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**Faculty of Letters and Language**

**Department of English Language**



**An Investigation of Teachers' Practices in Assessing EFL Learners'  
Speaking Performances**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master Degree in Didactics of English

Submitted by

**Hocine SLIMOUNE**

**Radouane OUALI**

Supervised by

**Mrs. Chadia CHIOUKH**

**Board of Examiners**

**Chairperson: Dr. Zahia BOUCHAIR** University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel

**Examiner: Dr. Meriem BOUSBA** University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel

**Supervisor: Mrs. Chadia CHIOUKH** University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel

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Slimoune Hocine

Ouali Radouane

Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel

### **Abstract**

Assessment has an undeniable importance in education and in the teaching process in particular. Hence, the main objective of this study is to investigate the different practices used by oral expression teachers to assess students' oral performances. The study attempts as well to probe the types of assessment, the materials, and the activities that teachers use to teach and assess the speaking skill at the English Language Department of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel. The current study is based on the hypothesis that when teachers of oral expression adopt different assessment types and practices, and when they vary in their assessment criteria, it positively influences EFL learners speaking skill. As for the theoretical part of the dissertation in hand, two chapters in which "Speaking" and "Assessment" were dealt with. The third chapter was practical in nature and discussed the descriptive paradigm that was opted for in this paper. The data were gathered through the use of two research tools; a questionnaire addressed to fifty-five participants (55) out of three hundred and thirty-two (332) first year EFL license students, along with an online interview that was conducted with four (4) teachers of the oral expression module at the department of English. The analysis of the data showed that teachers rely more on formative assessments. Teachers also make use of different practices and activities to assess their learners' speaking skill, mostly presentations, interviews, roleplays and debates. Furthermore, they take into account different criteria in the assessment process, focusing more on fluency and accuracy. On the ground of the obtained results, pedagogical recommendations to facilitate the process of assessment for teachers and to make the student knowledgeable of the importance of speech and speech assessment. Finally, suggestions for further future research are proposed.

**Key words:** Speaking Skill, Assessment, Practices, Criteria

### **Dedication**

**In the name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful**

*This humble work is dedicated to my dear parents,  
Who have always been with me and supported me unconditionally in every step of my life.  
To my dear brother and sister,  
To our amazing teacher and supervisor, **Mrs. Chioukh Chadia**,  
Who took from her time and has been with us since the beginning and provided us with all  
the guidance and advice we needed to accomplish this work.  
To my close family and relatives,  
To my best friend Radouane and all my friends with whom I have spent wonderful times,  
inside and outside the university.*

**Hocine.**

*I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved parents  
For their love and support in everything I do.  
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### **List of Abbreviations**

**CAF:** Complexity Accuracy Fluency

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**DM:** Direct Method

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**GTM:** Grammar Translation Method

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**OE:** Oral Expression

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**TL:** Target Language

**TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language

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**Résumé**

**ملخص**

## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Foreign language teaching and learning is in constant development. Nowadays, the English language is regarded as the primary tool of communication in almost every given domain. Consequently, speaking English has become a subject of interest for many students. As Nunan (2003) stated, “in order to communicate well in another language, we must make ourselves understood by the people we are speaking with” (p. 50). In other words, mastering the speaking skill has become a necessity.

Correspondingly, the role of the teacher is of crucial importance in teaching this skill, preparing speaking activities, managing classrooms and most importantly, assessing the learners. Brown and Yule (1983, p. 102) noted: “many well-established tests do not have an oral component since grammatical accuracy and vocabulary can be assessed quite adequately, it seems, in the written mode”. Put otherwise, assessing EFL students speaking performances was problematic at the time as the assessment practices for this skill were not precisely well-established as opposed to the writing skill. Since then, these practices have evolved, and this is what this study aims to investigate. Albeit the assessment of the speaking skill is of great importance for students, however the learners do not have a clear idea of the process. According to Thornbury (2005), there are two main ways of assessing the student: either giving the score on the basis of an overall impression (holistically), or giving them a separate score for different aspects of the task (analytically).

### **2. Statement of the Problem**

It is undeniable that speech plays a crucial role in the process of learning English. Speech is considered to be the most basic human way of interaction and communication (Celce-murcia, 2001). Nevertheless, mastering the speaking skill seems to be complex for many EFL students at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel. This fact was

noticed along the years spent studying English at the aforementioned university. Some peers revealed that they encountered major problems to promote their speaking skill. Moreover, at the preliminary stage of conducting this research, some informal conversations were held with the first year licence students to enquire about the extent to which they were knowledgeable about the types and the criteria upon which their speaking performance was assessed. Hence, the majority revealed that they were not informed about them, and this has more or less made them enquire about the basis of the evaluation marks given to their speaking performance.

Similarly, assessing the learners' oral performances can be a hard task for the teachers, especially that there is no definite syllabus adopted in teaching and evaluating the speaking performance at the English Language Department of Jijel University as revealed by the administration. The reason behind this might be the fact of not informing their learners about the criteria upon which they evaluate and assess their speech. Thereby, teachers' practices in assessing the oral performances of the learner need to be deeply investigated so that both the learner and the teacher get an insight on how the assessment process is put into practice.

### **3. Aims of the Study**

This study is concerned with identifying teachers' practices in assessing and teaching the speaking skill to first year Licence learners of English at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel. Moreover, it attempts to investigate the types of assessment (s) adopted by Oral Expression module teachers to assess their EFL learners 'speaking skill. The present study endeavours, as well, to shed light on the different materials, methods and activities used to instruct and assess the speaking skill. Furthermore, it seeks to highlight the constraints that both teachers and students encounter to teach/learn this skill. Finally yet importantly, the study attempts to unveil the criteria upon which EFL first year licence

students' speaking skill is assessed and the extent to which they are informed about the assessment criteria.

#### **4. Research Questions**

There is an urgent need for a better understanding of the difficulties that the teachers face in assessing the speaking skill and the variety of materials and activities used in this process.

Thus, the following research questions need to be answered:

1. What are the activities and materials used by oral expression teachers to assess and evaluate their learners' oral performances?
2. What aspects of the speaking skill the teachers do focus on most along the process of speaking assessment?
3. Do teachers vary their practices of assess the speaking skill?
4. Are EFL learners' aware of the criteria upon which their speaking skill is evaluated?

#### **5. Hypothesis**

The current piece of research is based on the hypothesis that when teachers of oral expression adopt different assessment types and practices, and when they vary in their assessment criteria, it positively influences EFL learners speaking skill.

#### **6. Research Tools**

The descriptive paradigm is adopted in the current study as the latter aims, on the one hand, to explore, investigate, and describe teachers' practices in assessing the speaking skill. On the other hand, it attempts to highlight the criteria upon which learners' oral performances are assessed. Thus, a quantitative method of data collection is applied.

Hence, to make the results more valid, two tools of data collection are used. At the preliminary stage, a questionnaire is administered to fifty-five participants (55) out of three hundred and thirty-two (332) first year Licence English Language students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University. Moreover, an interview is conducted with four (04) oral expression module teachers instructing first year level at the same department.

## **7. The Structure of the Study**

The present work is divided in three chapters, two theoretical ones namely Speaking and Assessment, and a practical one.

The first chapter is concerned with the Speaking skill. It starts with an overview about the speaking skill, its definition, significance and importance, as well as its major components. In addition to that, it sheds light on all the whereabouts of teaching the speaking skill, from its historical background, to the materials and activities used to teach it, and along with the difficulties encountered by teachers when teaching it. Furthermore, it deals with the theories of second acquisition and their relationship with speaking, and finally, it speaks about negotiation of meaning and feedback significance in learning/teaching speaking.

The second chapter of the current research is devoted to elucidate Assessment. It deals with issues in connection with assessment, such as definition, its major types (Formative, Summative, Interim assessment), along with its foremost principles which are: Validity, reliability, practicality. Then, it highlights the concepts of scoring rubrics and alternative assessment. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the assessment of the speaking skill particularly, together with the elements that are taken into consideration when assessing it. Furthermore, it illustrates the differences between evaluation, testing, and assessment concepts. It, as well, reviews the different teachers' practices in assessing the speaking skill.



The third and final chapter is the practical part of the dissertation. It explains the design of the research and the adopted methodology. It also analyses the questionnaire administered to students and the interview addressed to the four oral expression module teachers. Finally, it gives some pedagogical recommendations, exposes the limitations of the study, and proposes some suggestions for further future research.

## **Chapter One: The Speaking Skill**

### **Introduction**

In this modern era, English has become the most common medium of communication around the world. Teaching English as a foreign language has evolved and became more globalized than ever. Beare and Kenneth (2020) noted that the number of English learners around the world is constantly rising and expected to grow to almost 2 billion speakers of the language. Given that, being proficient in the productive skills such as speaking is of paramount importance.

The first chapter is devoted to the speaking skill. It focuses on defining the skill from several viewpoints and highlighting its importance. In addition to this, it deals with the major components of speech and compare between speaking in the first language and in the second language. The chapter also portrays the issue of teaching speaking in EFL context including its history, difficulties, materials and activities. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the place of speaking in the different theories of language acquisition. Finally, the chapter shed light on some issues that are in connection with speaking such as negotiation of meaning and feedback.

### **1.1. The Speaking Skill**

Communication and interaction are processes that are needed for everyday life. Speaking is arguably the most basic and practical way to communicate, express ideas and convey messages. Having good verbal skills and being able to communicate effectively can offer significant advantages for any individual in any domain. According to Ur (1996):

Of all the four skills (listening speaking reading and writing) speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in

learning to speak (p. 120).

In other words, mastering the speaking skill should be a priority for EFL learners.

### **1.1.1. Definition of Speaking**

Literally speaking, it is defined by the Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2009, p. 414) as “The action of conveying information or expressing one’s thoughts and feelings in spoken language.” In addition to that, the speaking skill is one of the four major language skills that L2 learners are expected to master. This skill was previously marginalized and ignored in favour of the reading and writing skills, but in recent years, it has become increasingly more important in EFL teaching. English became the lingua-franca of the world, and it is necessary to be able to express oneself and communicate correctly. Speaking is considered to be a “productive” skill along with writing, and as opposed to reading and listening, which are said to be “receptive” skills. “Productive”, according to Bailey (2004) simply means the language (utterances) generated by the learner. In this regard, Nunan (2003) asserted that speaking is the productive skill which consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to express meaning. In other words, it is the action of generating words and utterances orally in order to convey a meaningful message.

Moreover, the speaking skill has several other definitions from different standpoints. Speaking has been defined as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997) (as cited in Omari, 2015, p. 11). That is, it is not only concerned with producing utterances, but also receiving and processing them.

