

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem
Faculty of Letters and Arts
Department of English
EDOLAS



**An Investigation of Oral-Expression Evaluation Procedures
at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem:**

The case of second year LMD students of English

By
Sabrine M'ZAD

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Magister
in
Applied Linguistics and ESP
Board of Examiners

Dr. Fatima-Zohra BENNEGHRUZI	MCA	Chairman	University of Mostaganem
Dr. Bakhta ABDELHAY	MCA	Supervisor	University of Mostaganem
Mrs. Melouka ZIANI	MAA	Guest-examiner	University of Mostaganem
Dr. Hind Amel MOSTARI	MCA	External-examiner	University of SBA
Dr. Fatma Zohra NEDJAI-MEBTOUCHE	MCA	External-examiner	ESBA Algiers

Academic year ~ 2013-2014~

DEDICATION

To the air I breathe and water I drink

Anissa & Ali, my parents

To sugar and spice

Nesrine&Amel, my sisters

To Samir, my brother

To Ismène&Abd-Elfateh for their affection

*To the memory of my beloved grandma, "Mima," and that of my dear teacher and friend,
Dr.BENALIRachid... May their soul rest in heavenly peace...*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the accumulation of efforts offered by many people and the final product bears their distinct imprints. I am so fortunate to have had their support and take pleasure in the opportunity to name some of the people who have helped me in this journey...

I should like to thank Dr. Bakhta ABDELHAY, my supervisor, for her enthusiasm, her encouragement and resolute dedication to the group at large and to me in particular for she has always had great faith in my capacities; how lucky to find such a supportive person. She gave me the essential things: Quality instruction and a firm attitude to help me move forward and never give up! She is like a caring parent...

I also wish to express my most sincere gratitude to my co-supervisor Mrs. MeloukaZIANI for her guidance and unswerving patience with me, for her attentiveness and understanding for her support and unflinching courage. Special thanks go to the panel, namely: Dr. Fatima-Zohra BENNAGHROUZI, Dr. Hind MOSTARI and Dr. Fatma-Zohra NEDJAI-MEBTOUCHE for having accepted to examine my work.

At EDOLAS I was extremely fortunate to benefit from the instruction of dedicated and brilliant teachers whose work and attitude truly inspired me and to whom I will forever be grateful. I am also lucky to have gained a family away from home with my dear colleagues, classmates, and friends. Our frequent exchanges in the classroom and on the campus were instrumental in pushing my research in new directions and providing me with useful feedback.

I am indebted to the assistance of a number of individuals and colleagues at the department of English of Mostaganem University who were kind enough to let me attend their classes. I shall not forget the second year LMD students whose contribution made this work possible.

The true support from the course of my life however comes from my family, particularly my uncle Belgacem BELARBI who never ceased encouraging and advising me, and my friends, those who have been with me for years. It was my parents, though, who supported me through life's struggles personally and professionally, and through each decision no matter how unexpected, that I have made. As we grow older it's not the things we did that we often regret, but the things we didn't do. That's why God created tomorrows. So, thank you God for the tomorrows, thank you for second chances! Last, I should like to thank those people who never believed I can make it someday for their disbelief contributed in fueling my desire to advance!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS& ACRONYMS

CBA: Competency Based Approach

CC: Communicative Competence

CEF: Common European Framework

CELS:Cambridge Certificate in English Language Speaking Skills

CLA: Communicative Language Ability

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EALTA: European Association of Language Testing and Assessment

E.F.L: English as a Foreign Language

E.S.L: English as a Second Language

F.L.A:First Language Acquisition

S.L.A: Second Language Acquisition

LC: Linguistic Competence

LMD:Licence, Master, Doctorat

O.E: Oral Expression

ROA: Record of Achievement

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ABSTRACT

The following work tackles the issue of the evaluation of speaking skills in the module of Oral Expression (O.E) by teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem, Abdelhamid Ibn Badis. More specifically, it seeks to examine how teachers at the department of English proceed to assess their students, both summatively and formatively with a view of improving EFL learners' speaking skills. This descriptive study uses triangulation to increase the validity of the research. Data were gathered through self-completion questionnaires administered to second-year LMD learners and to teachers of Oral Expression at the Department of English; through weekly observation of two teachers and their students during O.E classes and through semi-guided and informal interviews of teachers of Oral Expression. The study casts an eye on the many different aspects affecting evaluation, namely: the setting of objectives to the O.E course, the development of a framework for the teaching and assessment of speaking skills, the design and use of tasks that help reach the set objectives, the provision of effective and timely feedback on students' performance, the use of comprehensive assessment criteria and checklists (grids, scales), etc. The results have shown that some learners whose teachers make use of specific criteria and who introduce students to formative techniques of assessments are able to focus on areas of improvement, thus, confirming our hypotheses. On the other hand, results revealed that some other teachers hold a traditional vision of assessment and are not aware of some formative assessment practices. Also, the absence of clearly defined criteria and rating scales/checklists for speaking assessment makes the results of tests unreliable and does not help learners improve their oral proficiency. This study has certainly its limitations, but its findings revealed interesting implications.

Key words: Language assessment – Evaluation – Oral Skills – continuous assessment- summative assessment- formative assessment.

RÉSUMÉ

La présente recherche traite du sujet de l'évaluation des compétences orales dans le module d'Expression Orale par les professeurs d'Anglais de l'Université Abdelhamid Ibn Badis de Mostaganem. Ce travail, plus précisément, vise à examiner comment les enseignants procèdent pour évaluer leurs étudiants tant de façon sommative que formative, en vue de l'amélioration des compétences orales de leurs apprenants. Cette étude descriptive utilise la méthode dite « Triangulaire » afin d'augmenter la validité de la recherche. Les données ont été recueillies au moyen : d'une auto-complétion des questionnaires administrés aux étudiants de 2ème année LMD et aux enseignants d'Expression Orale du département d'anglais ; d'observations hebdomadaires de deux enseignants et de leurs étudiants durant les classes d'E.O et enfin à travers des entretiens semi-guidés et informels des enseignants d'E.O. L'étude jette un regard critique sur les différents aspects touchant l'évaluation notamment : la fixation d'objectifs pour le cours d'E.O, l'élaboration d'un plan pour son enseignement et son évaluation, la conception et l'utilisation d'exercices qui contribuent à atteindre les objectifs fixés , fournir en temps opportun un feedback efficace sur la performance des apprenants, l'utilisation d'une liste de critères spécifiques et exhaustifs ainsi que de grilles et/ou autres outils d'évaluation. Les résultats obtenus démontrent que certains apprenants, dont les enseignants utilisent des critères spécifiques, sont en mesure de se concentrer sur les domaines d'amélioration confirmant, ainsi, nos hypothèses. D'autre part, les résultats révèlent que d'autres enseignants ont une vision traditionnelle de l'évaluation et ignorent certaines pratiques d'évaluation formative. En outre, l'absence de critères clairement définis et des échelles de notation / grilles d'évaluation de la compétence orale rend les résultats des tests peu fiables et n'aide pas les élèves à améliorer leur compétence orale. Cette étude a surement un certain nombre de limitations, mais révèle, néanmoins, d'intéressantes implications.

Mots clés: évaluation de la langue - compétences orales - feedback - évaluation formative et sommative

المخلص

يتناول هذا العمل موضوع عتققيمهارات التحدث في وحدة التعبير الشفهيمن طرفاساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة عبد الحميد بن باديس بمستغانم. بشكل أكثر تحديدا، يسعى إلى دراسة كيفية تقييم مدرس في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية لطلابهم سواء كان تقييمًا تكوينيًا أو تحصيليًا وذلك بهدف تحسين مهارات التحدث لتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تستخدم هذه الدراسة الوصفية "التأليث" لزيادة صحة البحث. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيانات الملء الذاتي وزعت على طلبة السنة الثانية LMD واساتذة التعبير الشفهيفيقسم اللغة الإنجليزية، الملاحظة الأسبوعية لاثنتين من المدرسين وطلابهم خلال حصص التعبير الشفهيو من خلال المقابلاتشبهالموجهة وغير الرسمية مع اساتذة التعبير الشفوي .

الدراسة تسلط الضوء على العديد من الجوانب المؤثرة في التقييم وهو وضع أهداف لبرنامج التعبير الشفهي ، وضع إطار لتدريس وتقييم مهارات التحدث، تصميم واستخدام المهام التي تساعد على تحقيق الأهداف المرسومة، توفير "ردود فعل" فعالة وظيفية لأداء الطلاب، استخدام معايير تقييم شاملة وقوائم مراجعة (شبكات، جداول) ، الخ. اظهرت النتائج أن بعض الطلبة ممن يدرسون مساهمة اساتذة يستعملون معايير محددة ويخضعون طلابهم لتقنيات المتابعة التكوينية، اظهرت انهم قادرون على التركيز على مجالات التحسين، وبالتالي، هذا تأكيد لفرضيات البحث من ناحية أخرى، كشفت النتائج أن بعض المدرسين الآخرين لديهم رؤية تقليدية للتقييم وليسوا على اطلاع على بعض ممارسات التقييم التكوينية .

إضافة إلى ذلك، عدم وجود معايير محددة وجدول أو قوائم تصنيفية لتقييم الكفاءة الشفهية يجعل نتائج الاختبار غير موثوقة ولا يساعدا على تحسين كفاءتهم الشفهية. هذه الدراسة لها بالتأكيد حدودها، بالرغم من ذلك كشفت نتائجها استنتاجات مثيرة للاهتمام.

General Introduction

In the ever-changing world of education new goals are set by higher authorities regarding the teaching and learning of English. However, one aim which seems to stand the test of time is the one that seeks to improve the learner's speaking abilities. To most students success in a foreign language is equated with the ability to express oneself fluently in the target language. However, achieving oral proficiency remains a farfetched objective breaking teachers' and students' illusions into a bitter reality. Though opportunities might be given to students to express themselves and communicate in the language classroom, when it comes to results facts show a different outcome. Many teachers complain about the level of their students especially when it comes to the oral skill and usually fail to make them speak during class. During an examination, it may prove worse, given the fact that the students feel even more nervous knowing that their performance will be assessed.

I. Statement of the problem: (observation/research gap)

As mentioned above, speaking is regarded as one of the most important skills. Yet, it is one of the most difficult ones to teach and assess. Therefore, it is no wonder that teachers, especially novice ones, feel lost and lack confidence in designing their own courses and assessment tools without any major guidelines. They may at best use a good conversation book to serve as resource for their communicative tasks but when it comes to assessment it is a far more complicated task.

Currently in Algeria, a lot of research has been carried out on ways of improving teaching and learning the oral skills but very little was produced regarding the issue of testing and evaluating these skills. Evaluation is an integral and vital activity in the educational process and it is worth mentioning that its prime purpose is to support the teaching/learning process, hence enabling students to improve their level and to

achieve a good command of English. Therefore, it should be a central concern to any teacher.

It is apparent, in view of what has been observed that some teachers have difficulties concerning oral production assessment. In this research, we tried to investigate these difficulties with a group of teachers and students at the University of Mostaganem.

II. Aims of the study and research questions:

The main purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' assessment procedures of the Oral Expression module at the department of English of Mostaganem University and how assessment can be utilized in improving EFL learners' speaking skills. It is guided by three research questions:

- ✓ Q#1: What are teachers' procedures for assessing students' oral performance?
- ✓ Q#2: "Does classroom instruction prepare students adequately for Oral Expression tests?"
- ✓ Q#3: "To what extent do teachers' assessment procedures contribute in improving students' level of speaking proficiency?"

The research seeks to contribute to the meagre amount of investigation in this domain within the Algerian context. It also aims at:

- Spotting some of the major difficulties that teachers of Oral Expression encounter while assessing their learners.
- Serving as a guideline to teachers embarking in the teaching profession and lacking both training and experience in assessing the oral skills.

-
- Contributing to the improvement of learners' poor production in English through pre-planned and more effective assessment procedures.

III. Assumptions and hypotheses:

On the basis of what has been said, we assume that:

- English Language Learners' desire is to achieve a high degree of oral proficiency.
- Students' underachievement in speaking is partly due to the assessment methods practised.
- Students feel quite nervous and insecure and may have developed a reticence towards Oral Expression tests.

In this research we hypothesize that:

- An awareness of Oral Expression test procedures and protocols would help students focus on speaking areas to be improved.
- An on-going assessment and sound feedback can help students be self-confident, and improve their oral proficiency.

IV. Means of Research:

For this research we relied on mixed-methods (Both qualitative and quantitative) for collecting data. The data of this investigation was collected through teachers' and students' questionnaires. The teachers' questionnaire, intended for a sample population of 10 teachers selected out of 16 teachers of Oral Expression for the academic year 2012-2013 aimed at gathering information about how they proceed to assess their students and what their vision of teaching and assessing speaking is. The students' questionnaire, intended for a sample population of 100 students selected randomly out of 600 second year LMD

students aimed at finding out their attitude towards Oral Expression classes and tests. Semi-structured interviews and frequent observations were conducted to see whether Oral Expression classes enhance learning and prepare students for a summative assessment. A group of first year students was taught and feedback forms were filled-in in order to get students' point of view and expectations concerning the speaking course, classroom feedback and evaluation. The analysis of the collected data aimed at determining the elements that would provide the basis for a fairer and more effective evaluation and instruction.

Student sampling choice:

Second year students were chosen as the principal informants for this research because LMD students of English at the University of Mostaganem have only two years of Oral Expression and second year students have a year experience that first year students do not have and therefore the former, we believe, hold a better insight than the latter.

Organization of the work:

The present research is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter reviews the related literature. The second chapter describes the field of investigation. The third chapter deals with the results' discussion and suggestions/recommendations.

The first chapter reviews literature related to evaluating speaking. Basic concepts are defined such as the notions of formative vs. summative assessment. Theoretical models are outlined. In this chapter, various tools and protocols, used as point of reference in assessing the oral skills, are also included.

The second chapter deals with the field of investigation. It provides a detailed analysis of both teachers' and students' questionnaires. Part of the chapter also describes how we proceeded to choose teachers to attend their Oral Expression classes with two groups of

Second Year LMD students. It provides invaluable information that will constitute the basis for the discussion of the results in the next chapter.

The third and last chapter is a follow up to the second chapter. It interprets the questionnaire and classroom observation results in terms of what they practically imply and attempts to provide some suggestions and recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the basic terminology related to assessment in its broad sense and to the particular question of assessing speaking skills. Some of the most important principles will be described, theoretical models will be listed and tools will be suggested aiming at providing a comprehensive compilation for teachers starting the adventure of teaching and assessing spoken language.

I.1. Evaluation, Testing, Assessment:

First things first, the basic concepts related to evaluation have to be clearly defined. If our objective is to develop an effective assessment plan, then the first step is to become familiar with its terminology in order to facilitate our understanding of the bigger picture. When all three terms (evaluation, testing and assessment) are used to measure how much and how well students have learned the assigned materials, there is a distinction to be made between them.

Evaluation is a broad term which involves the systematic way of gathering reliable and relevant information for the purpose of making decisions. It focuses on the program or the course as a whole, including: the achievement of the learners, the teachers, the quality of the materials, the appropriateness of the objectives, the teaching methodology, the syllabus etc... This information can be qualitative or quantitative and may make use of questionnaires, interviews, classroom information, study of documents, tests, ratings. Evaluation in the classroom may be based on test results as well as teachers' subjective assessment (overall impression), and the assessment of students' classwork and their homework. (Sárosdy 2006: 131)

The focus of **assessment**, on the other hand, is on the students' learning and the outcomes of teaching. It involves testing, measuring or judging the progress, the achievement or the

language proficiency of the learner. It can be non-judgmental and does not provide any grading but simply giving feedback on students' learning. (Ibid)

Assessment may take place at any stage of a course or learning process depending on its type (more information in section 1.3). Thus, it can be defined as "a continuous process whose primary purpose is to improve students' learning." (Quoted in Olrich 2010: 321)

A **test** is a specific type of assessment, usually a set of questions that all students must answer in a fixed period of time and under similar conditions to demonstrate learning. Tests are used to "determine how well students perform on a specific set of tasks and to obtain comparative measurements of students' performance." (ibid) Tests, then, are a subset of assessment. They are certainly not the only form of assessment that a teacher can make.

Throughout this dissertation the terms evaluation and assessment will be used interchangeably where they point out at measuring students' oral performance (unless otherwise specified).

1.2. Planning, Teaching and Assessment:

As mentioned in section 1.2 above, the focus of assessment is on students' learning and the outcomes of teaching. Teachers assess their students to know how well they reached the targeted goals of instruction and how well they are progressing. It is also a way for them to pay attention at particular aspects of their own teaching in order to adjust it, making appropriate modifications if necessary to better suit their students' needs. This is why assessment is used to support the teaching/learning process. Thus, in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) it is impossible to think of teaching without thinking of assessment. (Brown 2003: 3)

Traditionally, assessment was seen as a once in a term or once in a year task that is detached from instruction and practice, revealing very little about the learning process and the value of different teaching approaches; it has been treated as a somewhat 'separate' activity, sitting outside the normal realms of daily teaching and learning. Today, it is a vital part and one of the interactive components of educational instruction along with planning and teaching (Brookhart, 1999). Planning involves the establishment of instructional objectives and learning outcomes, which leads to decisions about the types of learning activities that will enable students to successfully achieve the required outcomes. The desired learning outcomes and instructional activities then guide the assessment techniques. Finally, the assessment results direct, and even modify, the teaching approach.

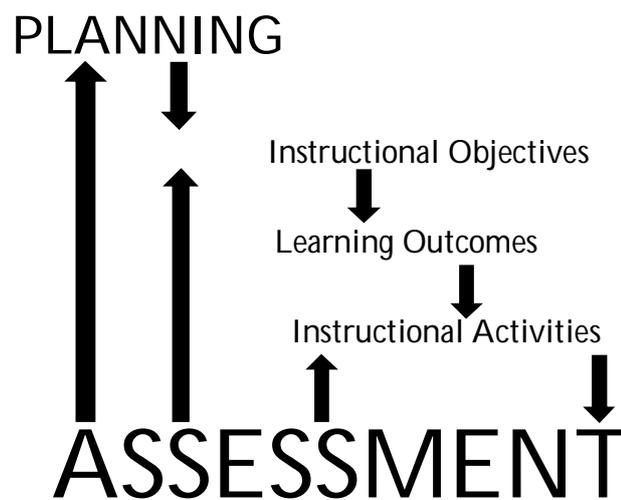


Figure 1.1 Interaction of planning, teaching and assessment in educational instruction
Brookhart (1999)

Figure 1.1 illustrates this relationship, which Brookhart (1999) describes as effective when the assessment instruments provide accurate, meaningful, and appropriate information.

When the main goal of classroom assessment is to obtain valid and reliable information about student achievement, assessment procedures also assist in appraising the effectiveness of instruction. Hence, a well-designed assessment plan helps teachers optimize their teaching by identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. While poorly designed assessment is at odds with learning, assessment that is well-designed not only promotes learning, but also enhances teaching by assisting both the student in learning and the teacher in teaching. If assessment is integral to all teaching and learning, it is therefore also central to planning, preparation and target setting (Butt, 2010).

I.3 Types of Assessment:

I.3.1 Formal and Informal Assessments:

Informal assessment involves any kind of unplanned comment or feedback carried out by the teacher about the student's work. It can include expressions like: "Good Work!", "You should revise the past tense", "Carry on" and so forth. More importantly, informal assessment is carried out by the teacher during instruction and this without recording results or making a fixed judgment about a student's performance. For example, a teacher's marginal comments on the students' papers and her/his advice to the students on how to better write an argumentative essay are instances of informal assessments (Brown, 2003: 5). On the other hand, **formal assessment** deals with the planned techniques and systematic methods used by the teacher to get into the students' achievements. Note that formal assessments are not necessarily tests. All tests are formal assessments but not all formal assessments are tests. Teachers may use students' journals or portfolios as a formal assessment (ibid).

Venn (2012) provides a simple comparison of informal and formal assessments that could be summed up this way:

Informal Assessment	Formal Assessment
✓ Flexible	✓ Structured
✓ Dynamic	✓ Static
✓ Individualized	✓ Standardized
✓ Continuous	✓ Episodic
✓ Process-Based	✓ Product-Based
✓ Progress Measuring	✓ Knowledge Testing

I.3.2 Summative and Formative Assessments:

Another useful distinction to bear in mind is the one existing between summative and formative assessments. The most familiar function of assessment and that which has a longer tradition in education is the summative one. **Summative assessment** (or assessment *of* learning) occurs at the end of a course or a unit of instruction. It also deals with the exams which take place at the end of the semester or year of study (end-year exams) (Brown, 2003: 6). It encompasses any test or method used to get information about students' achievement if it respects two criteria. First, "*it is administered at the end of some unit of instruction (e.g., unit, semester, school year)*". Second, "*summative assessment aims at assigning grades, determining students who will pass and those who will not, awarding or denying a diploma classifying test-takers according to their performance, etc.*" (Cizek, 2010:3).

Formative assessment is defined by Brown as:

...evaluating students in the process of "forming" their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process. The key to such formation is the delivery (by the teacher) and internalization (by the student) of appropriate feedback on performance, with an eye toward the future continuation (or formation) of learning.

(Brown, 2003: 6)

In view of this definition, it is understood that formative assessment is an ongoing process that has as a primary focus on the continuous development of the learners' skills and competencies. So, when teachers give a student a comment or a suggestion, or call attention to an error, that feedback is offered in order to improve the learner's language ability. The different instruments used for formative assessment are, for instance, homework, performance in classroom, responses to questionnaires etc...

Unlike summative assessment, formative assessment (also called assessment *for* learning)

... can occur many times in every lesson. It can involve several different methods for encouraging students to express what they are thinking and several different ways of acting on such evidence. It has to be within the control of the individual teacher and, for this reason, change in formative assessment practice is an integral and intimate part of a teacher's daily work.

(Black et al, 2003: 2)

Drawing on several models of formative assessment as a tool for helping to guide student learning as well as to provide information that teachers can use to improve their own

instructional practice, Cizek suggests a constellation of ten key features of formative assessments in the table below: (Formative assessment)

-
- 1- Requires students to take responsibility for their own learning.
 - 2- Communicates clear, specific learning goals.
 - 3- Focuses on goals that represent valuable educational outcomes with applicability beyond the learning context.
 - 4- Identifies the student's current knowledge/skills and the necessary steps for reaching the desired goals.
 - 5- Requires development of plans for attaining the desired goals.
 - 6- Encourages students to self-monitor progress toward the learning goals.
 - 7- Provides examples of learning goals including, when relevant, the specific grading criteria or rubrics that will be used to evaluate the student's work.
 - 8- Provides frequent assessment, including peer and student self-assessment and assessment embedded within learning activities.
 - 9- Includes feedback that is non-evaluative, specific, timely, related to the learning goals, and provides opportunities for the student to revise and improve work products and deepen understandings.
 - 10- Promotes metacognition and reflection by students on their work.
-

Table 1.1 Characteristics of Formative Assessment adapted from Cizek (2010: 8)

Cizek explains that while not all of the characteristics listed above have to be present for an assessment to be considered formative, each characteristic has been identified for its potential to maximize the achievement, development, and instructional benefits of this type of assessment.

The assessment system being currently used in Algerian universities comprises continuous/ongoing assessment and end-of-term tests. One of the aims of continuous (formative) assessment is promoting involvement and participation on the part of the learners. The idea is that they are evaluated on the basis of their development and performance throughout the term and not according to the results of a single test. Continuous assessment should also provide learners with consistent and objective feedback on both classroom activities and homework.

Rather than being mutually exclusive, as the title of this section might suggest, summative and formative assessments should be seen as complementary measures that ought to be balanced if teachers are to attend to the requirements.

I.3.3 Teacher Assessment and corrective Feedback:

Central to the idea of formative assessment is **feedback**. Feedback is defined as: *“information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance.”* (Ur, 1996:242). Ur distinguishes between two components of feedback: assessment and correction. In feedback as assessment, learners are simply informed about how well or poorly they have performed. In feedback as correction, learners are provided with specific information regarding their performance and explanation, provision or elicitation of other or better alternatives. (ibid)

Feedback from teachers to students is an important component of formative assessment. Research calls for **specific, descriptive feedback** that allows students to learn from their work in order to advance further (Black & William: 1998). Good feedback contains information that a student can use, which means that the student has to be able to hear and understand it. Giving/receiving feedback is a delicate matter as much as it is an important one; on the one hand, it involves learners' feelings of control and self-efficacy and on the other hand, it requires teachers to be non-judgmental. But any sort of feedback involves some kind of judgment. That is why it is important for learners to evolve in an inclusive classroom environment. An environment where students see constructive criticism as a good thing and understand that learning cannot occur without practice. If part of the classroom culture is to always “get things right,” then if something needs improvement, it's “wrong.” Teachers have to explain to their students that the purpose of giving feedback is to help and promote learning; and that 'getting it wrong' is not 'bad', but

rather a way into 'getting it right'(Ur: 1996). Similarly, teachers have to accept that giving feedback does involve some kind of judgment but to try to make the attitude to this more positive: that mistakes are a natural and useful part of language learning(Brookhart: 2008).

In her book, *How to Give Effective Feedback* (2008), Brookhart explains the powerful virtues of formative feedback. She says that its true power lies in its double-barreled approach: addressing cognitive and motivational factors. If learners know where they are in their learning and what to do next (cognitive factor), they will develop a feeling of control over their own-learning (motivational factor).

Given the virtues of formative or corrective feedback, one is tempted to ask how to best use it. First of all, teachers need to keep in mind that one of their roles is to encourage students by praising them for work that is well done. Praise is an important component of student's motivation and progress. However, teachers need to be careful about over-complementing the learners especially when their own self-evaluation tells them they have not done well; this might prove counter-productive(Harmer: 2007). Nevertheless, it is recommended to provide a brief feedback after each activity the learner completes. As to the correction of errors, Penny Ur (1996) selected several opinions, based on different approaches to language learning, on the correction of mistakes

THE CORRECTION OF MISTAKES: DIFFERENT OPINIONS

Audio-lingualism

Learner mistakes are, in principle, avoided by the limiting of progress to very small, controlled steps: hence there should be little need for correction. The latter is, in any case, not useful for learning; people learn by getting things right in the first place and having their performance reinforced.

Cognitive code-learning

Mistakes are regrettable, but an unavoidable part of learning: they should be corrected whenever they occur to prevent them occurring again.

Interlanguage

Mistakes are not regrettable but an integral and important part of language learning; Correcting them is a way of bringing the learner's 'interlanguage' closer to the target language (Selinker, 1972, 1992).

Communicative approach

Not all mistakes need to be corrected: the main aim of language learning is to receive and convey meaningful messages, and correction should be focused on mistakes that interfere with the aim, not on inaccuracies of usage.

Monitor theory

Correction doesn't contribute to real acquisition of the language, but only to the learner's conscious 'monitoring' of speech or writing. Hence the main activity of the teacher should be to provide comprehensible input from which the learner can acquire language, not to correct (Krashen, 1982).

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We may notice from these differing views that there are pros and cons to error correction. Bartram and Walton (2002) propose questions teachers should ask themselves and which may help to decide whether to let an error go or not:

- 1- Does the mistake affect communication?
- 2- Are we concentrating on accuracy at the moment?

-
- 3- Is it really wrong? Or is it my imagination?
 - 4- Why did the student make the mistake?
 - 5- Is it the first time the student has spoken for a long time?
 - 6- Could the student react badly to my correction?
 - 7- Have they met this language point in the current lesson?
 - 8- Is it something the students have already met?
 - 9- Is this a mistake that several students are making?
 - 10- Would the mistake irritate someone?

I.3.4 Self and Peer Assessment:

So far we have identified the primary goal of formative assessment as providing feedback to students and teachers about the targets for learning, where students are in relation to those targets, and what can be done to fill in the gaps; but if teachers are the unique providers of assessment then it is difficult to see how students can become empowered and develop the skills they need to prepare them for learning outside the university and throughout life (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick: 2006).

Modern approaches to education stress the fact that each learner should be encouraged to cast a critical eye over their own work and effective self and peer- assessments can do just that. According to Brown, self-assessment derives its theoretical justification from a number of well-established principles of second language acquisition: notably, the principle of **autonomy** and that of **intrinsic motivation**. Peer-assessment appeals to similar principles, the most obvious of which is **cooperative-learning** (Brown: 2003). Furthermore, self and peer assessments "...are becoming more important as an alternative assessment method since they could encourage learners to be involved in the assessment process." (Boud: 1999)

In effect, self and peer assessments are seen as **authentic** types of assessments that are valuable not only because they help learners understand how the assessment process actually works, but because they prepare learners for real-life situations (in the workplace, for example) where they will not have a teacher telling them if they have carried out an action correctly.

However, research indicates that these two types of assessments have a risk of being perceived as a process of presenting inflated grades and being unreliable: *“subjectivity is a primary obstacle to overcome. Students may be either too harsh on themselves or too self-flattering.”*(Brown,2003: 28).Moreover, students usually feel ill equipped to undertake the assessment or tend to be biased against the proficiency of peers. (ibid)Therefore, *“...self and peer evaluation of learners’ performance or ability have been considered to be **sub-assessments** for teachers”* (Brown & Hudson, 1998: 653-675). By sub-assessment it is meant that they support teachers’ final decisions about students’ evaluation.

We believe that apart from the marking issue, these methods can be effective if used in classroom activities for the simple purpose of monitoring students’ performance. Thus, learners can comment on their own or their classmates’ performance using a checklist¹ or guidelines to do so. This would allow students to be more attentive, would raise their awareness as to their own progress and increase their level of motivation.

In order to be effective, self-assessment should respect basic elements that are cited below:

Necessary Elements for Effective Student Self-Assessment

¹For more details of checklists and assessment grids that students can use as self-assessment tools you can refer to Brown 2003.

-
- 1- Awareness of the value of self-assessment.
 - 2- Access to clear criteria on which to base the assessment.
 - 3- A specific task or performance to assess.
 - 4- Models of self-assessment.
 - 5- Direct instruction in and assistance with self-assessment, including feedback Practice.
 - 6- Cues regarding when it is appropriate to self-assess.
 - 7- Opportunities to revise and improve the task or performance.

Table1.2: Necessary Elements for Student Self-AssessmentAdapted from:

(Goodrich: 1996 in Andrade, 2010: 93)

Table1.2 shows that in order to be effective, self-assessment should be based on some key elements among which are the assessment criteria, the task to be assessed, the appropriate moment of self-assessment, the motivation of the students and the improvement of the task being assessed by correctives and revision. In addition, it is to be highlighted that, in many cases, students are hesitant to judge the quality of their performance because the conditions are not available, for example, the absence of criteria for self/peer-assessments. Goodrich (1996) confirms that the elements of self-assessment are also its condition and if they are available in the classroom, effective self-assessment is likely to occur (Andrade, 2010: 93).

To conclude, external feedback (such as teacher feedback) and internal feedback (such as student self-evaluation) affect student knowledge and beliefs. If used effectively, together they can help students with self-regulation: deciding on their next learning goals and devising tactics and strategies to reach them.

I.4 Principles of Language Assessment:

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.” _Quote attributed to Albert Einstein

In the domain of education this allegory has been employed repeatedly to say that it is inappropriate to judge an animal by focusing on a skill which the creature does not possess. A fish is specialized to swim superbly, and its ability to climb a tree is non-existent or rudimentary. The question that applies to language assessment reads: “Does a test measure what it is supposed to?” In other terms, is the test valid? Validity, reliability, practicality and authenticity are important principles of language assessment.

I.4.1 Validity:

Brown (2003) identifies five types of validity-related evidence: Content validity, criterion validity, construct validity, consequential validity and face validity, but the central idea is that teachers determine what they want to measure and then design items, tasks, or prompts for the test that truly measure that construct. (Bailey: 2005)

There are some factors that make a test invalid:

- If it measures external knowledge or other skills.
- If it was designed for one country, institution purpose, etc but adopted by another.
- If it does not contain a representative sample of the course.
- If it is not relevant to the objective of the course.

Those factors influence the validity of test interpretation and can be found in the relation of teaching to testing, in the administration and scoring of the test, and in the typical responses of pupils to the test situation.

I.4.2 Reliability

The reliability or stability of a language test is concerned with the degree to which it can be trusted to produce the same result upon repeated administration to the same individual, or to give consistent information about the value of a learning variable being measured. Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, which is to how consistent test scores or other evaluation results are from one measurement to another. Four types of reliability-related evidence are identified by Brown (2003): Student-related reliability, rater reliability, test administration reliability, test reliability.

Some factors affecting the reliability of a test are:

- The size of the sample; the larger the sample, and the more reliable the test will be.
- The administration of the test, such as the condition of testing room.
- The clarity of test instruction, by giving examples.
- Personal factors: motivation, illness, etc.
- Scoring the test.

All factors mentioned above are important to insure the reliability of a test but, specifically, it is the problem of "rater/scorer reliability"² that constitutes an issue that must be avoided or overcome when teachers evaluate students speaking skills.

I.4.3 Practicality

It would be unwise if in the design and administration of a test we considered validity and reliability apart from its practicality. Indeed, an effective test is practical if it:

²Both *Inter-rater* (over different markers) and *intra-rater* (within one rater over time)

-
- Is not excessively expensive. (cost-effective)
 - Stays within appropriate time constraints.
 - Is relatively easy to administer.
 - Has a scoring/evaluation procedure that is specific and time-efficient.

In other words, a test can only be useful if it *“does not make unreasonable demands on resources, including time, money and personnel.”* (Bailey, 2005: 22)

I.4.4 Authenticity

Bachman & Palmer (1996, p.23) define authenticity as “the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language task.” In other words, how much test tasks resemble real-life tasks.

An authentic test is one where:

- The language in the test is as natural as possible.
- Items are contextualized rather than isolated.
- Topics are relevant and meaningful for learners.
- Some thematic organization to items is provided.
- Tasks represent, or closely approximate, real-world tasks.

I.4.5 Washback/Backwash

The last criterion is washback (or instructional impact). This concept is often defined as: *“the effect a test has on teaching and learning.”*(Bailey, 2005: 22). How learners prepare for a test and how teachers modify their teaching to reach the targets. If it promotes the

skills and knowledge to be learnt, a washback is said to be positive. It is negative if it hinders that development. (ibid)

I.5 The Speaking Skills:

So far, some of the most important concepts and terminology related to assessment/evaluation have been defined. This section will discuss the particularity of speaking skills' assessment. Because speaking is different from other skills, in nature, a look at what constitutes these differences is important in understanding how and what it means to evaluate speaking.

I.5.1 The Nature of Speaking:

There are many characteristics peculiar to spoken discourse and that make it different from written discourse. Knowing these differences helps in understanding how speech is processed and why it cannot be taught nor assessed the way writing for instance is.

Among these characteristics, Richards (2008) mentions the following:

- **Spontaneity:** usually, speaking is a spontaneous exercise that requires the interlocutors to process and create ideas "online".

