Currently, she is handling three classes in a week, with a class size of 30-40 students each. Her background records show that she has completed a full course on assessment and evaluation.

Teacher C. Teacher C is also a female Oral Communication instructor, belonging in the age group of 31-35. She handles six classes, in total, every week, with an average of 40 students per class. The same with Teacher B, she has been teaching for six years but has only handled oral communication classes in the last three years. Her background in assessment and evaluation come from her completed full course on assessment and evaluation, and also another course in which the two were only covered as one of the topics.

Instrumentation

The present study ensured that data is triangulated to ensure detailed exploration of the case at hand. With this, a combination of two instruments were utilized. Firstly, an interview guide was drafted by the researcher, following Scarino’s (2013) and Giraldo’s (2019) discussion of LAL. Also, it was ensured that questions noting the assessment practices of the teachers were included to observe the cornerstones of testing. Secondly, a survey questionnaire was adapted from the works of Cheng, Rogers, and Hu (2004) to tally the purpose of assessment and practices of assessment of the teachers with the qualitative data from the interview. Originally, Cheng Rogers, and Hu’s (2004) survey questionnaire covers the four macro-skills. For the purpose of the study, only the set of questions for speaking assessment was utilized. Specifically, the survey questionnaire was comprised of three parts, namely: (a) purposes of assessment and evaluation; (b) methods of assessment and evaluation; and, (c) profile of respondents.

The Collection of Data

The data collection for the case analysis relied highly on the in-depth interviews done separately with the three teachers. Originally, an in-depth face-to-face interview was planned for data gathering. However, due to time constraints and the requests of teachers B and C, only teacher A had the face-to-face interview with the researcher. Teachers B and C did the in-depth interview in written form. In addition, follow-up questions were addressed with the three teachers through an exchange of messages in messenger. This virtual exchange was again due to the time constraint the researcher was facing, and in consideration of the convenience of the teacher-participants.

To triangulate the methods, a survey was administered to the three teachers. The survey questionnaire was adapted from the work of Cheng, Rogers, and Hu (2004), only including the set of questions for Speaking assessment, in particular. Finally, the assessment tools, particularly the rubrics utilized by the teacher-participants for their assessment, were obtained for content analysis.

Data analysis
The data analysis commenced with the transcription done by the researcher, after the interview with teacher A. Later, once data from teachers B and C were obtained, thematic analysis was applied to develop patterns from the responses of the teacher-participants. The process of coding was highly guided by the ideas of Scarino (2013) and Giraldo (2019), together with literature on cornerstones of testing (Brown, 2004; Introduction to issues in language assessment and terminology, n.d.; Rogier, 2014).

For triangulation purposes, as mentioned, quantitative responses were tallied with the developed patterns from the interview, therefore confirming and strengthening observations from the qualitative data. Lastly, the content analysis done on the sample assessment tool requested from the teacher-participants was utilized to confirm the reported assessment purposes and assessment of the teacher-participants.

One limitation of the study is the lack of classroom observation, which was initially part of the data triangulation. This method of data collection was later removed and exchanged with the content analysis due to the unavailability of classes to be observed at the time the study was being conducted.

Results and Discussion

Purposes of Assessment

Looking at the purpose of assessment identified by the three teacher-participants from the interview, it may be noted how Teacher B and Teacher C displayed inclination towards utilizing assessment for the learning of students. Specifically, Teacher B indicated during the interview that the main purpose of assessment for her is to “push students to their limits;” whereas Teacher C reiterated that assessment serves the purposes of developing the communication skills of her students. Teacher A, on the other hand, mentioned during the interview that he uses assessment, “so they (the students) could see a numerical value whether they are able to accomplish the main goal of the course – which is to be able to speak.”

Supplementing these qualitative responses of the teacher-participants are their survey responses. From these quantitative responses, the three teachers’ utilization of assessment tools for three purposes identified by McMillan (2015, as cited by Acar-Erdol & Yıldızlı, 2018) as assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning, was observed. In addition, the possibility of the three teachers perceiving assessment as part of their administrative compliance was recorded (Cheng et al., 2004).