### **1.1.2. Significance and Importance**

L2 learning relies on different skills to take place. Speaking is considered as one of the most essential skills to master among the four language skills which are: speaking,

listening, writing and reading. In this modern era, second/foreign language learners are required to acquire the skill in order to be proficient in every other aspect of the language as asserted by Celce-Murcia (2001, p. 103): “the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication.”

Additionally, speaking is a skill that is needed in communicative situations where the learner is facing real life obstacles and challenges while using the language, Nunan (2003, p. 48) added that: “unlike reading or writing, speaking happens in real time: usually the person you are talking to is waiting for you to speak right then. Second, when you speak, you cannot edit and revise what you wish to say, as you can if you are writing”.

Furthermore, learners who wish to be successful in their academic paths and eventually their professional careers should be able to master speech. Baker and Westrup (2003, p. 5) underscored that “students who can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion”. It is fair to say that speaking English is highly required in several domains especially in this era.

### **1.1.3. Components of the Speaking Skill**

In EFL context, it is crucial for the speakers of a language to produce correct oral output. The aim behind this is to avoid generating inappropriate language and to address comprehensible output. This can be achieved by mastering three speech components: grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation that will be explained subsequently.

#### **1.1.3.1. Grammar**

It is the study of rules and structures that govern a language. Nunan (2003, p. 154) described it as “a set of rules specifying the correct ordering of words at the sentence level.” Grammar, then, can include syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics. Nunan (2003, p. 154) also noted that “sentences are acceptable if they follow the rules set out by

the grammar of the language.” This means that grammatical knowledge contributes enormously in producing accurate speakers of a language in EFL context, especially when the primary objective of learning grammar is searching for correctness.

#### **1.1.3.2. Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is defined by Brown and Hatch (1995, p. 1) as “a list or set of words for a particular language or a set of words that individuals might use.” Vocabulary is an essential element in language learning and teaching. It gives the speaker the chance to convey his ideas into comprehensible words and sentences. In other words, having good vocabulary skills gives the speaker many advantages especially when it comes to word selection and how to put utterances in their appropriate context. Wilkins (1972, p. 111) accentuated the importance of vocabulary is stating: “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” Thus, acquiring a rich vocabulary could significantly enhance the way students speak the language.

#### **1.1.3.3. Pronunciation**

Pronunciation is the ability to pronounce and articulate words and utterances in a proper manner. Redmond and Vrchota (2007, p. 104) said that “it is imperative that you use the correct word in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation.

Pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood.”

Hence, mastering the various elements of the sound system is considered as an important aspect that shapes the student’s oral proficiency. In addition to this, Nunan (2003, p. 112) acknowledged that “how we pronounce words, phrases, and sentences communicates to others considerable information about who we are, and what we are like, as people.” Thus, correct pronunciation does not only provide the teacher with a clear idea about the student’s level but it also shows him what to expect from his learners.

## **1.2. Teaching Speaking in the EFL Context**

Speaking is an essential skill to master in EFL learning. Egan (1999) said that this skill was “at the heart of second language learning. It is arguably the most important skill...” (p. 277). The teaching process of this skill is acknowledged to be particularly difficult; speaking is much more than the ability to form grammatically correct sentences and be able to pronounce them (Thornbury, 2005). It involves many other aspects, as stated by Spratt, Pulverness and Williams (2005) “teaching speaking means developing learners’ speaking skills by focusing regularly on particular aspects of speaking (fluency, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and body language)”. (p. 34)

Ashour (2014) on the other hand argued that speaking involves three areas of knowledge, namely mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary), functions and social and cultural norms. In addition to that, teaching speaking is also about instructing the learners on the time, the reason, and the ways to produce language (Nunan, 1999).

### **1.2.1. Historical Background**

Foreign language teaching was never an effortless task. Each skill of the language has different demands and requirements especially when it comes to speaking. Throughout history, teaching speaking has always been problematic for both tutors and learners. It is worthy to state the speaking skill was instructed differently from one method to another according to the method’s priorities.

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) focused mainly on improving the learners reading skills and neglected the oral proficiency, as Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 3) stated “Reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening.”, in clear, the speaking skill was totally neglected in this method.

The Direct method (DM) came up in the late nineteenth century as a reaction to the shortcomings of the GTM. Put otherwise, it came to pursue a more practical and interactive method of teaching. This method attempted to make the learners think and, most importantly, speak in the TL by imitating the native speakers. Brown (2001) described the principles of the DM “second language learning should be more like L1 learning; lots of overall interaction spontaneous use of the language no translation between first and second languages and little or no analysis of grammatical rules” (p. 21), in other words, L2 learning should follow the same procedures as in L1 learning.

The Direct method declined after the Second World War outbreak with the emergence of the Audiolingual method. The latter included the concept of habit formation, repetition drills and was very similar to the direct method, although it prioritized oral skills more. Prator and Celce-murcia (1979) (as cited in Brown, 2001) stated that in the Audiolingual method, new material was presented in dialogue form, very little use of mother tongue was allowed during the instruction and it gave a lot of importance to pronunciation.

Despite the fact that these models provided clear implications of teaching, there was a lack of an approach that could truly help learners use the language in real life situations. Nunan (2003) argued that “for many years teaching speaking involves providing students with the components of the language in hopes that they would eventually put them all together and speak so students might spend several semesters repeating after the teacher studying grammar rules reciting dialogues and learning vocabulary” (pp. 49-50).

Language learning is a process that requires interaction; therefore, learners should interact as much as possible in classroom context. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) came as an attempt to promote classroom interaction. Within the frame of this approach, accuracy was less focused on and more priority on how the students

communicate using the TL was given (Nunan, 2003). CLT, is then one of the few approaches that worked to encourage the development of oral skills without neglecting reading, writing and listening.

### **1.2.2. Materials Used for Teaching Speaking**

Tomlinson (2012) defined a material as “anything that can be used to facilitate the learning of a language” (p. 01). It means that we can call “material” every item or tool that could be used for educational purposes. According to Ampa, Rasyid, and Rahman (2013) “There are two kinds of learning materials, i.e. printed materials and non-printed materials” (p. 295). They further explained what are these two types by saying “The printed materials include textbook, module or course-book, handout, while the non-printed materials are such as cassettes or audio materials, videos, or computer-based materials “(p. 295).

Similar to the three other fundamental skills, teaching the speaking skill requires the use of adequate materials, otherwise it would be ineffective, Burns (1998) argued that “many classroom materials designed for the teaching of speaking are, at the least, less than appropriate, and often misleading and disempowering.” (p. 106).

As the focus upon teaching speaking changed over time, the materials taking part in the process also evolved. According to Macknish and Tomaš (2018) “materials for teaching speaking have changed over time as they have been influenced by methodological developments in the English language teaching (ELT) profession” (p. 01). The absence of materials dedicated to teaching speaking in the old ELT methods such the Grammar-Translation method and the existence of various visual and auditive aids in the later Audio-lingual method backs this claim up.

Since the advent of CLT, the use of authentic materials has gained significant importance. Nunan (1988) made the use of this type of materials one of the constitutional



principles of CLT. He argued that materials should be authentic in terms of text and task, and he defined authentic materials as the spoken or written language data that has been produced in the course of genuine communication and not specifically for purposes of language teaching (Nunan, 1999). According to Bordonaro (2018) “The use of authentic materials should be an important consideration for teachers of speaking. Although the concept of authenticity is often associated with reading classes, it is equally valid in speaking classes as well.” (p. 02)

Materials that can be used in teaching the speaking skill are numerous, Bordonaro (2018) maintained that: “the Internet provides a rich source of authentic spoken and written English language material (...) for promoting speech production” (p. 03). The researcher further went to mention television, radio, as well as short videos from YouTube or social media as examples of authentic oral materials, newspapers and magazines as examples of authentic written materials. In addition, Bahadorfar and Omidvar (2014) recommended for EFL teachers to “encourage their students to use technology in developing their speaking skill.” (p. 13), as technology can be a valuable asset in mastering the speaking skill.

### **1.2.3. Activities for Teaching Speaking**

There is a wide range of effective activities to teach the speaking skill. Bailey (2005) proposed four types of activities for teaching speaking:

- **Information Gap Activities**

Information gap activities are defined as situations in which students are required to communicate with each other in order to fill in the gap of the missing information, for instance, a “spot the difference” activity (Schmidt & Richards, 2010, p. 282). Information gap activities help developing the learners’ speaking skill because they are required to use the TL for sharing the information (Raptou, 2001). Moreover, information gap activities are said to be “extremely effective in the ESL classrooms, as they allow for students to

speak in the target language for an extended period of time.” (Afrizal, 2015, p. 347), and speaking for long periods of time undoubtedly improves the speaking skill.

- **Jigsaw Activities**

The jigsaw activities were originally developed by Elliot Aronson in the 1970s and they are very similar but more elaborate than information gap activities. Schmidt and Richards (2010) defined Jigsaw activities as “a type of information gap activity in which groups of learners have different information that is needed to put together the solution to a task.” (p. 305).

Bailey (2005) gave an example of a jigsaw activity “One student could have a timetable for a train travel in Canada, another could have a map of Canada, without showing each other the visual information, they must speak English to plan a one-week trip.” (p. 56).

- **Role-plays**

Another type of activities that was proposed by Bailey is role-plays. Sogunros (2004) (as cited in Westrup & Planander, 2013) defined role-plays as “a learning activity in which participants act out a set of defined role behaviors or position with a view to acquiring desired experiences” (p. 201). Role-plays are useful in that they allow the learners to practise speaking the TL before they must do so in real environment (Bailey, 2005).

- **Simulations**

The fourth type of activities that can be used to teach speaking is simulations. Jones (1982) (as cited in Chergui, 2016) defined a simulation as “a reality of function in a simulated and structured environment” (p. 211). In other words, it is the creation of a simulated real-life environment inside the classroom for the students to practice their

speaking skill. Thus, Bailey (2005) asserted that using props and documents can be helpful in simulations as it provides a realistic environment for language practice.

#### **1.2.4. Difficulties of Teaching the Speaking Skill**

Facing some complications during the teaching process can be inevitable, especially while teaching the oral proficiency. Brown and Yule (1983, p. 25) believed that “Spoken language production, learning to talk in the foreign language is often considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for the teacher to help the students with.” Thus, teaching speaking in an EFL context can be a complex task. In Ur’s (1996, p. 121) views, the followings are the most common obstacles the teachers might face:

- **Mother Tongue Use**

In EFL classroom, learners acquire a different language from their native one. This might lead to the use of L1 as an alternative to communicate. “They may tend to use it because it’s easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language and because they feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.” (Ur, 1996, p. 121), this use of the mother tongue might cause a problem during the teaching process.