- **Speed:** Often spoken discourse strikes second or foreign language listeners/speakers as being very fast. In contrast to written discourse where the reader can process information at his own pace, the listener often doesn't have a chance to listen again and the speaker has to think quickly of an answer to his interlocutor.

-
- **Planning:** spoken discourse is usually unplanned and reflects a process of construction such as hesitation, reduced forms, fillers, and repeats.
 - **Structure:** unlike written discourse which has a hierarchical structure in which the sentence is the unit of organization, spoken discourse has a linear one where speech is delivered one clause at a time, and longer utterances in conversation generally consist of several coordinated clauses; most of them are conjuncts and adjuncts.
 - **Dependence:** spoken texts are often context-dependent and personal assuming shared background knowledge.
 - **Accents:** lastly spoken texts may be spoken with many different accents, from standard or non-standard, regional, non-native, and so on.

In addition to these features, Luoma (2004) adds:

- (Spoken discourse) employs more **vague** or **generic words** than written discourse.
- Employs **fixed phrases**, fillers and hesitation markers.
- Contains **slips** and **errors** reflecting online processing.
- Involves **reciprocity** (i.e., interactions are jointly constructed)
- Shows **variation** (e.g., between formal and casual speech), reflecting speaker roles, speaking purposes, and the context.

1.5.2 The elements of spoken language:

Drawing on Van Lier's (1995:15) model, this part outlines the components of spoken language. **Figure 1.2** illustrates the complexity and interrelatedness of the different components which make spoken language a difficult skill to master. Teachers need to be aware of all these elements in order to assist their students in the process of learning spoken English.

The left column of the "Pyramid" lists the different traditional areas of linguistic analysis that teachers need to know and understand in order to help learners. The center column shows the "levels" of language that students have to master. These must work simultaneously when foreign language learners speak English:

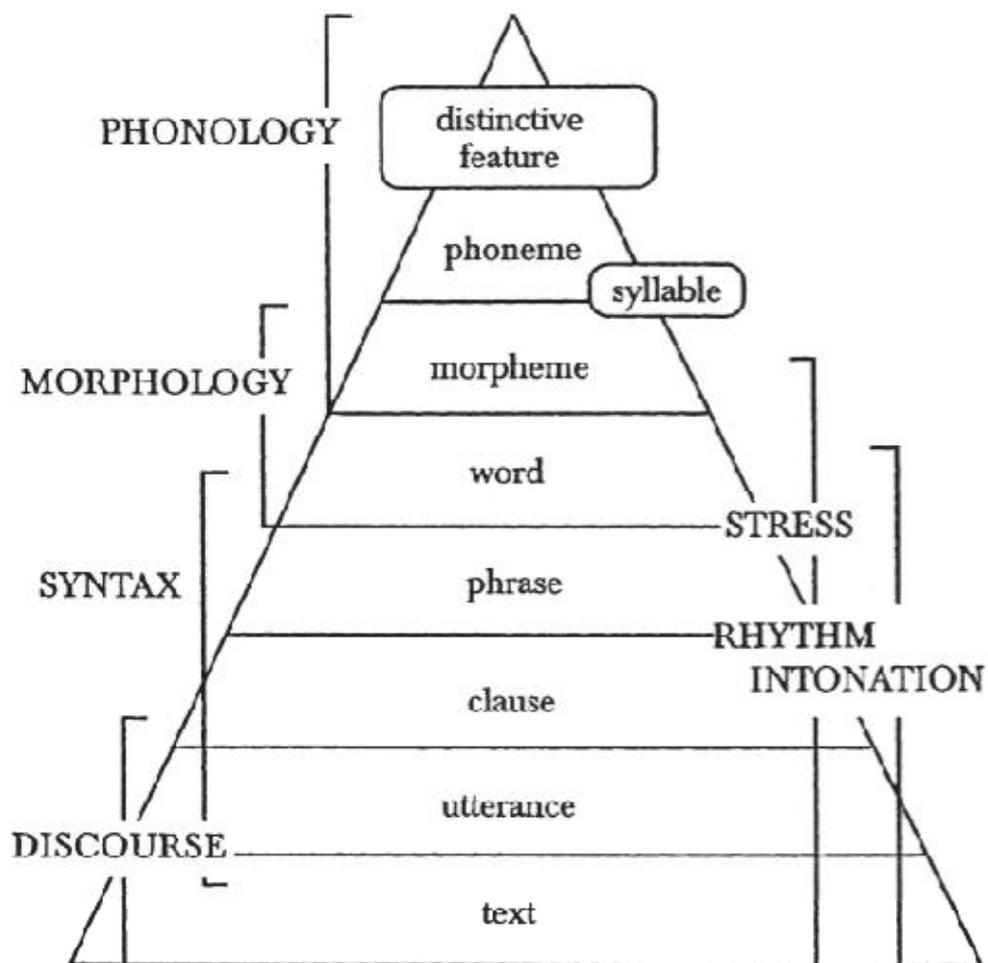


Figure 1.2 Units of Language (Van Lier, 1995: 15)

- **Text:** refers to stretches of language of an undetermined length. Spoken texts consist of utterances.
- **Utterance:** a thing that people say and that may not be a complete grammatical sentence. However the utterance makes sense in a specific context.

-
- **Clause:** consists of at least two words containing a grammatical subject and a verb marked for tense. Independent clauses can stand alone while dependent clauses rely on independent ones to be complete.
 - **Phrase:** consists of two or more words but in contrast with a clause it does not have a subject or a verb marked for tense. It can be prepositional, a noun phrase or infinitive phrase. Clauses and phrases can both stand as utterances in speaking but not in writing (unless representing speech).
 - **Word:** are free morphemes, i.e., units of language that can stand alone and convey meaning. In contrast, bound morphemes do not appear alone, they are connected to words. Suffixes and prefixes are instances of bound morphemes.
 - **Phoneme:** is a divisible unit of sound that distinguishes meaning. It can be either a consonant or a vowel.
 - **Syllable:** in Figure1 above the syllable overlaps the levels of morphemes and phonemes because it can consist of a morpheme or one or more phonemes. It can either be open (ending with a vowel) or closed (ending with a consonant).
 - **Distinctive features:** is an even smaller unit of spoken language. It relates to how and where in the mouth a sound is produced.
 - **Stress, rhythm and intonation:** represent supra-segmental phonemes i.e., when we speak, phonemes carry meaning differences according to where stress is placed or what intonation we have. These differences are related to the context where the utterances occur.

As far as EFL learners are concerned, managing the multiple components of language that must work together as they speak is widely required, and the ability to use these components to produce and understand language is known as **linguistic competence**(Bailey, 2005). However an important element of successful speaking that is not addressed in this model is “knowing how to make use” of the linguistic components of English which is part of EFL learners' communicative competence as Mackey cited in Bygate 1987 says:

Oral expression involves not only (...) the use of the right sounds in the right patterns of rhythm and intonation, but also the choice of words and inflections in the right order to convey the right meaning

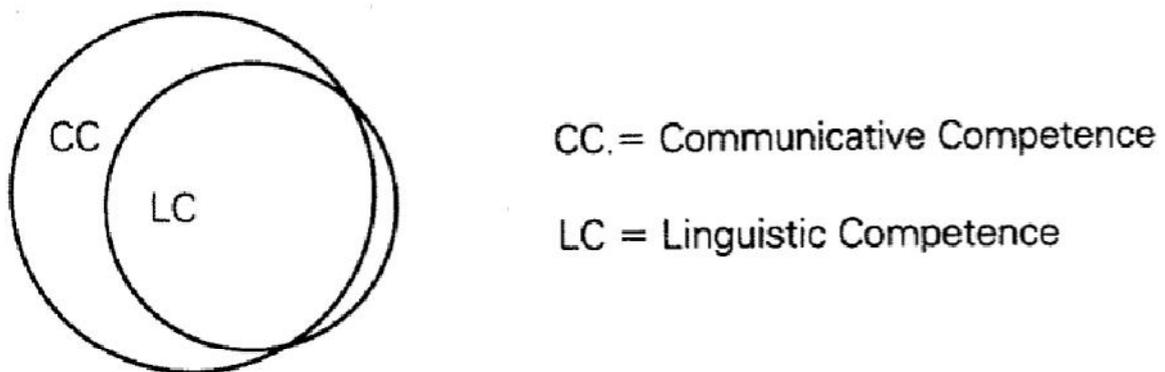
(Mackey, 1965: 266 cited in Bygate, 1987:5)

To be proficient in a language means to develop a communicative competence. What is communicative competence and what are its various components?

1.5.3 Communicative Competence:

The notion of communicative competence was introduced by Hymes in reaction to a restricted Chomskian concept of linguistic competence. Hymes's understanding of competence is much broader than to comprise only a linguistic perspective. He defines communicative competence as “the ability to participate in [the child's] society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member”(Hymes cited in Magnan 2008: 350).Hymes's definition encompasses all rule-systems underlying language use and thus accords a central role to sociocultural factors. Similarly, Allwright (1979) uses the notion as a broader term implying that: “...linguistic competence is a part of communicative competence.” (Allwright 1979: 168). As shown in the diagram below, communicative

competence encompasses linguistic competence, however, for what we know nowadays, CC would need to be portrayed as much a bigger circle in comparison with LC.



**Figure 1.3: The relationship between communicative and linguistic competence
(Allwright 1979: 168)**

There are several other models of communicative competence. One that is worth mentioning is Canale and Swain's (1983) model. They extend the model of communicative competence to comprise four interrelated areas of competence, namely: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence and discourse competence

- **Linguistic competence:** It refers to the knowledge of lexical items and of rules of grammar, semantics, and phonology.
- **Sociolinguistic competence:** It refers to the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of the language and of discourse and the ability to use language appropriately in various contexts. It entails register (i.e.; degrees of formality and informality), appropriate lexical choice, and style shifting.
- **Strategic competence:** It refers to the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for gaps in one's second/foreign language skills.

-
- **Discourse competence:** It refers to the ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to make meaningful utterances.

(Canale & Swain, 1983: 29 in Brown, 2007: 219)

A more recent model by Bachman (1990) expands the concept of communicative language ability to include several broad areas: **organizational competence** including grammatical and textual competence, **pragmatic competence** including illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence, **strategic competence** and **psychophysiological mechanisms**. All in all, the crucial point to be made here is that through the use of Communicative Language Teaching CLT it has become widely understood that communicative competence should be the primary goal of LT (Savignon 1997). The eventual model that is chosen to describe this concept is secondary to this realization.

1.5.4 The micro and macro skills of speaking:

Knowledge of the linguistic as well as the sociolinguistic aspects of language is a prerequisite to successful communication. Brown (2003) has drawn up a list to provide taxonomy of speaking skills which is based on the forms and the functions of language. The former refers to producing the smaller chunks of language such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocation, and phrasal units. The latter implies that the speakers focus on the large elements, fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion, nonverbal communication and strategic option:

Micro skills:

- Produce chunks of language of different length.
- Orally produce difference among English phonemes and allophonic variants.

-
- Produce English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure and intonation contours.
 - Produce reduced forms of words and phrases.
 - Use an adequate number of lexical units (words) to accomplish pragmatic purpose.
 - Produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery.
 - Monitor one's own oral production and use various strategic devices pauses, fillers, self-corrections, backtracking to enhance the clarity of the message.
 - Use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc.), systems (e.g. tense agreement, pluralization), word order, pattern, rules and elliptical forms.
 - Produce speech in natural constituents, in appropriate phrases, pause groups, breath groups and sentences.
 - Express a particular meaning in different grammatical form.
 - Use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

Macro skills:

- Accomplish appropriately communicative functions according to situations, participants and goals
- Use appropriate register, implicature, pragmatic conventions and other sociolinguistic features in face to face conversations.
- Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization and exemplification.
- Use facial features, kinesics, body language and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey meanings.

-
- Develop and use a battery of speaking strategies, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for help, and accurately assessing how well your interlocutor is understanding you.

Brown (2003: 142-143)

In the same line of thought, Orwig (1998) suggested an array of micro-skills that the speaker has to master:

- Pronounce the distinctive sounds of a language clearly enough so that people can distinguish them. This includes making tonal distinctions.
- Use stress and rhythmic patterns, and intonation patterns of the language clearly enough so that people can understand what is said.
- Use the correct forms of words. This may mean, for example, changes in the tense, case, or gender.
- Put words together in correct word order.
- Use vocabulary appropriately.
- Use the register or language variety that is appropriate to the situation and the relationship to the conversation partner.
- Make clear to the listener the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, object, by whatever means the language uses.
- Make the main ideas stand out from supporting ideas or information.
- Make the discourse hang together so that people can follow what you are saying.

It is assumed that in designing tasks for assessing spoken language, these skills can act as a checklist of objectives. Although, the functions of language have the appearance of being

more complex than the forms, both of them present a level of difficulty, depending on the stage and background of the test-taker.

I.6 Approaches to Oral Proficiency Testing:

Since the publication of Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence, some of the terms and concepts which encapsulate language proficiency have become synonymous to some extent. We know now that they overlap to a great extent that is why for the purpose of this research the terms: Language Proficiency, Communicative Competence and Language Ability will be used interchangeably.

The testing of oral proficiency can be associated to three schools of thought as indicated by Oller and Damico (1991): Discrete-point Testing, Integrative Testing and Pragmatic Testing.

Discrete point is based on the assumption that language proficiency consists of:

....separable components of phonology, lexicon, syntax, and so on, each of which could be further divided into distinct inventories of elements (e.g., sounds, classes of sounds or phonemes, syllables, morphemes, words, idioms, phrases and structures, etc...

Oller and Damico (1991:82)

Following this model, the testing of oral proficiency typically consists of test formats such as phoneme discrimination tasks, tasks designed to measure vocabulary by selecting

an appropriate option from a set of fixed of choices etc. According to the authors, the weaknesses of such an approach centers upon:

- the difficulty of limiting oral testing to a single skill for example Multiple Choice Questions.
- the difficulty of limiting oral testing to a single linguistic element (for example, vocabulary) without involving other domains (for example, phonology);
- and the difficulty of measuring oral proficiency in the absence of any social context or link to human experience.

The integrative approach assumes that oral language processing or use entails the simultaneous engagement of more than one language component (for example, vocabulary, grammar, gesture) and skill (for example, listening, speaking). Following this approach, an integrative task might require the test-taker to listen to or read a story then retell or summarize it.

Pragmatic language testing differs from integrative testing in one fundamental way: an ostensible effort is made to link the language testing situation to the test-taker's experience. As Oller and Domico (1991) state, normal language use is connected to people, places, event and relations that implicate the whole continuum of experience and is always constrained by time or temporal factors. Thus, pragmatic oral language tasks are intended to be as "real-life" or authentic as possible. That might require the test-taker to

engage in a listening task just like in an integrative task, but under the contextual and temporal conditions that generally characterize this activity.

The three approaches seem to offer both advantages and disadvantages in terms of validity and practicality. Opting for one approach or another will depend on the situation and the objectives to be attained.

I.7 Oral Proficiency Test Types:

Scott Thornbury(2005)lists a number of the most commonly used test types; these are:

➤ **Interviews:**

The oral interview is considered to be the simplest and easiest type of oral tests to set. However, interviews do not always go without any problems. Some of the issues related to oral interview tests are:

- ✓ The formal nature of interviews that doesn't test conversational speaking style.
- ✓ The interviewer effect (her/his type of questions) on the candidates' performance.
- ✓ Maintaining the flow of the talk while trying to make an objective judgment if the interviewer is the assessor.

Some ways to circumvent these problems are:

- ✓ The interviewer can initiate a casual talk at the beginning of the interview.
- ✓ The use of a picture or pre-selected topic as a focus to the interview.
- ✓ Having a third party present to co-assess.

➤ **Live monologues:**

These are talks that the candidate prepares on a pre-selected topic. The talk can be held in front of an audience constituted of other students. Live monologues are good testing techniques in that they provide evidence of the learner's ability to hold long (extended) turns and speak interactively and spontaneously with an audience.

➤ **Recorded monologues:**

These are the same as live monologues except that the candidate doesn't speak in front of an audience. S/he records the talk in another room (adjacent to the classroom) with no disruption to the lesson. This practice is less stressful than that of live monologues. Recorded tests can be assessed after the event with the possibility of multiple examiners rating the performance and allowing a comparison of the scores attributed to each performance.

➤ **Role-Plays:**

This practice is simple and doesn't require sophisticated skills or imagination. Candidates are used to it in the classroom. The partner can be the assessor or another learner. The information can be provided in advance or may center around written data such as a brochure etc... Role-plays are valid tests if they are grounded in everyday-life situations but their centering around written data mean that the test can partially assess reading skills.

➤ **Collaborative tasks and discussions:**

The performance is like that in a role-play except that the candidates do not have to assume a role but simply be themselves. The performance of a candidate is likely to affect that of another but the advantage is that learners' interactive skills can be observed in circumstances that approximate real-life situations.

Underhill (1987) also lists different oral test techniques that are grouped here in the form of a chart classifying them from the most spontaneous to the most mechanical ones.

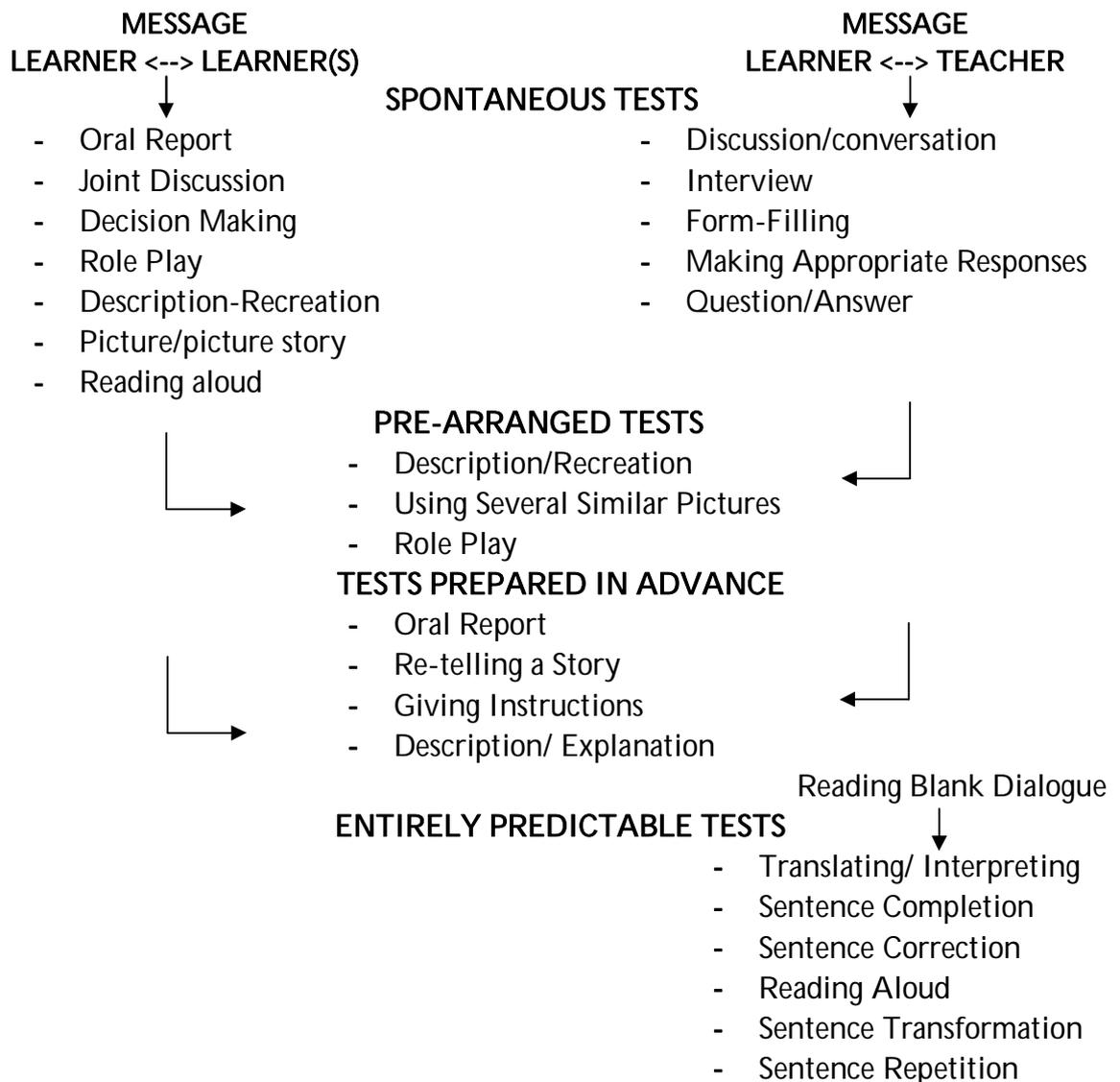


Figure 1.4: Oral Test Elicitation Techniques (adapted from Underhill 1987)

Other oral proficiency test tasks include: games, multiple choice, picture-cued items, group oral exam, dycoms (split information), describe and draw, conversational cloze

and imitation. Brown (2003) classifies them into five categories: imitative speaking, intensive Speaking, responsive speaking, interactive speaking and extensive speaking.

Thornbury (2005) argues that the activities designed to test speaking are generally the same as the kind of activities designed to practice speaking so, the learner should be quite used to them. He adds that the challenge is more in designing and applying satisfactory assessment criteria.

I.8 Assessment criteria and scoring procedures:

As mentioned above, selecting assessment criteria might prove problematic for teachers. According to Knight (1992), one of the main reasons why teachers are reluctant to take on testing oral ability is *"...deciding which criteria to use in making an assessment."*(Knight, 1992: 294)

For the validity and reliability of oral tests, teachers need to be aware of the different possible criteria that can be used for assessing learners' speaking skills and they also need to be aware that their selection and weighting of those criteria depend on the context in which they are to be used (Ibid). In other words, what are teachers looking at (or considering) in their assessment? Are the criteria adapted to the particular task type?

Before moving to more formal tools for measuring learners' oral ability, let us consider the one proposed by Brown & Yule (1983). Brown and Yule suggest using a basic chart for recording comments or scores on students' spoken performance. This informal chart would contain headings reflecting those aspects of students' speech which the teacher feels confident of measuring. The chart may take the following form:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type of speech required</i>	<i>Grammatical Correctness</i>	<i>Appropriate Vocabulary</i>	<i>Fluency/ Pronunciation</i>	<i>Information Transfer Score</i>	<i>Others</i>

Table 1.3 Assessment Record of Students' Oral Performance (Informal Chart)

(Brown & Yule, 1983: 104)

It is assumed that some aspects of speech (like fluency) are to be judged subjectively by the teacher. An experienced teacher who knows his learners well enough can provide a solid basis and a valid measurement for the informal assessment of students' oral performance.

Knight (1992) provides a fairly comprehensive list of assessment criteria containing eight broad categories:

Assessment Criteria

1- GRAMMAR

- a- Range
- b- Accuracy

2- VOCABULARY

- a- Range
- b- Accuracy

3- PRONUNCIATION

- a- Individual sounds (esp. phonemic distinction)

- b- Stress and rhythm

- c- Intonation
- d- Linking/ elision/ assimilation

4- FLUENCY

- a- Speed of talk
- b- Hesitation while speaking
- c- Hesitation before speaking

5- CONVERSATIONAL SKILL

-
- a- Topic development
 - b- Initiative (in turn taking, and topic control)
 - c- Cohesion: i) with own utterances
ii) with interlocutor
 - d- Conversation maintenance (inc. clarification, repair, checking, pause fillers, etc.)

6- SOCIOLINGUISTIC SKILL

It is up to the teachers to add or delete elements from this list according to their objectives.

Items that test different aspects of oral language are called "Analytic tests". According to Thornbury (2005)analytic testing:

*..takes longer, but compels testers to take a variety of factors into account and, if these factors are well chosen, is probably both fairer and more reliable. One disadvantage is that the scorer may be distracted by all the categories and lose sight of the overall picture.....
Four or five categories seem to be the maximum that even trained scorers can handle at one time.*

Thornbury (2005:127)

- a- Distinguishing register and style (e.g. formal or informal, persuasive or conciliatory)
- b- Use of cultural references

7- NON-VERBAL

- a- Eye-contact and body-posture
- b- Gestures, facial expressions

8- CONTENT

- a- Coherence of arguments
- b- Relevance

On the other hand, oral language can be assessed on the basis of an overall impression of the learners' performance. Such tests are known as "Integrative" or "Holistic" tests in that, unlike discrete-point (analytic) tests, they do not isolate language items and test them separately. The advocates of integrative testing base their arguments on the unitary test hypothesis which claims that: "... Vocabulary, grammar, phonology and other discrete points of language could not be disentangled from each other in language performance." (Brown, 2003:10)

However, holistic tests are not without disadvantages. Underhill (1987) argues that:

A single test technique, marked on an overall oral proficiency criterion, will give a quick but approximate estimate of speaking ability. A sequence of different techniques, each marked on the basis of one or two different sub-skills of speaking, with their scores added together, will clearly take longer but should produce a more accurate and consistent result.

Underhill (1987:14)

Other interesting sources for the selection of criteria to test oral ability are standardized tests. As Thornbury (2005) argues: *"In practice, formal examinations often include a range of test types, so that the strengths of one type counterbalance the weaknesses of another and allow learners to show themselves to their best advantage."* (Thornbury, 2005: 126)

One such instance is the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Speaking Skills (CELS) Test of Speaking. The test includes four categories of criteria: "Grammar and Vocabulary", "Discourse Management", "Pronunciation" and "Interactive Communication". The categories are described as follows:

- **Grammar and Vocabulary:** To test the accurate and appropriate use of syntactic forms as well as vocabulary.
- **Discourse Management:** To test candidates' ability to express ideas/opinions in coherent, connected speech.
- **Pronunciation:** To test candidates' ability to produce comprehensible utterances including: individual sounds, linking words, stress and intonation.
- **Interactive communication:** To test candidates' ability at initiating talk, responding appropriately, taking turns, maintaining coherence of the conversation, using strategies ...etc.

To determine the level of a candidate's oral proficiency, the CELS refers to the descriptors provided by the Common European Framework (CEF). The CEF distinguishes between "speaking" (or Oral Production) and "Spoken Interaction". Six levels of competences are used to describe the overall oral production in terms of what candidates are able to do (Can Dos); they are stated in the table below:

OVERALL ORAL PRODUCTION	
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes etc as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
A1	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.

Table 1.4 CEF Descriptors for Oral Production
(Council of Europe, 2001:58 in Thornbury, 2005: 129)

On the other hand, descriptors for spoken interaction include such factors as:

- Turn-taking skills
- Communication strategies
- Spontaneity
- Asking for clarification
- Information exchange
- Politeness strategies

Teachers may also want to assess their learners in terms of their fluency and accuracy. Following is a scale detailing both the level and score to be awarded to students.

Accuracy		Fluency	
Little or no language produced	1	Little or no communication	1
Poor vocabulary mistakes in basic grammar, may have very strong foreign accent	2	Very hesitant and brief utterances, sometimes difficult to understand	2
Adequate but not rich vocabulary mistakes obvious grammar mistakes, slight foreign accent	3	Gets ideas across but hesitantly and briefly	3
Good range of vocabulary, occasional grammar slips, slight foreign accent	4	Effective communication in short turns	4
Wide vocabulary appropriately used, virtually no grammar mistakes, native-like or slight foreign accent	5	Easy and effective communication, uses long turns	5
TOTAL SCORE OUT OF 10:			

**Table 1.5 Accuracy & Fluency Assessment Scale
(Ur, 1996: 135)**

To sum up, there exist many different protocols for assessing oral proficiency. Teachers will have to choose and adapt these tools to the types of test tasks they design. They also need to use a marking system significant with the test procedure and consistent with their aims, learners' needs and the resources available. To the question whether to use atomistic (analytic) or holistic tests and marking systems, Underhill (1987) suggests that teachers strike a balance between the two. Teachers can opt for both analytic and holistic approaches to oral tests and scores using one as a check on the other. They thus will strike a balance between "structural and communicative" objectives and between "subjective and objective" judgment.

Conclusion:

In this chapter there, first of all was an attempt at defining the terms: evaluation, testing and assessment. We then tried to show the place of assessment in the instructional cycle. Types of assessment were listed to explain the principles underlying each. Next, we explained the notions of validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and their importance in assessment. After that we moved to the specificities of oral language assessment with a look at the nature of speaking, its elements and its sub-skills. Finally, we outlined the different approaches to oral proficiency testing, the types of oral tests and the assessment criteria and scoring procedures. This is what was developed in the first chapter.

CHAPTER TWO:

FIELD OF INVESTIGATION

Introduction

So far, we have presented a review of related literature to oral expression evaluation. The next step of any research design is to move to something more practical. As far as this particular research is concerned, the most suitable method is the descriptive one. According to **Burns and Grove (2001, 248)** a descriptive design helps us identify problems in current practice with an aim to solve them. The researcher may draw on a range of different procedures for collecting data, such as: observations, meetings, tests and questionnaires. The choice of what procedure(s) to employ obviously depends on the aim of the research work, the sample under investigation, the time available and the nature of the collected data.

The questionnaire is perhaps the most widely used tool for eliciting information from the target informants relative to their goals, attitudes and backgrounds. In this study, we have made use of two questionnaires: (1) The teachers' questionnaire was designed for teachers of oral expression who are in good position for providing data relevant to our study. (2) The students' questionnaire was designed to invite them to contribute information on their opinions and attitudes towards oral expression classes and evaluation. This chapter then clarifies the research design in terms of the aim, the administration (procedure) and the description. It comprises the analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaires as well as the procedures and selection of the population for classroom observation.

II.1. Students' questionnaire

II.1.1. Aim of the questionnaire:

This questionnaire was mainly designed to investigate second year LMD students' opinion about the importance of speaking skills, as well as to diagnose their own perception of their level of English, since this latter is usually measured through their aptitude to interact and converse in English. It also attempts to investigate their current attitude towards oral expression class and evaluation procedures.

II.1.2. Administration of the questionnaire:

Given the impossibility to conduct the research on the whole population under investigation, namely second year LMD students whose total number is 600 students, the questionnaire was administered to a sample population of 100 students. The participants in this study were selected from three different classes.

It is worthy to mention that the questionnaire was distributed during the month of June 2013 when students were taking their final examinations at the English department of Mostaganem University. Before they complete the questionnaire, students were given identical instructions on how to do so and for what reason it was designed. They were notified that: a) it is not a test, b) it is an important component in our study, c) their participation is going to be really appreciated, d) what matters is their opinions (no true or false answers), and e) the answers they will provide would remain completely confidential (even though they were not asked to write their names). They were asked to fill in the questionnaire once they are done with their exam; some of them returned their exam papers and their questionnaires at the same time, while others returned their exam papers and remained in the amphitheater to complete the questionnaires. Students reported that the questions were clear and easy to answer however their answers may have been

influenced by the stress and frustration resulting from their performance. Out of the 100 questionnaires given to students, only 93 of them were handed back.

II.1.3. Analysis of the questionnaire:

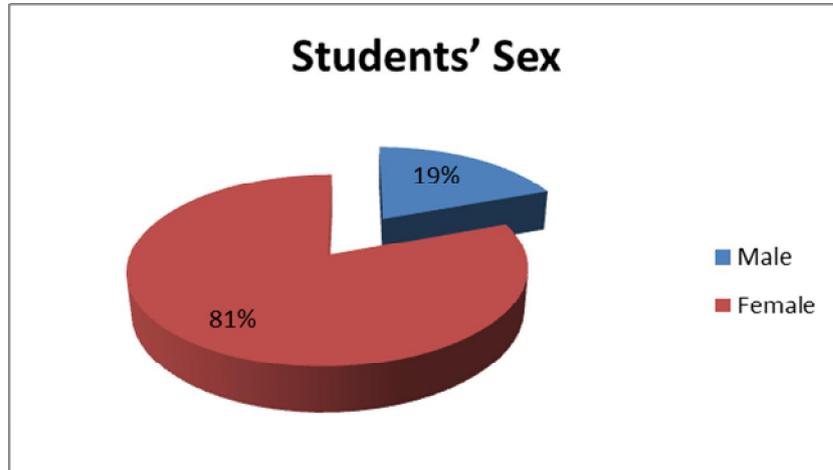
PART ONE:

Q1. Sex:

SEX	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
NUMBER	18	75	93
%	19,35%	80,64%	100%

Table 2.1: Students' Sex

Figure 2.1: Students' Sex



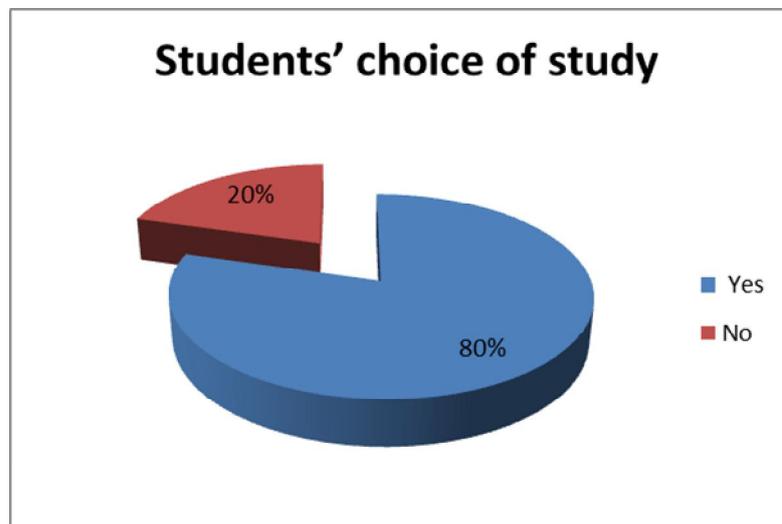
Female students outnumber males. In fact, we have recorded just (18) male subjects out of a total of 93 making up (19,35%), whereas the rest is of a female sex, that is 75 (80,64%). This adds nothing to the work except to the extent that girls are expected to be more interested than boys in studying a foreign language.