Table 1

| STATEMENTS                        | A  | B  | C  |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|
| To formally document growth in learning | ✔ ✔ | ✔  |
| To determine the final grades of my students | ✔ ✔ | ✔  |

As Table 1 depicts, only Teachers B and C displayed the use of assessment to record students’ achievement or learning. This survey result may appear in contradiction with the
response of Teacher A during the interview wherein he indicated that his purpose for assessing his students is to provide them with a numerical value to show if they have actually accomplished the goal of the course or not.

Table 2

Teacher-participants’ use of assessment tools for the purposes of assessment for learning

| STATEMENTS                                               | A   | B   | C   |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| To motivate my students to learn                         | ✔   | ✔   | ✔   |
| To make my students work harder                          | ✔   | ✔   | ✔   |
| To diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my students      | ✔   | ✔   | ✔   |
| To provide feedback to my students as they progress      | ✔   | ✔   | ✔   |
| To prepare my students for standardized tests            |     |     | ✔   |

Table 2 above shows survey results of the three teachers’ utilization of assessment for the learning of students. It may be observed that all three teachers reported that they indeed use assessment in their Oral Communication classes to motivate their students, diagnose their strengths and weaknesses, and provide feedback in their progress. By contrary, only Teacher B and Teacher C indicated that they use assessment to make their students work harder; and only Teacher B reported that she uses her assessment procedures so that she can form her students to meet the threshold of different standardized tests.

Table 3

Teacher-participants’ use of assessment tools for the purposes of assessment as learning

| STATEMENTS                                               | A   | B   | C   |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| To group my students for instruction purposes in my class| ✔   |     |     |
| To obtain information on my students’ progress           | ✔   | ✔   | ✔   |
| To plan my instruction                                  | ✔   | ✔   | ✔   |
| To diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my own teaching and instruction | ✔   | ✔   |     |

Table 3 exhibits the teachers’ survey responses in relation to using assessment as learning. Here, specifically, the questionnaire items point to teachers making use of assessment procedures and results as a form of their own learning to guide their instruction and decision-making as instructors and assessors. Noted is the three teachers’ admission of using assessment to obtain information on their students’ progress, so as to plan their instruction. However, as per making use of assessment procedures and results to reflect on
one’s own instructional strengths and weaknesses, only Teacher B and C responded positively. On the contrary, it was only Teacher A who mentioned of using assessment to guide him in grouping or clustering his students.

Table 4

Teacher-participants’ use of assessment tools for the purposes of administrative compliance

| STATMENTS                                                    | A  | B  | C  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| To provide information to the central administration (e.g.    | ![ ]| ![ ✔️ ]| ![ ]|
| school, university)                                          |
| To provide information to an outside funding agency          | ![ ✔️ ]| ![ ]| ![ ]|

In their study, Cheng, Rogers, and Hu (2004) discussed how teachers may also have assessments for administrative purposes, meaning, to comply with their duties to an institution. Here, Table 3.4 portrays from the survey that only Teacher B acknowledges the use of assessment for administrative compliance, specifically to obtain information about students, to be reported to the University, or an outside funding agency.

Beliefs and attitude towards assessment. When the teachers were asked to share their views about the essence of assessment for them through an interview, their beliefs and attitude towards assessment were revealed. First, Teacher A shared that he believes assessment is important, for it is the only way to provide students a proof of their learning and achievements. Specifically, he mentioned, “I just think that [you know] the students are here to know if they are able to comply with the requirements of the course.” He further reiterated that he views assessment to be numerical, and that is what he believes the students wish more to see; therefore he considers rubrics to be essential tools to provide feedback, both in numerical and descriptive form, to his students. Also, it may be deduced that Teacher A takes on a positive attitude towards assessment. When asked if how he takes planning, giving, and checking assessment products of his students to be taxing, he responded, “No, I’m good.” More so, he added how he enjoys doing assessment. From here, his regard for assessment as a usual and necessary part of his being a teacher may be observed.