- **Uneven Participation**

Only one participant can talk at a time. This means that in a large classroom, it is unlikely that each student, especially reticent ones, will get the chance to participate, especially in the presence of those who are risk-takers and who like to dominate the participation scene. Brown and Yule (1983, p. 25) also stated that: “Each speaker needs to speak. He needs to speak individually and, ideally, he needs someone to listen to him speaking and to respond to him.”

- **Inhibition**

Speaking is a process that includes exposure to an audience. Consequently, learners might be fearful or inhibited from criticism and making errors in the TL. Ur (1996) said that even though some learners are not inhibited to talk, they still have no motive to express themselves and would rather stay silent during the whole instruction.

Furthermore, Burns and Goh (2012, p. 26) argued that: “We could say that affective factors such as anxiety are most strongly linked to speaking and listening where learners often have to process and produce language spontaneously without any planning or rehearsals”. These factors might be an obstacle for the teaching process, especially for the teacher since they cannot be visible.

### **1.3. The Place of Speaking in Second Language Acquisition Theories**

As the speaking skill is a major language skill, instructing it has been, in a way or another, affected by second language acquisition theories (SLA) theories among which are the ones listed subsequently.

#### **1.3.1. Krashen’s Input Hypothesis**

Stephen Krashen developed a hypothesis that he called “The Input Hypothesis”, it is also known as the monitor model and it contains five hypotheses concerned with SLA, which are the following:

- **The Acquisition-learning Hypothesis**

In this hypothesis, Krashen made a clear distinction between the process of ‘acquiring’ and ‘learning’ a language. He defined learning as the “conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them”, whereas he holds that acquisition of L2 is similar to the way children acquire their mother tongue (Krashen, 1982). With regards to the speaking skill, Krashen (1981) said

that acquiring a language requires natural and meaningful interaction in the TL, and in which the speakers should focus on the meaning and not on the form.

- **The Natural Order Hypothesis**

The second hypothesis claimed that some language elements and structures are acquired earlier than others. Krashen (1982) stated that some grammatical structures are acquired earlier than others. He further went to say that the order of acquisition in L1 differs from that of L2.

- **The Monitor Hypothesis**

Liu (2015) explained this hypothesis by saying that “the ability to produce L2 utterances derives from the learner’s acquired competence (subconscious knowledge) while learning (conscious knowledge), simply as a Monitor, helps him make corrections or change output”.

- **The Input Hypothesis**

In this hypothesis, Krashen (1982) claimed that a necessary condition to advance to the next stage in the learning process is that the acquirer understands input that is above his level. That is to say, in order to advance in the acquisition process, learners need to understand utterances that are slightly beyond their level. Krashen (1981) highlighted that comprehensible input is crucial and necessary. He further claimed that the best, if not the only way to teach speaking, according to this view, is simply to provide comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982).

- **The Affective Filter Hypothesis**

The last amongst Krashen’s five hypotheses relates the effects of affective factors on the SLA process. Krashen (1982) provided three ‘affective variables’ that help learners do better in SLA: high motivation, high self-confidence, and low anxiety. He further added that learners whose attitudes are not optimal will have a high or strong affective filter, and

thus the input will not reach the part of their brain responsible for acquisition. In other words, a high or strong affective filter is like a barrier that prevents learners from acquiring new input. According to Krashen (1981), discussions with sympathetic native speakers who are willing to help the acquirer understand are very helpful, Krashen (1982) further pointed out:

Real language acquisition develops slowly, and speaking skills emerge significantly later than listening skills, even when conditions are perfect.

The best methods are therefore those that supply “comprehensible input” in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear (p. 7).

In sum, Krashen’s theory underscores the significance of the input variable in the language learning, so that the latter can take place.

### **1.3.2. Swain’s Output Hypothesis**

The Comprehensible Output Theory was developed by Swain in 1985 in the field of SLA. This theory states that SLA occurs whenever the student finds a gap in his linguistic knowledge while using or producing the language (output). Discovering such gaps may lead the learner to be more aware of the language he is about to produce, particularly, speaking. Swain and Lapkin (1995, p. 373) argued that “the activity of producing the target language may prompt second language learners to consciously recognize some of their linguistic problems, it may bring to their attention something they need to discover about their L2”. This theory concludes that acquiring the language occurs whenever we try to convey a message and fail. The learner, then, would notice the fissures occurring in his speech, and would eventually produce correct utterances and be able to acquire the new forms of the language. Thus, whenever the learner verifies his own language, he is more likely to acquire new features of the language.

In addition to this, it was also mentioned that through validating the language produced, the learners' accuracy is significantly enhanced. Nobuyoshi and Ellis (as cited in Swain & Lapkin, 1995) suggested that pushing learners to modify their output results in an increase in the ability to deploy existing grammatical knowledge more accurately.

Although his theory encourages the student to be more productive, sometimes it can be hard for the learner to generate output without faulty performances. Swain and Lapkin (1995, p. 385) stated that "It needs to be pointed out that, for these learners at least, the substance of their thoughts was sometimes faulty, leading to incorrect hypotheses and inappropriate generalizations, suggesting that relevant feedback could play a crucial role in advancing their second language learning".

### **1.3.3. Interaction Hypothesis**

The Interaction Hypothesis was mainly credited to Michael Long, it stresses that SLA is developed mostly by face to face interaction and communication. As a result, speaking plays a major role in it. Lightbown and Spada (2013, p 114) stated that learners need opportunities to interact with other speakers and work together to reach mutual comprehension. By interacting with each other, the speakers would find out what they need to do to keep the conversation going and make the input as comprehensible as possible for less proficient speakers. In addition to this, interaction alone cannot be sufficient for the speakers to develop their oral skills. When communication is difficult, other factors such as corrective feedback and negotiation of meaning are needed for language development. Long (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013, pp. 114-115)

### **1.4. Negotiation of Meaning**

Negotiation of meaning is one of the processes used by EFL learners for an effective communication. This process is said to be the central discourse structure, and is defined as the verbal exchanges that occur when the speakers seek to prevent the

breakdown of the communication (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Ellis (2003) gave another definition to negotiation of meaning: “negotiation of meaning is “the process by which two or more interlocutors identify and then attempt to resolve a communication breakdown” (p. 346). In other words, negotiation of meaning is the process by which the speakers tend to make themselves understood and to avoid confusion while interacting with other interlocutors.

The process of negotiating meaning plays an important role in SLA. Allwright (1999) asserted that “the negotiation of meaning has been proposed as the key to second language development” (p. 230), that is to say, it is a crucial step in enhancing EFL learner’s language knowledge. In addition to that, Swain (1995) as cited in Bower and Kawaguchi (2011) argued that “negotiation of meaning is able to help this process because by becoming consciously aware of one’s own production, output can serve the metalinguistic function of helping to internalize linguistic form” (p. 45). Moreover, Long (1996) suggested that “negotiation for meaning (..) facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways” (pp. 451-452) in other words, by combining all of the above mentioned, the acquisition process becomes easier.

### **1.5. Feedback and Speaking**

In a language-learning classroom, students are frequently exposed to new elements of the TL. Consequently, the learners would expect teachers to intervene and provide them with clear clarifications, correction or instructions. Nunan (2003) stated that it is important “to provide learners with feedback on how well they are doing. Teachers need to support learners’ efforts, guide them, and provide cues for improvement. Otherwise, learners may be unaware where they need to place their energies” (p. 116). This means that feedback is



highly important. In EFL context, giving learners feedback plays a crucial role in maximizing and shaping their abilities as proficient speakers of the language.

According to Harmer (2007), it is important to know when and how to give feedback in speaking activities by considering the effects of each approach on the learners. For instance, when a student is in the middle of a speaking task, over-correction can take out the communicativeness out of the activity and inhibits the student as immediate feedback may break up the flow of the speaking tasks. (Li, 2014, as cited in Kerr, 2017, p. 5). However, Harmer (2007) asserted that helpful and gentle correction might get the students out of their comfort zones and help them avoid any kind of misunderstanding or hesitation. Harmer (2007), then, concluded that teachers should allow learners to assess themselves first and eventually give them feedback about what went well, and react to the language used along with the content of the speaking activities. Thus, the teacher plays a vital role in organizing speaking activities. This involves giving the students instructions, demonstrations and guidance, prior and after dealing with speech activities. (Harmer, 2007)

Moreover, the way feedback is addressed in an oral expression session can affect the learners. According to (Havranek, 2014, as cited in Kerr, 2017, p.2) “feedback can also be about the performance of peers. In fact, some learners benefit more from hearing this kind of feedback than feedback which concerns them more directly”. In other words, it enables the student to learn from the errors made by their peers. This denotes that targeting the whole group could be more beneficial for the students.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the first chapter of this study was devoted to expose the literature review pertaining to the speaking skill, which is a fundamental skill that needs to be mastered by EFL learners. It shed light on this productive skill, its components, as well as

some materials and activities that teachers can use in order to teach and develop the oral proficiency of the learners. Furthermore, this chapter dealt with many other theoretical and practical elements related to the speaking skill.

## **Chapter Two: Assessment**

### **Introduction**

The second chapter is dedicated to the process of assessment. It starts by providing clear definitions of the term assessment in general. Moreover, different types of assessment are mentioned, defined and explained. It is also important to highlight the main principles of assessment. Furthermore, it involves a clear description of speech assessment along with the major elements to assess in the speaking skill. In addition to this, a comparison is made between assessment, evaluation, and testing. Finally, this chapter introduces the teacher's practices in assessing oral proficiency.

### **2.1. Assessment**

#### **2.1.1. Definition**

Assessment is an important issue in EFL teaching. It plays a central and important role in teaching and learning (Cheng, Rogers, & Hu 2004). Many scholars have provided definitions to this process. Cheng et al. (2004) asserted that it is “the process of collecting information about a student to aid in decision-making about the progress and language development of the student” (p. 363). Bachman (2004) provided a similar definition and stated that it is: “the process of collecting information about a given object of interest according to procedures that are systematic and substantively grounded.” (p. 07). In other words, assessment is the process of gathering information about the student's current proficiency levels and discern their strengths and weaknesses.

Regarding its importance, Coombe, Troudi, and Al-Hamly (2012) said that assessment is an “integral part of the teaching-learning process” (p. 1), which means that assessment should be one of the primary focuses of teachers and it should not be neglected. Moreover, one of the main purposes of assessment is to assist the students' progress towards further achievements (Agasøster, 2015).