Q2. Choice of study:

	Yes	No	Total
Number	74	19	93
%	79,56%	20,43%	100%

Table 2.2: Students' choice of study

Figure 2.2: Students' choice of study



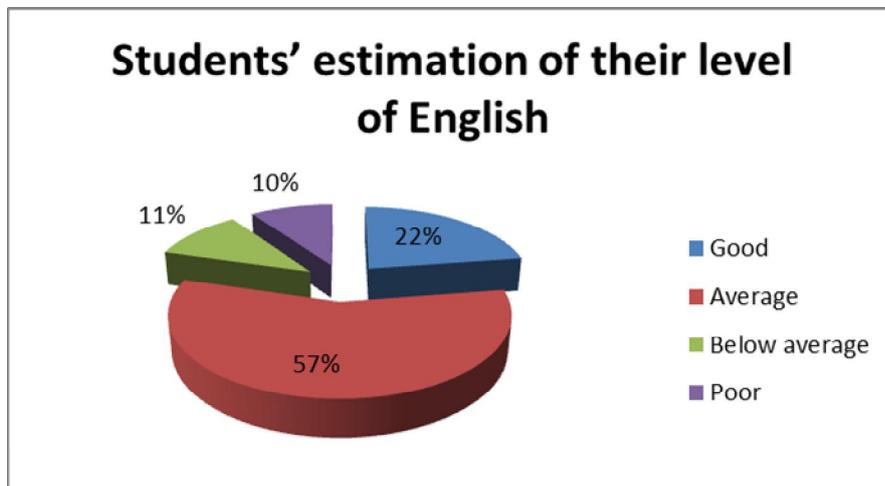
To the question whether studying English was their own choice, the majority of the subjects 74 (79,56%) answered “yes” while only 19 of them representing a percentage of (20,43%) answered “no”. We assume that their baccalaureate average did not allow some students to follow the specialties they wanted. This question is a reason, among others to justify students' lack of motivation in learning to speak English.

Q3. How do you consider your level in English?

	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	Total
Number	21	53	10	09	93
%	22,58%	56,98%	10,75%	09,67%	100%

Table 2.3: Students' estimation of their level of English

Figure 2.3: Students' estimation of their level of English



10 participants (10,75%) consider their level in English to be below average and 09 others (09,67%) consider it as poor. 21 (22,58%) state that their level is good. A large majority of students: 53 (56,98%) assume that their level is average. Students usually relate their level to how well or not they can understand and produce the language either orally or in writing.

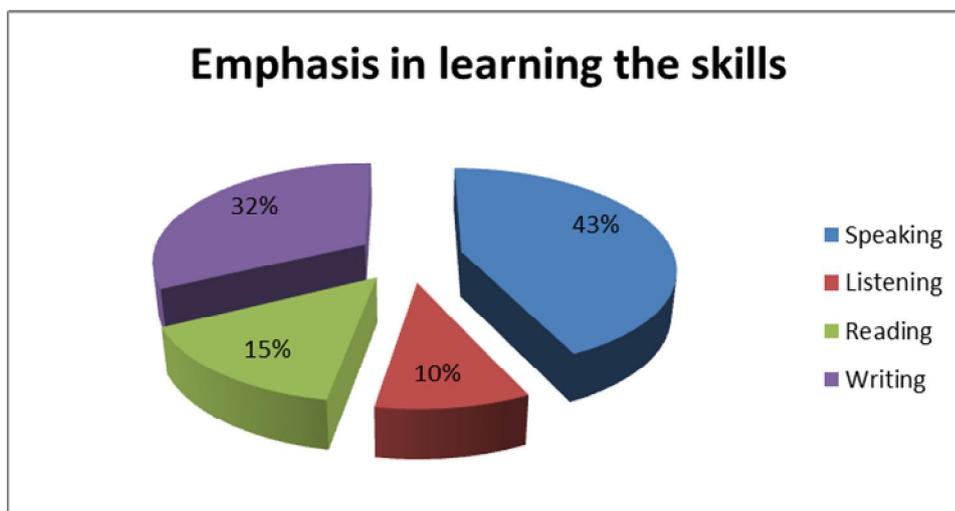
PART TWO:

Q4. The most important skill to master is:

	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing	Total
Number	40	09	14	30	93
%	43,01%	09,67%	15,05%	32,25%	100 %

Table 2.4: Emphasis in learning the skills

Figure 2.4: Emphasis in learning the skills



Students were asked to pick, what in their view, represents the most important skill to master. The majority of the respondents, 40 (43,01%), put speaking in the first place. In the second position writing was mentioned by 30 respondents (32,25%). Finally, reading and listening got the lowest percentages with (15,05%) and (09,67%) respectively

Because students' examinations are often ones where they have to produce something written, the writing skill is the second most important skill for students, speaking being in the view of the majority the ultimate skill to master. Listening and reading skills have lesser importance to students.

Among the reasons why students picked speaking skills as being the most important for them to master are:

- ✓ It's the best way to express oneself freely, to communicate with others. You know a person's level of English from the way they speak.
- ✓ If you are good at speaking, this means that you already master the three other skills.

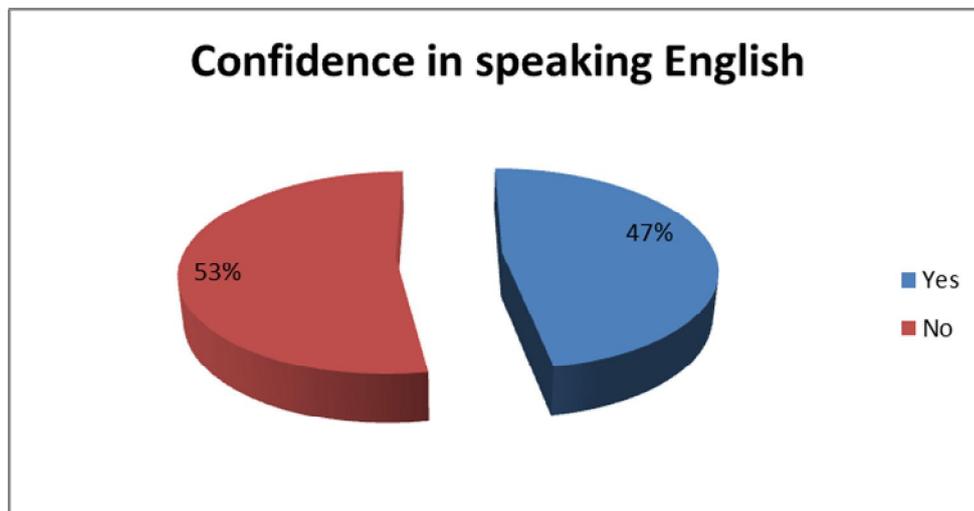
- ✓ We need to speak fluently in order to be able to present our end of degree research paper.

Q5. Do you feel afraid to talk?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	44	49	93
%	47,31%	52,68%	100%

Table 2.5: Confidence in speaking English

Figure 2.5: Confidence in speaking English



This question aims at determining whether informants are afraid to talk or not during oral expression classes. An examination of the table above reveals that the majority of the respondents 49 (52,68%) feel confident speaking in English. While 44 (47,31%) of them find no such easiness to express themselves during oral classes. Yet, reticence to take part in speaking classes does not always stem from the fear to speak; it can also be attributed to a lack of motivation or interest in the topic or in the subject in itself. Although motivation can play a major role in students' initiation of speech or participation in classes, reasons of their reticence cannot all be attributed to it. The

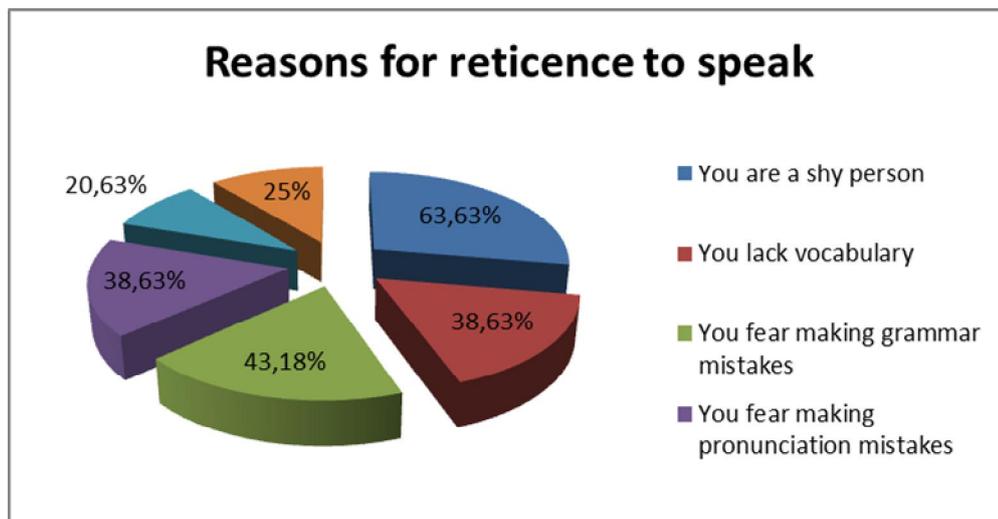
objective of the next question is to give us an idea of some other possible factors which may prevent students from speaking English.

Q6. If your answer is yes, is it because? (More than one answer can be picked)

Suggestions	Number	%
a- You are a shy person	28	63,63%
b- You lack vocabulary	17	38,63%
c- You fear making grammar mistakes	19	43,18%
d- You fear making pronunciation mistakes	17	38,63%
e- You fear your classmates' comments	09	20,45%
f- You fear your teacher's negative feedback	11	25%

Table 2.6: Reasons for reticence to speak

Figure 2.6: Reasons for reticence to speak



Having discussed the issue of students being afraid to talk, it seems wise to see just what makes students unwilling to use the language for oral communication. Informants are, therefore, asked why they do not participate in the classroom, and are provided with a set of possible choices from which they have to choose those which best describe their case.

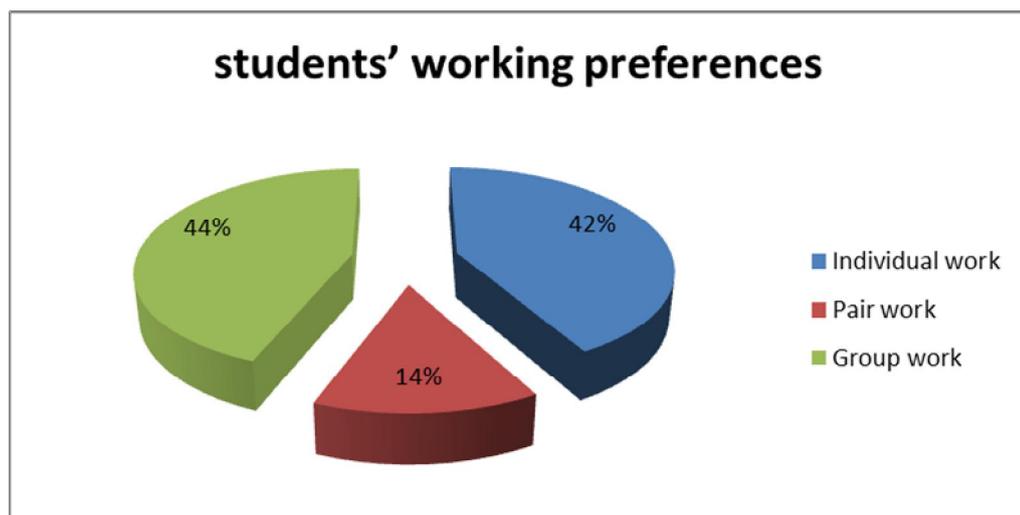
Informants' most cited reason for not speaking in the classroom is not related to any speaking sub-skill but rather to the informants' nature. In fact, 28 of them (63,63%) checked the box "you are a shy person". This means that some of them may have sufficient knowledge of vocabulary and good grammar and yet, not want to be "under the spotlight". The second most cited reason is the fear of making grammar mistakes, followed closely by pronunciation problems and lack of vocabulary. In fact, those may be the most striking/apparent elements that show a learner's lack of proficiency. Finally, fear from their teacher's negative feedback and classmates' comments prevents them from taking part in classroom activities and follow in the fifth and sixth positions with a percentage of (25%) and (20,45%) respectively.

Q7. Students' working preferences

	Individual work	Pair work	Group work	Total
Number	39	13	41	93
%	41,93%	13,97%	44,08%	100%

Table 2.7: students' working preferences

Figure 2.7: students' working preferences



As it is apparent in the table above the majority of the respondents (44,08%) opted for group work as preferred working technique. Followed closely by a percentage of 41, 93%, i.e.; 39 students, who stated that they like individual work. Finally, 13 of them prefer pair work with a percentage of 13, 97%.

Q8. Justification:

Group work:

The majority of the respondents mentioned group work as a preferred technique mostly for practical reasons: "it's easier to do the job when tasks are shared; classmates provide you with more ideas, help you when you forget something and correct your mistakes before you address the teacher".

Other reasons have to do with learning preferences: learning more from others while exchanging/sharing ideas.

Last, reasons related to self-confidence/shyness were mentioned:

- ✓ "I feel insecure when I work alone"
- ✓ "This way, teacher's and classmates' attention won't be only on me"

Individual work:

Among the reasons why they prefer working alone, students mention the willingness to show their capacities, express their opinion and also to get the opportunity to have their own mistakes corrected. This shows evidence as to the importance and value of getting a feedback and error correction from their teacher as a way of improving their oral proficiency.

Other reasons students mentioned were expressed as follows:

- ✓ " We are here to learn, sometimes while working in groups you tend to rely on the others"
- ✓ " it encourages individuals to speak to develop their abilities in oral expression"
- ✓ "I like doing things on my own"

Pair Work:

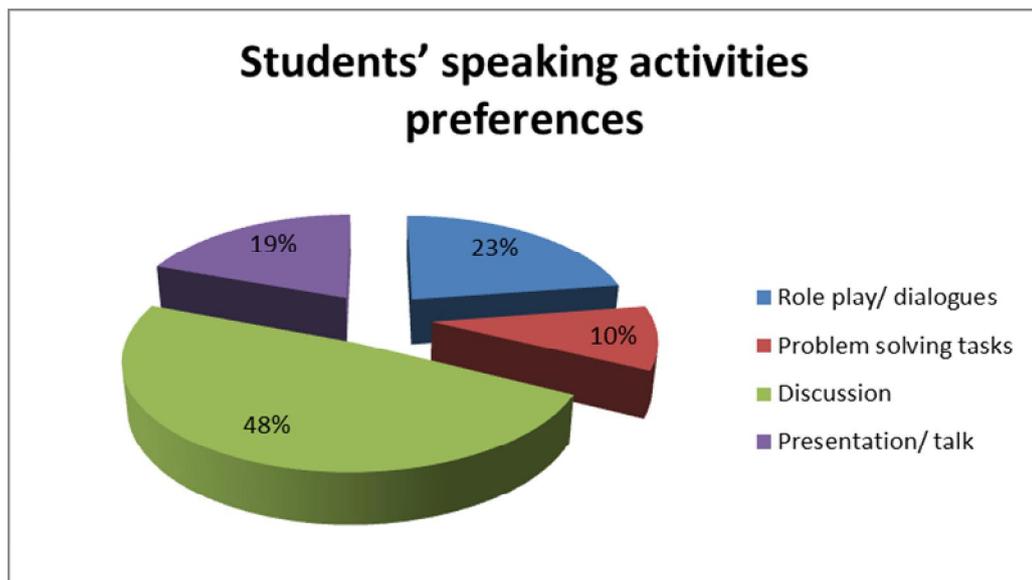
Students believe that pair work is one of the best ways to learn from themselves and their partners at the same time without getting lost in the "shadow" of the group.

Q9. Students' activities preferences

	Role play/ dialogues	Problem solving tasks	Discussion	Presentation/ talk	TOTAL
Number	21	09	45	18	93
%	22,58%	09,67%	48,38%	19,35%	100%

Table 2.8: Students' speaking activities preferences

Figure 2.8: Students' speaking activities preferences



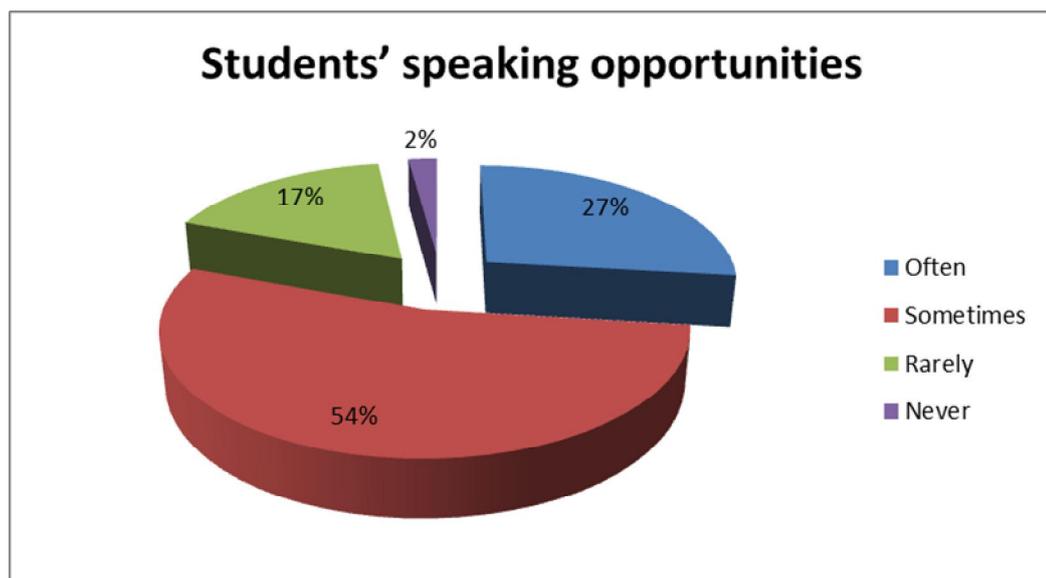
The present item of information is intended to ask informants about the speaking technique they enjoy best. The table above summarizes the most frequent techniques that teachers can use in order to carry out a speaking activity. As can be noticed in table 8, Discussion comes in the first place with (48,38%) followed by role play/dialogues (22,58%). Presentation/talk was opted for by 18 informants and only 09 of them mentioned problem solving tasks as a preferred speaking technique. These preferences can be associated with the type of techniques that are most widely used by their teachers in the classroom. The answers corroborate with those given by teachers (see: Teachers' questionnaire- Q8)

Q10. Speaking opportunities

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number	25	50	16	02	93
%	26,88%	53,76%	17,20%	02,15%	100%

Table 2.9: Students' speaking opportunities

Figure 2.9: Students' speaking opportunities



To the question “does your teacher give you the opportunity to speak in the classroom?” (53, 76%) of the respondents answered that their teacher “sometimes” gives them the opportunity to interact; another (26,88%) of them stated that they “often” have speaking opportunities. (17, 20%) of them say that they “rarely” get the opportunity to do so. Finally (02,15%) of the respondents “never” participated in classroom discussion/activities. On the whole it can be deduced that students are generally encouraged to practice speaking during the oral expression class.

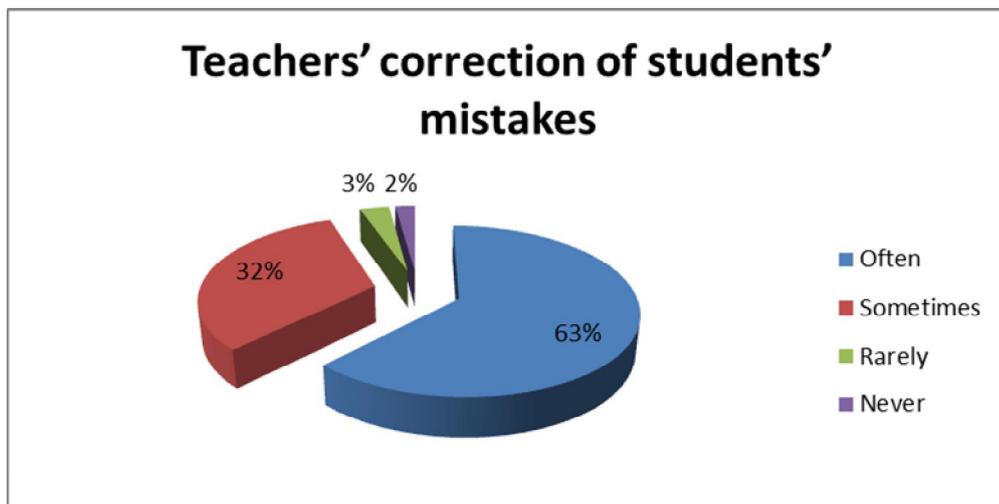
PART THREE:

Q11. Does your teacher correct your mistakes?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number	58	30	03	02	93
%	62,36%	32,25%	03,22%	02,15%	100%

Table 2.10: Teachers’ correction of students’ mistakes

Figure 2.10: Teachers’ correction of students’ mistakes



The objective behind this question is to know whether students get corrective feedback from their teacher during oral expression classes. 58 students affirmed that their teacher “often” corrects their mistakes; followed by another 30 of them stating that their mistakes are sometimes corrected. Only (03,22%) of the informants declared that their

mistakes are rarely corrected and (02,15%) of them state that their teacher never corrects their mistakes.

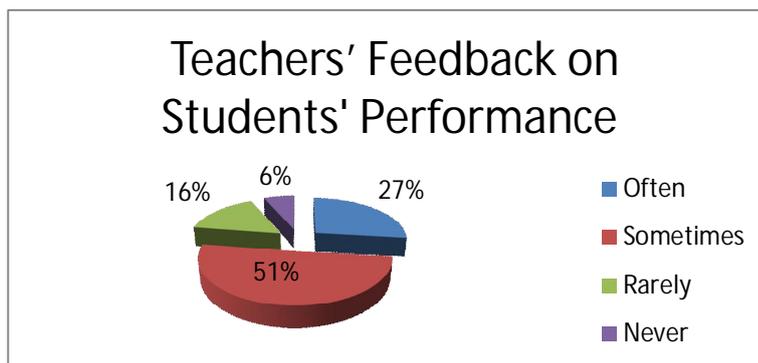
From the table above it is apparent that teachers take the opportunity to correct their students' mistakes. Correcting mistakes is a vital part of on-going assessment but to say whether this is done in an effective way or not, we must know how and when students' mistakes are corrected as explained in the first chapter.

Q12. Does your teacher tell you how well you have performed?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number	25	47	15	6	93
%	26,88%	50,53%	16,12%	6,45%	100%

Table 2.11: Teachers' Feedback on Students' Performance

Figure 2.11: Teachers' Feedback on Students' Performance



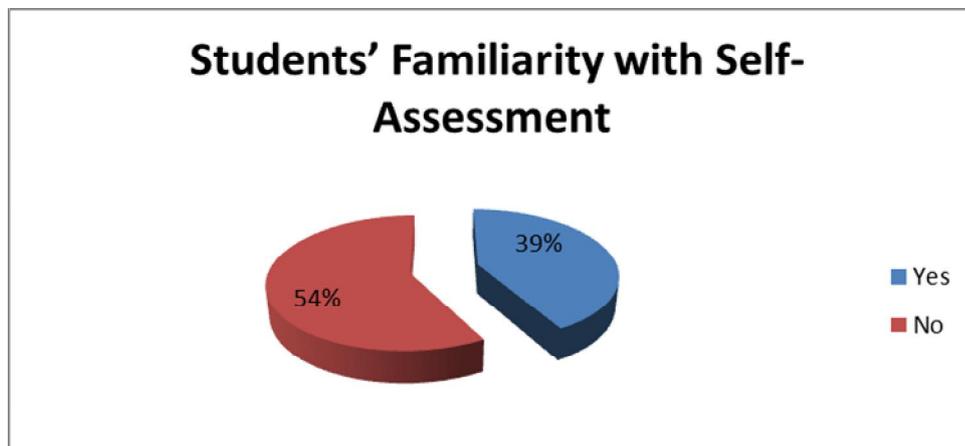
To this question, the majority of the informants (50,53%) stated that their teachers "sometimes" gave them feedback as to how well they did. 26,66% of them are "often" given feedback on their performance. 15 students declared that their teacher "rarely" provided feedback, while only 6 of them "never" received any feedback on their performance. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, it is recommended from teachers to give a brief feedback after students complete a task so that they know how well they are performing.

Q13. Have you heard of self-assessment?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	39	54	93
%	41,93%	58,06%	100%

Table 2.12: Students' Familiarity with Self-Assessment

Figure 2.12: Students' Familiarity with Self-Assessment



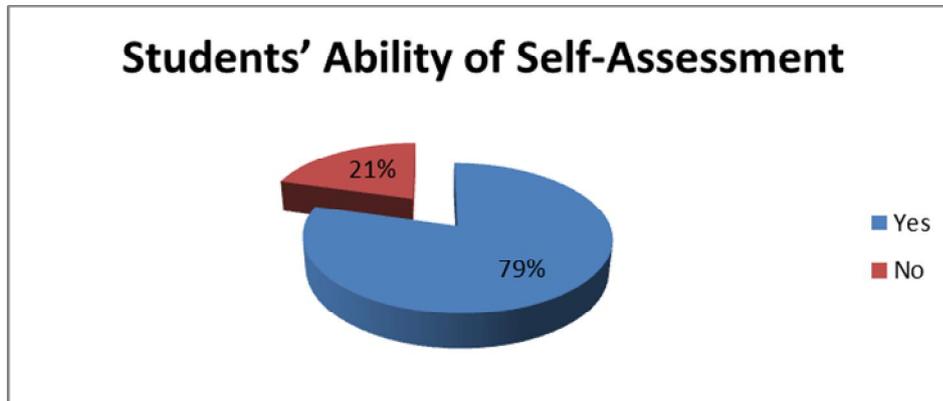
We can note from the answers to question 13 that the majority of second year LMD students (54%) have not heard of self-assessment. However, 39 % of them heard of it. We may conclude that not all teachers are familiar with self and peer-assessment and thus these notions have not been discussed in class with students. This conclusion is confirmed in the teachers' questionnaire. (See Teachers' Questionnaire Q13)

Q14. If "yes", are you able to evaluate your proficiency?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	31	8	39
%	79,48%	20,51%	100%

Table 2.13: Students' Ability of Self-Assessment

Figure 2.13: Students' Ability of Self-Assessment



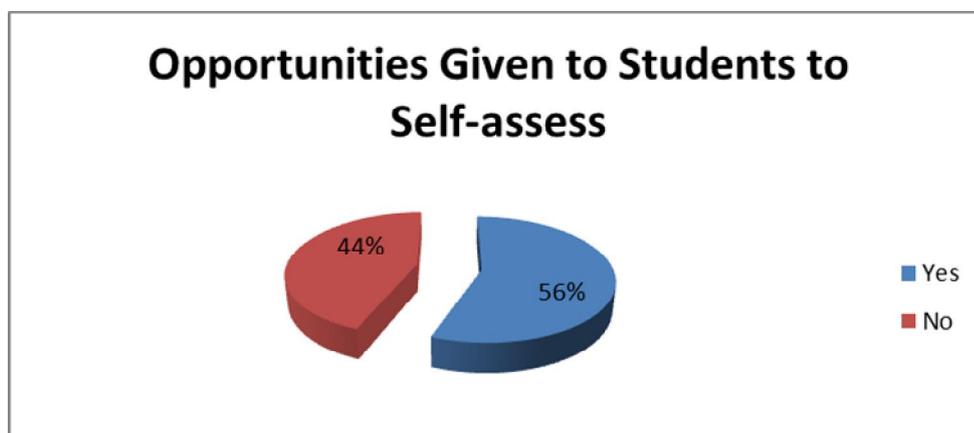
As shown in the figure above, 79% of the questioned students have declared to have the capacity to measure their oral ability. If teachers devote some of their pedagogical time to explain to students the positive impact that self-assessment can have on their learning process, more and more learners will trust their capacities in measuring their own oral ability.

Q15. Are you given the opportunity to assess your oral proficiency?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	52	41	93
%	55,91%	44,08%	100%

Table 2.14: Opportunities Given to Students to self-assess

Figure 2.14: Opportunities Given to Students to Self-assess



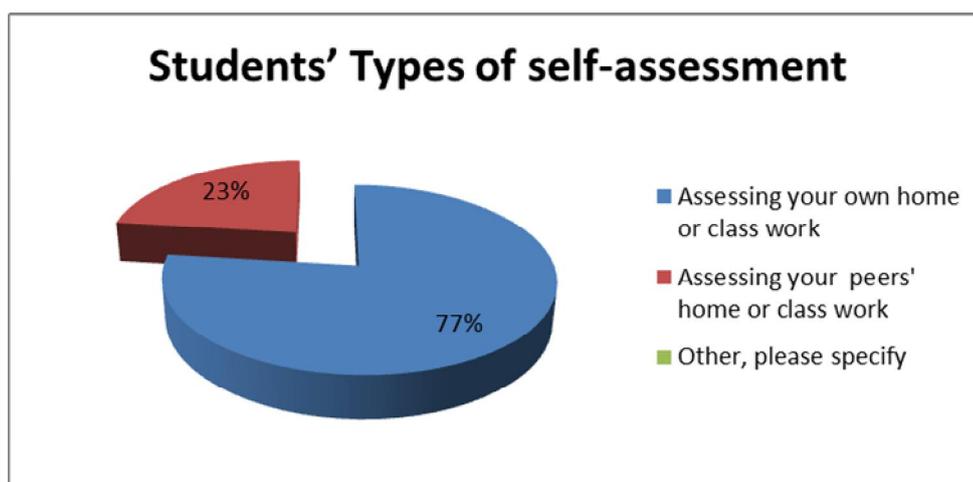
Self and peer assessment can be useful techniques through which students feel more responsible for and more independent in their learning. The majority of the respondents (56%) stated that their teachers give them the opportunity to assess their oral production.

Q16. If "yes", is it through:

	Assessing your own home or class work	Assessing your peers' home or class work	Other, please specify	Total
Number	40	12	0	52
%	76,92%	23,07%	0,00%	100,00%

Table 2.15: Students' Types of self-Assessment

Figure 2.15: Students' Types of self-assessment



Of the 52 students who are offered the opportunity to self-assess, 40 of them (78, 92%) state that they do so through assessing their own home or class work. And 12 of them (23, 07%) assess their peers' home or classwork.

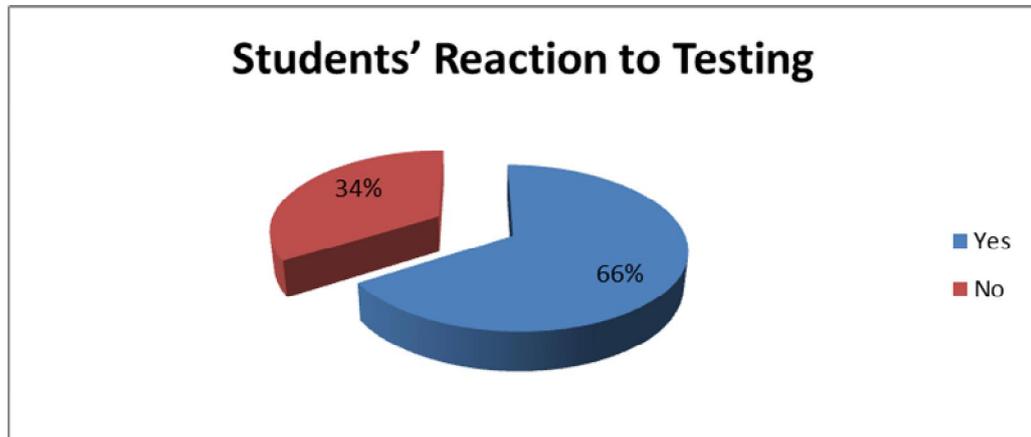
PART FOUR:

Q17. Do you like to be tested?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	62	31	93
%	66,66%	34,40%	100%

Table 2.16: Students' Reaction to Testing

Figure 2.16: Students' Reaction to Testing



The results indicate that 66, 66% of the questioned students declared that they like being tested. This shows that students are really motivated to learn and are willing to be involved in testing situations no matter how stressful it can be.

Q18. Please, explain why

The 62 students who answered positively explained:

- ✓ It is a way to know where we stand. How much knowledge we got.
- ✓ To learn from our mistakes and improve our English.
- ✓ To spot the problems we have and try to fix them.
- ✓ When we are tested, we are actually learning.
- ✓ Tests are a good way to challenge ourselves.

The 31 students who answered negatively explained:

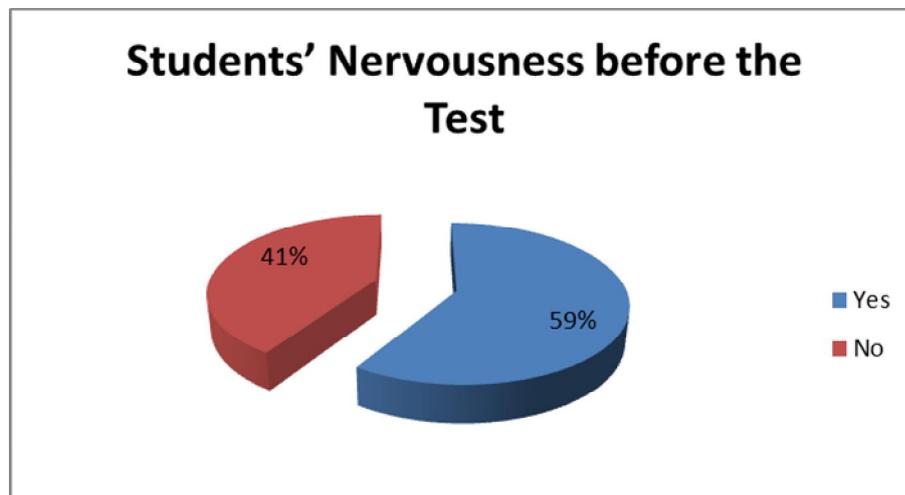
- ✓ We don't like the type of tests we are given.
- ✓ We are scared of having bad grades.
- ✓ Tests make us feel nervous. We simply hate being tested and we never feel ready to take them.

Q19. Do you feel nervous before the oral expression test?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	55	38	93
%	59,13%	40,86%	100%

Table 2.17: Students' Nervousness before the Test

Figure 2.17: Students' Nervousness before the Test



More than half of the respondents asked (59%) state that they do feel nervous before oral expression tests, which most probably implies that this will have an impact on the performance of the learners. 41% of them (38 students) said they do not live a state of nervousness before the evaluation. This may suggest that they feel confident taking the test.

Q20. If yes, please explain why?

The justifications of the nervousness provided by the 55 students before taking the test are:

- ✓ We feel nervous and we are afraid of making mistakes.
- ✓ We are shy by nature and hate taking tests especially if it is in front of classmates.

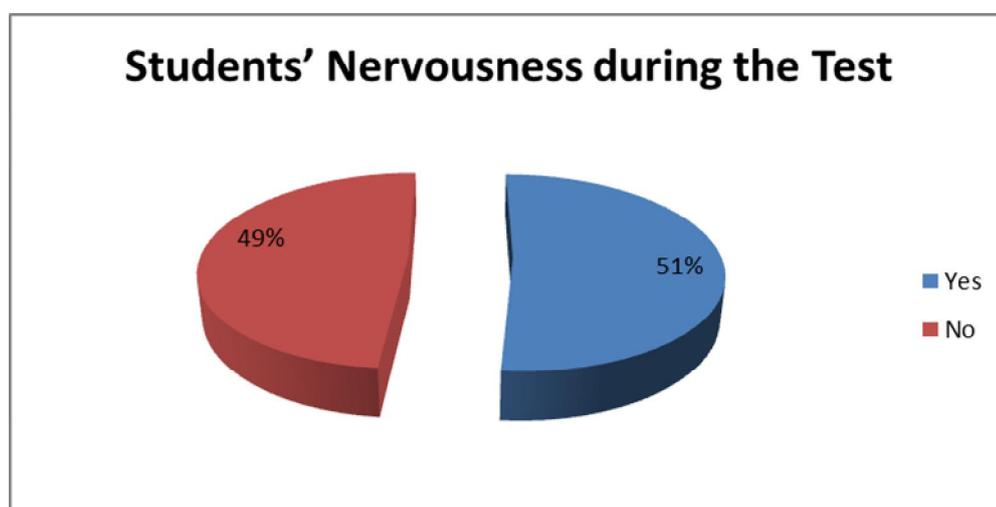
- ✓ Because of the pressure of grades; we are scared to have bad marks, we want to be the best.
- ✓ We are intimidated by our teacher. We fear his/her reaction to what we say (our answers).
- ✓ Because we don't know what the test will be about.