Second, Teacher B shares how she views assessment to be important, especially for the aspect of it being helpful for a teacher to reflect and improve. She disclosed, “It [assessment] helps us in improving and revising our tools for future. We can see and analyze if the activity is effective and we can still continue them for the next set of students or we need to revise some factors in that activity for another set of students.” From here, it is reflected how Teacher B perceives assessment as more than a way of giving grades to the students, but rather as a process that extends long after the grades are out. She emphasized how she believes assessment come essential to make teachers reflect on their assessment tools and procedures, and later on, make use of an improved version of it. Teacher B’s positive attitude towards assessment may also be observed here as she relays how beneficial it is for her as a teacher.
Lastly, Teacher C reiterated how she believes the value of assessment is in gauging the learning of her students. In particular, she said, “There is no exact parameters to measure the learning, that is why we put rubric to gauge students’ learnings.” She also added that assessment is essential in checking if students actually developed their communication skills. Also, Teacher C’s beliefs towards assessment exhibit her encompassing perspective towards the necessity of using both traditional and alternative assessment procedures. Here, she displays a positive attitude towards using assessment both in testing her students in practical and theoretical aspect.

Assessment practices. From the triangulated ways to collect data from the teacher-participants, each of the teacher’s experiences are illustrated below. Following the framework of the study, the experiences of the three teacher-participants are then analysed using the cornerstones of testing (Brown, 2004; Introduction to issues in language assessment and terminology, n.d.; Rogier, 2014). In particular, the violations specifically observed from the practices of each of the teachers were identified and reported separately.

Teacher A’s assessment practices. Teacher A narrated that he plans his assessment procedures for a whole semester in a way that every activity is designed to prepare the students for the final Performance Task (PT). For example, he usually opens the semester with group activities, having about 5 students in a group showcase their speaking skills in different scenarios or tasks set-up for them. Later on, the grouping system gets into smaller schemes, until students are ready to have their individual memorized speech delivered. Teacher A explicitly informs his students about this line of formative assessments afterwards, once his students are about to get into their individual and final performance task. This way, he believes his students would find all their activities more meaningful. However, what Teacher A admitted of not observing on his assessment practices is authenticity. He shared, for one, that he only assigns the same type of assessment for all his students, regardless of their strands. Also, he mentioned of personally choosing a memorized speech as a final PT to entail fairness in grading. As Teacher A explained, it is through a memorized speech that the students, both the good or experienced speakers and shy or first-time speakers alike, are put in a “fair ground.” He expressed that although he knows that his assessments are, “not as authentic as I want it to be,” what he at least achieves in his assessment is making the students speak in front of a crowd, which may still stand as a helpful first-time experience for a lot of students.

Talking about his final PT, a memorized speech, Teacher A claimed that he starts by giving instructions to his students only by explaining it to the whole class through oral instructions. After, he opens to the students the way they will be graded by showing the rubric for grading. Then, his students get their practice time for the memorized speech within their class hours. Teacher A expressed how he is involved highly during this preparation period of his students, as for every class time he allot for practice, he informs of his students of their objectives for the day to make sure that they all come prepared on the day of presentation. In terms of managing his students on the actual presentation, Teacher A shared how his rubric helps him a lot, both in grading the students and in making sure that all the other students sitting down as audience listen. This happens as he incorporates audience’s reception as part of his rubric for grading; therefore sending an implication to the class that they should listen while someone is speaking in front, so as to help one another meet the standards of the rubric. Finally, in terms of grading and giving feedback to his students, Teacher A cited that the key in doing the two is, “doing it right then and there.” Specifically, he relayed that since his PT is a memorized speech, he can simply finish grading his students as they perform, especially with the detailed rubric with him. Also, giving individual feedback right after every
performance come convenient, again, with the help of the detailed feedback. Teacher A detailed that his way of giving feedback is usually personalized. When he knows that his students are quite shy, he gives feedback on a one-on-one level, but when he believes the student is open for correction, he can give general feedback in front of the whole class. Nonetheless, what he assures of giving every student after a performance is “generous praises”.