### **2.1.2. Types of Assessment**

There are several types of assessment which differ from each other, the major ones are:

#### **2.1.2.1. Formative Assessment**

The first major type of assessment is ‘Formative Assessment’. Bell and Cowie (2001) asserted that this type is becoming “a focus in policy documents on educational assessment and in the professional development of teachers” (p. 536). They further went to define it as “the process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning, during the learning” (p. 540). Boston (2002) on the other hand, defined it as “the diagnostic use of assessment to provide feedback to teachers and students over the course of instruction” (pp. 1-2). According to Frunza (2014), unlike summative assessment that operates at the end of a program, the formative one is done during the program development. It accompanies the program from the beginning to the end, and that is why it is said to be ‘continuous’.

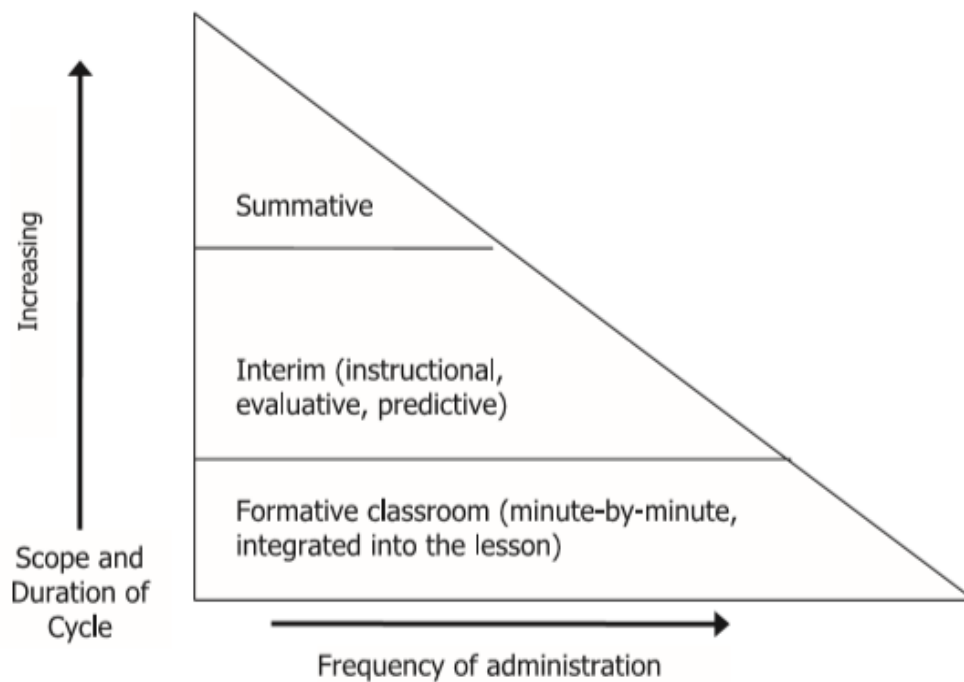
Formative assessment is concerned with “how judgments about the quality of student responses (performances, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the student's competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning” (Sadler, 1989, p. 120). In other words, how to use students’ responses and answers in order to help them improve.

Moreover, formative assessment has many benefits. Boston (2002) stated that “when teachers know how students are progressing and where they are having trouble, they can use this information to make necessary instructional adjustments” (p. 2.) This means that by knowing the elements in which students have difficulties, teachers will be able to adapt and modify these elements in order for the students to overcome the encountered difficulties.

### 2.1.2.2. Interim Assessment

Interim assessment might be similar to formative assessment, especially when it comes to the constant measurements of the students' progress. However, the data collected is usually used by schools, policy makers, districts and not only the teacher unlike formative assessment.

Furthermore, interim assessments are administered during the course in order to provide information and clear data about the students' knowledge and skills related to specific academic outcomes. (Perie, Gong & Marion, 2009, p. 6)



**Figure 2.1. Tiers of Assessment**

Perie et al. (2009, p. 7) demonstrated through this triangle the differences between the three types of assessment. The figure shows that formative assessments are used most frequently and have the smallest scope which means the narrowest curricular focus and the shortest time frame, while summative assessments are administered less frequently and

have the most curricular focus. Interim assessment comes between these other two types since it is conducted during the course and has clear and established academic outcomes.

### **2.1.2.3. Summative Assessment**

The second major type of assessment is called summative assessment. Nunan and Carter (2001, p. 137) informed that “assessment at the end of a course, term or school year - often for purposes of providing aggregated information on programme outcomes to educational authorities - is referred to as summative assessment.”

Summative assessment, then, takes place at the end of the unit or the course, a module or a program, and it gives details about the students understanding of the content that was taught. In addition to this, it represents a valid measurement tool for students’ performances especially since it consists of final exams, final projects and papers, etc....

As opposed to formative assessment, summative assessment tends to be more formal and relies heavily on delayed feedback through different tests and exams. (Burns & Goh, 2012). In addition to this, Looney (2011) asserted the importance of this type of assessment. The scholar claimed that “summative assessments of individual students may be used for promotion, certification or admission to higher levels of education” (Looney, 2011, p. 7). Hence, summative assessments can be highly significant in the learner’s advanced educational and professional careers.

## **2.2. Principles of Assessment**

In order to have a properly designed assessment plan, there are some particular principles or qualities that need to be met. Nunan (2003, p. 310) stated that “the two most important qualities of assessment are validity and reliability.” Both criteria are subsequently explained.

### **2.2.1. Validity**

Brown (2001) asserted that “the most complex criterion of a test is validity, the degree to which a test actually measures what is intended to measure.” (p. 387). On the other hand, Nunan (2003, p. 310) said that “a valid assessment is one which provides information on the ability we want to assess and nothing else.” For instance; an oral test/assessment cannot include the elements of a writing skill test. In other words, it is essential that a valid assessment incorporates the appropriate content to achieve its own purposes.

### **Types of Validity**

There are three main types of validity in assessment. Construct Validity is the extent to which the content of the assessment reflects current theoretical knowledge of the skill being assessed. Additionally, content validity means whether it covers what the teacher wants to assess. The last type is called Criterion-related validity; it refers to the extent to which the results match with the skill being assessed. (Carter & Nunan, 2001, pp. 137-138)

### **2.2.2. Reliability**

A reliable assessment is consistent and dependable in the test itself and the results. However, sources of unreliability may differ and originate from different factors. (Brown, 2001, p. 386). Moreover, Carter and Nunan (2001) affirmed that:

Reliability is concerned with ascertaining to what degree scores on tests or assessments are affected by measurement error, i.e. by variation in scores caused by factors unrelated to the ability being assessed (e.g. conditions of administration, test instructions, fatigue, guessing, etc.). Such factors may result in inconsistent performance by test takers (p. 138)

Hence, it is quite important to ensure that an assessment can consistently measure the students' competencies under different circumstances and through different periods of time.

### **2.2.3. Practicality**

In addition to validity and reliability, which were proposed by Nunan in 2003, practicality can be further added. According to Yoneda (2013) "practicality refers to evaluating the assessment according to cost, time needed, and usefulness" (p. 44). Bachman and Palmer (1996) asserted that "practicality in assessment means that if the extent to which the demands of the particular test specification can be met within the limits of time and existing human and material resources, it can be concluded as practical assessment" (As cited in Kadir, Zaim & Refnaldi, 2019, p. 99). Put otherwise, an assessment is said to be practical when it satisfies the time, materials and resources requirements.

### **2.3. Scoring Rubrics**

Brookhart (1999) defined scoring rubrics as descriptive scoring schemes, developed by teachers or other evaluators. They are used to guide the analysis of the products/ processes of students' efforts (as cited in Moskal, 2000). In other words, a scoring rubric is a well-organized scheme or plan used to assess students. Moskal (2000) held that "scoring rubrics are typically employed when a judgement of quality is required and may be used to evaluate a broad range of subjects and activities" (p. 1), scoring rubrics are of great help in assessing many skills, including the speaking skill.

#### **2.3.1. Major Types of Scoring Rubrics**

There are two major types of scoring rubrics, namely holistic rubric and analytic rubric and they are subsequently portrayed.



### **2.3.1.1. Holistic Scoring Rubric**

The first type of scoring rubrics is called “holistic rubrics” or “holistic scoring rubrics”. It is defined as “a rubric that requires a teacher to rate or score a student’s product or process as a whole without first scoring parts or components separately” (Nitko & Brookhart, 2014, p. 8). This type is considered to be quicker than analytic scoring. (Nitko & Brookhart, 2014, p. 211)

Regarding speaking, Ounis (2017) maintained that “in a holistic assessment of speaking, the testers look at the overall oral performance of the testee. The different components (...) are assessed under speaking as a whole.” (p. 680). That is, when assessing a learner’s oral performance, the teacher does not judge each and every single component of the speaking skill individually, but the overall performance.

### **2.3.1.2. Analytic Scoring Rubric**

The other major type of scoring rubrics is “analytic rubrics”. According to Nitko and Brookhart (2014) “an analytic scoring rubric (also called scoring key, point scale, or trait scale) requires you to evaluate specific dimensions, traits, or elements of a student.” (pp. 219-220), they further added that an analytic scoring rubric “requires that you list the major criteria of good work (sometimes called dimensions or traits)” and “you decide the number of points to award to students for each criterion” (p. 220.) Put differently, when assessing learners via this type of scoring rubrics, the teacher needs to decide on the criteria that will be taken into consideration, and how will s/he mark each one.

As reported by Elsheikh (2018) “one major advantage of analytic rubrics is (...) the ability to provide teachers with a detailed account of the strengths and weaknesses of their students in writing or speaking.” (p. 4.) One of its disadvantages is the fact that it is “more time-consuming to use because the rater must look for and separately rate each component

of a performance.” (p. 222.) In other words, because the teacher has to assess every element (fluency, accuracy, complexity) individually, it will take more time.

## **2.4. Alternative Assessment**

Huerta-Macías (1995) defined it as activities or situations in which “students are evaluated on what they integrate and produce, rather than on what they are able to recall and reproduce” (p. 9). Put otherwise, alternative assessments are methods that are used to determine what the learners are able to do and produce rather than recalling what they know. Alternative assessment is also known as performance assessment or authentic assessment. Hamayan (as cited in Sood, 2013, p. 4) added that alternative assessment can take many forms that can be adapted to varying situations. Examples include self-assessment, peer-assessment.