Q21. Do you feel nervous during the oral expression test?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	48	45	93
%	51,16%	48,38%	100%

Table 2.18: Students' Nervousness during the Test

Figure 2.18: Students' Nervousness during the Test



The results show that 49% of the respondents do not feel nervous while being tested whereas 51, 16% of them (the majority) admitted feeling nervous during the test. This nervousness may be due to the nature of the tests the learners are taking or to the conditions in which they are tested.

Q22. If "yes", please explain.

The 48 respondents provided us with the following answers to justify their nervousness during the test:

- ✓ Sometimes we have to talk about a topic we don't know a single word about.
- ✓ We are scared of sounding stupid; we lack self-confidence.
- ✓ Time is too short and we are not supposed to make mistakes if we want to have a good grade.

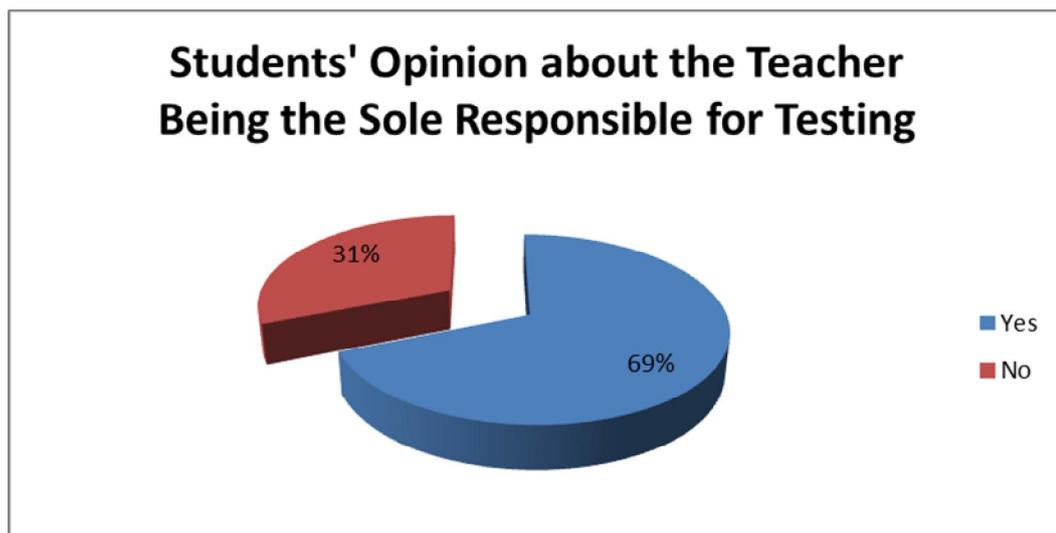
PART FIVE:

Q23. Is the teacher the sole responsible of testing?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	64	29	93
%	68,81%	31,18%	100%

Table 2.19: Students' Opinion about the Teacher Being the Sole Responsible for Testing

Figure 2.19: Students' Opinion about the Teacher Being the Sole Responsible for Testing



A very large number of students (nearly 69%) believe that testing is the teachers' sole responsibility; a very traditional view of teachers/learners' roles in the process of assessment. Only a small portion of the informants (31%) think that teachers are not the only responsible for assessment.

Q24. Please, explain why

The 64 students who said that the teacher is the sole responsible for testing gave the following arguments:

- ✓ Our teachers can have a better judgment of our work and performance. They have more experience. They choose and design the tests then evaluate our performance.
- ✓ Our teachers are the most fit to correct our mistakes.
- ✓ Since our teachers know our level they are able to select the most suitable questions that match our level in order to make us improve.
- ✓ They are teachers and we are students; they know better and we have to learn from them.

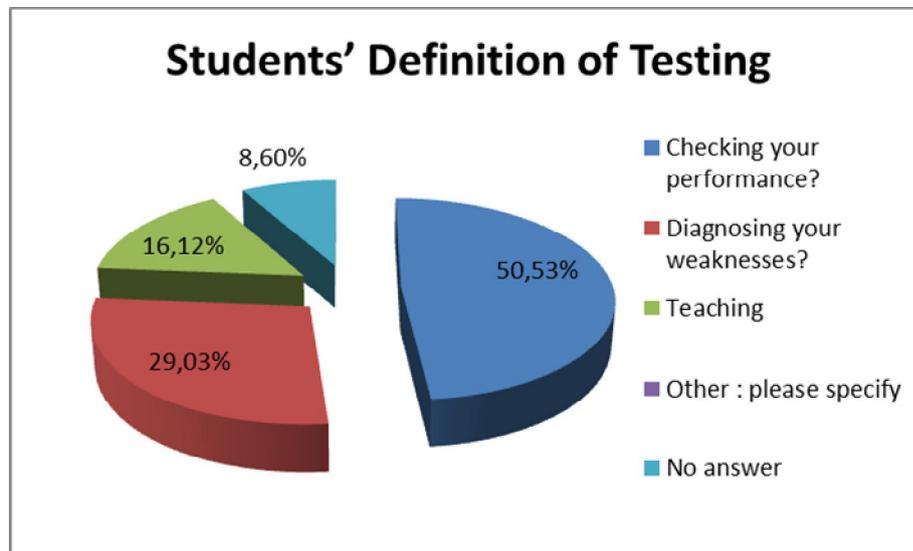
The 29 students who said that the teacher is NOT the sole responsible for testing admitted that the teacher is just a guide, a collaborator and that they can also test themselves.

Q25. Do you consider testing as:

Definition of Testing	Number	%
• Checking your performance?	47	50,53%
• Diagnosing your weaknesses?	27	29,03%
• Teaching	15	16,12%
• Other : please specify	00	0,00%
• No answer	08	8,60%

Table 2.20: Students' Definition of Testing

Figure 2.20: Students' Definition of Testing



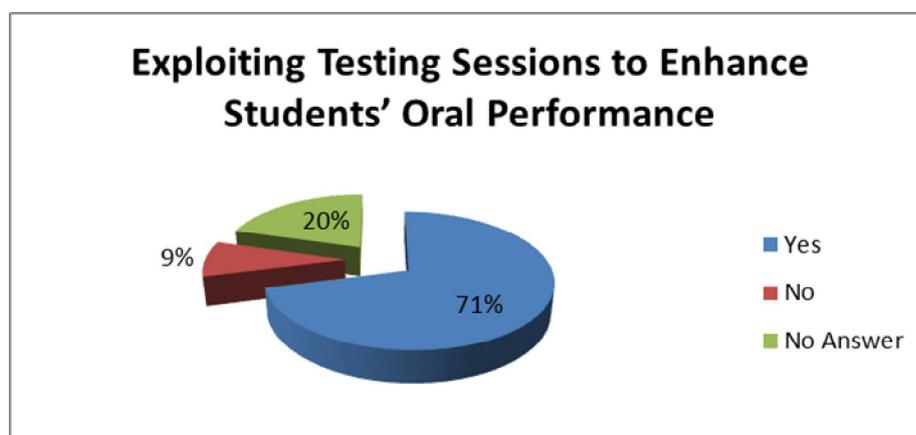
50, 53% of LMD students think that testing is “checking student’s performance”, 29, 03% of them consider it as “Diagnosing student’s weaknesses” and only 16, 12% view it as “Teaching”. 8 students provided no answer to this question.

Q26. Do you fully exploit your testing sessions to enhance your oral performance?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Number	66	08	19	93
%	70,96%	08,60%	20,43	100%

Table 2.21: Exploiting Testing Sessions to Enhance Students' Oral Performance

Figure 2.21: Exploiting Testing Sessions to Enhance Students' Oral Performance



More than seventy percent of the respondents said that they do exploit fully their testing sessions to enhance oral proficiency; this may be an indication of the students' interest and motivation to communicate in the target language.

Q27. If "No", please, explain why

The following arguments were provided by the informants to justify their answer:

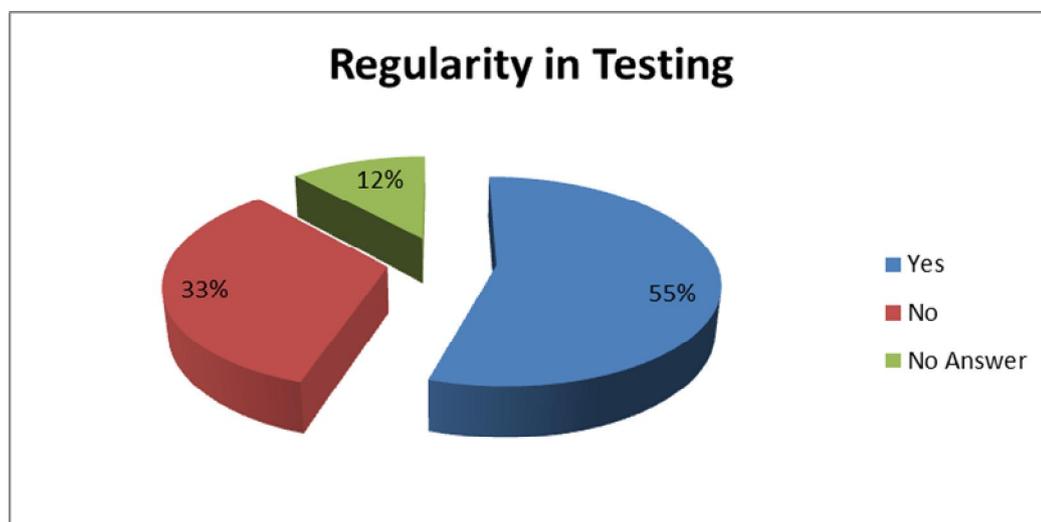
- ✓ It is always the same students who are given the opportunity to speak.
- ✓ The teacher dominates the speaking time.

Q28. Are you regularly tested?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Number	51	31	11	93
%	54,83%	33,33%	11,82	100%

Table 2.22: Regularity in Testing

Figure 2.22: Regularity in Testing



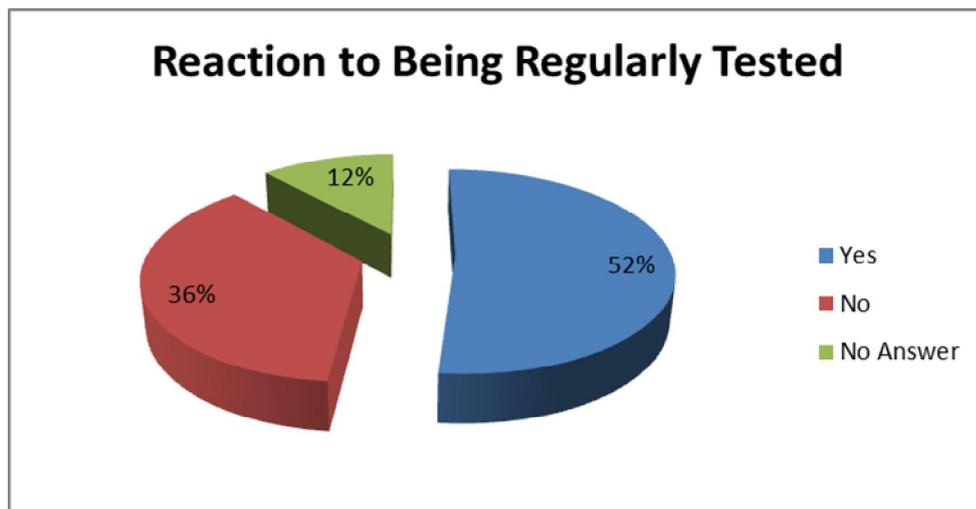
The results to question 28 show that the majority of the questioned learners are regularly tested i.e. 55%, however, 33% of them answered negatively while 12% of them didn't answer. Our opinion is that new regulations of continuous assessment need to be fixed, so that students' knowledge can be regularly evaluated.

Q29. Do you like being regularly tested?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Number	48	34	11	93
%	51,61%	36,55%	11,82	100%

Table 2.23: Reaction to Being Regularly Tested

Figure 2.23: Reaction to Being Regularly Tested



The Results give a clear idea about the desire of the second year LMD students to be regularly tested 52% answered positively. Such attitude may reflect the students' motivation to learn.

Q30. If "Yes", please, explain why

The arguments evoked by the students who are willing to be tested regularly are:

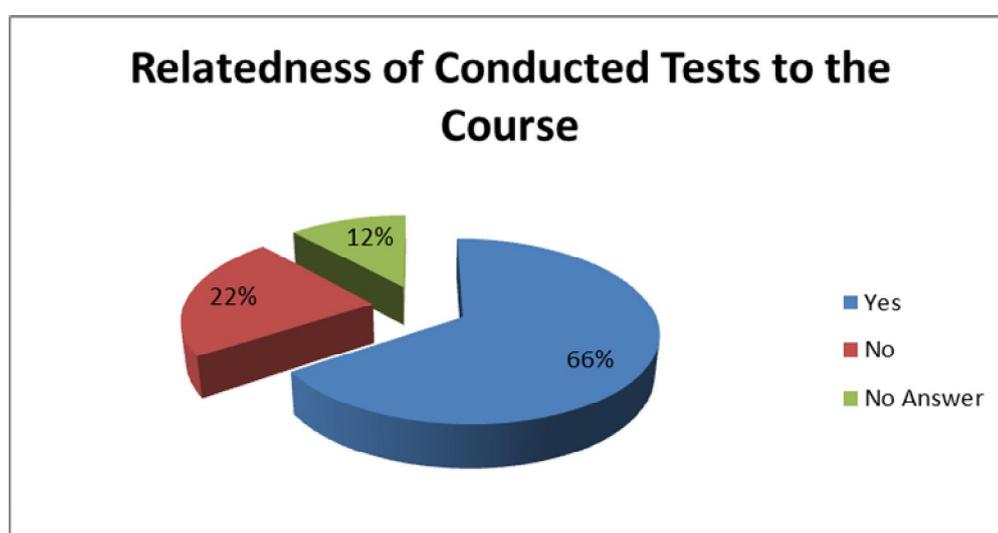
- ✓ Testing forces us to study, to make efforts in order to improve. It is challenging and motivating.
- ✓ To check our progress and see how much learning/knowledge we assimilated.
- ✓ To learn more.

Q31. Are the tests you are given related to the topics covered in the course?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Number	61	21	11	93
%	65,59%	22,58%	11,82	100%

Table 2.24: Relatedness of Conducted Tests to the Course

Figure 2.24: Relatedness of Conducted Tests to the Course



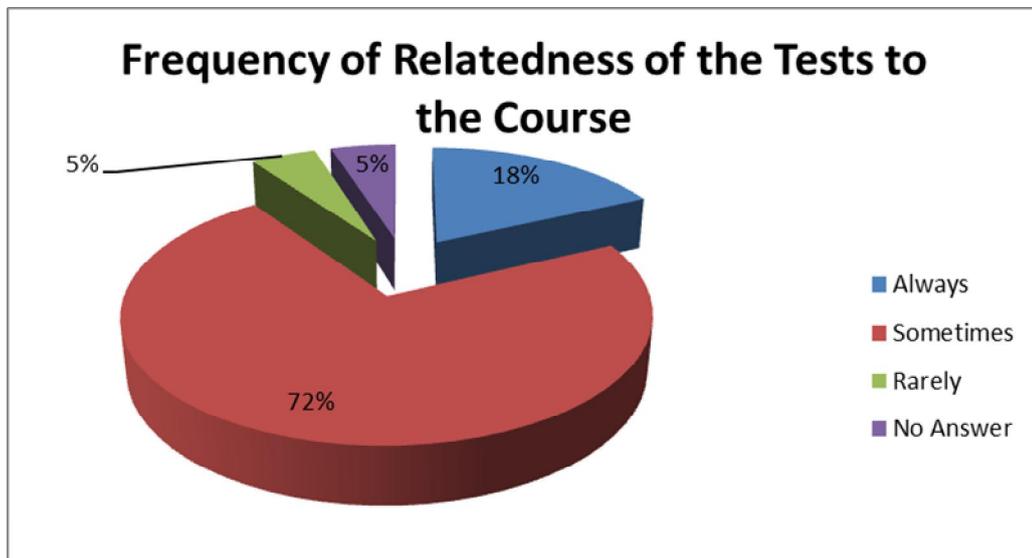
The indication that we can have from the answers to question 31 is that 66% of the students stated that the tests they are given are related to the topics covered in the course. 22% of them answered negatively. It is important that learners be tested on what they have learned as some of them complained about the difficulty of tests and the fact that sometimes they had to talk about topics they have absolutely no idea about.

Q32. If "Yes", is it :

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	No Answer	Total
Number	11	44	03	03	61
%	18,03%	72,13%	04,91%	04,91%	100%

Table 2.25: Frequency of Relatedness of the Tests to the Course

Figure 2.25: Frequency of Relatedness of the Tests to the Course



Among the 61 students who stated that their tests are related to the topics covered in the course, only 18% of them said that this always happens. We believe that teachers of Oral Expression need to deal more and more with topics which have already been introduced to the students; this will probably give the learners more chance to communicate in the target language.

Q33. If "No", please, explain why:

Among the answers given by the 21 students who answered "no" are the following:

- ✓ We always try to experiment something new with our teacher.
- ✓ Any subject is accepted by the teacher.
- ✓ Our teacher wants us to be able to talk about many different topics.
- ✓ We are generally asked about background information or general culture.

From the information provided to question 33 we may conclude that some teachers do not relate their tests to their course, therefore, they either do not establish a plan to design tests maybe because the course content is also not planned for. Or, they simply want their

students to be free to talk about any topic. In planning for tests, teachers must set objectives that are consistent with course objectives.

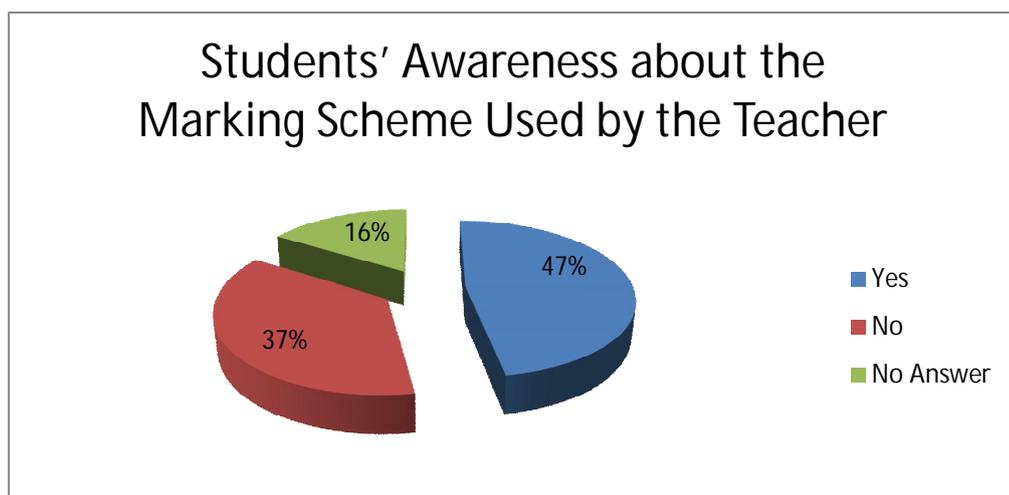
PART SIX:

Q34. Are you informed of the marking scheme used by your teacher?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Number	44	34	15	93
%	47,31%	36,55%	16,12%	100%

Table 2.26: Students' Awareness about the Marking Scheme Used by the Teacher

Figure 2.26: Students' Awareness about the Marking Scheme Used by the Teacher



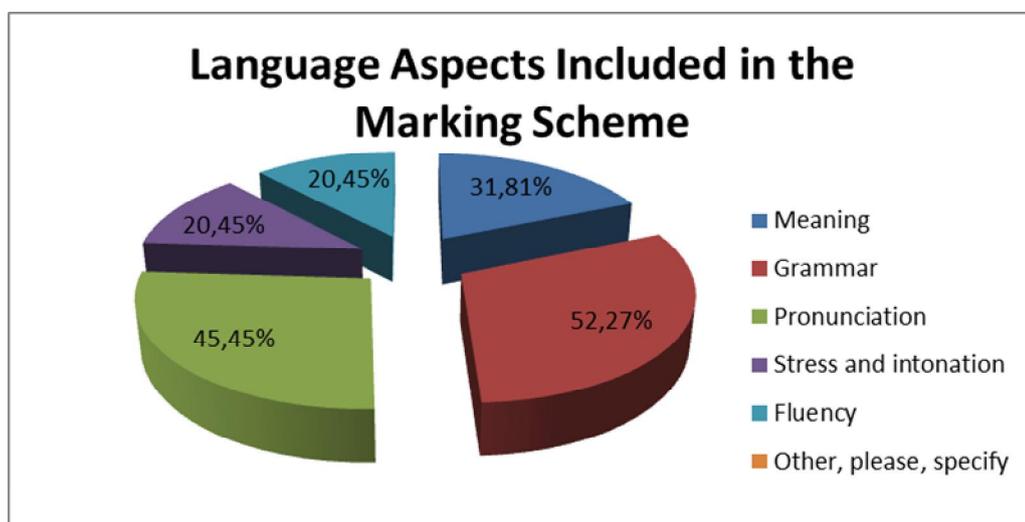
47% of the students stated that they are aware about the marking scheme used by their teacher while 37% of them are not. After having had a look at the answers provided by students to the next question, we came to realize that students might have misunderstood the question. They might have thought about the general marking scheme that concerns the whole term assessment, including classroom performance, attendance etc... while what was suggested (as clearly stated in the next question) were the different language aspects that teachers should look at while assessing their learners.

Q35. If "Yes", does it include?

Suggestions	Number	%
a- Meaning	14	31,81%
b- Grammar	23	52,27%
c- Pronunciation	20	45,45%
d- Stress and intonation	09	20,45%
e- Fluency	09	20,45%
f- Other, please, specify	00	00%

Table 2.27: Language Aspects Included in the Marking Scheme

Figure 2.27: Language Aspects Included in the Marking Scheme



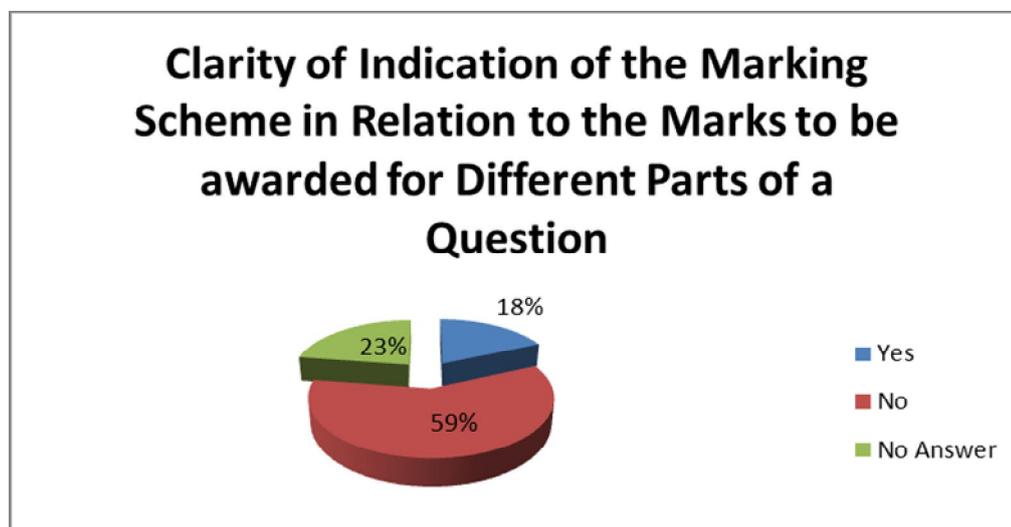
Out of the 44 students who answered 'yes', 27 of them picked a single answer i.e. they believe that their teacher looks at one single language aspect. This shows clearly that the matter has not been discussed in the classroom. Therefore, we may conclude that the answers students picked are of their own guess. All language aspects were included but the majority of students think that their teachers mark their grammar and pronunciation first, meaning next and finally fluency, stress and intonation last. We believe that this manner of dealing with learners' measurement must be radically reconsidered if we want to obtain better results.

Q36. Does the marking scheme indicate clearly the marks to be awarded for different parts of the question?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Number	17	55	21	93
%	18,27%	59,13%	22,58%	100%

Table 2.28: Clarity of Indication of the Marking Scheme in Relation to the Marks to be awarded for Different Parts of a Question

Figure 2.28: Clarity of Indication of the Marking Scheme in Relation to the Marks to be awarded for Different Parts of a Question



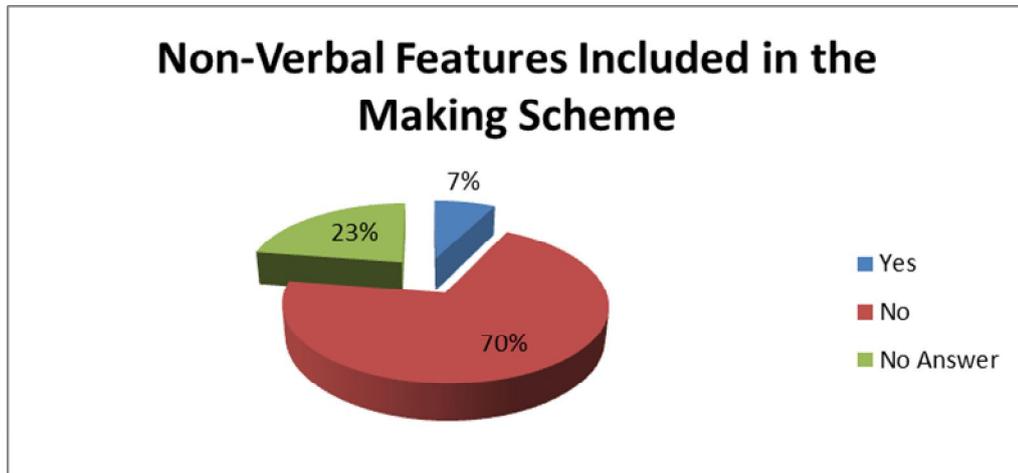
59% of the respondents, the majority, stated that the marking scheme does not indicate clearly the marks to be awarded for the different parts of the question. 23% of them didn't answer the question and 18% answered positively. It is apparent in view of the answers obtained that marking matters are not thoroughly discussed by some of the population under investigation.

Q37. Does it refer to your non-verbal features, such as attitude, gesture, and way of dressing?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Number	07	65	21	93
%	07,52%	69,89%	22,58%	100%

Table 2.29: Non-Verbal Features Included in the Making Scheme

Figure 2.29: Non-Verbal Features Included in the Making Scheme



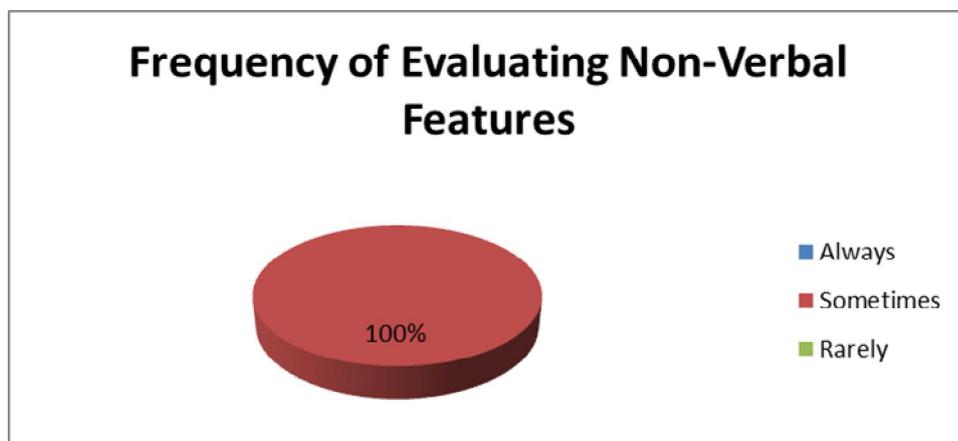
The majority of the respondents (70%) said that their teachers do not include non-verbal features in the marking scheme. Only 7% of them said that they did. The next question discusses the frequency at which these features are considered in the marking scheme.

Q38. If "Yes", is it:

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Number	00	07	00	07
%	00,00%	100%	00,00%	100%

Table 2.30: Frequency of Evaluating Non-Verbal Features

Figure 2.30: Frequency of Evaluating Non Linguistic Features



The 7 students who mentioned that their teacher considers their non-verbal features while being tested said that they “sometimes” did so. This lets us think that teachers involved in this study ignore non-verbal features while testing their students. This was confirmed by teachers (**See: Teachers’ questionnaire Q 21**)

Q39. What do you think can be done to make oral examination a better experience?

The propositions made by students were as follows:

Most propositions made by students concerned three main areas: “Choice of Topics”, “Teachers” and “Oral Expression Classes”.

Choice of Topics:

- ✓ We want to choose the topic before the examination and choose the way to present it: individually, in pairs or groups.
- ✓ We want topics that we tackle in class; the usual topics.
- ✓ We want topics to be related to our daily life, situation and society.
- ✓ We want free topics and discussion.
- ✓ We want to be provided, on the examination day, with a range of possible topics from which we can choose the one we feel most comfortable with. We want to have alternatives.
- ✓ We want less difficult/ complicated topics

Teachers:

- ✓ Our teacher should vary the methods during the exams from individual to pair or group work.
- ✓ Our teacher should suggest new ways of examining like using pictures/photos and asking us to describe them. S/he should select topics that would actually make us speak.

-
- ✓ Our teacher should help us be less passive and should encourage us in many different ways, understand us and accept our opinion.
 - ✓ Our teacher should correct our mistakes in the end; s/he should not interrupt us.
 - ✓ Our teacher should make us feel comfortable and his/her critiques should be given as pieces of advice.
 - ✓ Our teacher should give us more time to talk about the topic during the exam so we can show our real capacities.
 - ✓ Our teacher should test us every now and then and not on a specific day.
 - ✓ When we love our teacher, we will love the Oral Expression examination and we will not feel nervous.

Oral Expression Classes:

- ✓ We want less teacher talk and more student talk; after all this is our class and our time to express our ideas and opinions.
- ✓ We want I.C.Ts and audio-visual material to be integrated in Oral Expression classes to improve our listening skills and acquire new vocabulary.
- ✓ We want songs and plays to practice pronunciation and make learning fun.

II.2. Teachers' questionnaires

II.2.1. Aim of the questionnaire:

This questionnaire was designed to investigate what teachers of Oral expression view as being an important aspect (important aspects) to assess speaking skills. It also looks at the different techniques teachers use to, both, teach and evaluate speaking. The procedures and frequency of giving feedback on students' performance are also investigated with an attempt to get an overall picture of the whole process of formative and summative assessment of students' oral proficiency assessment.

II.2.2. Administration of the questionnaire:

Out of the 16 Oral Expression teachers at the English Department of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem, 10 were given this questionnaire. 5 of them had first year classes and the 5 others had second year classes.

The questionnaire was handed to the teachers on the same day as the students. Out of the 10 copies, 09 were returned about two hours later and one was returned two days later.

II.2.3. Analysis of the questionnaire:

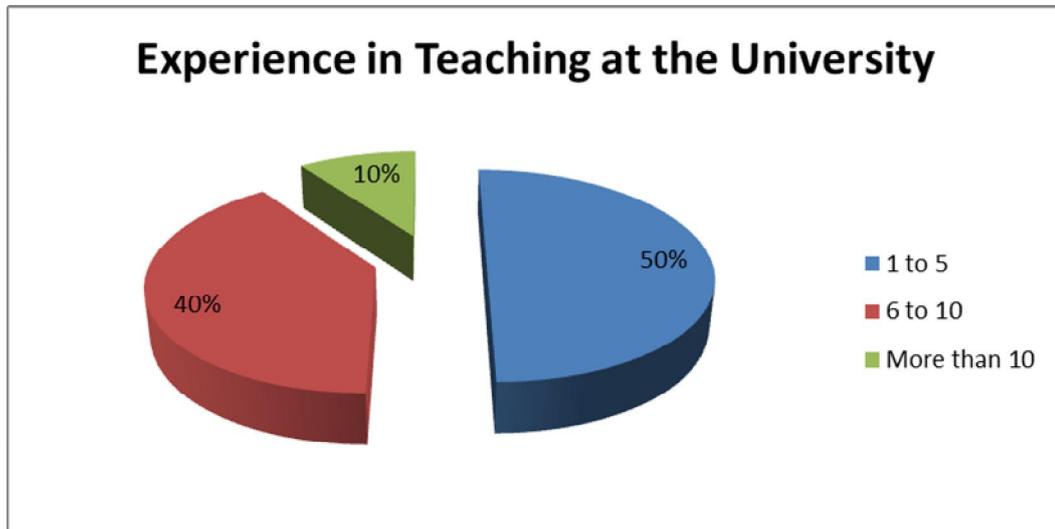
PART ONE:

Q1. How long have you been teaching at the university?

Years	1 to 5	6 to 10	More than 10	Total
Number	05	04	01	10
%	50%	40%	10%	100 %

Table 2.31: Experience in Teaching at the University

Figure 2.31: Experience in Teaching at the University



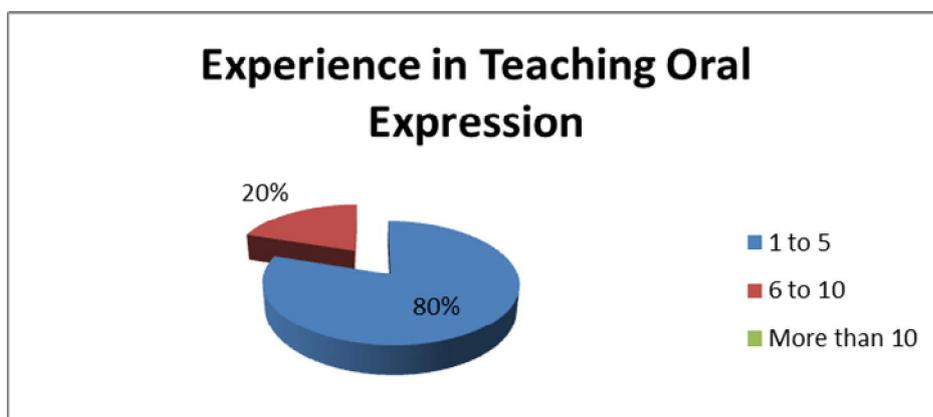
50% of the questioned teachers have less than 5 years of experience teaching at the university. Four of them (40%) have less than 10 years of experience and only one of them (10%) has been teaching at the university for more than 10 years (12 years to be exact).