Table 5

The observed cornerstone violations in Teacher A’s practices

| Cornerstone Violation | Problems in Teacher A’s Practices | Possible Solution |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Authenticity          | Although Teacher A’s use of a memorized speech as a final PT pass the cornerstones of usefulness and validity, it still violates the essence of authenticity. Particularly, even from Teacher A’s own words, he admitted that his assessment practice is far from the actual public speaking that happens in real-life situations. | Teacher A may incorporate adopting a situation or role for the students in a chosen field of theirs to related better a memorized speech that he wants his students to perform. Also, although it is a memorized speech he is asking, he can still make this authentic and personalized by allowing his students to choose or write their own memorized speech, and not assigning them the same speech for memorization and delivery. |

**Teacher B’s assessment practices.** Teacher B shared how she normally browses the internet for assessment tasks, particular of performance-based tasks as she does not usually make use of pen-and-paper tests for her Oral Communication class. She reported preparing different, customized PTs for her different classes, especially if they belong to different strands. She particularly makes sure that her students coming from different strands, and ideally would be entering different fields, could all find her PTs meaningful. For her final PT, she recalled assigning her students to prepare a Podcast once to serve as their final assessment in an Oral Communication class. In giving instructions to her students, she maximizes the use of their school’s Learning Management System, Schoology. However, she also mentioned channeling her instructions through social media. In terms of monitoring her students, Teacher B relayed that she believes the students of this generation do not need close monitoring as they prefer discovering their potentials through their own explorations. Nevertheless, she noted that she still checks on her student from time to time, within the usual one to two weeks’ time that she gives her students to work on their PT. When it comes to checking the assessment products of her students, Teacher B did not specify how much time it takes her to get back to her students for their ratings and feedback. Instead, she cited of the importance of being in a “good mood” when checking so she could “grade them fairly and based on the standard of their capability.” Also, she reiterated the convenience of her
checking, especially as her PT is a recorded one, hence she can check easily at her preferred
time, and the class time will not be cut for performances. Once done grading her students, she
gives feedback to her students by calling them one by one, although she does not return to
them their feedback form/paper. When asked about incorporating peer assessment on her PT,
she admitted of not being able to do so as she “simply do[es] not have time.”

Table 6

The observed cornerstone violations in Teacher B’s practices

| Cornerstone Violation | Problems in Teacher B’s Practices | Possible Solution |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Transparency          | When giving instructions to her students, Teacher B did not mention informing her students of how they will be graded for their PT. | Teacher B can include her rubric for grading whenever she announces her PTs to her students through their LMS. Also, better if she can involve her students in their criteria for grading. |
|                       | In giving feedback to her students, she mentioned of giving individual oral feedback, however, she admitted of not giving back the “papers” to her students. | Teacher B may start the practice of giving back all assessment products and tools to her students once done checking and recording. This way, her students can keep track of their own progress as they file their own papers. |

Teacher C’s assessment practices. Teacher C detailed of being strongly guided by the DepEd Curriculum Guide and her own syllabus whenever deciding on her PTs. For her Final PT, she shared asking her students to perform and Extemporaneous Speech. To relay the mechanics to her students, she prepares a PowerPoint presentation, complete with the objectives of the assessment task, the instructions for the presentation (speech), and the rubrics for grading. To prepare her students for their final PT, she mentioned of utilizing formative assessments. Further, she shared how she utilized both pen-and-paper and performance-based activities for her formative assessments. Once done with the performances, Teacher C said she normally asks both students and other teachers to evaluate with her, putting in practice the importance of peer evaluation. With this, she acknowledges that having students grade other students may add to the confidence of her students when performing. After, Teacher C mentioned that as she gives feedback, she usually starts with a general feedback for the whole class, and then, she provides specific feedback to her students. Finally, in terms of the authenticity of her PTs, she expressed how she ensures that these are “simulating the actual scenarios of real life situations.” More so, she cited of acknowledging the varying interests of her students which she also takes as a consideration whenever preparing the PTs of her classes.
The observed cornerstone violations in Teacher C’s practices