### **2.4.1. Self-Assessment**

Self-assessment occurs when “the learners themselves evaluate their own performance, using clear criteria and weighting systems agreed on beforehand” (Brindely, 1989, as cited in Ur, 1996, p. 245). This indicates that it is an individual process that learners go through to review their own skills. In addition to this, participating in self-assessment can help the learners become skilled judges of their own strengths and weaknesses and to set their goals and objectives and eventually become self-directed students. (Dickinson and Oscarson, 2001, as cited in Nunan & Carter, 2001, p. 140)

### **2.4.2. Peer-Assessment**

Boud and Falchinkov (2007) stated that “peer assessment requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product, process or performance” (p. 132.) This means that students will take the responsibility of assessing other peers in the classroom. Moreover, Edwards (2014) noted that peer assessment “has

been shown to be an effective, engaging, and learner-centered language task for both oral and written language activities” (p.748). He then added that it can promote not only the development of the learners’ language skills but also their social skills such as interaction, collaboration and negotiation.

Besides, Spiller (2012) asserted that “peer evaluation helps to lessen the power imbalance between teachers and students and can enhance the students’ status in the learning process.” (p. 11), in other words, peer assessment helps students to feel more comfortable expressing themselves.

## **2.5. Assessment of the Speaking Skill**

Assessment is, generally, regarded as a crucial element in the teaching and learning processes. Likewise, in speaking, assessing oral proficiency is both a necessary and a demanding process.

Speaking skills are an important part of the curriculum in language teaching, and this makes them an important object of assessment as well. Assessing speaking is challenging, however, because there are so many factors that influence our impression of how well someone can speak a language. Luoma (2004, p. 1)

Additionally, assessing speaking is an important area of the speaking program. It plays a vital role of diagnosing the learners’ needs on an ongoing basis and also enables teachers and learners to analyze what progress has been made in the course. Additionally, assessment can also have a major effect on which speaking area the teacher chooses to teach and reinforce. (Burns & Goh, 2012)

Moreover, speech assessment is dependent on different aspects of the learner’s output. Brown and Yule (1983, p. 103) stated that “Naturally, there will continue to be a requirement that students be assessed on their command of the grammar and vocabulary

which they have been taught. Teachers may also wish to make informed judgements on the pronunciation and fluency”.

types that can be used. O'Malley and Piece (1996) proposed different activities for assessing the speaking skill such as oral interviews, storytelling, and role-plays (as cited by Inayah, Komariah & Nasir, 2019).

### **2.5.1. Elements to Assess in Speaking**

The followings are the most important criteria upon which EFL learners' speech is assessed:

#### **2.5.1.1 Accuracy**

Accuracy refers to the correct use of language in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Accurate learners' speech requires to construct a clear and correct grammar whether it is written or spoken (Brown, 2001).

The primary objective of accuracy is correctness and the ability to form flawless sentences and convey messages without making errors. When it comes to speaking and communication, fluency is mostly favored. However, accuracy has massive contributions in making the learners aware of the multiple aspects of the language. According to Brown (2001) “Accuracy is achieved to some extent by allowing students to focus on the elements of phonology, grammar, and discourse in their spoken output” (p. 268). Thus, learners should always aim to produce correct oral structures and by doing so, they would avoid generating inappropriate language. This can be achieved by mastering the different elements of a language (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation).

#### **2.5.1.2. Fluency**

Along with accuracy, fluency is one of the core components of the speaking skill that has to be assessed. This term is widely used in EFL context, and it can relate both to speaking and writing. Speech fluency holds an undeniable importance in EFL teaching, as

reported by Riggensbach (1991) “the fluency of non-native speakers has long been recognized as an important factor in judging target-language proficiency” (p. 423).

There has been some divergence about how to define fluency, but in general terms it means to be able to express yourself in a given language clearly, fluidly, and with no hesitation. In this regard, Crystal (1987) defined fluency as an effortless and smooth way of producing the language. Another definition of fluency was given by Hedge (1993), saying that it is “the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness or undue hesitation” (p. 275).

Moreover, speaking with no hesitation does not necessarily mean to speak rapidly without stopping, Hasselgren (1998) and House (1996) agree that using small words such as “yeah, ok, I mean ...” help to make the speech smoother and more coherent. Fluency is a focal point in the language learning process for most learners, and it should receive a particular attention by teachers while assessing speaking.

### **2.5.1.3. Complexity**

In addition to accuracy and fluency, complexity is one of the elements to assess the speaking skill. According to Ellis (2003), complexity is portrayed as the extent to which the language output produced in performing a task is varied, in addition to that, “complexity has been commonly interpreted as the size, elaborateness, richness and diversity of the learner’s linguistic L2 system.” (Housen & Kuiken, 2009, p. 464).

Housen and Kuiken (2009) stated: “as befits the term, complexity is the most complex, ambiguous, and least understood dimension of the CAF (complexity, accuracy, fluency) triad” (p. 463). In general terms, it is defined as “the extent to which learners produce elaborated language” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 139), or as “the capacity to use more advanced language” (Ellis, 2008, as cited in Craven, 2017). In other words, it is the ability to use words and utterances that are beyond the EFL learner’s level, in that matter

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) described complexity as input that is at the upper limit of the student's interlanguage system, which is not fully internalized by the learner.

With regards to assessment, Housen and Kuiken (2009) asserted that “(CAF) have figured as major research variables in applied linguistic research. CAF have been used both as performance descriptors for the oral and written assessment of language learners as well as indicators of learners' proficiency underlying their performance” (p. 461). Moreover, they reckoned that these three elements have been used to measure progress in language learning.

## **2.6. Differences between Evaluation, Testing, and Assessment**

Although evaluation, testing and assessment terms are different, they are mistakenly used interchangeably. Given that, the discrepancy between the three terms needs to be highlighted.

According to Brindley (2003), evaluation is a process that involves collecting and interpreting information that serve in judging the effectiveness of a particular program. Language program evaluation may be carried out for a variety of reasons. He further asserted that usually the government will want to know whether the program is suitable in their views, and that unlike the government, teachers are concerned with the question of whether or not their course was successful on its own terms, in particular they will want to find out learners' opinions of the course (Brindley, 2003)

Furthermore, Nunan & Carter (2001 p.137) said: “assessment is also distinguished from evaluation which is concerned with the overall language program and not just with what individual students have learnt.”. This means that assessment is less broad as a concept compared to evaluation. Moreover, Mahmoodi-Shahreabaki (2018) maintained: “the main characteristic of evaluation making it distinguished from the assessment is the qualitative nature of it plus its utilization for judgment.” (p. 02)

Testing, on the other hand, is different from both evaluation and assessment. Clapham (2002) asserted that: “some applied linguists use the term ‘testing’ to apply to the construction and administration of formal or standardized tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and ‘assessment’ to refer to more informal methods” (p. 150), this means that tests are more “formal” and “academic” compared to assessments. Valette (1994) asserted that tests are large-scale proficiency tests and that assessments are school-based tests (As cited in Clapham, 2002). From his part, Ezir (2013) stated that testing is one of the many ways to collect information. He further added that testing is characterized as being a “single-occasion, unidimensional, timed exercise, usually in multiple choice or short-answer form. Testing is formal, and is often standardized, which means that everyone takes the test under the same conditions” (Ezir, 2013, p. 37). Moreover, he (2013) classified testing as being a part of assessment, and that its primary focus was ‘finding the norm’ (p. 38)

## **2.7. Teachers Practices in Assessing Speaking**

The assessment process of the speaking skill is not the same as that of the other skills. Some researchers consider the assessment of speaking more difficult compared to the assessment of the other skills. According to Sook (2003) “there are many difficulties involved in the construction and administration of any speaking assessment” (p. 02). Some other scholars consider it to be the most difficult to assess reliably. (Alderson & Bachman, 2004).

In order to assess the speaking skill, teachers need to have a sample of the learners’ oral performance, Ginther (2012) confirmed that “assessing speaking requires that we either observe a “live” oral performance or that we capture the performance by some means for evaluation at a later time” (p. 01). Moreover, Saville and Hargreaves (1999)

asserted that in order to design a face-to-face speaking test. The designer of the test has to produce a suitable procedure that involves two main aspects that are:

- a) The elicitation of an appropriate sample of spoken English;
- b) The rating of that sample in terms of pre-defined descriptions of performance in spoken English, as a whole, or broken down into different criteria (Saville & Hargreaves, 1999, p. 43)

Regarding the most used practices to assess the speaking skill, Shohamy (1983) stated that asking the test takers to use and perform in the language in actual communicative situations was the most frequently advocated. In addition to that, Clark (1975) stressed the use of direct tests for assessing oral proficiency, such as oral interviews. Morrow (1977), on the other hand, suggested the use of what is called “performance tests”, namely tasks such as asking and answering questions, as well as narrations. (As cited in Shohamy, 1983, p. 528).

Furthermore, Sinwongsuwat (2012) ascertained that “in assessing students’ speaking performance elicited in the interview and the role-play, scoring rubrics used often include some or all of the following aspects: pronunciation/accent, grammar/structure, vocabulary, content, fluency, and comprehension” (p. 78). The elements taken into consideration while assessing the speaking skill are those aforementioned.

## **Conclusion**

The second chapter of the present piece of research was dedicated to discuss the issue of assessment. It introduced basic definitions to the concept of assessment. It provided further details as to its different types along with its core principles. Additionally, the chapter in hand elucidated the assessment of the speaking skill. The discrepancy between assessment, testing, and evaluation was highlighted within the frame of the



current chapter. Finally, it explained some practices that teachers may use to assess the speaking skill, which is the focal point of the present study.

## **Chapter Three: Fieldwork**

### **Introduction**

The third chapter of this research paper is practical. It attempts to investigate the main practices used by teachers in assessing their learners' speaking performances. The chapter in hand introduces the population upon which the research is based. Additionally, two main research instruments are used in an effort to confirm or refute the set hypothesis of this research and fulfill the study. Moreover, it highlights and describes the methodology adopted in the current research. The data collected are analyzed and discussed within this chapter. Besides, it puts into plain words the major limitations encountered in conducting the research. Finally, it concludes with proposing additional recommendations and suggestions for further research.

### **3.1. Research Design and Methodology**

This study aims at investigating the practices that teachers make use of in assessing their EFL students' speaking skill. To explore these practices, the quantitative research approach to gather the necessary data was adopted. Quantitative research is defined as "an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures." (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 41). In other words, quantitative research is concerned with describing different phenomena using numbers.