Q2. How long have you been teaching Oral Expression?

Years	1 to 5	6 to 10	More than 10	Total
Number	08	02	00	10
%	80%	20%	00%	100 %

Table 2.32: Experience in Teaching Oral Expression

Figure 2.32: Experience in Teaching Oral Expression



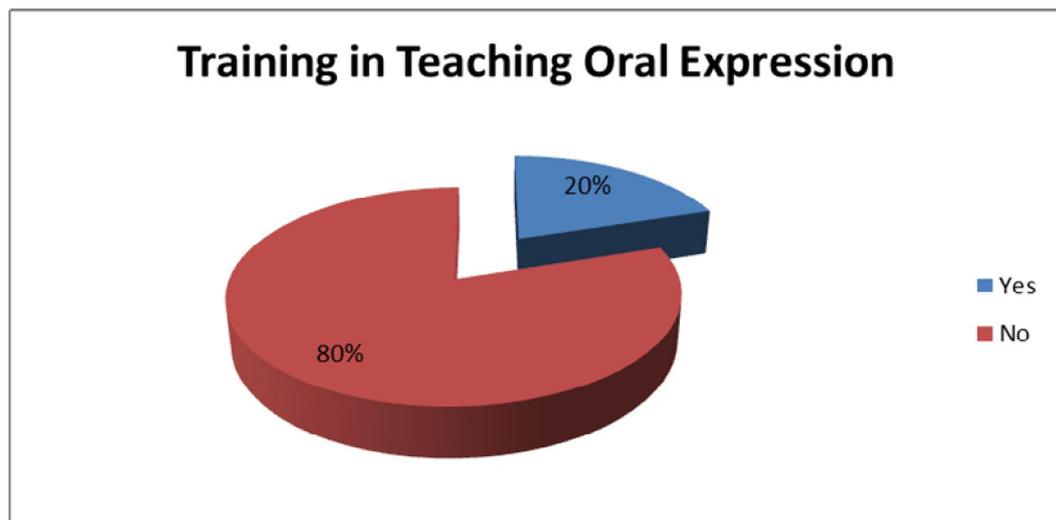
We can notice from the figure above that most of the teachers questioned (80%) have less than 5 years of experience teaching Oral Expression. 20% of them have less than 10 years of experience. This may justify any shortcoming in the way they proceed to both teach and assess their learners' oral skills.

Q3. Have you received any special training to teach Oral Expression?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	02	08	10
%	20%	80%	100%

Table 2.33: Training in Teaching Oral Expression

Figure 2.33: Training in Teaching Oral Expression



Again, the majority of the teachers questioned (80%) stated that they did not have any training in teaching Oral Expression with the exception of two of them (20%) who responded positively.

Q4. If "Yes", please explain

The two teachers who said that they had a special training in teaching Oral Expression explained that this was actually a pre-service training on teaching the four

skills, among which there was Oral Expression. The training was not totally devoted to the oral skills and thus we may suppose that not all areas of these complicated skills were covered.

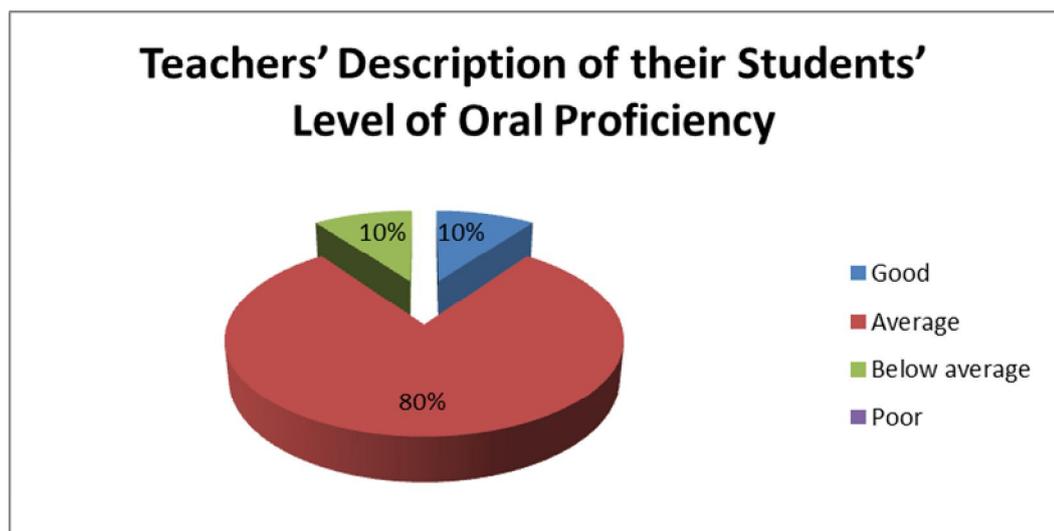
PART TWO:

Q5. Students' level of oral proficiency

	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	Total
Number	01	08	01	00	10
%	10%	80%	10%	00,00%	100%

Table 2.34: Teachers' Description of their Students' Level of Oral Proficiency

Figure 2.34: Teachers' Description of their Students' Level of Oral Proficiency



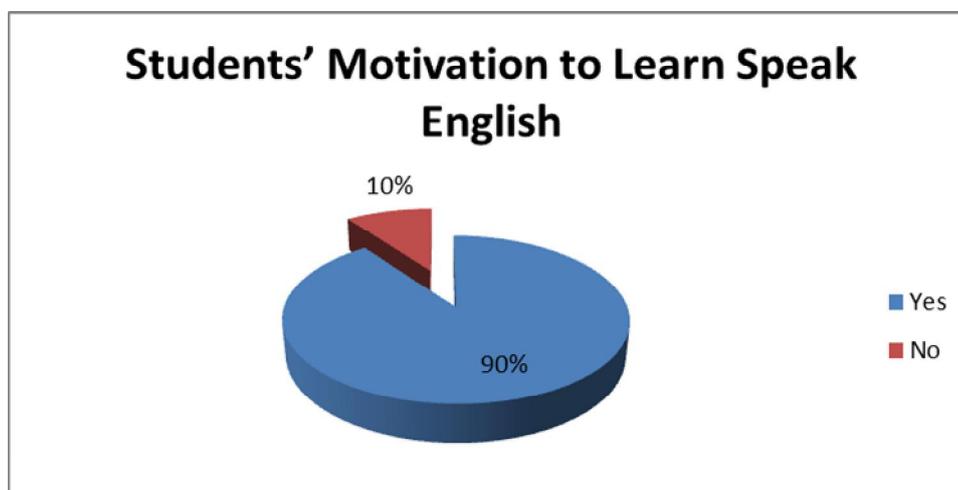
When asked about their students' level of oral proficiency, the majority of teachers said that their learners were average. These answers corroborate with the ones students gave. (See: Students' questionnaire Q3)

Q6. Students' Motivation to Learn to Speak English

	Yes	No	Total
Number	09	01	10
%	90%	10%	100%

Table 2.35: Students' Motivation to Learn Speak English

Figure 2.35: Students' Motivation to Learn Speak English



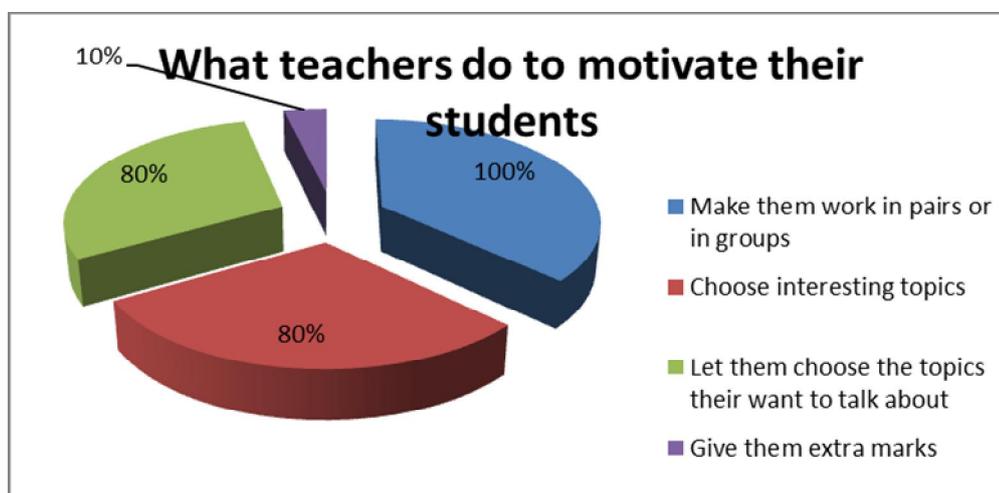
The quasi totality of teachers (90%) (except one of them) agree that second year LMD students are motivated to learn to speak English. Being motivated is major asset in learning foreign languages.

Q7. What do you do to motivate your students?

Suggestions	Number	%
a- Make them work in pairs or in groups	10	100%
b- Choose interesting topics	08	80%
c- Let them choose the topics they want to talk about	08	80%
d- Give them extra marks	01	10%
e- Other, please, specify	00	00%

Table 2.36: What teachers do to motivate their students

Figure 2.36: What teachers do to motivate their students



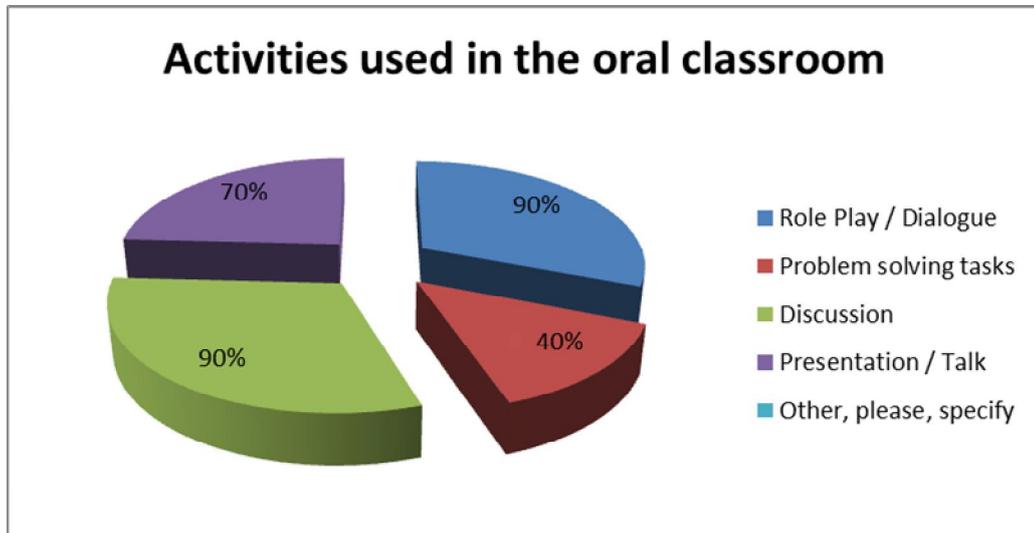
From among the suggested answers to question 7 the totality of teachers (10) stated that they make their students work in pairs or in groups to motivate them. 80% of them also said that they choose interesting topics and another 80% let students choose the topics they want to talk about. One teacher only said that s/he gave students extra marks to motivate them. In fact, we may conclude from the results that teachers give a certain freedom to their students and vary techniques of work to motivate their learners.

Q8. Activities used in the oral classroom

Types of Activities	Number	%
a- Role Play / Dialogue	09	90%
b- Problem solving tasks	04	40%
c- Discussion	09	90%
d- Presentation / Talk	07	70%
e- Other, please, specify	00	00%

Table 2.37: Activities used in the oral classroom

Figure 2.37: Activities used in the oral classroom



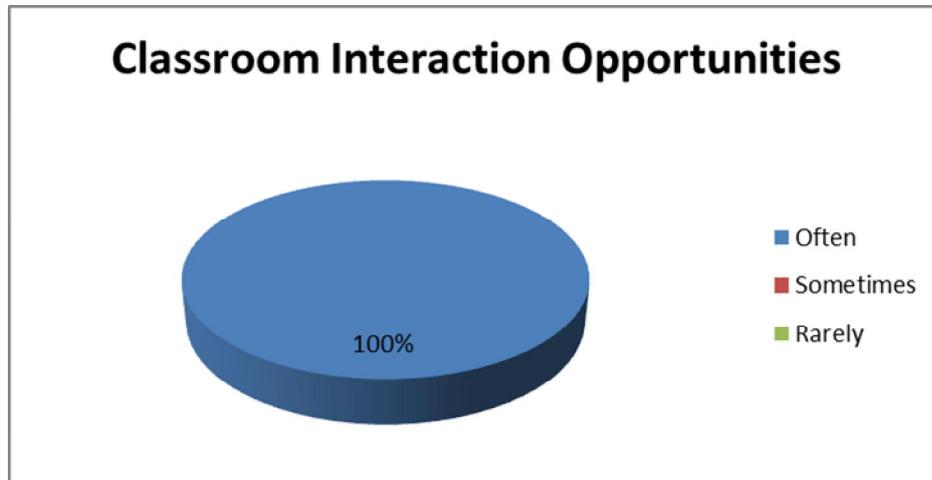
The questioned teachers' most used classroom activities are "Discussion" and "Role Play", opted for by 90% of the respondents. 70% of them use "Presentations/Talk" and finally the least used technique is "Problem Solving Tasks". These answers corroborate with those given by students. (See: Students' questionnaire Q9)

Q9. Classroom Interaction Opportunities

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Number	10	00	00	10
%	100%	00%	00,00%	100%

Table 2.38: Classroom Interaction Opportunities

Figure 2.38: Classroom Interaction Opportunities



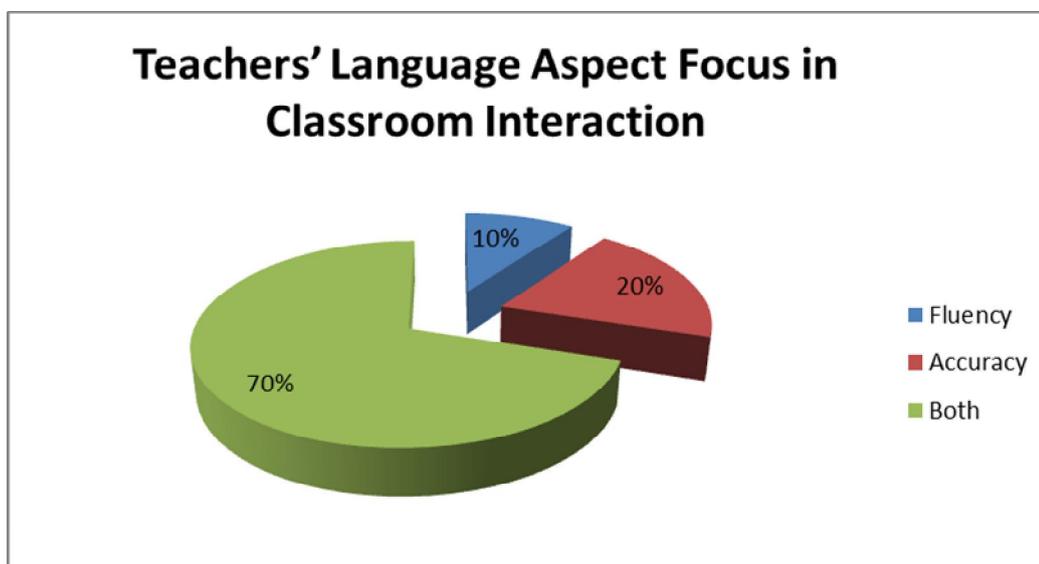
100% of the teachers said that they “often” give their students opportunities to interact in the Oral Expression classroom. In fact, the more students get a chance to talk, the more they get accustomed to it and overcome their nervousness. Involving all learners in classroom tasks and activities is the best way to make them improve their speaking skills, especially if feedback is provided as often as is their participation.

Q10. Which of these aspects do you focus on in classroom interaction?

	Fluency	Accuracy	Both	Total
Number	01	02	07	10
%	10%	20%	70%	100%

Table 2.39: Teachers’ Language Aspect Focus in Classroom Interaction

Figure 2.39: Teachers' Language Aspect Focus in Classroom Interaction



In response to question 10, the majority of the respondents (70%) consider both fluency and accuracy as important language aspect to focus on in classroom interaction. Two teachers focus more on accuracy; this presupposes that they would tend to put heavy emphasis on grammar in designing tasks or correcting mistakes. While one of them focuses just on students' fluency. Recent research in L2 learning and pedagogy has come to recognize the importance of both fluency and accuracy and both top-down and bottom-up language skills.

Why?

Teachers justified their responses as follows:

- ✓ Both are important while interacting; keeping in mind the need of learners to be intelligible.
- ✓ Ideally both of them can be fostered: if teachers help students become accurate through the correction of mistakes for instance. Fluency is a much more difficult task that necessitates time and practice.

- ✓ “My policy is to make them speak first even with lots of mistakes to overcome their fear of interacting and then we work on accuracy”.

The remaining teachers did not justify their answers.

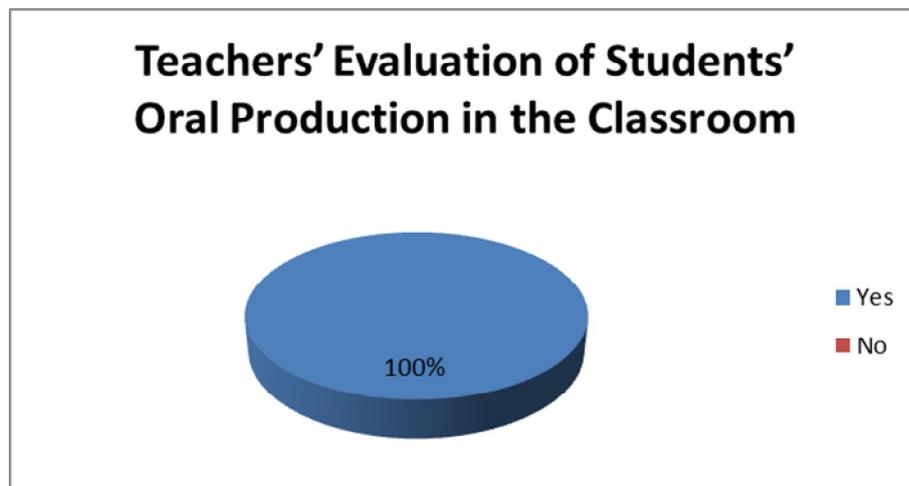
PART THREE:

Q11. Do you evaluate students’ oral production in the classroom?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	10	00	10
%	100%	00%	100%

Table 2.39: Teachers’ Evaluation of Students’ Oral Production in the Classroom

Figure 2.39: Teachers’ Evaluation of Students’ Oral Production in the Classroom



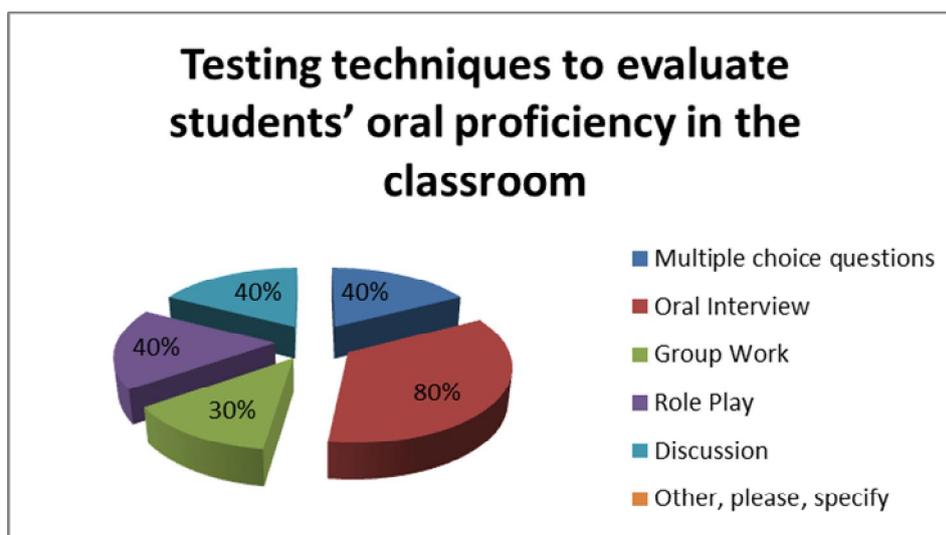
All the questioned teachers stated that they do evaluate students’ oral proficiency in the classroom. Being evaluated as part of their continuous assessment grade is a requirement and teachers have to plan for it during the whole term.

Q12. Testing techniques to evaluate students' oral proficiency in the classroom

Testing Techniques	Number	%
a- Multiple choice questions	04	40%
b- Oral Interview	08	80%
c- Group Work	03	30%
d- Role Play	04	40%
e- Discussion	04	40%
f- Other, please, specify	00	00%

Table 2.40: Testing techniques to evaluate students' oral proficiency in the classroom

Figure 2.40: Testing techniques to evaluate students' oral proficiency in the classroom



80% of the respondents stated that they used "Oral Interviews" as the most frequent testing technique to evaluate their learners' oral proficiency. This is followed by "Discussion", "Role Play" and "Multiple Choice Questions" which were opted for by 40% of the respondents. "Group Work" is the least frequently used technique for evaluating students' oral performance. Some teachers explained that the type of technique used for evaluation depended on whether this was for Tutorials (Travaux Dirigés: T.D) or Practical

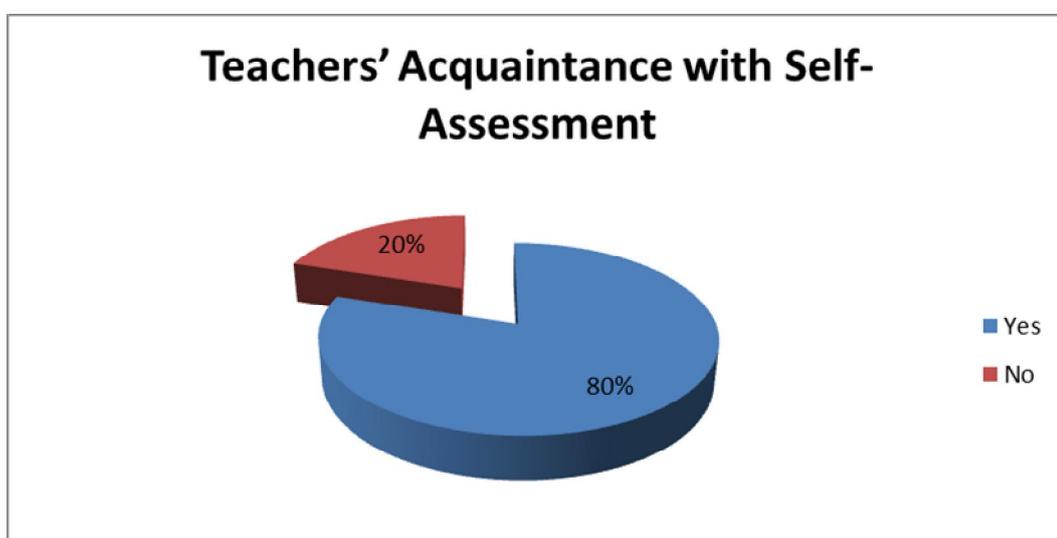
Work (Travaux Pratiques: T.P) which justifies whether the learner should be evaluated individually, in pairs or in groups.

Q13. Have you heard of self-assessment?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	08	02	10
%	80%	20%	100%

Table 2.41: Teachers' Acquaintance with Self-Assessment

Figure 2.41: Teachers' Acquaintance with Self-Assessment



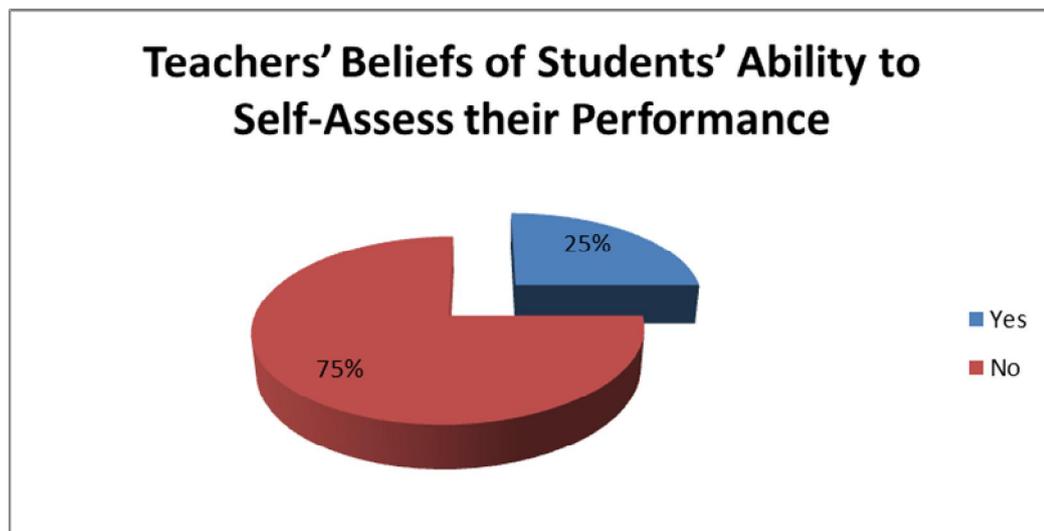
Not all teachers of oral expression heard of self-assessment. 80% (the majority) of them did but 20% of them did not. Although the results seem positive, it remains evident that students' autonomy and learning of how to assess themselves may be compromised by their teachers' ignorance of such practice.

Q14. If "Yes", do you think your students are able to evaluate themselves?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	02	08	08
%	25%	75%	100%

Table 2.42: Teachers' Beliefs of Students' Ability to Self-Assess their Performance

Figure 2.42: Teachers' Beliefs of Students' Ability to Self-Assess their Performance



Of the eight teachers who said that they were acquainted with the notion of self-assessment only 2 of them trust their learners' ability to assess themselves. The majority (75%) of them is pessimistic regarding such assessment. We may conclude that most teachers hold a very limited and traditional view of assessment practices. Their pessimism may stem from a simple lack of experience and/or training in these alternative types of assessment. We believe that once they experience it, they will no doubt discover another positive way of doing things differently.

Q15. Please, explain why

The explanations provided by the teachers who think that their students cannot assess themselves are that their students need first to be introduced to such a practice, to be prepared and learn how to use self-assessment tools effectively; in short that they need to be trained by their teachers; a point of view that we do share. Other teachers said that

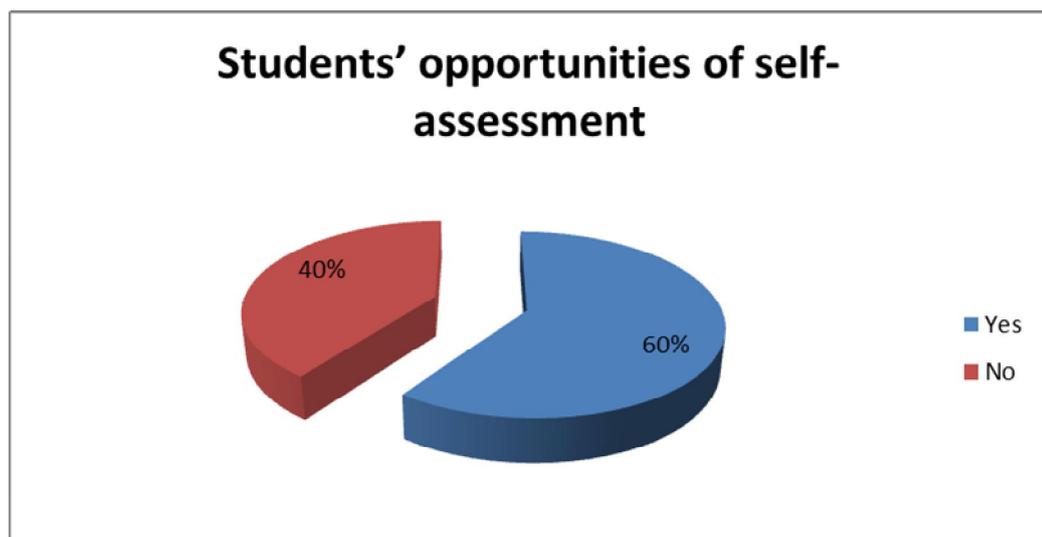
their students do not possess the required capacities to be involved in such responsibilities. As for those who answered “yes”, they explained that they believe learners can determine whether they performed well or not. They added that teachers should help them raise their awareness to lead them to use self-assessment effectively and become autonomous.

Q16. Students’ opportunities of self-assessment

	Yes	No	Total
Number	06	04	10
%	60%	40%	100%

Table 2.43: Students’ opportunities of self-assessment

Figure 2.43: Students’ opportunities of self-assessment



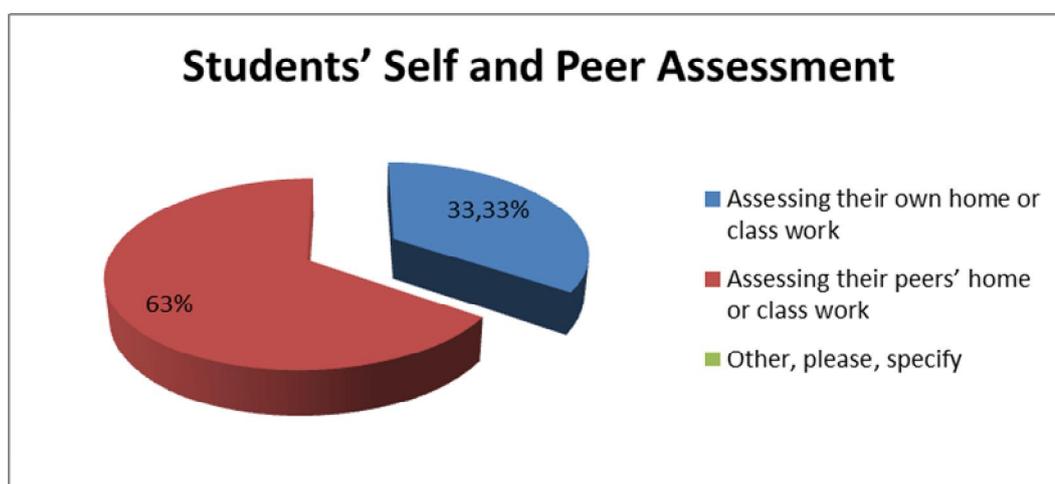
Although the majority of teachers said that they did not trust their students’ capacity to assess themselves, most of them (60%) admitted that they do give their learners’ opportunities to self-assess; a practice that should be adopted by ALL teachers.

Q17. If "Yes", is it through:

Suggestions:	Number	%
a- Assessing their own home or class work	02	33,33%
b- Assessing their peers' home or class work	05	63%
c- Other, please, specify	00	00%

Table 2.44: Students' Self and Peer Assessment

Figure 2.44: Students' Self and Peer Assessment



Out of the six teachers who answered "yes", two teachers said that their students usually assess their own home or class work while five teachers said that they gave their students the opportunity to assess their peers' home or classwork. One teacher selected both options.

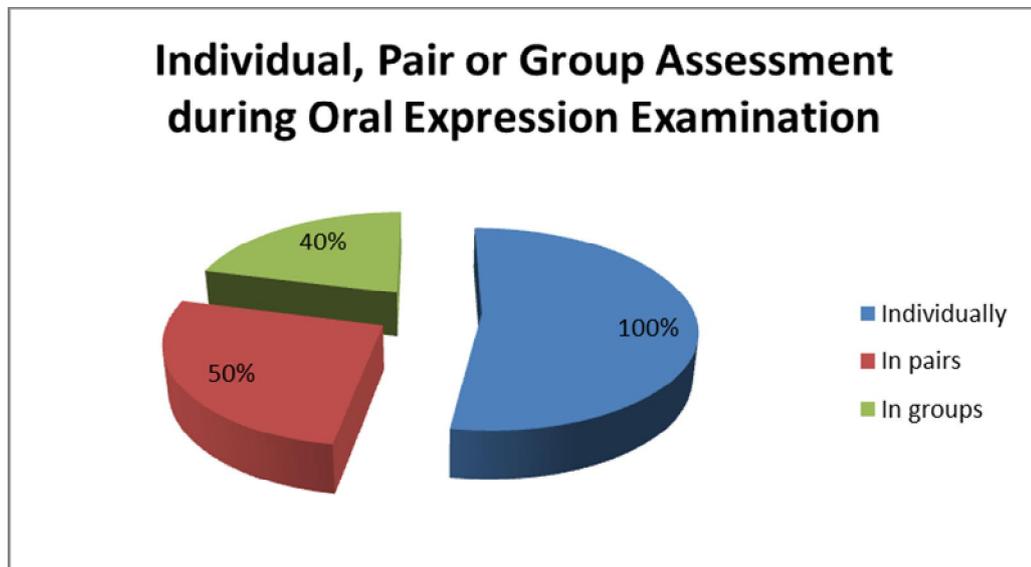
PART FOUR:

Q18. During the examination, are learners evaluated individually, in pairs or in groups?

	Number	%
a- Individually	10	100%
b- In pairs	05	50%
c- In groups	04	40%

Table 2.45: Individual, Pair or Group Assessment during Oral Expression Examination

Figure 2.45: Individual, Pair or Group Assessment during Oral Expression Examination



All teachers questioned (10) said that they evaluated students' oral skills individually during examinations. 50% of them also opted for pair evaluation and only 40% use group evaluation. Again, then, group evaluation is the least used technique by teachers of oral expression.

Please, explain how you proceed

As to how they proceed, teachers of oral expression suggested the following:

- ✓ "Students are asked to express themselves freely. I give them enough time to do so, and if they hesitate, I help them with questions."
- ✓ "I select questions that would encourage my students to speak and we have an exchange in terms of questions/answers. Sometimes I select different topics from which students can pick up one randomly. I then, give them a few minutes to think of what they want to say and how they want to present it."

- ✓ “When I evaluate my students in pairs, I ask them to prepare a dialogue thinking of a specific situation. When I evaluate them in groups they usually make a presentation or a play”
- ✓ “I sometimes ask my students questions related to the topics we have discussed before in class. Sometimes I ask them to imagine situations in which they have to interact with someone; this may involve one or more students.”