| Cornerstone Violation | Problems in Teacher C’s Practices | Possible Solution |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| **Validity**          | Teacher C asks her students to deliver an Extemporaneous Speech about relevant issues concerning the country and the world. With this, the expected content from the students’ speech may be a bigger factor to affect the performance of the students, when the focus of the assessment should be the oral communication skills of the students. | Teacher C should make sure that she prepares her students not just about the technicalities of delivering the speech, but also about the topics to be covered in their speeches. Teacher C should be careful in choosing topics that will be meaningful, relevant, and known by her students to secure that she is checking on their language skills, and not simply on content knowledge. |
| **Practicality**      | Teacher C has Extemporaneous Speech as her final PT. With about 40 students in a class, allotting about 15-20 minutes for each student may consume much time for the class. | Teacher C may explore possibilities of doing a recorded speech, or if not, she may opt to partner with another subject teacher so their class time can both be utilized to make sure all students will be able to perform. |

**Conclusion**

Noting, firstly, the purposes of assessment realized by the three teacher participants, it may be observed that although each of them are differently giving prime to certain purposes, they all display adherence to the purposes of assessment identified by McMillan (2015, as cited by Acar-Erdol & Yildizli, 2018). On the one hand, this varied prime on the purposes of assessment follow the value of teacher individuality emphasized by Shepard (2000, as cited by Ozdemir-Yilmazer & Özkkan, 2017). On the other hand, the similarities found in the purposes of assessment recognized by the three teacher participants may be attributed to the same conclusions of Özdemir-Yılmazer and Özkkan (2017). As Scarino (2013) cited in her paper, a factor for this similarity would be contextual limitations, or more specifically, standards set by institutions teachers belong to. For the present study, it may be deduced that although the teachers assume different practices for their assessments, entailing their individuality, the underlying purposes they follow are still uniformly governed by the institutional characters of assessment present in their context.

Secondly, following the individuality in the purposes of assessment focused on by the three teachers, the teachers’ beliefs and attitudes towards assessment may also be observed to follow a personalized stance. This follows Giraldo’s (2019) and Scarino’s (2013) argument that teachers’ contexts and personal interpretive framework vary, therefore shaping their practices in varied forms as well.
Finally, the two conclusions above give light to the observed assessment practices and recorded cornerstone violations of each teacher participant. First, for Teacher A, as he expressed utilizing assessment to measure students’ learning (assessment of learning), and provide them numerical feedback, his practice of giving his students a useful and valid assessment task, but one the other end is not authentic, come rational. Teacher A’s held beliefs about assessment offer an explanation as to why he serves a tendency to give students alternative assessments that are not authentic. Second, for Teacher B, as she explained her belief of assessment as a helpful tool to make teachers reflective of their assessment procedures, her lack of transparency become explained. Third, for Teacher C, she has mentioned a number of times her belief that she intends her assessment practices to cover the overall communication skills of her students. With this view, she may have carried an encompassing perception that this communication skill shall cover the content repertoire of her students, which although good in principle and intention, may still come to violate the validity of the assessment if not implemented in a careful manner.

Overall, insights from this case analysis lead to the strengthening of Scarino’s (2013) interpretive framework found to strongly shape and influence teachers’ assessment practices. Moreover, it is noteworthy that through the exploration of the teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and perceived purposes on assessment – the teachers’ interpretive framework – a different understanding of the cornerstone violations being different from the teachers’ mere neglect of key concepts in testing is concluded. Meaning, the teachers’ practices are understood not to be in violation of the cornerstones of testing; instead, these practices are observed to stem from teachers’ misconceptions as portrayed in their interpretive framework.

Hence, from these observations, it shall be pointed out that although the teachers’ interpretive frameworks provide explanations to the observed violations in their practices, these explanations do not equate to such practices being acceptable. Instead, the analysis drawn from the combination of the overall interpretive framework of the teachers and their actual assessment practices, offer recommendations for institutions catering to teacher education as regards their assessment instructions for pre-service and in-service teachers. These conclusions strengthen the need to further the training of teachers in general principles and cornerstones of assessment, while also leading these teachers to acknowledge and reflect on their individualities in assessment purposes, beliefs, and attitudes. Specifically, programs intended to shape teachers’ LAL are proposed to highlight how teachers can be aware of the misconceptions of testing they take from their beliefs and in turn bring to practice. This way, LAL may be developed more meaningfully for the teachers given that it will not only focus on technical knowledge, skills, and principles. Instead, it shall address teachers’ personalized interpretive frameworks.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

July 16, 2019

Dear Respondent,

Greetings!