Furthermore, as the focal aim of the current piece of research is to elucidate and describe the teacher's practices in assessing speaking, to enquire about the types of assessment they are adopting as it also attempts to elicit information about issues in connection with the learning of speaking, it seems then that the descriptive research design is the best to adopt to conduct the study. The descriptive design is based "on the premise

problems can be solved and practices improved through observation, analysis, and description.” (Koh & Owen, 2000, p. 219) is best suited for this study.

### **3.1.1. Population and Sampling**

First year EFL students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia’s University-Jijel district were chosen as the sample population of this study. Fifty-five (55) out of three hundred and thirty-two (332) students were randomly asked to answer a questionnaire. In addition, an interview was conducted with four (04) oral expression module teachers who are instructing the speaking skill in the same university. The goal of choosing first year licence students was to see their perspective as to the learning/ teaching and assessment of the speaking skill. Additionally, oral expression teachers were chosen because they are in the best position to inform us about the assessment practices of this skill particularly.

### **3.1.2. Data Collection Tools**

In order to obtain the necessary data, two research tools were used. The first one was a questionnaire addressed to first year licence students. The aim behind this questionnaire was to elicit information about the students’ perspectives on issues in connection with the speaking skill, the different types of activities they are assigned in the classroom to develop their oral performance. Furthermore, the questionnaire attempted at investigating students’ knowledge of the assessment process, along with the complications they face while performing orally. The second research instrument used was an interview. It was conducted with all the four teachers of the oral expression module. The interview was carried out in order to elicit information about the main practices the teachers adopt when teaching the speaking skill. More importantly, it aimed at highlighting their ways and types of assessing their learners’ oral performance.

### **3.1.3. Description and Administration of the Research Tools**

Both tools used in this research are described subsequently.

### **3.1.3.1. Description and Administration of the Questionnaire**

This research paper aims at investigating teachers' practices in assessing EFL learners' speaking performances, and in order to gather enough information about the matter, a questionnaire was opted for as one of the research tools, as it allows the researchers to collect the necessary data. According to Marshall (2005), a questionnaire is a popular and cost-effective research instrument that proved to have some very interesting advantages, as it allows to clearly define and identify the target population and ask very precise questions to the respondents, moreover, it can have open, closed, and quantity questions.

A questionnaire provides the necessary quantitative data to the researchers in order to finalize their study.

#### **3.1.3.1.1. Questionnaire Administration**

The questionnaire was administered randomly online to fifty-five (55) first year EFL students at Jijel's Mohamed Seddik Benyahia's University. The questionnaire was posted in July, 6<sup>th</sup> on the "Department of English Jijel" Facebook page, as well as on "First Year Students of English (Jijel University)" Facebook group. It took several days to collect the answered questionnaire back (July, 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020). The researchers made themselves available to answer and explain any ambiguity encountered by the students who were asked to answer the questionnaire.

#### **3.1.3.1.2. Questionnaire Description**

Students' questionnaire comprises four sections, with a total of twenty (20) questions. The first section is entitled "Background Information" and has three (03) basic close-ended questions, aiming at discovering the number of years that these students have been studying English, their own evaluation of their speaking skill, and the skill that they consider to be the most important. The second section is concerned with "The Speaking

Skill”, it consists of six (06) questions, five (05) of them are closed-ended and one (01) is open-ended. It aims at exploring students’ knowledge about the speaking skill, the difficulties they encounter while speaking, and the activities and materials that their teachers use to teach them this skill. The third section is about “Classroom assessment”, it has two (02) close-ended questions that aim at discovering the type of assessment that their oral expression teachers use most, and also if they make use of alternative assessment methods, namely self-assessment and peer-assessment. The fourth and final section is entitled “Assessment of speaking” that comprises nine (09) questions, with six (06) close-ended and three (03) open-ended ones. The goal behind this section is to elicit information about teachers’ assessment of the speaking skill in particular, the activities used in the classroom, the aspects of speaking that are taken into consideration while performing orally, and also the types of scoring rubrics and feedback that they are being given by their oral expression module teachers.

### **3.1.3.2. Description and Administration of the Interview**

In addition to students’ questionnaire, an online interview was conducted with teachers of the oral expression module, in order to collect enough data about their practices of assessment the speaking skill. The findings were gathered through a standardized open-ended interview. In actual fact, McKay (2006, p. 52) asserted that this type of interview is highly structured because the exact wording and order of the questions are specified. McKay (2006) then added that the interviewees are asked identical questions which makes the data analysis process easier and the findings comparable (p. 52). In addition to this, such interviews involve the use of a set of predetermined questions. Thus, the interviewer follows a rigid and steady procedure, asking questions in a form and order prescribed which makes his job easier and also provides a safer basis for generalization (Kothari, 2004, pp. 97-98)

### **3.1.3.2.1. Interview Description**

The interview is composed of ten questions (10) that are linked to the literature review. The interview consisted of two main sections: the first section was about the speaking skill, while the second one was about assessing speech. The first section of the interview was composed of three (3) open-ended questions. This part aimed at exploring the most important elements of the speaking skill in the respondents' perspectives. Moreover, it covered the different activities and materials used to teach the skill. The main goal behind this section was to have a broader insight on the process of teaching the speaking skill. The second section included seven questions (7). Only two of those questions (2) were close-ended while the rest (5) were open to free responses. This section was set to shed light on the assessment process as it covered the different activities and criteria used by the teachers in assessing speech. It also aimed at discovering the different roles the teachers play regarding feedback, highlighting the strategies they espoused to deal with reticent learners and the enquire about extent to which alternative assessment is being implemented.

### **3.1.2.2.2. Interview Administration**

The present interview was conducted with four English teachers of the oral expression module at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. The administration of the interview started on the 8<sup>th</sup> of august and ended on the 4<sup>th</sup> September. The interviews were directed depending on the teachers' schedules. Besides, it is worthy to mention that the interview was conducted online due the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3.2. Data Analysis

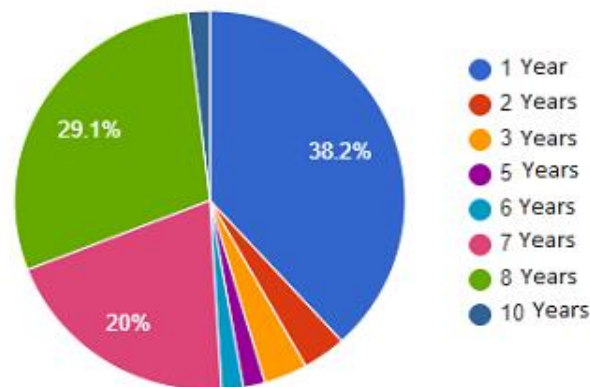
#### 3.2.1. The Questionnaire's Results

##### 3.2.1.1. Questionnaire Analysis

The results gathered from the students' questionnaire are represented in pie charts and discussed with numbers and percentages as follows:

#### SECTION ONE: Background Information

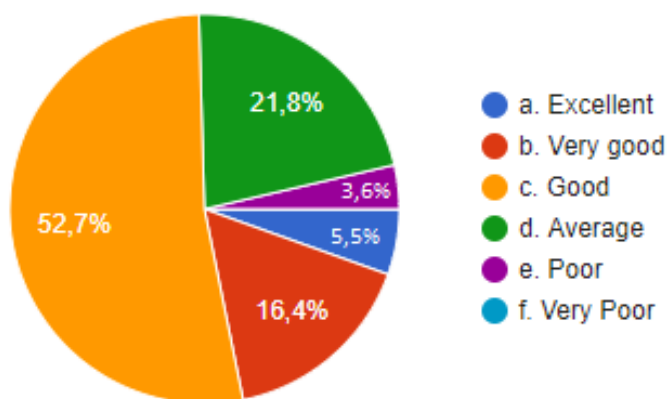
**Q1.** How many years have you been studying English?



**Figure 3.1. Years Spent in Studying English**

The first question inserted in this section was set to enquire about the overall years spent in studying English language. The results showed that twenty-one students out of fifty-five (38,2%) said that they had been studying English for “one year”, while sixteen students (29,1%) ticked “eight years”, eleven students (20%) ticked “seven years”, the rest of the results were diverse, with only one student (1.8%) who opted for each of “five, six, and ten years”, two students (3.6%) chose “three” and “two”. The results of this question demonstrate that participants did not really understand the question, as they could not distinguish between studying English as a language in their academic career and studying English language as a specialty at the university.

**Q2.** How would you evaluate your English speaking skill?

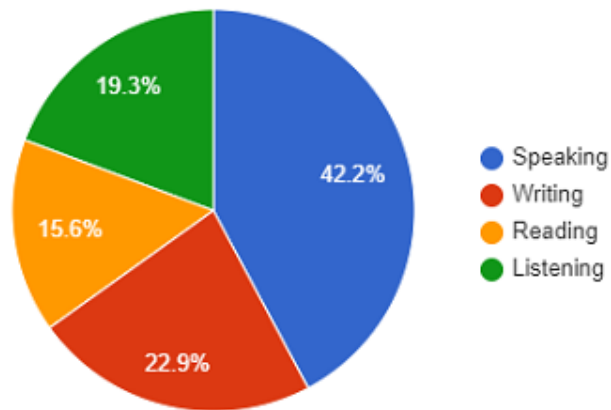


**Figure 3.2. Students' Self- Evaluation of Their Speaking Skill**

The second question was designed to investigate the participants' evaluation of their speaking skill. The results showed that more than half of them (twenty-nine out of fifty-five) (52,7%) considered their speaking skill as “good”, while nine students (16,4%) deemed it to as “very good”, in addition, three students (5,5%) viewed their speaking skill as “excellent”. Furthermore, twelve students (21,8%) evaluated their level in the aforementioned skill as being “average”, while only two students (3,6%) acknowledged that it was “poor”, and none (0%) believed to have a “very poor” level in speaking English. These findings clearly show that a large majority of learners (74,6%) believe that they have a satisfactory level in the speaking skill, while only a small minority (3,6%) believe of having a poor level.