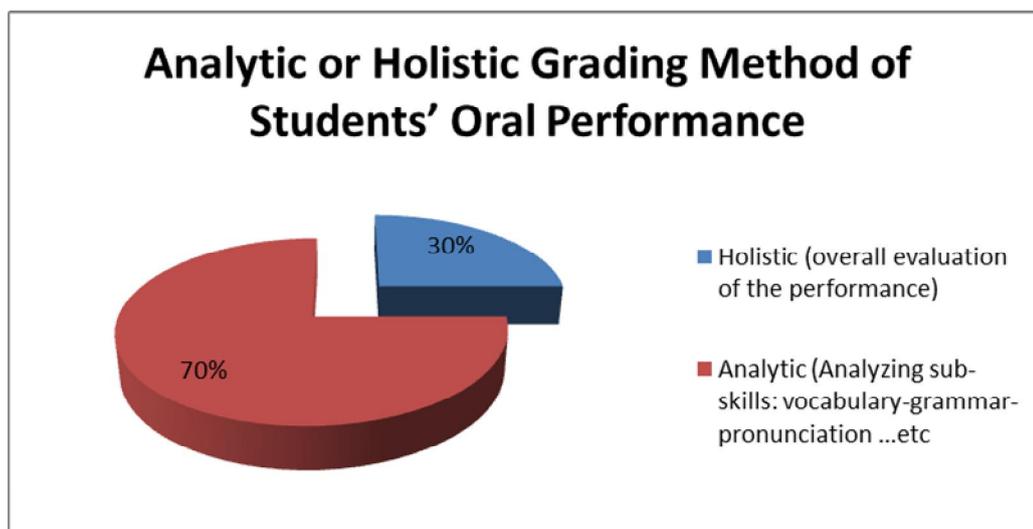
Finally, Some of them explained that pair and group evaluations are used in tests but for examinations, students are evaluated individually, this makes it a little easier to attribute a grade.

Q19. Grading method of students’ oral performance

Grading Method	Number	%
a- Holistic (overall evaluation of the performance)	03	30%
b- Analytic (Analyzing sub-skills: vocabulary-grammar-pronunciation ...etc	07	70%

Table 2.46: Analytic or Holistic Grading Method of Students’ Oral Performance

Figure 2.46: Analytic or Holistic Grading Method of Students’ Oral Performance



When asked whether they used a holistic or an analytic method for grading their students' performance, most teachers (70%) said that they looked at discrete points such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc... 30% of the teachers opted for impression grading method of assessing their learners' performance. We believe that analytic scoring scales are more reliable and provide more data concerning specific areas to be improved for individual learners. Although teachers stated that they looked at discrete points, some of them confessed not to hold any checklist or grid to refer to. This can have an impact on the reliability of the results.

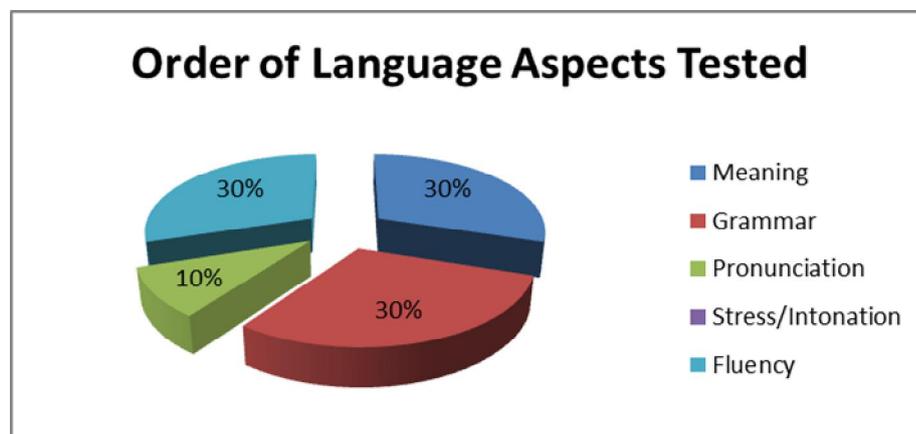
Q20. Which language aspects do you test? Specify the order of importance (1 for the most important, to 5 for the least important)

Language Aspects Tested	Number (most important)	%	Number (least important)	%
a- Meaning	03	30%	00	00%
b- Grammar	03	30%	01	10%
c- Pronunciation	01	10%	00	00%
d- Stress/Intonation	00	00%	06	60%
e- Fluency	03	30%	03	30%
Total	10	100%	10	100%

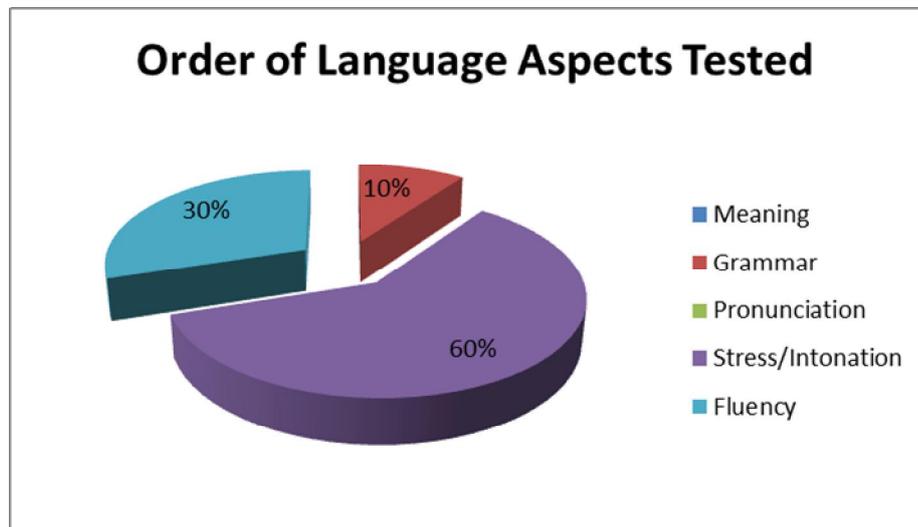
Table 2.47: Order of Language Aspects Tested

Figure 2.47:

a- Order of Language Aspects Tested (Most Important)



b- Order of Language Aspects Tested (Least Important)



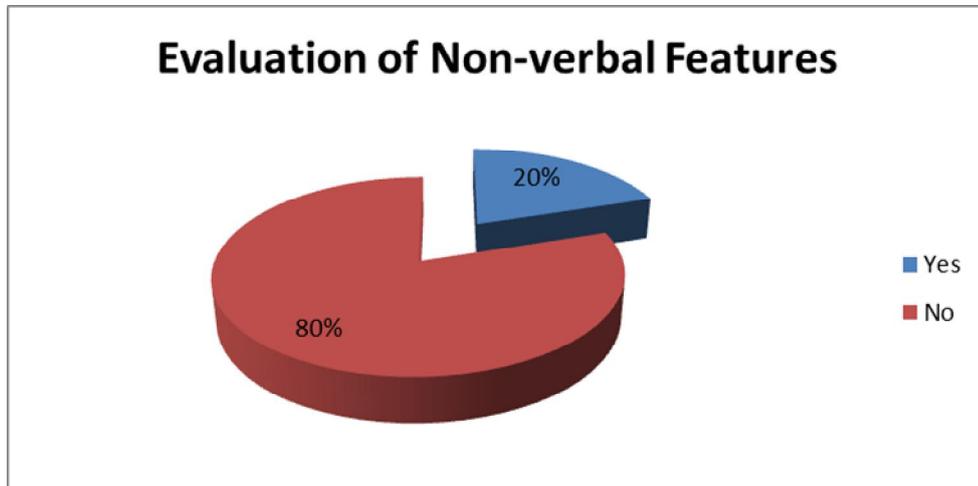
As indicated in Figure 2.47 (a), “Meaning”, “grammar” and “Fluency” were equally selected as being the most important language aspects tested by teachers in oral examination. Each one of these aspects was selected by three teachers. One teacher views pronunciation as being the most important language aspect to test in speaking. Figure 47 (b) indicates that the majority of teachers (60%) view “stress and intonation” as the least important language aspect tested. 30% of them selected “fluency” and finally 10% view “grammar” as being the least important language aspect tested. Note that the same teachers who selected “Grammar” as most important aspect, chose “Fluency” as least important aspect as if accuracy and fluency were opposed in teachers’ view. Our opinion is that all aspects must be taken into consideration when testing oral proficiency, but specific attention to any aspect of the language will depend on the objective of the evaluation.

Q21. Do you evaluate non-verbal features, such as attitude, gestures, and facial expression?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	02	08	10
%	20%	80%	100%

Table 2.48: Evaluation of Non-verbal Features

Figure 2.48: Evaluation of Non-verbal Features



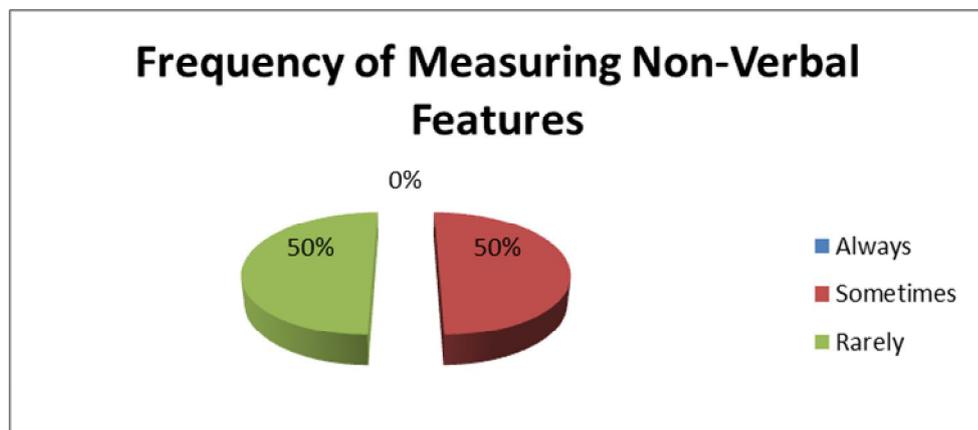
80% of the questioned teachers do not evaluate non-verbal features, such as attitude, gestures and facial expression. We think that raters should take into consideration at least to a certain extent these paralinguistic features while measuring the oral proficiency.

Q22. If "Yes", is it

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Number	00	01	01	02
%	00%	50%	50%	100%

Table 2.49: Frequency of Measuring Non-Verbal Features

Figure 2.49: Frequency of Measuring Non-Verbal Features



Out of the two teachers who answered “yes” to question 21, One of them (50%) said that s/he “sometimes” takes into consideration students’ non-verbal features while the other one (50%) stated that s/he rarely takes them into consideration.

Q23. If “No”, please explain

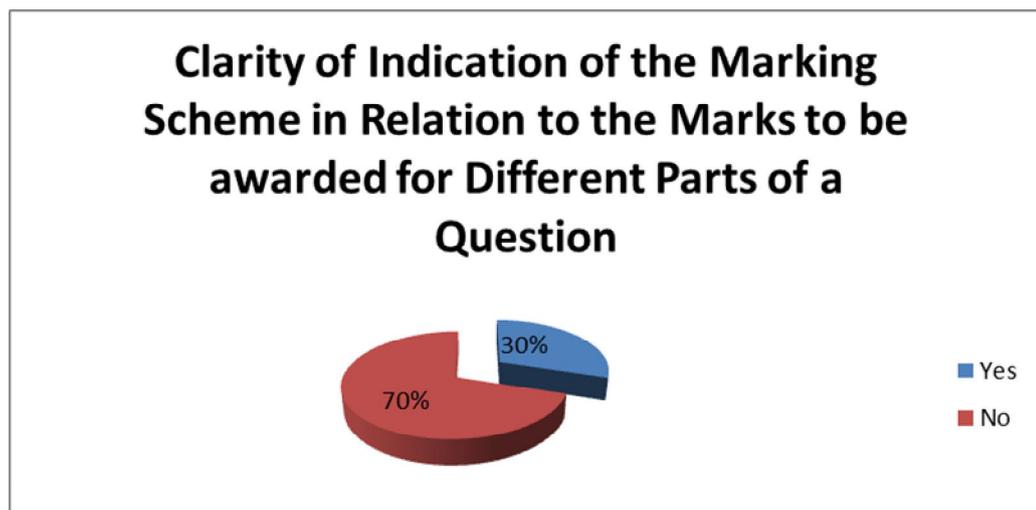
Most questioned teachers said that non-verbal features are not of great importance to them and that they are only interested in the linguistic competence of their students. One teacher stated that the only non-verbal aspect s/he pays attention to is the strategic competence of the learner.

Q24. Does the marking scheme indicate clearly the marks to be awarded for different parts of the question?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	03	07	10
%	30%	70%	100%

Table 2.50: Clarity of Indication of the Marking Scheme in Relation to the Marks to be awarded for Different Parts of a Question

Figure 2.50: Clarity of Indication of the Marking Scheme in Relation to the Marks to be awarded for Different Parts of a Question



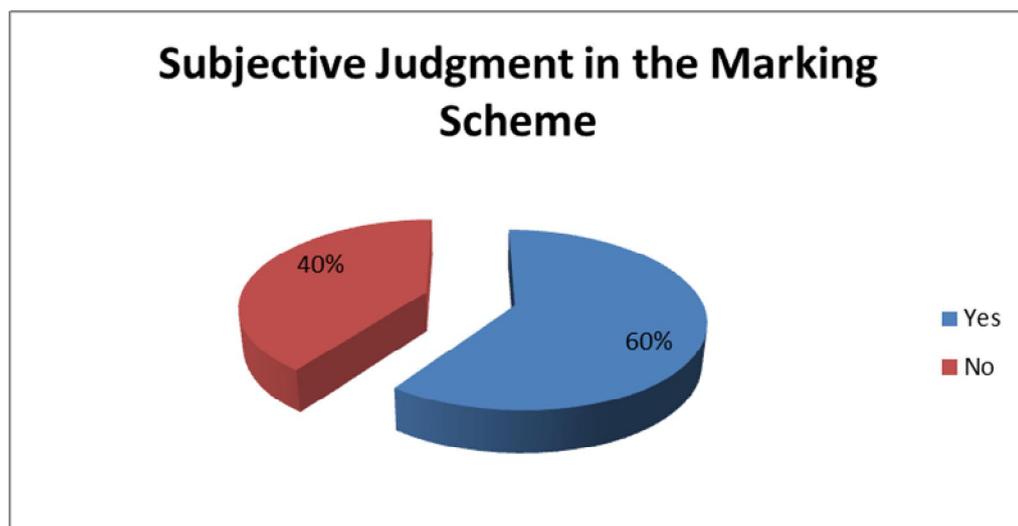
Seven out of the ten teachers asked stated that the marking scheme does not indicate clearly the marks to be awarded for different parts of a question. We believe that such indication would improve the quality of students' test results.

Q25. Does the marking scheme, by specifying performance criteria, reduce as far as possible the element of subjective judgment that the examiner has to exercise in evaluating students answer?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	06	04	10
%	60%	40%	100%

Table 2.51: Subjective Judgment in the Marking Scheme

Figure 2.51: Subjective Judgment in the Marking Scheme



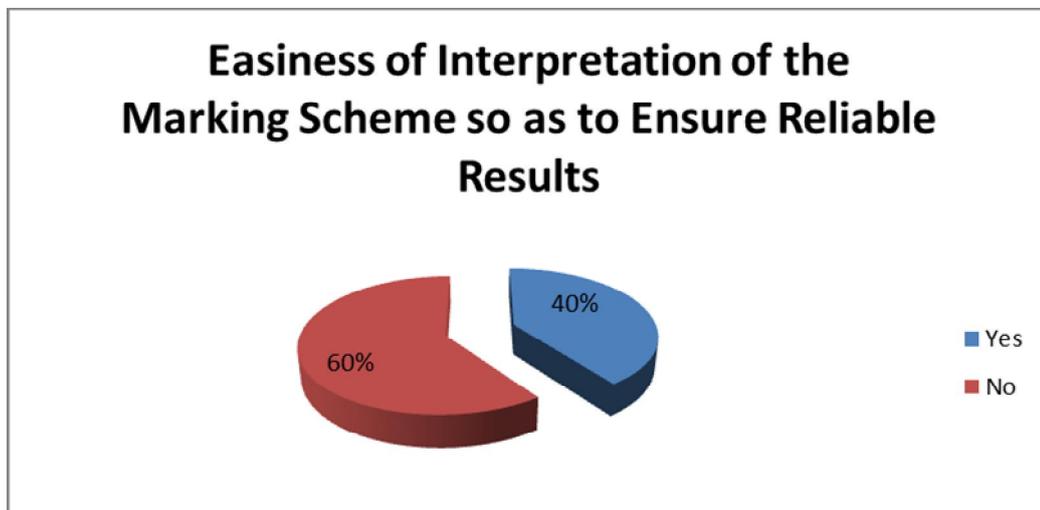
The majority of teachers (60%) said that their marking scheme, by specifying performance criteria, reduces as far as possible the element of subjective judgment that the examiner has to exercise in evaluating candidates' answers. This would allow teachers to obtain results that reflect the true level of the students. However, 40% of the questioned answers responded negatively, that is they admitted that their marking scheme does not specify performance criteria. We may conclude that not all the results obtained by teachers are objective.

Q26. Can the marking scheme be easily interpreted by a number of different examiners in a way which will ensure that all mark to the same standard?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	04	06	10
%	40%	60%	100%

Table 2.52: Easiness of Interpretation of the Marking Scheme so as to Ensure Reliable Results

Figure 2.52: Easiness of Interpretation of the Marking Scheme so as to Ensure Reliable Results



We can notice that (60%) of the questioned teachers admitted that their marking scheme cannot be easily interpreted by a number of different examiners; this means that it would not ensure the reliability of results.

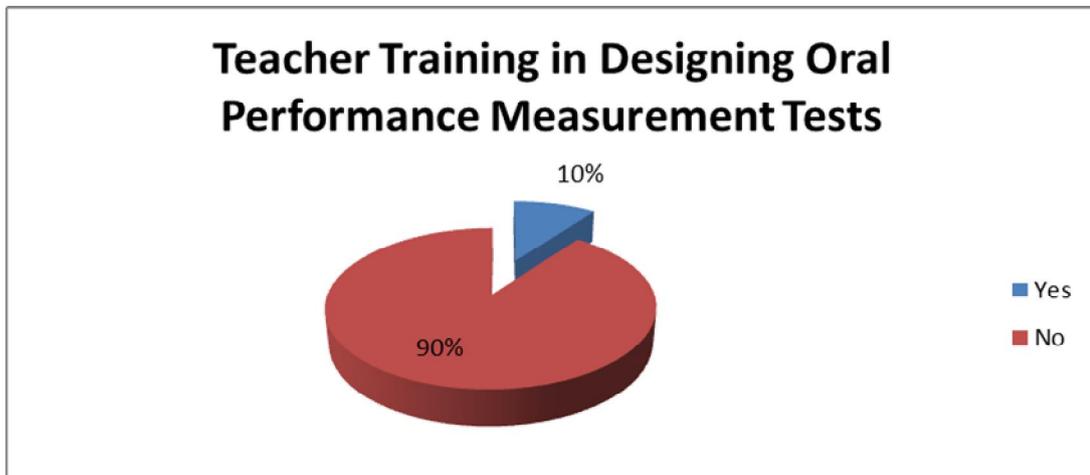
PART FIVE:

Q27. Teacher Training in Designing Oral Performance Measurement Tests

	Yes	No	Total
Number	01	09	10
%	10%	90%	100%

Table 2.53: Teacher Training in Designing Oral Performance Measurement Tests

Figure 2.53: Teacher Training in Designing Oral Performance Measurement Tests



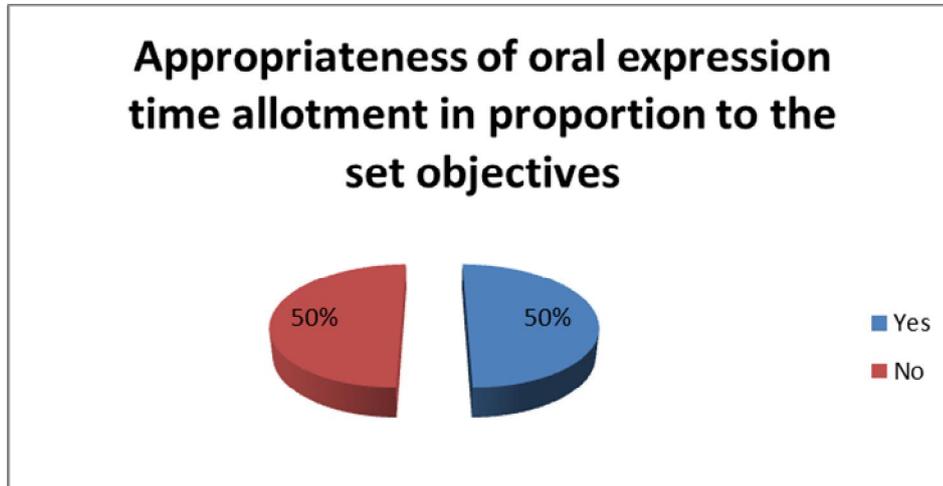
90% of the respondents said that they did not have any training in designing oral performance measurement tests. We may safely say that given the complexity of assessing oral skills any teacher, no matter how experienced s/he can be, needs to be trained in assessing oral skills to be able to ensure that results are reliable, fair and serve learning.

Q28. Appropriateness of oral expression time allotment in proportion to the set objectives

	Yes	No	Total
Number	05	05	10
%	50%	50%	100%

Table 2.54: Appropriateness of oral expression time allotment in proportion to the set objectives

Figure 2.54: Appropriateness of oral expression time allotment in proportion to the set objectives



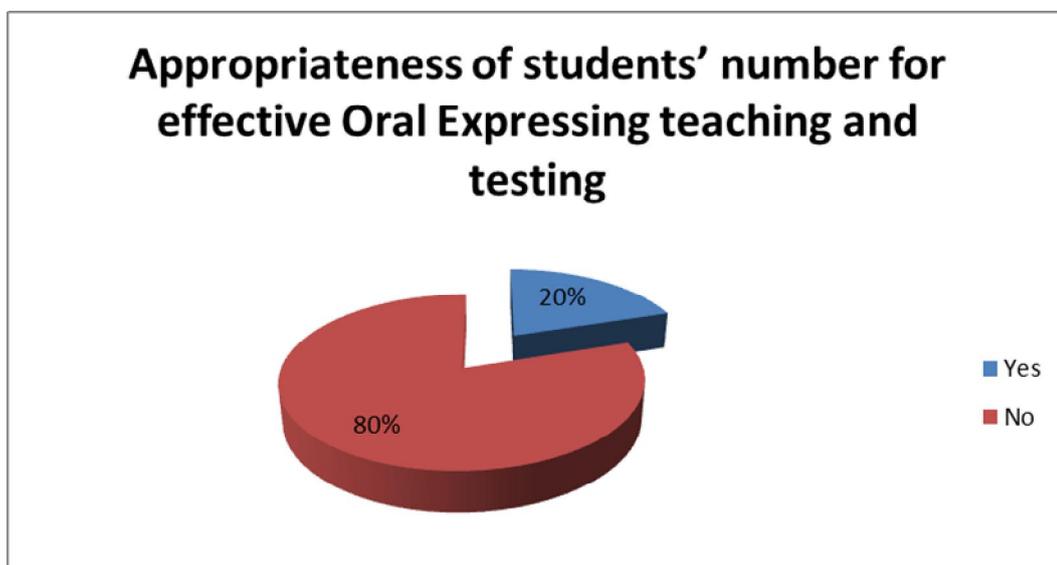
Half of the teachers questioned (50%) find that the time allotted to oral expression is appropriate in proportion to the set objectives. The other half (50%) thinks the opposite. Teachers seem to hold opposing views concerning the time issue. Our personal opinion is that different teachers have different objectives; these objectives should be realistic and teachers have to adapt them according to the time allotted to oral expression at their department.

Q29. Appropriateness of students' number for effective Oral Expressing teaching and testing

	Yes	No	Total
Number	02	08	10
%	20%	80%	100%

Table 2.55: Appropriateness of students' number for effective Oral Expressing teaching and testing

Figure 2.55: Appropriateness of students' number for effective Oral Expressing teaching and testing



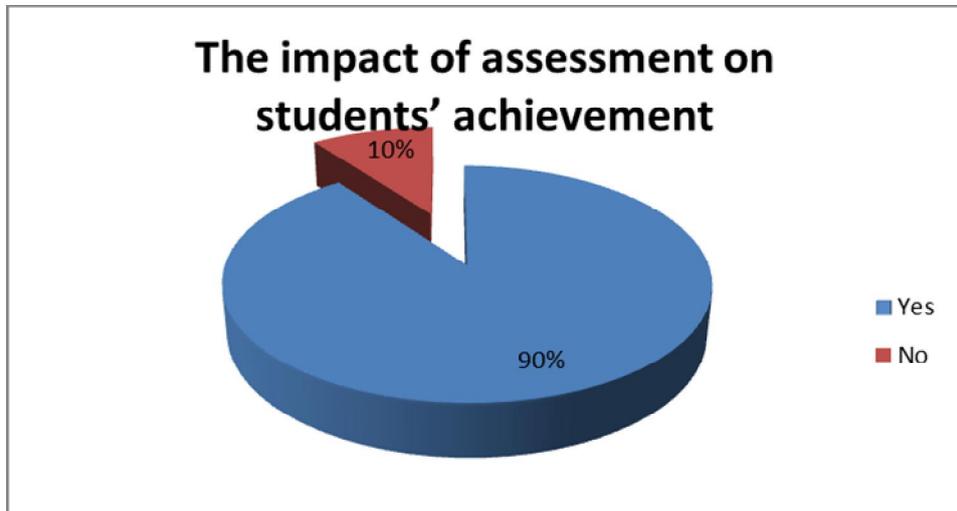
The majority of the teachers questioned (80%) find that the number of students in their classes is inappropriate for effective oral expression teaching and testing. While the two teachers who answered positively explained that exceptionally this year their groups had no more than 23 students; but in general classes are too large to ensure effective teaching and assessment.

Q30. The impact of assessment on students' achievement

	Yes	No	Total
Number	09	01	10
%	90%	10%	100%

Table 2.56: The impact of assessment on students' achievement

Figure 2.56: The impact of assessment on students' achievement



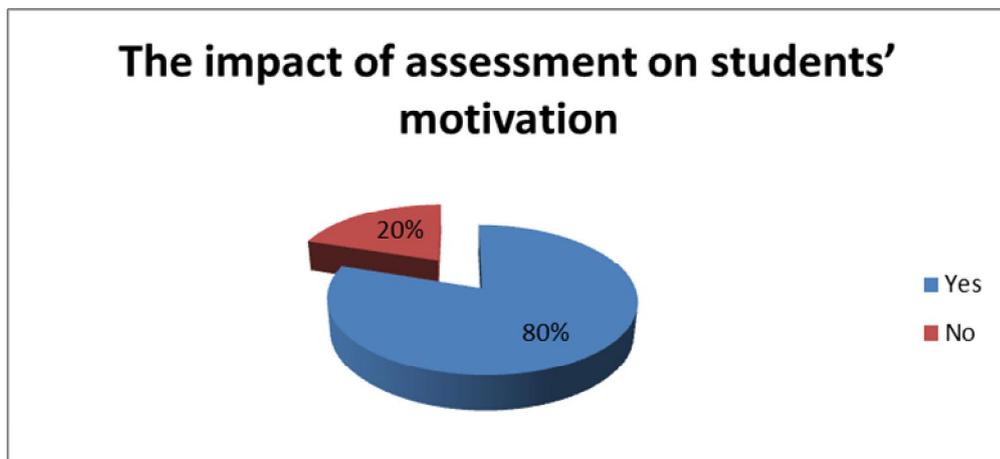
90% of the oral expression teachers asked stated that assessment had an impact on students' achievement. We view this answer as being positive since teachers are aware of this fact and may be ready to (re)consider matters related to assessment.

Q31. The impact of assessment on students' motivation

	Yes	No	Total
Number	08	02	10
%	80%	20%	100%

Table 2.57: The impact of assessment on students' motivation

Figure 2.57: The impact of assessment on students' motivation



80% of the oral expression teachers asked stated that they believed assessment had an impact on students' motivation. Some of them gave further comments:

Personal comments:

- ✓ "Assessment can motivate students only if it becomes an integral part of Oral Expression sessions".
- ✓ "I have the firm belief that assessment has an impact on students' motivation and achievement since the marks attributed by the teachers have an influence on the feelings and reactions of the students."
- ✓ " Students do not give much importance to Oral Expression for two main reasons:
 - 1- Because of the low coefficient (weighting) attributed to Oral Expression
 - 2- Speaking spontaneously is too demanding and too difficult a task for them so they ignore it.That is why assessment will not have an impact on their motivation or their achievement"

These concluding comments are clear evidence of some teachers' view of assessment at the English Department of Mostaganem University. The biggest concern seems to be related to marking issues. None of the comments provided by the teachers pointed out at their responsibility with regards to assessment or even teaching and motivating students.

Students and teachers questionnaires helped us so far answer some of our questions; principally those related to assessment procedures and students' attitudes. More information was gathered thanks to observations made while attending oral expression classes.

II.3. Classroom observation:

Classroom observation is a research technique designed to record teachers' daily practices in the classroom. According to Wallace, observational techniques, used principally for qualitative research, aim at: "exploring through observation aspects of what goes on in the classroom for the benefit of teachers' own development." (Wallace 1998:105).

To obtain a fuller picture of teachers' procedures as regards summative and formative assessments of students' oral performance, two groups of Second Year LMD students and their two O.E teachers were observed during the first semester of the academic year: 2012-2013. The aim was to observe teachers practices and record instances of what may constitute effective or ineffective assessment techniques. These include task feedback, corrective feedback as well as types of tasks/ instructions and whether these were conducted individually, in pairs or in groups. Observation also aimed at attempting to answer our research questions:

- ✓ Q#1: What are teachers' procedures for assessing students' oral performance?
- ✓ Q#2: "Does classroom instruction prepare students adequately for Oral Expression tests?"
- ✓ Q#3: "To what extent do teachers' assessment procedures contribute in improving students' level of speaking proficiency?"

II.3.1 Procedure:

Our procedure of data collection was as follows: After being granted the permission from the Head of Department to carry out this investigation, we started right away attending O.E classes with the two Second Year LMD classes. These were two sessions of

an-hour-and-half a week with each group from November 2012 to February 2013. Observation stopped right after the first semester examinations as we deemed it sufficient to draw conclusions based on instances of both continuous and summative assessments.

Classroom observations were most of the time followed by some informal interviews with the concerned teachers to discuss matters related to the sessions observed or to get their opinions about O.E teaching and assessment as well as students' work or motivation. The same teachers answered semi-structured interview questions which will be discussed in the last chapter.

As for data collection, after students and teachers signed an official document authorizing video-recording of the sessions (The Informed-Consent), we started filming O.E sessions and noticed that teachers' and students' attitudes were very unnatural so we decided to stop video-recording in order to avoid the "observer's paradox" and to make the population under investigation feel as comfortable as possible and act more naturally. The data was thus collected on the basis of written field notes.

II.3.2. Teachers' Profile:

Teacher (A)	Teacher (B)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Visiting fellow- Native speaker of English- Never taught O.E before- Team-teaching the O.E class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Permanent Teacher- Non-native speaker of English- Taught O.E for five (05) years- Teaching the O.E class alone

II.3.3. Choice of Teachers:

For this investigation, teacher (B) was chosen randomly among the 15 permanent teachers of O.E. Teacher (A) however, was selected purposefully, for his coming from an English-speaking country, with the objective of observing different procedures in both formative and summative assessments. Without necessarily comparing and contrasting the two teachers, observations of the two classes allowed us to record different but equally interesting procedures of assessing the oral skills.

The results and discussion of the questionnaires, classroom observation and informal as well as semi-structured interviews with the concerned teachers will be discussed in the third and last chapter of this dissertation: "Results, Discussion & Suggestions/Recommendations".

CHAPTER THREE:

DISCUSSION

&

SUGGESTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter (Chapter Two) we dealt with the analysis of both teachers' and students' questionnaires. We presented the answers in charts and tables with a preliminary description of the results obtained. We also described how we proceeded to gather information from observation classes. This last chapter provides a deeper reading of the results obtained with a highlighting of the main points emerging from questionnaires' results and the data gathered during observation sessions.

III.1 Classroom observation's results & discussion:

In this section, results from observation classes are reported and explained; a few points arising from post-observation as well as semi-structured interviews are discussed and used to support what was observed in O.E classes. The issues discussed include the following: (1) course content/objectives, (2) Assessment tools, (3) Formative assessment (4) Summative assessment.

III.1.1 Course Content:

The first thing observed was that teachers (A) and (B) had two different approaches to their second year speaking classes, content and procedure-wise.

One of the good things about university instruction is that teachers are free to select the content which will constitute their course and suite their learners' needs. They are not entitled to use any prescribed materials or course-books. However, this "freedom" can yield certain difficulties, especially for novice teachers. The most challenging aspect for the teachers observed was to identify course objectives for speaking classes. "Where do we start?" and "Where are we going to?" In fact, during the semi-guided interview, O.E teachers were asked to state some of the difficulties they faced while teaching and assessing speaking skills. Teacher (A) responded:

".....the major difficulty began with our uncertainty as to what the course was about. Was this public speaking (Which we arrived at) or conversation skill? ..."

Teacher (A) had two levels of Oral Expression classes to teach (First and Second years) and he confessed teaching the same content to both levels. To him, learners seemed to have the same language difficulties. When asked to describe their level of oral proficiency (good, average, below average or poor), the teacher said that it was a mix of all of these: varied. To him, there was no evidence that second year students had significantly improved oral skills as compared to the first year learners he had. All groups were large, mixed-ability classes and one could not tell which ones were first years and which ones were second years. He admitted that in both levels there were learners with excellent language abilities and others with very limited ones. So, he based his decisions for the establishment of the course content on those observations.

Teacher (B) expressed the same concern regarding the course. When asked what he thought should be done to make Oral Expression a better and more effective experience for both students and teachers, he answered:

"...[there's a need for] a better identification of the objectives behind such a course and aligning assessment with those objectives."

True that at the beginning of the academic year, several staff meetings were held to discuss the course contents of the different modules and try to come up with one unified course for instructors to work with. We attended one of them in which we observed that teachers tried to issue ideas and organize other meetings where they would work collaboratively for the elaboration of a program. The program or course content outline had to be handed to the administration. The majority of teachers had several modules to teach and thus could not focus on the preparation of all modules at a time.

Having taught and met colleagues on several occasions all through the first semester, we can say that it went by with no common course or defined course objectives for Oral Expression module, let alone assessment tasks, techniques or protocols. During one of the informal discussions with a teacher at the English Department of Mostaganem University, we asked the question of how teaching speaking was considered by teachers at the department and the teacher spontaneously answered:

".....to be honest, Oral Expression module is the one module where the teacher relaxes; a sort of recess, because the objective is to make the learners speak...we just pick a topic and let them discuss it...However, I have come to realize that it is one of the most difficult and challenging modules of all... It requires so much work and energy if it is to be taught and assessed adequately."