I am Ma. Pamela A. Capace, a graduate school student under the program, Master of Arts in English Language Education. Currently, I am enrolled in the course, Language Testing and Assessment, of which one of our major requirements is to conduct a case analysis of the assessment practices of three language teachers in the Senior High School Department.

With this, I would like to request your kind approval to be one of my participants, with you being identified as a SHS teacher handling the course, Oral Communication in Context. As a participant of the case analysis, you will be asked to take part in:

1. An in-depth interview;
2. A survey questionnaire; and
3. A document analysis.

The interview will entail reflective questions on your process of preparing an assessment tool, implementing it, and evaluating it after. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription of data later on. In addition, the survey questionnaire, as a complementary instrument, will be asking you to provide a self-report of your purposes for assessing your students, your usual sources of assessment tools, and your preferred way of giving feedback to students. Finally, the document analysis will simply involve your approval to share sample assessment tools for the case analysis to be done by the researcher.

You may rest assured that all collected data will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for the sole purpose of the study. Should you have further clarifications, you may contact me thru: ma_pamela_capace@gmail.com or 09651983298.

Sincerely,

Ma. Pamela A. Capace

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

By signing this form, I, ______________________________, give my full consent to participate in this case analysis. Hence, all data collected from me and through me may be used for the sole purpose of the abovementioned study.

Date signed: _________________________
Appendix B

Interview Guide

This interview guide is intended to elicit insightful experiences of three SHS language teachers about their assessment practices in their class, Oral Communication. Each language teacher will be asked to focus on one assessment type they employ in their classroom, which is **PERFORMANCE TASK**.

Kindly answer the following questions in detail, with your use of **PERFORMANCE TASKS** in your Oral Communication Class in mind:

1. Kindly relay in detail your own process of assessing your students:
   - Starting from your preparations and planning, with whom do you usually plan your assessment tools with?
   - What guides your decisions in choosing/preparing the assessment tools? What are the first things you prepare?
   - Going to the actual giving of instructions to your students, how do you relay them the information about the assessment?
   - How do you guide/prepare them for the assessment?
   - On the actual conduct of the assessment, how do you monitor your students and their works?
   - After assessing your students, how do you go about the checking of their written or performance-based outputs?
   - How much time does it usually take you to finish checking and grading your students' works?
   - Once done checking and recording the grades of your students, what is your usual practice about the assessment that has been done?
   - How do you give feedback to your students? What do you do with their graded works/papers?
   - Do you apply peer critiquing or self-evaluation practices with your students? Why or why not?
2. What do you consider as the main purpose of the assessment tools you prepare for your class?

What shapes (are you guided most by the kinds of students you have, the curriculum you are following? Your own preference? Or the prescription of textbooks, or any other factor?) this purpose?

3. When you design assessment tools for your students, do you design different/class-specific tools for each of your classes? Why or why not?

4. How authentic do you think your assessment tools are? Explain and cite examples.

5. Do you have any means to ensure that your assessment tools are both student-friendly and teacher-friendly? What are these? Teacher-friendly in the sense that you also put into consideration the load of checking/grading you will face with the kinds of assessment you prepare.

6. What is your view towards the value/essence of assessing your students? Why do you assess your students?

Once done, kindly attach in this file a sample performance task (instructions) you had for your Oral Comm students, and/or a sample rubric you used to grade them. Thank you!
About the Author

Ma. Pamela A. Capacete is a graduate student at De La Salle University Manila, currently finishing the program Master of Arts in English Language Education. She is a Senior High School instructor who passionately handles Languages and Research courses. Her research interests cover discourse analysis, language testing and assessment, and curriculum design.
(email: ma_pamela_capacete@dlsu.edu.ph)

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