**Q.3** As an EFL student, which of the followings do you consider the most important skill (s) to be mastered?



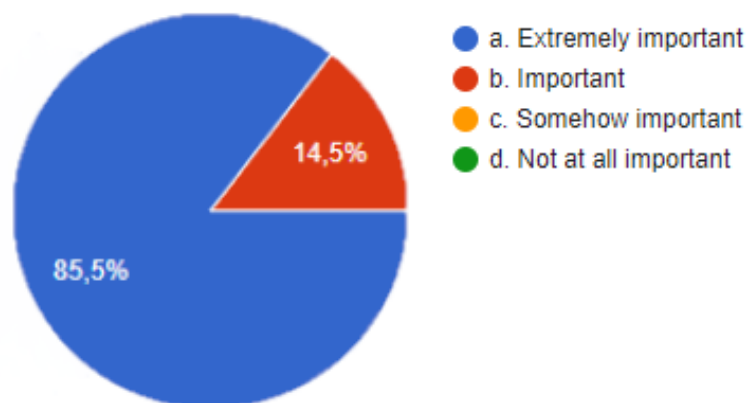


**Figure 3.3. Students' Perspective About the Most Important Skill(s) To Master.**

The third question was set to probe the participants' perspectives about the skill(s) they thought to be the most important to master. As the figure demonstrates, the speaking skill was largely opted for by 42,2% of the participants, followed by writing 22,9%, listening with 19,3%, and finally reading with only 15.6%. These results denote that first year EFL students seem to consider "Speaking" to be the most important skill to master, as it is chosen by a considerable number of the students (42,2%), the three other fundamental skills had similar results, which proves that students consider them to be somehow evenly important.

## SECTION TWO: The Speaking Skill

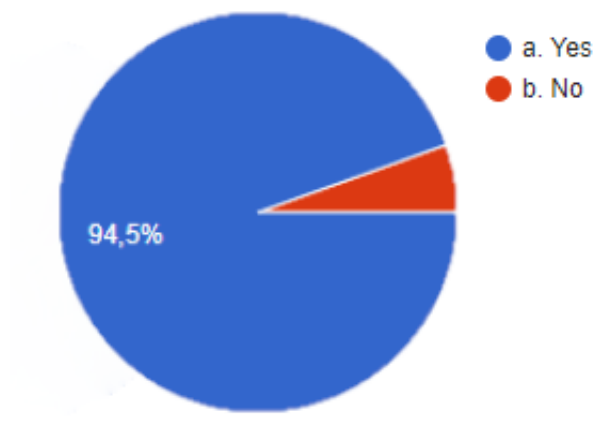
**Q4.** As an EFL student, how important do you consider the speaking skill?



**Figure 3.4. Students' Perception of the Importance of the Speaking Skill.**

The fourth question is designed to identify the participants' estimation of the importance of speaking in learning English as a foreign language. As shown in the pie chart above, forty-seven students out of fifty-five (85.5%) believed that speaking is extremely important in the process of learning the English language. Moreover, eight students (14.5%) out of fifty-five considered the speaking skill "important", while none of the students (0%) picked the other options. The yielded results illustrate students' recognition of the importance of mastering speaking in order to be proficient learners of the language.

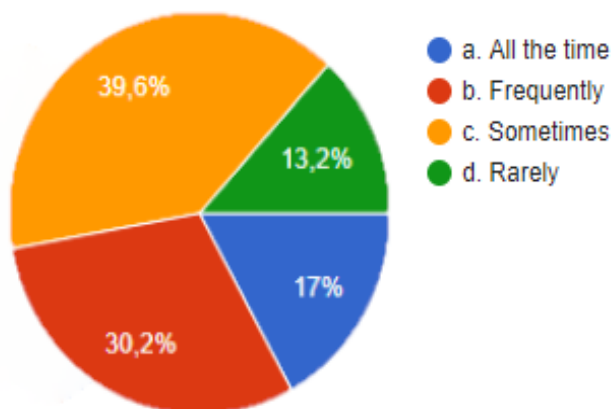
**Q5.** Do you practise your English speaking skill outside the classroom context?



**Figure 3.5.1. Practicing English Speaking Skill Outside Classroom Context.**

The fifth question was set to collect information about the learners' practice of the speaking skill outside the classroom. As displayed in the figure above, fifty-two (94.5%) out of fifty-five of the students claimed that they did practise the aforementioned skill outside classroom context while only three students (5.5%) revealed that they never did. The findings show that the greatest majority are speaking the language even outside classroom settings which means that they are likely aware of the significance of practice to develop their oral skills.

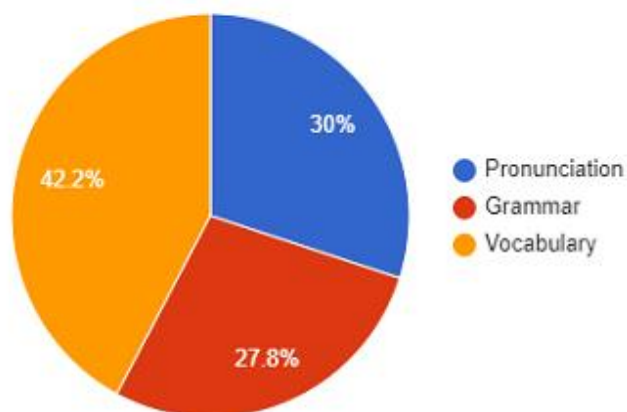
The participants who opted for “yes” answer were required to respond to the subsequent question that was designed to probe the frequency of their practice of English outside the classroom.



**Figure 3.5.2. Frequency of Practicing English Outside the Classroom**

The second part of the fifth question aimed at exploring the extent to which the participants spoke English outside the classroom. The results showed that nine participants (17%) out of the fifty-three who answered yes did practise speaking all the time. Sixteen (30.2%) of them opted for “frequently” as an answer. Twenty-one students (39.6%) chose “sometimes”. While only seven students (13.2%) revealed that they “rarely” did. This indicates that the majority of the learners are practicing speaking sufficiently. Given that, one might deduce that the participants are constantly working on enhancing their oral performances.

**Q6.** Which of the following (s) do you consider the most important component (s) while speaking?



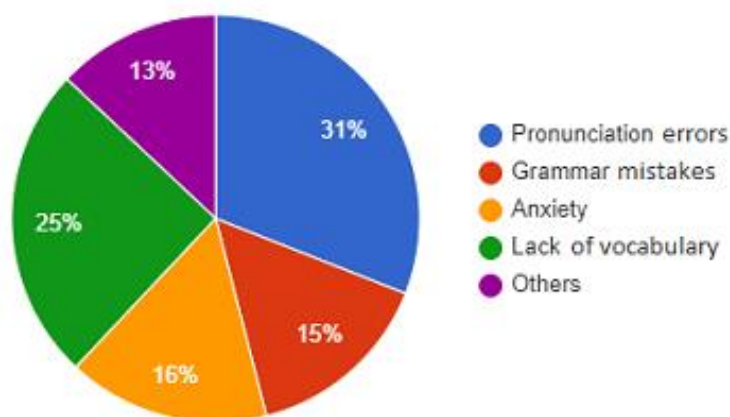
**Figure 3.6. Learners' Estimation of the most Important Speech Components.**

The sixth question was generated to find out the importance of each component of the speaking skill (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) in the views of the participants. As displayed in the figure above, “vocabulary” was the most selected option with 42.2% of the answers. Furthermore, pronunciation and grammar collected 30% and 27.8 % respectively. The results reveal that the findings were close, however the participants opted more for vocabulary. This means that the participants are aware of the importance of each component of the speaking skill with a slight tendency to focus more on vocabulary.

The participants were requested to justify their answers that are summarized subsequently:

- All of the three components are important. They complete each other.
- Having a rich vocabulary is key to become a fluent speaker of the language.
- Pronouncing words correctly is vital for proper communication.
- Grammatical knowledge allows you to compose sentences in their correct form.

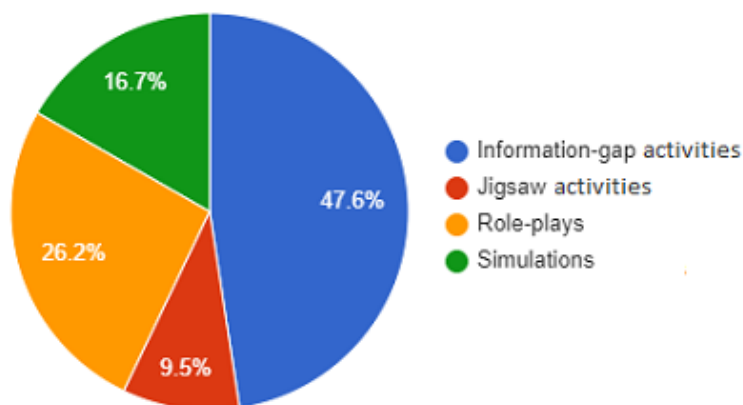
**Q7.** Which of the following problem (s) do you face most while speaking English in the classroom?



**Figure 3.7. Problems Encountered by EFL Learners While Speaking English**

The seventh question was designed to know more about the problems facing the participants while speaking English language. The aim behind this question was to find out the reasons that could prevent the participants from speaking English comfortably in the classroom. As displayed in the pie chart above, the fear of making pronunciation errors was selected by 31% of the participants. In addition to this, 25% of the them acknowledged that they faced the lack of vocabulary problem. Anxiety was chosen as a major problem by 16% of the respondents, while grammatical mistakes and other non-defined factors were opted for by 15% and 13% of the participants respectively. Thus, a large number of the student admit that they are afraid of making errors in the target language, especially when it comes to pronunciation and vocabulary. In other words, it can be concluded that the poor vocabulary background and the fear of making pronunciation mistakes are the most inhibiting factors the participants are faced with while speaking English in the classroom.

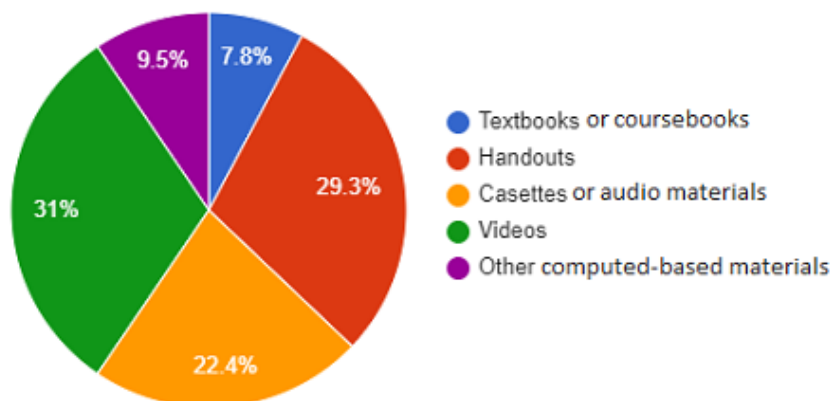
**Q.8** What are the types of speaking activities that your teachers assign you most in the classroom?