If the given answer is only true for this particular teacher who expressed her own opinion, we can but agree when she says that teaching and assessing speaking can be laborious especially when it is not planned for and that some teachers just don't know where and how to start.

III.1.2 Assessment tools:

Here again, the O.E teachers observed proceeded differently:

Teacher (A) and his partner developed a rubric and gave the students that tool early in the semester. It was actually introduced as early as session (3). After they discussed with their learners what they thought made a good conversation (Title of the lesson: What Helps You Learn English: session (1+2)), learners, guided by their teachers, could guess the elements that made a good speech. These elements were actually the rubric's criteria. Step by step, teacher (A), aided by his partner, led the learners to a deeper understanding of what it meant to use an appropriate and specific vocabulary, why pronunciation has to be accurate and the voice has to be loud, why it is important to be clear in the ideas we

express, what fluency and accuracy mean etc... Thus, the rubric was used as a teaching tool to discuss the multiple dimensions of effective speaking. It was also used as a point of reference for learners to assess their own and their mates' performance. Teacher (A) used the rubric for both formative and summative purposes and made his learners familiar with the criteria so they know what is expected from them and become self-aware of the progress they make in speaking. (Table 3.1: Oral Presentation Feedback Rubric)

Oral Presentation Feedback Rubric

Focus of Feedback	1 Point Needs Improvement	2 Points Developing	3 points Proficient
Pronunciation Correct, Loud and Clear			
Fluency Natural Flow of Speech			
Accuracy Well-formed sentences and Correct Use of Grammar			
Vocabulary Use of Precise and Varied Vocabulary			
Communication Effective Details and Examples and Arrangement of Parts			

Table 3.1: Oral Presentation Feedback Rubric

In addition to this rubric, the teacher said during an interview that he also paid attention to **organization, use of details and examples** as well as **non-verbal communication** while evaluating a learner's performance.

On the other hand, Teacher (B), though guided by specific criteria that are important for assessing speaking skills, did not hand in any rubric to his learners. He did take into consideration the multiple elements that constitute a good speech and did provide his

learners with feedback and comments on their performances but students were not directly aware of what they should pay attention to. Teacher (B)'s assessment checklist was mostly used for summative purposes (attributing grades).

The Scoring Grid he used includes the following rubrics:

- **Delivery**
- **Language Use**
- **Topic development**
- **credibility**

Teacher (B) explains:

- **Delivery:** Verbal and non-verbal skills/ Pronunciation/ Intonation/ Overall intelligibility.
- **Language Use:** Grammatical structures/ Word choice/ Coherence.
- **Topic Development:** Relevant information/Appropriate detail/ Clarity/ Organization/ Purposefulness.
- **Credibility:** Understanding of the problem/ Self-confidence.

It is of utmost importance for EFL teachers to have a clear understanding of what it means to be able to speak a language in order to transfer this understanding to the selection or design of tasks and evaluation criteria. It seemed clear that both teachers assessed their learners' performances with some criteria in mind however, if the learners are not aware of what is expected from them and what aspect(s) or their speech production has/have to be improved, there is little chance for them to ameliorate the quality of their production. That is why using checklists or grids not only allows teachers to provide sound bases for the feedback on their learners' performances but it also enables the learner to spot the "problem" or the specific aspect(s) of language s/he needs to improve.

III.1.3 Formative Assessment

This section discusses how assessment was conducted mainly for formative purposes. The focal point is feedback. As discussed in Chapter One, feedback should address both cognitive (where learners are in their learning and what to do next) and motivational factors (learners develop a feeling that they have control over their own learning). Both external (teacher feedback) and internal (self-assessment) feedbacks affect students' beliefs and learning.

During our observation, we could notice all such instances but at different degrees of focus. Also, teachers (A) and (B) held different views about how feedback should be administered while both incorporating it in their Oral Expression classes.

To start with, one common point between the observed teachers is that they insist on the importance of positive feedback. Holding a positive attitude themselves and insisting that their students be positive too while assessing other learners' performance. Both teachers provided a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere. Teacher (A) for instance, explained to his learners that making mistakes is not something "wrong" on the contrary; it is a way to learn from them. This was used as a reminder whenever the teacher sensed that learners were hesitant to participate because of their fear of making mistakes and receiving negative feedback from their mates. Likewise, teacher (B) asked his students to always start with the positive points while commenting on their mates' performance. Both teachers explained the term feedback to their students:

Teacher (A): ".....Feedback is not the same as grade, this is what you did well; it is what you could do better..."

Teacher (B): "... What worked and what was not so effective..."

Teachers' procedures for giving feedback on students' performance and involving learners in self and peer assessment was handled differently though. The variant views held by both teachers influenced the way teacher, self and peer assessments were tackled. The difference resided in the focus points and frequency of the feedback. Teacher (A) and his partner gave instant feedback right after every individual or group presentation guided by the assessment tool criteria discussed in the earlier section. On the other hand, teacher (B) took notes of all students' performances and gave a general feedback to the class including only what seemed to be the major points. Let's illustrate the procedures:

Teacher (A):

Starting from session (3) when teacher (A) handed the assessment tool to his students, after explaining again every element of the rubric, all the learners were involved in the assessment process. Before individual or group presentations, groups of students were formed in order to engage them in evaluating their peers using the assessment tool. Each group was assigned to evaluate a single aspect of effective speech, becoming experts on one aspect. Their focused attention seemed to result in improvements in that dimension of their own speech when it was their turn to present. These peer evaluations of the elements became part of the continuous assessment. After the presentations, teacher (A) first gave the opportunity to the learner(s) to self-assess bearing in mind the different dimensions of effective speech. Then, to compare students' self-assessment, he asked the groups to comment on their mates' performance by providing examples and arguments and then only did the teacher build on the comments or tackled points that were missed.

Teacher (A) and his partner prepared a handout of the lessons, explaining the steps that the students should go through while preparing their presentations and reminding them of the assessment dimensions. Here is a sample lesson plan:

What Helps You Learn English (and What Doesn't)

Goal: deliver a 5 minute group presentation on effective and ineffective English learning.

First step: Your group discusses and writes down personal English learning experiences. Include both effective (ones that helped you learn) and ineffective ones (ones that didn't). Hint: be specific; describe them so we can hear, see and feel them.

Second step: Split your group in two: one working on the effective experiences and one on the ineffective experiences. Each student writes one clear example of effective or ineffective learning events (This is mostly writing on your own, but ask for help if needed.)

Third step: Full group gets together again and reads and listens to each other's work. Make corrections and suggest improvements. Remembering what makes a good presentation, pay particular attention to each other's **pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary and accuracy.**

Fourth step: Now arrange your collective work in the best order. Decide how to introduce your presentation and how to sum it up in a conclusion. Write this down and decide who will say each part (share duties). This step requires close attention to the '**communication**' dimension of good presentations.

Fifth step: Practice. During our next class period, all groups will present their work.

Remember, your presentation will be evaluated according to the 5 dimensions of good expression that we discussed.

Feedback instances:

✓ self-assessment:

-
- ✓ Teacher: "What can you say about your presentation?"
 - ✓ Student (A): "I think our group was not coherent. We had a problem of communication"
 - ✓ Student (B): "I spoke at a very fast pace! When I speak slowly I have difficulty in pronunciation that's why I prefer to speak quickly."

 - ✓ Peer assessment:
 - ✓ Student (C): "You need to speak more loudly. We could not hear you at the back."
 - ✓ Student (D): "I appreciated that you separated the words out and that worked well. You broke the words well to make every word ring."

 - ✓ Teacher feedback:

Teacher: Speaking loud enough to be heard by others is really important, otherwise all the other elements: accuracy, fluency etc... won't work... You have to be loud and clear. Speak loudly but not noisily: Shrill voice is really annoying. You need to speak while breathing from this part of the body (teacher pointing at belly.)

Teacher (A)'s partner tells an anecdote about her own experience: "I trained myself to breathe and talk to give more air. I went to a speech therapist who advised me to do this." "Imagine you're chewing a big baguette, open your mouth and speak (teacher mimes)..... Think of this before your presentation.

Washback:

After students' presentations and feedback, teacher (A) decided to work on the particular problem of loudness which was recurrent among the learners. Thus, he adjusted his teaching by introducing a game which consisted in reading loudly pieces of famous speeches/plays/poems (Martin Luther King's: "I have a dream", Shakespeare's: "Julius Cesar", poems by Maya Angelou and Sojourner Truth). The passages were chosen to convey feelings of anger, injustice etc... Students had to read them out with the appropriate tone and as loudly as possible. Learners were thus evaluated for just being able to be heard at the back of the room. This was also a peer evaluation because even the disengaged students who wanted to sit in the back of the room could say if they could hear their mates.

Teacher (A) and his partner proceeded as follows:

First of all the teachers introduced the different passages and read them out to the students. They made sure to talk about the background of each passage and explain to the learners some of the difficult words that could impede their understanding of the texts' meaning and mood, as students had to not only raise their voice but also work on the emotion of the text. Teachers also seized the opportunity to teach some new vocabulary and idiomatic expressions to their learners (Like: "to stab someone with a knife" _ Julius Cesar) etc...

By reading out the different passages, teachers acted as models of how the reading should be: loud, since it was the main aim of the activity, and conveying certain feelings. Then, students were asked to choose one of the four passages; the one they liked best or felt more at ease reading. One by one, they picked a text and read it out to their mates and teachers. This time teachers did not use any grid or rubric to assess their learners'

performances but rather, feedback was given by them as well as the remaining students of the group on the performance in general with special attention to the loudness of the voice and the emotions conveyed. Teachers first asked each learner whether s/he liked her/his performance (a way for them to self-assess). Here are instances of the feedback given:

✓ Teacher (A) to student (A)

T(A): "Did you like doing that?"

S(A): " No, I didn't like it.... I'm not really satisfied with the last part"

T(A): " I want you to do again that last part that you're not happy with one
More time."

✓ Peers on student (B)'s performance

- He was not angry, he was laughing!
- He was too fast.

✓ Teacher (A) to student (B)

T(A): "You chose to speak more quickly. Why did you choose that pace of delivery?"

S(B): " When I speak slowly I make more pronunciation mistakes."

✓ Teacher (A) to student (C)& class

One of the girls in the group chose to read the poem: "Ain't I a Woman" by Sojourner Truth and she read it with force and emotion, so much so that when reading a line talking about "Mother's grief", the learner started crying... When asked by her teachers, she said that she cried because this made her think of her own mother's pain.

T(A): " I didn't expect that from you. It frees you to act. You can be a totally different person. When you can come here and reinvent yourself into a big, strong woman..."

T(A): "She [...the girl] said that she felt that woman's emotions... Well, we talked about what would/wouldn't work in teaching; crying doesn't but here it's just perfect it conveys the mood, the emotions of the woman...This is fluency!"

- ✓ Miscellaneous feedback from teacher (A):
- ✓ "Nice, slow pace that helps overcome some difficulties in pronunciation."
- ✓ "You are such a quiet person. I didn't know you had that voice!"
- ✓ "I appreciated that you separated the words out and that worked well. You broke up the words well. It makes every word ring. You also used silence well."
- ✓ "Relaxation of the voice is very important. Shrill voice is terribly annoying! You need to breathe from this part of the body (Teacher points at belly)."

On the whole, what was noticed is that this washback session had a very positive impact on students. They gained more self-confidence as they were practicing speaking more loudly and trying to convey emotions from the poems and speeches. They seemed to have progressed by the end of the session. The teachers also accompanied students effectively in their process of self-disclosure.

Teacher (B):

Teacher (B) took notes during the learners' presentations. After each presentation, he asked students to comment on their mates' performance without

specifying to the students which aspect they should be looking at. He asked them just to look at what “worked and what was not so effective”. When all performances were done, he gave his own feedback. It was done mainly orally, writing key elements on the board. Feedback on students’ oral performance was not directed to one student in particular but done to the whole class. Teacher (B) explained that the reasons behind adopting such an approach were several: “psychological considerations, differentiating mistakes from errors, and focusing on specific points etc...”

Teacher (B)’s course was based on different activities that aimed at developing some skills and competences. The topics were numerous: there were debates, games, opinions that aimed at fulfilling different functions: argumentative, descriptive, prescriptive etc... and the teacher alternated between group and pair work. Session (4) was a role-play activity during which students had to work in pairs imagining a father-son/daughter situation where the father received his son’s/daughter’s school report which was bad. Students had to imagine the conversation. After the first performance, teacher (A) asked if there were any volunteers who would comment on the performance:

Feedback instances:

- ✓ Peer assessment:
 - ✓ Student (A): “It was good at the beginning then she forgot the words...but it was good!”
 - ✓ Student (B): “It was good but the second character did not say anything!”
 - ✓ Students (C): “The performance was very good. There were some pronunciation problems.”
 - ✓ Student (D): “I liked the pronunciation of X she speaks up and well.”

✓ self-assessment:

Teacher: "Were you nervous?"

Student (E): "Yes, I think I was!"

Teacher: "Is it good or bad?"

Student (E): "I don't think it's good."

Teacher: "What didn't work for you? Something you planned but did not achieve?"

Student (F): "I said in order *to* not.... It's in order *not to*"

✓ Teacher feedback to the class:

✓ "When you speak, you should look at people."

✓ "Don't be in a hurry to finish."

✓ "You should pay attention to the cultural aspect of your pronunciation. You speak English with an Algerian intonation. You have to find a way to get rid of this."

✓ "You still speak English with an Algerian intonation. Ask a friend to video-tape you and you will have an idea of how you are speaking."

✓ " You make short vowels long; e.g. : /wi:n/ instead of /win/"

✓ "There are many words you know but do not pronounce correctly such as: Village, persuade, lieutenant..."

✓ "There are words that you confuse: Experience vs experiment; optimist vs optimistic; a cook and a cooker."

✓ "When you report you do not say: I don't know who is the person but I don't know who the person is."

Teacher (B)'s students did not take notes from their teachers' feedback since it was not directed to a particular person. The lessons were not modified to try to meet learners' needs. However, during the semi-guided interview, teacher (A) expressed his concern about student feedback; when asked to complete the statement: Assessment would be better at making learning happen with my students if only..... Teacher (B) answered: "...we had a rational number of students so that we could perform more individual assessment to meet individual students' needs." Thus, class size, was a real issue for the observed teachers. In fact, teacher (A) also mentioned this problem during the interview saying: ".....then, because of the size of the class, we had the problem of providing sufficient ongoing feedback so that students could see their progress."

To conclude, Teacher (A) and Teacher (B) had similarities and differences in approaching classroom feedback. In spite of their large classes, one favored individual feedback, when the other opted for class feedback. Teacher (B), just like his colleague, used self, peer and teacher evaluation as formative assessment techniques. Their effect was not the same, though, especially regarding students' attention and use of the feedback. Moreover, when both teachers faced a recurrent problem (that of loudness for Teacher (A)'s students and that of Algerian accent in pronunciation for Teacher (B)'s) only Teacher (A) decided to remedy by organizing a session devoted to loudness and inhibition (modifying the course).

III.1.4 Summative Assessment

In this section we will be discussing the observed teachers' procedures of summative assessments. The assessment system currently used comprises both continuous and end-of-term examinations (finals). The teachers observed proceeded differently in evaluating students' performances during the course and attributing a grade for students' continuous

assessment. The final examinations too were different in form and substance. Here is a description of how grades were attributed to learners of the two observed groups:

Teacher (A):

For continuous assessment, teacher (A) and his partner adopted a learner-centered method to evaluate their students' work. This method is: "keeping a portfolio". Introduced early in the semester, this method helped the teachers double-check on their learners' progress since every student had to include a piece of reflection on each of their classroom presentations that included the following sections:

- 1- What I think I did well.
- 2- What I think I didn't do well.
- 3- What I want to improve in my next presentations.

Not only did this allow students to self-assess and reflect on their performance, but it enabled them to feel responsible for their learning too. Knowing that their portfolios will be graded added to the motivation of the students to take the task more seriously, to keep track of their progress and pay attention to the different language aspects that they will have to improve.

Here are a few samples of learners' portfolios from Teacher (A)'s group that were chosen randomly:

"The Effective and Ineffective Ways of Learning English"

My presentation (sample 1)

1- Concerning my pronunciation:

I think I did well. I pronounced the words correctly. I've always been careful in pronouncing words. I think I've spoken clearly and loudly so that my classmates could understand what I said.

2- Concerning fluency:

I think I did well.

3- Concerning accuracy:

I think I did my best; I tried to follow the rules of grammar, at the same time I paid attention to the formation of sentences, but of course there must be some mistakes...We are students and we make mistakes but we have to learn through them, this is thanks to our teachers.

4- Concerning vocabulary:

I used words that were clear and strong at the same time. My words were easy so that the others could understand.

"The Effective and Ineffective Ways of Learning English"

My presentation (sample 2)

In my presentation, I spoke about the effective way of learning a language. I said that the effective way to learn a language in my opinion is reading. Reading everything that can help us understand and get information and knowledge.

One thing I did well in my presentation is my pronunciation. I was clear and my voice was loud so that everyone could hear me and understand what I was saying.

In my next presentation, I will try to better my communication because I didn't give many examples and details. My sentences were disorganized, so I will try to organize my speech in my next presentation.

The portfolio was also used to reflect on and write about the topic of the final exam presentation: "Changes and Challenges" on which students had been working for weeks. Concerning the choice of the topic for the exam presentations, Teacher (A) said: "We tried to think of what was important to the student. Everyone becomes more articulate when they want to be understood, and people want to be understood if they think what they say is important." Teacher (A) and his partner asked students to discover what had been important to their parents and use that to reflect on what is important to them. They had students work in small groups on that topic so that then, they needed to use critical thinking to synthesize the various results into one, group statement and evaluate their own diverse challenges to find the most significant ones. Thus, classwork became a preparation for the summative exam, which was to be the final presentation of several

weeks of group work. This work was an oral presentation that was prepared for in writing (which was a part of the continuous assessment grade).

Teacher (B):

Continuous assessment for Teacher (B)'s group included two ways to score the learners: One was performed by giving the learner the possibility to prepare an activity /presentation individually or in groups. The second, by having the learner perform and speak in semi-guided or free activities. The former method gave learners the freedom to choose what and how to present their work allowing students to feel more comfortable and respecting their learning preferences. Some students wanted to present their work alone because they were self-confident and did not want the group work to influence the final grade. Other students favored group work because they felt more comfortable to be with friends while speaking in front of an audience. The latter method was done all along the semester while students participated in different classroom activities. Teacher (B) attributed a grade to each one of them until all got a grade. The final score for the continuous assessment was the average of the two scores obtained by each learner of the group. Learners were given the criteria for scoring beforehand.

As for the final examination, the students of the group were divided into three groups. Each group was scheduled for a one-and-a-half hour session. The first student in had to choose a number corresponding to a discussion topic (see list of topics below). S/he could opt for another topic in case the first one didn't suit her/him. Each student had four minutes to organize his/her ideas. Before student (1) started speaking, student (2) followed the same steps for selecting the topic. After that, student (1) started speaking while student (2) was getting ready. This procedure was followed until the end. For grading his learners, Teacher (B) used the same criteria mentioned in the "Formative Assessment" section.

Oral Expression Exam Topics

- 1- Tell me about the most interesting person you've ever met.
- 2- If you could take a week and travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- 3- What is the one truly defining moment of your life so far?
- 4- Who has influenced you the most?
- 5- What is the one thing you most want to do?
- 6- Who is your favorite historical figure?
- 7- Do you think elementary and high school students should be allowed to use cell-phones at school?
- 8- What if there were separate classrooms for boys and girls? Would that be more suitable?
- 9- Should downloading music and movies be illegal, and those who do so should be punished?
- 10- Aliens exist!
- 11- Acupuncture as a valid medical technique.
- 12- Non-medical cosmetic surgery.

Concerning Teacher (A) and Teacher (B)'s continuous assessment tasks, we may say that both techniques had very positive points. It seemed clear that both teachers cared about giving the learners the opportunity to express themselves freely (to Teacher (A) by asking them to write about their own presentations and later their challenges and to Teacher (B) by letting them choose the topic of their presentation and with whom they preferred presenting it).

However, the issue in our opinion concerning Teacher (A)'s method is the fact of opting for a **group presentation of one single challenge**. As said earlier, students had to synthesize the different results into one group statement by selecting the most significant challenge. This activity is positive in the sense that it encourages learners to use their critical thinking but gives rise to two issues: **1-** the idea of working on her/his own challenge on the portfolio for weeks but speaking only about "the most significant" challenge may make the learner feel that their own challenge is not that important as compared to others' (especially that teachers had students write about what is IMPORTANT to them and what is important to one student is not necessarily important to another). There seems to be an adequacy in the choice of the topic as compared to the technique of evaluation (group presentation). This type of topic is best suited for an individual evaluation **2-** the unevenness of time allotted to each student to speak. Given the fact that groups were made of about five to six students who were supposed to speak about ONE challenge, it is doubtful that learners can have enough to talk about in order to demonstrate their oral ability. The question is will the same mark be attributed for the group members' ability to synthesize and use critical thinking (difficult to know who did what) or will each one get a separate mark even if some may have produced only a tiny stretch of speech? What we think is that the learners could well carry out group work to exchange ideas in the classroom or get their classmates' feedback on their work and still make sure to be evaluated on speaking about their own challenge. Or else, the idea of group evaluation could have been kept but with a different topic; one in which learners would have shared tasks then each one of them would have presented a part or a piece of the collaborative work to build the whole. It could well be a presentation or simply role plays.

As to Teacher (B)'s **exam topics** although they were varied and students had the possibility to pick another topic if the first one didn't suit them, some topics were quite difficult and even a little penalizing especially regarding vocabulary. So if a student for instance picked topic 11: "Acupuncture as a valid medical technique" and had no idea whatsoever about what the word acupuncture might signify then decided to pick topic 12: "Non-medical cosmetic surgery" of which s/he might not have the slightest knowledge of or at least no sufficient vocabulary to be that convincing in four little decisive minutes, we can but imagine her/his feeling of distress added to an already heavy, exam-related stress. This can engender a negative attitude towards O.E exams and maybe even classes. Here again, the issue of topic selection and task design is really important and teachers need to be aware of the fact that learners might have the linguistic ability to answer the questions but not the necessary subject knowledge.

III.2 Questionnaires results & discussion:

III.2.1 Students' Self-confidence:

According to Ur (1996), learners are often inhibited about trying to say something in a foreign language in the classroom as they are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts. Although statistically most students said that they're not afraid to talk, a large portion of them (almost the same number) said they are. Refusing to take risks because s/he is shy, fears making grammar and pronunciation mistakes, lacks vocabulary or dreads her/his teacher's and/or classmates' comments denotes a problem of self-confidence.

➤ Suggestions/Recommendations:

To raise students' level of self-confidence it is important to:

-
- ✓ Create an inclusive and relaxed environment based on mutual trust and cooperation.
 - ✓ Act like “fuel to fire” and convince students that “Yes, they can do it!”
 - ✓ Explain to students that making mistakes is part and parcel of the learning process.
 - ✓ Encourage giving positive feedback before corrective feedback.
 - ✓ Praise risk-takers for their attempt even when their answer is wrong. Other students will feel less inhibited and may decide to give it a try.
 - ✓ Not interrupt students to correct their mistakes especially if it is the first time they speak.
 - ✓ Not interrupt students to correct their mistakes during fluency activities
 - ✓ Reduce learner anxiety through better teacher sociability.
 - ✓ Encourage peer interaction.
 - ✓ Raise learners’ engagement in classroom activities by selecting interesting and varied tasks.
 - ✓ Raise learners’ engagement in classroom activities by using multiple techniques: individual, pair and group work.

Additionally, teachers may want to get students’ feedback on the O.E course as well as an estimation of their performance level; whether they think they have improved and which speaking sub-skills they wish to practice more. One such feedback form¹ was handed right before the winter holidays to the first year O.E group that I taught. This was an opportunity to use the information² gathered as basis for the modification of the classroom input and task selection/design during the holidays, to be able to use them when resuming

¹ Refer to Appendix III

² Students answered the form anonymously, the point being to get their genuine feedback regardless of the identity of the one who provided it. They also were allowed to fill in the form in any language they wanted. The idea here is to give students the opportunity to express themselves as fully and freely as possible.

class a few weeks before the examinations. In fact, since the beginning of the semester, interactive, communicative activities were used in O.E classes. Learners appeared to be very satisfied with the activities but expressed the need to improve their pronunciation skills and enlarge their vocabulary. Following students' needs, Activities were designed around songs/ songs' lyrics that required from the learners to listen, fill-in blanks, work on vocabulary, give their opinion in a sort of debate, play roles based on the lyrics of the songs and finally sing the songs. There were three sessions of this kind which was deemed enough to make students feel a little more secure as to the practice of the language sub-skills they felt they needed to practice more.

III.2.2 Students' Speaking Opportunities:

The questionnaire result yielded a difference between students and teachers answer as to the opportunities given to students to interact in the classroom. In fact, all of the teachers questioned (100%) attested that they "often" give their learners the opportunity to speak while the majority of students (almost 54% of them) said that they are "sometimes" given the opportunity to speak.

There is certainly a willingness on the part of the teacher to let students take part to the O.E class and certainly the need of the learners to see their speaking skills increase. We may say that their objective is common. However some of our informants made statements such as:

- ✓ *"Our teacher should help us be less passive and should encourage us in many different ways, understand us and accept our opinion."*
- ✓ *"We want less teacher talk and more student talk; after all this is our class and our time to express our ideas and opinions."*

Teachers may endorse different roles in the classroom depending on the type of class or task or context. A teacher who fosters learner autonomy is called a “facilitator”; this one is actually the role of all committed teachers (Harmer 2007). In classes such as O.E it may be easy for teachers to shift to the role of “Controller” if they feel that students are not that engaged and do not participate as is expected of them. They are probably going to try to “fill” the silence.

This problem may stem from the type of activities students are engaged in. Results from the questionnaire indicate that teachers’ most used classroom activity is “discussion”. One might guess that if the topic is not of interest to the students, they may choose to refrain from speaking. Thus, we would suggest that teachers select interactive tasks that would make ALL students participate. For instance, one of the activities I tried with my first year group and that worked quite well is:

Proverb Communication Activity by Chris Gunn³

This activity is a retelling activity where students communicate common English proverbs to each other. Every student is given a proverb to communicate to the class. They are also asked to explain what the proverb means and either rephrase their explanation (using in other words) or to give an example (for example).

Class set-up

There are 15 proverbs in total so teacher of large classes may need to make more than one copy of each proverb. They may also need to adjust the number of proverbs (and the quiz

³ The *activity and all related handouts can be retrieved online from* :
<http://bogglesworldesl.com/proverbs.htm>

questions) according to the number of students they have. So for example, if they have 24 students they might want to use 2 sets of 12 proverbs instead of all 15 originals.

Each student is given a proverb and is told to memorize it word for word and to remember the explanation (meaning) of the proverb in her/his own words. After the students have been given time to memorize the proverbs, the teacher takes away the proverbs and hand out the activity sheet. Students go around and talk to other students and exchange information on proverbs.

When the students are finished exchanging information, the teacher gives them five minutes to review their activity sheet. Then, s/he gives them the quiz on proverbs. It is important that the students know that they will be given a quiz beforehand. This helps to focus their attentions while doing the activity. Teachers can have the students mark the quiz themselves by having them exchange quizzes. Then they quickly go over the answers as a class or decide not to count the scores and tell the students that from the start. Teachers can tell their students the reason for the quiz is so that they can measure their own communication skills. In other words, the quiz is a self-assessment tool.

This type of communicative activity not only makes ALL students participate but it motivates them, makes them learn proverbs, tests their communicative skills and their ability to make themselves understood by their peers, makes them work in groups and finally self-assess. It is our belief that engaging learners in this type of activities can but raise their engagement in O.E classes, increase their self-esteem and hopefully improve their language proficiency.

III.2.3 Feedback as correction:

Harmer (2007) says mistakes correction is made up of two stages: showing or signaling to the students that a mistake has been made and then, if necessary, helping them do

something about it. According to him, when and how to correct learners also depends on the type of classroom activity they are engaged in. Does the activity expect learners' accuracy (grammar, pronunciation exercise or vocabulary work) or fluency? Are they 'non-communicative' or 'communicative activities'? If the task learners are involved in focuses on **form**, teachers would need to intervene and show incorrectness to the students using different techniques:

- **Repeating**: asking student to repeat again and signaling through intonation that something is wrong
- **Echoing**: repeating what the learner said by emphasizing the wrong part.
- **Statement and question**: making a statement about what the learner said then asking a question like "Do people think that's correct?"
- **Expression**: facial expression or gesture to indicate something doesn't work
- **Hinting**: providing a quick hint on the type of mistake made; for instance: *tense*, or *countable*.
- **Reformulation**: repeating back a corrected version of the learner's statement without making a big issue of it.

If, after using these techniques, learners are still unable to correct themselves, teachers can:

- Focus on the correct version in more detail (emphasizing the part where there is a problem).
- Explain the grammar (if necessary).
- Ask students to help and correct each other (especially in a genuine cooperative atmosphere).

On the other hand if the task focuses on **meaning** teachers need to:

-
- Respond to the content and not the language form.
 - Provide feedback on such activities after the task not during it.
 - Have a greater tolerance towards errors than in more controlled activities
 - Make the correction as gentle as possible
 - Offer a form correction when necessary but do it with great tact and discretion

Research shows that errors which do not interfere with meaning are usually overlooked both in FLA and SLA contexts in real life. Parents typically respond to their children's errors in meaning rather than to those that violate grammatical rules. Similarly, errors made by second-language speakers are usually also left unnoticed if they do not impede with meaning. (Lightbown and Spada 2006: 32)

It is therefore unnatural if teachers concentrate their corrective focus mainly on structures and grammar rather than on meaning. Even though, corrective feedback can be helpful, over-correction or frequent correction of errors is neither effective nor encouraging for further spoken production. This is especially so if learners are trying to formulate their ideas and their flow of thought is interrupted by a teacher's error correction. In addition, as CLT suggests it is important to view errors in a positive way because quite often they are a proof of learners' ambitious attempts at testing new language and their willingness to take risks when trying to express thoughts that go beyond their level of proficiency.

To sum up, we may say that many teachers hold differing views as to whether mistakes should be corrected or not and when and how to correct them and may have different error correction strategies. Their beliefs and practices may pertain to their history with feedback, to their philosophy of language learning/teaching or classroom

experience with their learners. Our belief is that if correction of errors is sometimes necessary and positive, in some other times it has a negative effect. It definitely is needed at some point in the learning process to a lesser or a wider extent. Teachers should try to get as much information as possible from the students in order to know what their learning styles and preferences are. Thus, teachers should consider on the first hand the students' reaction to error correction and whether they are ready to digest such information, because some want to be corrected and others do not. On the other hand, teachers should also decide which errors should be corrected and which ones should be left uncorrected, depending on the students' level, students' needs, type of error etc... Basically, Correction builds on the rapport between teacher and students. A good teacher *"should be able to correct people without offending them"* (Harmer, 1998)

It is recommended for teachers who take notes of their students' mistakes in order to provide them with a feedback at the end of an activity to use a chart or other forms of categorization to help them with this. Harmer (2007) suggests the following simple instrument:

Grammar	Words and phrases	pronunciation	Appropriacy

Figure 3.1: A chart for recording student mistakes

III.2.4 Self and Peer Assessments:

"You tell me, and I forget. You teach me, and I remember. You involve me, and I learn."
Benjamin Franklin

In the previous chapter, results of the students' and teachers questionnaires indicated a lack of knowledge or a misconception about the notion of self-assessment. In fact, the majority of students are not familiar with this practice while the majority of teachers feel that their learners are unable to assess themselves; A feeling shared by some students who declared: *"They are teachers and we are students; they know better and we have to learn from them."* This vision of assessment is a very traditional one even in our context where things have evolved tremendously in the recent years with the implementation of the principles of the Competency Based Approach (CBA) in the earlier educational levels. In fact, learners deal with self-assessment rubrics (in terms of Can Dos) at the end of each unit of their course books (not only of English but other subjects as well). Since the university system and that of national education are disconnected we may infer that some teachers are ignorant of the learners' entry profile.

Teachers and students alike need to get rid of traditional perceptions of role attributions concerning learning and assessment. We believe that teachers need to draw their students' attention to their roles and responsibilities in their own learning. According to Baxter (1997):

*"The traditional testing system puts no responsibility on the student. The student is accustomed to the teacher saying if he/she is good or bad. For many students assessment is something that teachers do **to** them, rather than something teachers do **with** them."*

(Baxter, 1997: 57)

Self and peer assessments are at the heart of the learning process and there's nothing like involving the learner in his own learning. These types of evaluation can be utilized to help students learn their strengths and weaknesses and plan their learning better. Teachers can encourage their learners to become self-critical and to take more responsibility.

Some of the informants declared: "Our teachers can have a better judgment of our work and performance. They have more experience". So, how far can a student's judgment of her/his performance be reliable?

According to Underhill (1987)

"All learners have the ability to determine their own oral proficiency within certain limits. What they lack is the experience that enables the professional or tester to compare that learner against an external standard"

(Underhill, 1987:22)

To gain experience in assessing their performance teachers should:

- Organize a session devoted to explaining self and peer assessment techniques.
- Make students familiar with checklists and grids if any.
- Involve students in their own assessment on regular basis.

In other words, learners should be trained to know how they are getting on independently of the teacher. This should be done as an automatic part of teaching, to enable learners to take more responsibility for helping themselves progress...

"... any teaching programme that pays more than lip-service to the idea of student-centered learning should be training learners to monitor and assess themselves".

(Ibid: 23)

"There are three sides to every story-your side, my side, and the truth." John Adams

If students are assessed on regular basis, teachers might as well encourage them to keep a record of their performance. An interesting tool that can be used jointly by teachers and learners is a ROA (Record of Achievement). This tool can not only serve as a record that helps both learners and teachers keep track of the progress made by the learner, but will also allow more individual exchange and one-to-one feedback that combines both the expertise of the teacher and the learner's insight.

Continuous assessment card or a "record of achievement" (ROA)

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT CARD		Name:Peter Anderson.....		
Test No →	1	2	3	
Type of test and date	Interview 21 January	Role-playing tasks 19 February	
Self- assessment	'I thought I could answer about half of the 10 questions satisfactorily. Weak on pronunciation'	'Went very well. But there were a few words and phrases I didn't remember (Important?)	
Test result	7/10	Good		
Comments (by teacher of learner)	' Slight under estimation Pronunciation not too bad." (Teacher) ' Better than what I thought' (Student)	' you sounded a bit blunt, perhaps' (teacher) 'Must practice polite phrases.' (Student)	

Figure 3.1: Continuous assessment card (Oskarson, 1989: 6 in Fultcher, 2010: 72)

III.2.5 Summative Assessments and students' preferences:

Some students attested that they are not regularly tested and expressed their desire for more testing opportunities: *"Our teacher should test us every now and then and not on a specific day"*. Evaluating speaking skills can be a time-consuming activity; some teachers prefer attributing grades for attendance, completed homework or participation in classroom activities and discussions; while these can be regarded as valid ways of measuring classroom performance, they are not a valid measure of English ability. If teachers tested students more regularly, the latter would get accustomed to such practice and would feel less inhibited during formal examinations.

The tasks designed for a test should appeal to learners' interests and needs; thus, Teachers' choice of topics is of utmost importance. Most importantly, test tasks should reflect classroom instruction. According to Bailey (2005) in order for a test to be valid, it has to test what teachers taught and what learners want to be learning. Doing so is fair and appropriate.

Also, students expressed the need for more:

- *"Authentic" tasks: "We want topics to be related to our daily life, situation and society."*
- The use of varied methods during the exams from individual to pair or group work.
- Originality and diversity in assessment tasks: *"Our teacher should suggest new ways of examining like using pictures/photos and asking us to describe them. S/he should select topics that would actually make us speak."*

Authenticity, variety, originality and diversity of testing methods and techniques are important ingredients that can be of great value in the motivation of learners and in getting evidence of their oral ability.

There exists a variety of such tasks that involve the use of pictures/photos as elicitation techniques, for instance, as well as give the opportunity to the student to be assessed alone (individual long turn / interview) or in pairs (situational tasks: role-play) etc.

We would like first to suggest some Guidelines⁴ that can help teachers design speaking tasks for classroom use or examinations

✓ **Guidelines for designing interview questions:**

- Always ask global questions, because they provide more scope for the student.
- Do not ask for specific information.
- Use Wh-questions instead of Yes/No questions.
- Never ask questions the answer to which requires specific background knowledge.
- Avoid misleading, confusing, embarrassing and distressing questions.
- Do not ask display questions (questions to which we know the answer already).

Compare:

⁴The source of all guidelines used in this section is: © 2005 EXAMINATIONS REFORM TEACHER SUPPORT PROJECT, BRITISH COUNCIL HUNGARY
More details can be found in the book: CSEPES, I. & EGYUD, G. (2005). *Into Europe: The speaking handbook*. TelekiLászló Foundation [u.a.], Budapest.

Sample set 1	Sample set 2
1.1 Where are you from? Tell me about your town/village.	2.1 Where do you live?
1.2 How do you spend your free time?	2.2 Do you have friends?
1.3 What do you like most about television?	2.3 Do you like watching TV?
1.4 Tell me about your family.	2.4 Do you have any brothers or sisters?
1.5 What kind of films do you like? Why?	2.5 What is your favorite film?

If we compare the two lists, we find that the questions in Sample Set 2 are much less appropriate than in Sample Set 1. In Set 2, the interviewee is given much less scope for contributions as the questions are either *yes/no questions* or they ask for specific information.⁵

✓ **Guidelines for designing role-play tasks:**⁶

Prompts :

- Select prompts/input text and design the task so that it generates the appropriate amount of varied language at the required level.
- Use prompts that are clear, black and white or color, photocopiable (in size max. A4) and appropriate for the target age.
- Limit input text so that candidates can process it in 30 seconds.
- The language level of verbal prompts should be below the tested level.
- Do not use distressing, offensive, violent or taboo topics. Treat sensitive topics with care.
- Do not use surreal, abstract, puzzling or symbolic pictures at lower levels.

Situations, roles, interaction :

⁵For sample interview questions of intermediate speaking tests refer to APPENDIX IV

⁶For a sample Role-Play task refer to APPENDIX V

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- Create situations that are life-like, suitable for the target age-group and in which it is unrealistic for them to speak in English.
 - Students should not be required to take unfamiliar roles.
 - Use different questions and tasks of different complexity if using the same prompt for more than one level.
 - The task should not require students to use their imagination or creativity as these are not to be tested.
 - Role-plays should involve real interaction and have an outcome.
 - Create an information-gap or opinion-gap in role-play tasks.
 - In the individual format, when the student has to speak to the interlocutor (teacher), make sure the interlocutor does not have to speak more than the student.
 - Restrict the use of yes/no and alternative questions.
 - Always try out the task yourself to see whether you can speak for the required length of time.

Rubrics :

- Use standardized instructions.
- Instructions must be given in English.
- Instructions should be simple.

✓ **Guidelines for designing individual long turn tasks: ⁷**

	Dos	DON'Ts
Picture Prompts	- Use pictures that are clear and photocopiable (maximum A/4 size, black and white or color).	- Do not use sensitive, distressing, offensive, violent or taboo topics.

⁷For a sample Individual Long Turn (with picture prompt) refer to APPENDIX VI

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vary the source of pictures (photographs, drawings, cartoons, etc.). - Select pictures which show general, everyday, life-like situations which students can easily recognize and relate to. <p>Select pictures which show people in action.</p> <p>Select pictures which can be easily related to each other, but with significant differences to elicit a wide range of vocabulary and structures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not select bizarre, surreal, abstract or symbolic pictures, especially for lower level tests. - Do not select over crowded pictures. - Do not select pictures which do not contain enough stimuli for language output. - Do not use pictures which are very similar. - If possible, avoid using pictures which do not contain people and actions.
<p>Interlocutor's (Teacher's) Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some question prompts should be provided for any set of pictures. - The questions should be independent of one another. - The questions should always be general enough to relate to both pictures in the task. - The questions should be worded and focused in such a way that students can really produce long turns in response to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not ask questions which do not relate to the pictures at all. - Do not ask questions which relate to only one of the pictures. - The questions should not elicit physical description of either of the two pictures. - Do not ask artificial, impersonal questions. - Avoid questions which aim to elicit students'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each task should have some questions which relate the picture to the student's own experiences and/or opinions. 	<p>opinion about a topic in general as this can easily lead to students reciting memorized texts.</p>
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Learners also admitted to feel anxious before and during tests. Some of the strategies **teachers** can use to reduce students' level of anxiety are:

- Use the first name of the learner.
- Describe the purpose and the task of the test, even when they are already known.
- Mention the likely duration.
- In an interview look for an area of learner's interest.
- Show the human side: talk about yourself to get the learner talk about her/himself.

At the end of the test:

- Announce the end of the test
- Try to correct or explain something that has gone wrong.
- Leave the learner with a sense of accomplishment, a feeling that s/he has learned something.
- Ask the learner if s/he has any question.
- Give the results or an impression if it is appropriate.
- Thank her/him.

According to Oxford (1990), the following guidelines can help students to lower their anxiety, no matter which skills or combinations of skills are involved:

- Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation.
- Using music.

-
- Using laughter.
 - Encouraging oneself. Making positive statements: "everybody makes mistakes, I can learn from mine".
 - Taking risks wisely. It doesn't mean taking unnecessary risks, like guessing at random, or saying anything at all, regardless of its degree of relevance: saying something sensible when one does not just quite understand.
 - Rewarding oneself.
 - Taking one's emotional temperature. Listening to one's body and trying to control its reactions.
 - Using a checklist. Note one's changing attitude.
 - Writing a language learning diary.
 - Discussing one's feelings with someone else.

To conclude and as one of the informants wrote: "*When we love our teacher, we will love the Oral Expression examination and we will not feel nervous.*"

III.2.6 Assessment Criteria and scales:

It has been claimed that the holistic approach to language testing more closely resembles how language production is judged in real life, and can be quicker than using an analytic approach. However, analytic marking can offer richer diagnostic information for EFL learners.

The method used by the English teachers questioned/observed for assessing their learners' oral skills is an integrative (holistic) one with discrete-points in mind. Although teachers stated that they looked at discrete points, some of them confessed not to hold any checklist or grid to refer to. In fact, 40% of the questioned teachers admitted that their

marking scheme does not specify performance criteria. Unless the teacher is highly experience/qualified, this method can have an impact on the reliability of the results.

One of the reasons why teachers may not hold any evaluation scoring protocol is the difficulty inherent in the development of useful and flexible rubrics for scoring. The following is a suggested scale that we selected for its simplicity, practicality and clarity in explaining the degrees of performance of the different speaking sub-skills.

ANALYTIC SCALE FOR ASSESSING SPEAKING	
PRONUNCIATION	
4 Excellent -- No consistent or conspicuous mispronunciation; approaches native-like pronunciation with good intonation and juncture.	
3 Good -- Some identifiable deviations in pronunciation, but with no phonemic errors. Non-native accent evident with occasional mispronunciations that do not interfere with understanding.	
2 Fair -- Identifiable deviations in pronunciation with some phonemic errors. Non-native accent requires careful listening, and mispronunciations lead to occasional misunderstanding.	
1 Poor -- Frequent pronunciation errors with a heavy non-native accent. Many phonemic errors that make understanding difficult.	
FLUENCY	
4 Excellent -- Speech is effortless and smooth with speed that approaches that of a native speaker.	
3 Good -- Speech is mostly smooth but with some hesitation and unevenness caused primarily by rephrasing and groping for words.	
2 Fair -- Speech is slow and often hesitant and jerky. Sentences may be left uncompleted,	

but speaker is able to continue, however haltingly.

1 Poor -- Speech is very slow and exceedingly halting, strained, and stumbling except for short or memorized expressions. Difficult for a listener to perceive continuity in utterances and speaker may not be able to continue.

GRAMMAR/LANGUAGE USE

4 Excellent -- Very strong command of grammatical structure and some evidence of difficult, complex patterns and idioms. Makes infrequent errors that do not impede comprehension.

3 Good -- Good command of grammatical structures but with imperfect control of some patterns. Less evidence of complex patterns and idioms. Limited number of errors that are not serious and do not impede comprehension.

2 Fair -- Fair control of most basic syntactic patterns. Speaker always conveys meaning in simple sentences. Some important grammatical patterns are uncontrolled and errors may occasionally impede comprehension.

1 Poor -- Any accuracy is limited to set or memorized expressions; limited control of even basic syntactic patterns. Frequent errors impede comprehension.

VOCABULARY

4 Excellent -- Very good range of vocabulary with evidence of sophistication and native-like expression. Strong command of idiomatic expressions. Infrequent use of circumlocution because particular words are rarely lacking.

3 Good -- Good range of vocabulary with limited evidence of sophistication. Some expressions distinctly non-native but always comprehensible. Limited evidence of idiomatic expressions. Speaker is comfortable with circumlocution when lacking a particular word.

2 Fair -- Adequate range of vocabulary with no evidence of sophistication. Some distinctly non-native expressions or errors in word choice may impede comprehension. No evidence of idiomatic expressions. Speaker has difficulty with circumlocution when lacking a

particular word.

1 Poor -- Limited range of vocabulary. Lack of repertoire and frequent errors in word choice often impede comprehension. Speaker shows no attempt at circumlocution when lacking a particular word.

**Table 3.2: Analytic Scale for Assessing Speaking
(National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC) (n.d))**

Even if the scale doesn't cater for the larger speaking sub-skills, it nevertheless provides a range of basic oral assessment criteria that both teachers and learners can understand and apply with fair simplicity. Teachers can use the terms: "Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor" when they want to assess their learners' performance without any grade attribution.

The use of a scale or assessment checklist ensures a more reliable assessment; as Knight (1992) puts it: "The reliability of an assessor on different occasions with different testees can be improved by more explicit criteria, as can the reliability between assessors." (Knight, 1992: 295)

III.2.7 General Suggestions & recommendations:

Besides the different suggestions aforementioned, we should like to add others, among which:

- ✓ Setting objectives for the O.E course.

Identifying the objectives as the initial step in planning guides the instructional and assessment processes for a course and also provides the framework for developing measurement instruments that provide valid and reliable information about student achievement

-
- ✓ Developing a framework for teaching speaking skills.

There must be some sort of continuity in the course content between the two academic years. Ideally, O.E would be taught for another additional year.

- ✓ Developing activities and assessment strategies for teaching and evaluating speaking skills.
- ✓ Developing a mini-unit of instruction to introduce students to assessment grids and protocols as well as the notion and practice of self/peer assessments.

It is helpful to introduce students to the concepts and elements of assessment against specified criteria in the first weeks of class. This requires taking time to discuss and to provide guidance on how to judge their and other learners' contributions. Students will need to be assisted to understand the criteria used in the different scales/checklists. If assessment criteria for each element are set up and clearly communicated, teachers' role will also change to one of facilitators.

- ✓ Encouraging 'transparency' (Collins 1989)⁸ and 'fairness' (Shepard 2000)⁹ in assessment criteria and grading to learners.
- ✓ Training teachers in teaching the speaking skills.

⁸Frederiksen, J. R. and Collins, A. (1989).A systems approach to educational testing.*EducationalResearcher*18, 27–32.

⁹Shepard, L. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture.*EducationalResearcher*29, 7, 4–14.

As there are many aspects to look at, the WHOLE training has to be specifically devoted to these skills. The more teachers know about the nature of spoken interaction, the more confident they will feel in choosing the criteria for testing their learners' oral ability.

- ✓ Training teachers in assessing speaking skills.

Workshops and training programs need to be interactive and teachers should be given the opportunity to express their opinions, exchange ideas and concerns. They should also be actively involved in the design of classroom tasks; test tasks and different types of assessment grids and protocols.

- ✓ Referring to European standards of teaching and assessing speaking skills while adapting the content to our particular situation.

Research on language testing and assessment seems to be evolving rapidly. In order not to run the risk of lagging behind our counterparts, there's a need for keeping abreast with the latest methods of teaching and assessing speaking.

- ✓ Giving teachers opportunities to attend renowned international conferences such as The European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) annual conference (a four days intensive training held during the month of June) to discuss the latest developments in testing and assessment to share expertise, experiences and concerns.

- ✓ Encouraging classroom observation and action research as means of teacher professional growth and development.

When trainings cannot be held as frequently as some teachers would need, it is possible for them to be engaged in their own professional development by attending their colleagues' O.E classes or ask colleagues to attend their own with the objective of having feedback on their practices. Teachers can get feedback on:

- The way they assess learners' classroom performance.
- The type of elicitation techniques they use.
- How they monitor learners' self and peer assessment.
- The type of questions they ask in interviews.
- The type of tasks they design for examinations.

✓ Increasing teacher cooperation and coordination.

To avoid any discrepancy in attributing grades that would penalize students from different groups, teachers should work hand in hand and help one another to ensure a fair evaluation to all. Sharing their opinion and conjugating their efforts will certainly lead to better results and stronger faculty policy.

✓ Using multiple assessors for O.E evaluation.

Research shows that it is difficult for teachers to wear several hats during the assessment of students' oral skills. Most of the time, they have to keep an interview going while paying attention to the different assessment criteria. To ensure rater reliability, it is recommended to have two assessors: one running the test and the other one observing and assessing the students using the evaluation grid.

✓ Providing the necessary materials for an effective oral expression evaluation (both formative and summative) such as audio and/or video recorders.

-
- ✓ Providing an adequate place for assessing speaking (no disruption).

Tests should be held somewhere that is quiet and free from interruption. To Nic Underhill:

“Anybody trying to hold a conversation will become irritated if repeatedly disturbed by noise or by other people; a learner taking a test will also get the feeling that his test has not been given a very high priority. He may also lose his train of thought or flow of speech and so lose confidence.”

(Underhill, 1987: 17)

Conclusion:

In this chapter we tried to interpret the results obtained from questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations and understand what their practical implications are. We also attempted to make use of the collected information to make some suggestions and recommendations that would hopefully serve as basis for more effective assessment procedures.

General Conclusion

In its theoretical part, the research provided a description of the most basic concepts and elements related to the field of language assessment. This descriptive part shed some light on the meaning and place of assessment in educational instruction. It discussed the different types of assessments and their principles. Within the same part, the nature of speaking was explained for a better understanding of the principles underlying the assessment of these difficult skills. Moreover, the chapter discussed the approaches to oral proficiency testing, namely: the holistic (integrative) and analytic (discrete-point) approaches. Also, the chapter outlined the various oral proficiency tests types and elicitation techniques. Finally, it tackled the important issue of criteria and scales that teachers can rely on for judging their learners' oral performance.

Through the second and third chapters, we tried to collect some evidence about teachers' procedures of formative and summative assessments and learners' views, beliefs, attitudes and preferences through self-completion questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews. We then provided an analysis and interpretation of these results by trying to demonstrate their implications and explore the links between our hypotheses and reality. The outcomes of the research support the original hypotheses set forth by the study that an awareness of Oral Expression test procedures and protocols would help students focus on speaking areas to be improved and that an on-going assessment and sound feedback can help students be self-confident, and improve their oral proficiency.

In fact, some teachers seem to be more successful in implementing assessment procedures, especially the formative ones, than others. This disparity in evaluation procedures deprives some students from having equal opportunity to access quality instruction and feedback as well as effective assessment procedures that would make all the difference in improving their speaking skills. In our view, it is high time ALL teachers

started to question their assessment practices; after all, as Prof. MILIANI put it: *“One should not forget that our profession is one of the very few where constant questioning of everything we do in class is more of a virtue than a defect.”*¹⁰

On the other hand, results attest that there is a readiness on the students' part to be tested on regular basis. They expressed the will to be involved in their own assessment, they showed interest in getting feedback on their performance and suggested the ways and the techniques they preferred their teachers to use when assessing them. With this in mind, one cannot overlook the importance and the consequences that assessment procedures can have on learning.

Like most empirical studies, this one has also its limitations. The most important of which are: **(1): The length of the observation period:** in fact, classroom observations were held for one semester, initially with the assumption that it is enough of a period to have instances of formative and summative assessments. However, if the observation period had been extended, other instances of evaluation might have been observed or maybe even students' attitudes might have changed. Or else, investigation of other O.E teachers' classes could have been undertaken. **(2): The number of classes observed:** Although investigating two O.E classes was deemed a representative number statistically, observing other teachers' practices could have increased the reliability of the research. **(3) Large focus:** this first attempt aimed at giving a large picture of the state of affairs in terms of the evaluation of the speaking skills at university level. A more focused research with a limited set of objectives and a deeper observation could tell more accurately about how O.E assessment is carried out.

¹⁰MILIANI, M. (1990). Towards Communicative Testing: From Pragmatism to Theory. *English Language Teaching in the Maghreb : Current Issues in Evaluation. Proceedings of the XI th Mate Annual Conference (Oujda)*. pp 130-133

Some suggestions for further research could be:

- ✓ A research involving more O.E teachers and learners for a longer period of time.
- ✓ A look at O.E teachers' corrective feedback procedures and their effect on student learning.
- ✓ A look at O.E teachers' testing procedures and elicitation techniques.
- ✓ A research on students self and peer assessments.
- ✓ Investigating assessment procedures within a well-established O.E course and evaluation framework.
- ✓ The impact of assessment change on language learning strategies

Finally, we hope that this modest contribution will be a valuable means of communicating within the field of education and more specifically within the domain of language assessment, bearing the effect it was intended to. We also hope that it will stimulate further thought and research on educational problems.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

EDOLAS- Mostaganem.

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is a research tool to investigate your perception of the oral expression class and your attitude toward the testing of your oral production. You are kindly requested to fill it in bearing in mind that this is NOT a test and that there is NO right or wrong answer. We simply want to have your opinion which is really important for the validity of this research. Therefore we would like you to answer with a maximum of objectivity. We will ensure the anonymity of your answers as you do NOT have to write your name down on the questionnaire.

Thank you very much in advance.

Please tick (✓) the box corresponding to your answer or write your answer when indicated.

PART ONE:

1. SEX:

a- Male

b- Female

2. Was studying English at the university your own choice?

a- Yes

b- No

3. How do you consider your level in spoken English?

a- Good

b- Average

c- Below average

d- Poor

PART TWO:

4. Of the four skills, which one do you believe is the most important to master?

a- Speaking

b- Listening

c- Reading

d- Writing

Because

5. During the oral expression course do you feel afraid to talk?

a- Yes

b- No

6. If your answer is yes, is it because? (you may tick more than one answer)

a- You are a shy person

b- You lack vocabulary

c- You fear making mistakes of grammar

d- You fear making mistakes of pronunciation

e- You fear your classmates' comments

f- You fear your teacher's negative feedback

7. In the oral expression class do you prefer?

a- Individual work

b- Pair work

c- Group work

8. Please, justify

.....

9. Which of the following techniques do you enjoy best?

a- Role play-dialogues

b- Problem solving tasks

c- Discussion

d- presentation-talk

10. Does your teacher give you the opportunity to speak?

a- Often

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

PART THREE:

11. Does your teacher correct your mistakes?

a- Often

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

12. Does your teacher tell you how well you have performed?

e- Often

f- sometimes

g- rarely

h- never

13. Have you heard of self-assessment?

a- Yes

b- No

14. If "yes", are you able to evaluate your oral proficiency?

a- Yes

b- No

15. Are you given the opportunity to evaluate your oral proficiency?

a- Yes

b- No

16. If "yes", is it through:

a- Assessing your own home or class work

b- Assessing your peers' home or class work

c- Other, please specify

.....

PART FOUR:

17. Do you like to be tested?

a- Yes

b- No

18. Please, explain why?

Because.....

19. Do you feel nervous before the oral expression test?

a- Yes

b- No

20. If "yes", please, explain

.....
.....

21. Do you feel nervous during the oral expression test?

a- Yes

b- No

22. If yes, please, explain

.....
.....

PART FIVE:

23. Is the teacher the sole responsible of testing?

a- Yes

b- No

24. Please, explain why

.....
.....

25. Do you consider testing as:

a- Checking your performance?

b- Diagnosing your weaknesses?

c- Teaching?

d- Other: please, specify

.....

26. Do you fully exploit your testing sessions to enhance your oral performance?

a- Yes

b- No

27. If "no" please, explain why

.....
.....

28. Are you regularly tested?

a- Yes

b- No

29. Do you like being regularly tested?

a- Yes

b- No

30. If "yes", please, explain why

.....
.....

31. Are the tests you are given related to the topics covered in the course?

a- Yes

b- No

32. If "yes", is it :

a- Always

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

33. If "no", please explain why.....

PART SIX:

34. Are you informed of the marking scheme used by your teacher?

a- Yes

b- No

35. If "Yes", does it include?

a- Meaning

b- Grammar

c- Pronunciation

d- Stress and intonation

e- Fluency

f- Other, please, specify:

36. Does the marking scheme indicate clearly the marks to be awarded for different parts of a question?

a- Yes

b- No

37. Does it refer to your non-verbal features, such as attitude, gesture, and way of dressing

a- Yes

b- No

38. If "yes", is it:

a- Always

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

39. In just one or two sentences, what do you think can be done to make oral examination a better experience? Give your suggestions

.....
.....

THANK YOU 😊

APPENDIX II

EDOLAS- Mostaganem.

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire was designed as a data collection tool for a research that investigates the evaluation of students' oral production. You are kindly requested to fill it in. Your opinion is really important for the validity of this research. Therefore we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest.

Thank you very much in advance for sharing your experience.

Please tick (√) the box corresponding to your answer or write your answer when indicated.

PART ONE:

1- How long have you been teaching at the university?

.....

2- How long have you been teaching oral expression?

.....

3- Have you received any special training to teach oral expression?

a- Yes

b- No

4- If "yes", please explain

.....
.....

PART TWO:

5- How would you describe your students' level oral proficiency?

a- Good

b- Average

c- Below average

d- Poor

6- Are your students motivated to learn how to speak?

a- Yes

b- No

7- What do you do to motivate your students?

a- Make them work in pairs or in groups

b- Choose interesting topics

c- Let them choose the topics they want to talk about

d- Give them extra marks

e- Other, please specify.....

8- What activities do you use in the oral classroom?

a- Role play-dialogues

b- Problem solving tasks

c- Discussion

d- presentation-talk

e- Other, please specify

9- How often do you give your students the opportunity to interact?

a- Often

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

10- Which of these aspects do you focus on in classroom interaction?

a- Fluency

b- Accuracy

c- Both

Please, explain why.....

PART THREE:

11- Do you evaluate your students' oral production in the classroom?

a- Yes

b- No

12- Which testing techniques do you use to evaluate your students' oral proficiency?

a- Multiple choice questions

b- Oral interview

c- Group Work

d- Role Play

e- Discussion

f- Other: Please, specify:

13- Have you heard of self- assessment?

a- Yes

b- No

14- If "yes", do you think your students are able to evaluate themselves?

a- Yes

b- No

15- Please, explain why

.....
.....

16- Do you give opportunities to your students to evaluate their oral proficiency?

a- Yes

b- No

17- If "yes", is it through:

a- Assessing their own home or class work

b- Assessing their peers' home or class work

c- Other, please, specify

PART FOUR:

18- During the examination are learners evaluated individually, in pairs or in groups? You may choose more than one answer

a- Individually

b- In pairs

c- In groups

Please, explain how you proceed

.....
.....
.....

19- What method do you use to grade your students' oral performance?

a- Holistic (overall evaluation of the performance)

b- Analytic (analyzing sub-skills: vocab- grammar- pronunciation...)

20- Which language aspects do you test? Specify the order of importance (1 for the most important, to 5 for the least important)

a- Meaning

b- Grammar

c- Pronunciation

d- Stress and intonation

e- Fluency

d- Other, please specify

21- Do you evaluate non-verbal features, such as attitude, gesture, and way of dressing?

a- Yes

b- No

22- If "yes", is it?

a- Always

b- Sometimes

c- Rarely

23- If "no", please, explain why

.....

24- Does the marking scheme indicate clearly the marks to be awarded for different parts of a question?

a- Yes

b- No

25- Does the marking scheme, by specifying performance criteria, reduce as far as possible the element of subjective judgment that the examiner has to exercise in evaluating students' answers?

a- Yes

b- No

26- Can the marking scheme be easily interpreted by a number of different examiners in a way which will ensure that all mark to the same standard?

a- Yes

b- No

PART FIVE:

27- Have you received any training in designing oral performance measurement tests?

a- Yes

b- No

28- Do you think that the amount of time allotted to oral expression is enough to help you achieve your objectives?

a- Yes

b- No

29- Do you believe that the number of students per group is appropriate to teaching and testing oral performance effectively?

a- Yes

b- No

30- Do you believe that assessment has an impact on students' achievement?

a- Yes

b- No

31- Do you believe that assessment has an impact on students' motivation?

a- Yes

b- No

Personal comments on questions 30 & 31 will be appreciated

.....
.....

THANK YOU 😊

APPENDIX III

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur
et de la Recherche Scientifique
Université Abdelhamid Ibn Badis Mostaganem
Faculté des Lettres et des Arts

وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي
جامعة عبد الحميد بن باديس- مستغانم

كلية الآداب والفنون

FIRST YEAR LMD CLASS GROUP 9

ORAL EXPRESSION COURSE: STUDENT FEEDBACK

Dear students,

The questions below are about your impressions of and opinions about the course of Oral Expression during this first semester. Your answers will help your teacher gather some information to make changes that would improve the course of Oral Expression. You can answer in any language you feel at ease with: Arabic, French or English as long as this allows you to express yourself fully.

General Questions: (Tick the corresponding answer)

Question 1: How do you consider your level in English?

- a- Good
- b- Average
- c- Below average
- d- Poor

Question 2: **A-** Of the four skills, which one do you think is the most DIFFICULT to master?

- a- Speaking
- b- Listening
- c- Reading
- d- Writing

Oral Expression Lessons:

Question 4: During Oral Expression classes, what type of activities did you enjoy the most?

- a- Individual work

- b-** Pair work
- c-** Group work
- d-** All of the above

Question 5: **A-** What lesson(s) did you like the best?

- a-** The Story Behind My Name
- b-** Proverb Communication Activity
- c-** Personality Traits-related Adjectives
- d-** All of the above

B- Why?

.....

.....

Question 6: During the lessons, did your teacher give you the opportunity to speak?

- a-** Always
- b-** Often
- c-** Sometimes
- d-** Rarely

Question 7: How would you describe the classroom atmosphere during the Oral Expression session?

- a-** Relaxed/friendly
- b-** Tense
- c-** Enjoyable/Lively
- d-** Discouraging/Boring
- e-** Motivating
- f-** Highly Challenging

Question 8: **A-** During the Oral Expression class, do you feel afraid to talk?

- a-** Yes
 - b-** No
- B-** Why?

.....

.....

Question 9: **A-** So far, do you feel that you learned something or made any progress in speaking?

- a-** Yes
- b-** No

B- Please, justify/comment

.....

.....

Question 10: **A-** Do you believe you still have to improve your speaking skills?

a- Yes

b- No

B- If yes, what aspect? (you may tick more than one answer)

a- Pronunciation

b- Vocabulary

c- Accuracy

d- Fluency

e- Communication

Oral Expression continuous assessment:

Question 11: During the lessons, did your teacher give you the opportunity to correct your own mistakes?

a- Always

b- Often

c- Sometimes

d- Rarely

Question 12: During the lessons, did your teacher give you the opportunity to correct your classmates' mistakes?

a- Always

b- Often

c- Sometimes

d- Rarely

Question 13: During the lessons, did your teacher correct your mistakes?

a- Always

b- Often

c- Sometimes

d- Rarely

Question 14: When you are assessed, do you know what your teacher looks at when evaluating your oral production?

a- Yes

b- No

Question 15: What are some of the elements that your teacher looks at when evaluating your oral production?

.....

Question 16: What do you suggest to improve Oral Expression lessons?

.....

Question 17: What do you suggest to improve Oral Expression assessment?

.....

THANK YOU 😊

APPENDIX IV

Sample interview questions for the intermediate Speaking Test

1- Personal information and family

- ✓ What have been the best moments of your life so far?
- ✓ Could you tell me about your family?
- ✓ Would you rather be an only child or have brothers and sisters? Why?
- ✓ How often and on what occasions do you see your relatives?
- ✓ Could you tell me about your favorite relative?
- ✓ What kind of family would you like to have in the future?
- ✓ How do you share housework in your family?
- ✓ Do you think children should help with the housework? Why and how? / Why not?
- ✓ What are some of the things that your family usually do together?
- ✓ How are weekdays different from weekends in your family's life?
- ✓ What are your plans for the future?

2- Man and Society

- ✓ What are you like as a person?
- ✓ Could you tell me about your best friend?
- ✓ What is important about a friend for you?
- ✓ What family occasions do you celebrate in your family and how?
- ✓ How do you usually celebrate your birthday?
- ✓ What kind of clothes do you like to wear?
- ✓ Do you try to follow the latest fashion? How? / Why not?
- ✓ Could you tell me about the shopping habits in your family?
- ✓ Do you prefer shopping in a small shop or a big supermarket/hypermarket/shopping mall? Why?
- ✓ What kind of people do you like to spend time together with?

3- Our Environment

- ✓ Could you describe the area where you live?
- ✓ Would you rather live in a big city or in the country? Why?
- ✓ Could you describe your house/flat and the rooms in it?
- ✓ Which is your favorite place at home and why?
- ✓ Could you describe the home you would like to have in the future?
- ✓ What do you and your family do to protect the environment?
- ✓ What kind of weather do you like the most/the least? Why?
- ✓ Which season of the year do you like best/the least? Why?

4- School

- ✓ Why did you choose to study in this school?
- ✓ What do you like most about your school?
- ✓ What are some of the things you would change about your school?
- ✓ What are your favorite subjects/lessons at school and why?
- ✓ What is an ideal teacher like for you?
- ✓ What are some of the best memories of your school years?
- ✓ What do you think? How can you use your English in the future?
- ✓ How is it best to learn English? What has worked for you? Why?
- ✓ What do you like most about learning languages?

5- Work

- ✓ Could you tell me about the job you would like to have in the future?
- ✓ Would you like to be self-employed or an employee? Why?
- ✓ Have you ever had a summer job? If yes: Could you tell me about it? / If no: Would you like to have one this summer? Why/Why not?

6- Life-style

- ✓ What is an ordinary week-day of yours like?
- ✓ How are your week-days different from weekends and holidays?
- ✓ How do you think your days will be different after leaving secondary school?
- ✓ How healthy is your life-style? What should you do differently?
- ✓ What do you normally have for your breakfast / lunch / dinner?
- ✓ How healthy is your diet? Why do you think so?
- ✓ What does your family usually eat and drink on special occasions (e.g. Ramadhan, Eid, birthdays)?
- ✓ Where do you like to eat? Why?
- ✓ Do you prefer traditional restaurants or fast-food places? Why?
- ✓ Could you tell me about an illness you have had?
- ✓ Have you or someone in your family ever had an accident? If, yes, tell me about it.

7- Free-time and entertainment

- ✓ How do you try to keep fit?
- ✓ How important is sport in your family?
- ✓ What sports are you interested in? Why?
- ✓ What do you like doing in your free-time?
- ✓ Could you tell me about a film you have seen recently?
- ✓ Could you tell me about your family's TV viewing habits?
- ✓ What are your favorite TV programs and why?
- ✓ Which do you prefer: watching a film on TV/on video or watching a film in the cinema? Why?
- ✓ What are your favorite places for going out?
- ✓ What does music mean to you?

- ✓ Tell me what you read. Where and how often do you read that/those?

8- Travelling

- ✓ What's your favorite means of transport and why?
- ✓ What do you think of the traffic in your area/town? How would you improve it?
- ✓ Could you give me directions to the nearest shop/your home from here, please?
- ✓ Could you tell me about a holiday you enjoyed a lot?
- ✓ What kind of holiday do you prefer and why?
- ✓ What kind of accommodation and what way of travelling do you prefer when you go on holiday? Why?
- ✓ What do you like doing when you are on holiday?
- ✓ Could you tell me about your dream holiday?
- ✓ How do you prepare for a holiday?

9- Science and technology

- ✓ How do you think our life is easier nowadays than it was in the past?
- ✓ How do technological devices make your family's life easier?
- ✓ What technological devices would you not like to live without? Why?

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BRITISH COUNCIL HUNGARY

APPENDIX V

Sample Situational Role-Play

STUDENT'S SHEET

You are staying with a family abroad. Discuss with a family member (the examiner) how you can help them to do the housework. Tell him/her what jobs you do at home.

Think about the following jobs:

- ✓ shopping
- ✓ doing the washing-up
- ✓ doing the washing
- ✓ cleaning the rooms
- ✓ anythingelse?

Prompts for the interlocutor (teacher):

Accept/offer to share the following jobs:

- ✓ Cleaning the rooms
- ✓ Shopping
- ✓ Doing the washing-up

Agree on how you will share these jobs (who does it and when).

You have a washing machine.

The candidate has to clean his/her own room regularly.

Welcome any further help the candidate may offer.

APPENDIX VI

Sample Individual Long Turn (with picture prompt)

Personal information and family

1.5 DOING AND SHARING HOUSEWORK

Student's task sheet

These two pictures show people doing and sharing housework. Compare and contrast them. Include the following points:

- 1- How do you think the people in the pictures feel?
- 2- Do you think these people are from the same family? Why do you think so?
- 3- Which picture do you like more? Why?
- 4- How typical are these pictures of the people in your family?



Prompts for the interlocutor (the teacher):

1. Why are these people doing housework in these ways?
2. Who should do the housework in a family? Why?
3. How could you help the people in the two pictures to do the housework?

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Hungary