**Figure 3.8. Most Assigned Types of Speaking Activities.**

This question is related to the speaking skill. It aims at eliciting information about the types of speaking activities that oral expression teachers assign to their students in the classroom. Of the four proposed types, “information-gap activities” was the most selected option with a percentage of 47,6%, followed by “role-plays” with 26,2%, “simulations” with 16,7% and lastly “jigsaw activities” with only 9,5% of the answers. These findings demonstrate clearly that “information-gap activities” are the most assigned type of activities to teach the speaking skill, followed by “role-plays”, these two types combined gathered 73,8% of the answers. Furthermore, students mentioned presentations, debates, and discussions as other types of activities assigned by their teachers. This shows that oral expression teachers give a great importance to cooperation and group work in order to teach the speaking skill, as well as helping students overcome shyness and fear of communication, because the two most used types of activities require students to work with each other, either to find a missing information, or to play the role of someone else in order overcome shyness.

**Q9.** Which of the following teaching materials does your teacher rely on while teaching the speaking skill?

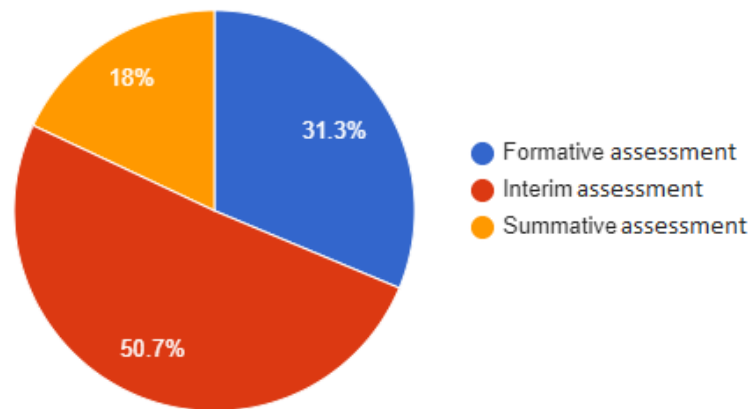


**Figure 3.9. Types of Materials Used in Speaking Classes**

This question aims at identifying the different types of materials that oral expression teachers make use of to teach the speaking skill. In an oral expression session, teachers may rely on a variety of materials or tools in order to make the process of learning easier. The results showed that “videos” was the most used type of materials with a percentage of 31% , closely followed by “handouts” with 29,3% and “cassettes or audio materials” with 22,4%, while “other computer-based materials” and “textbooks or coursebooks” are the least used types of materials with 9,5% and 7.8% respectively. The obtained results show that teachers mostly rely on “videos”, “cassettes and audio materials” and “handouts” to teach the speaking skill. Thus, teachers are likely using these types precisely as authentic materials in order to make students more familiar with real life language that native speakers use to communicate.

### **SECTION THREE: Classroom Assessment Practices**

**Q.10** Does your oral expression teacher assess you during the lesson, at the end of the course or at different intervals of the academic year?

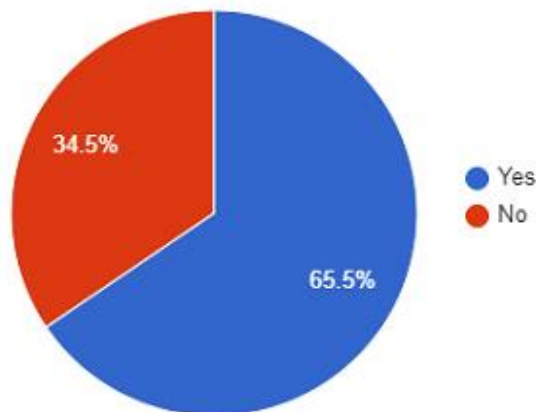


**Figure 3.10. Types of Assessment Used by Oral Expression Module Teachers**

The tenth question was designed to retrieve information about the different types of assessment that Oral Expression module teachers used in the classroom. The aim behind this question is to investigate whether the teachers adopted different assessment types during, after and at the end of the learning process. As displayed in the pie chart above, interim assessment is the most used type of assessment as it was selected by 50.7% of the respondents. Formative assessment came in second position with a percentage of 31.3% while summative assessment was picked by only 18% of the participants. The finding show that interim and formative assessments are the most used since they are both conducted during the course, while summative assessment is used occasionally. In other words, one might conclude that the teachers are constantly tracking the learners' progress through formative and interim assessments. This can be a good sign especially for first year students who need to develop their skills throughout the academic year.



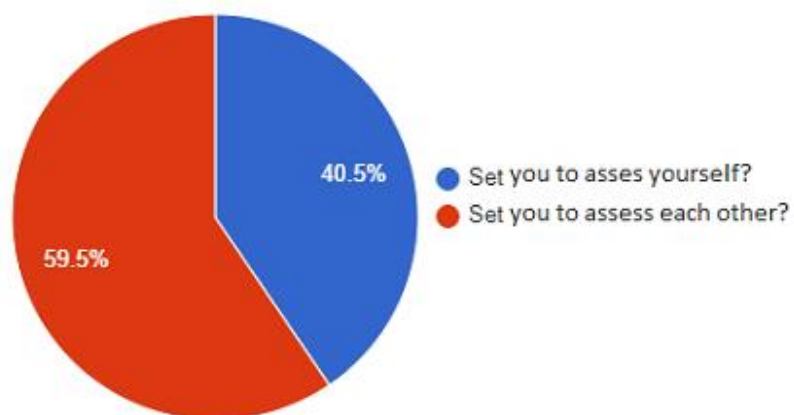
**Q11.** Does your teacher involve you and your classmates in assessing your own performance?



**Figure 3.11.1. Students' Involvement in the Assessment Process.**

The eleventh question was addressed to identify whether or not oral expression teachers involve their students in the assessment process. The results showed that thirty-six out of fifty-five students (65.5%) answered by “yes”, while nineteen students (34.5%) selected “no” option. These findings demonstrate that the majority of the participants are involved by their teachers in the assessment process. The second part of the eleventh question was designed to confirm whether the participants were indeed involved in the process of assessment and more precisely, to identify which type of assessment is more exercised; self-assessment or peer-assessment.

**If yes, does he/she ?**

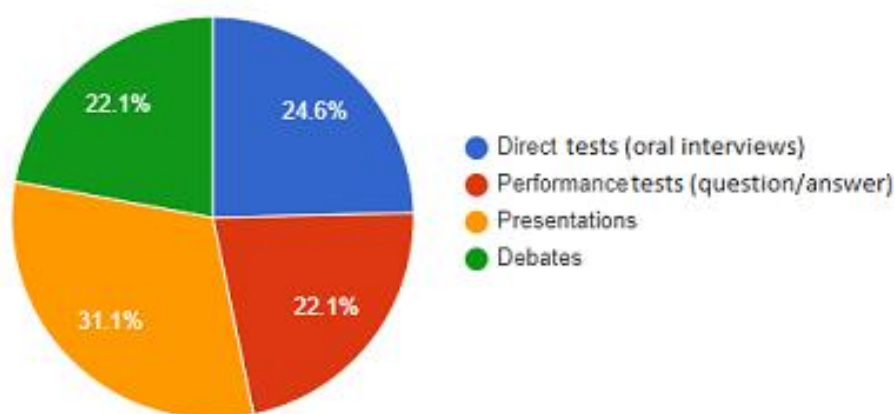


**Figure 3.12.2. Teachers' Use of Peer-Assessment or Self-Assessment.**

The findings indicated that 59,5% of those who answered “yes” in the first part of the question asserted that their teachers set them to assess each other, while the remaining 40,5% claimed that they were set to assess themselves. These results indicate that teachers use both peer and self-assessment and involve their students in the assessment process, with a slight preference to peer-assessment, in which students are required to provide feedback and grades to their peers. The latter is said to develop students’ social skills and helps them to feel more comfortable when they communicate orally with each other as well.

#### SECTION FOUR: Assessment of Speaking

**Q12.** Which type of activities does your oral expression module teacher use to assess your speaking skill?

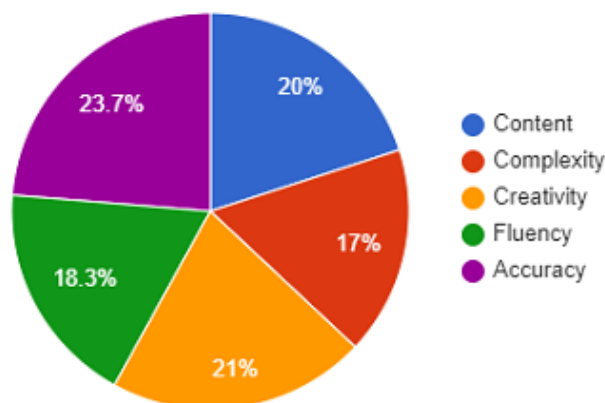


**Figure 3.13. Types of Speaking Activities Used by Teachers to Assess Speaking**

The twelfth question aims at eliciting information about the activities that oral expression teachers use in assessing the speaking skill. The results gathered in this question showed that “presentations” is the most used activity in assessing the speaking skill, with 31,1% of the answers. The three other types of activities (direct tests, performance tests, and debates) were chosen by 24,6%, 22,1%, and 22,1% of the respondents respectively. These percentages are very close to each other, which proves that oral expression teachers use all of these types of activities equivalently in assessing the speaking skill, with a little

preference to “presentations”. The participants were requested to mention any other type of activities that were not mentioned in the options. Thus, the major answers were “playing games”, as well as “discussing certain topics”.

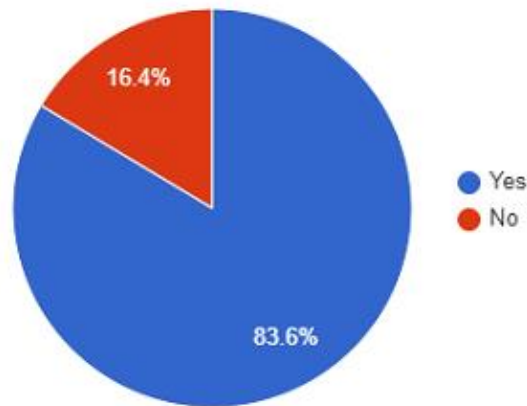
**Q13.** Which aspect (s) does your teacher take into account while assessing your oral performance?



**Figure 3.14. Criteria of Assessing Speaking.**

The thirteenth question was set to elicit information about the aspects that teachers focus on while assessing the speaking skill. The aim behind it was to investigate the main criteria upon which the teacher based his/her assessment of the speaking skill. As displayed in the figure above, 23.7% of the participants selected “accuracy” option, 21% of them opted for “creativity”, 20% of them selected “content”, 18.3% chose “fluency” while “complexity” was selected by 17% of the overall answers, respectively. The findings indicate that oral expression module teachers do take into account all of the criteria equivalently while assessing their learners.

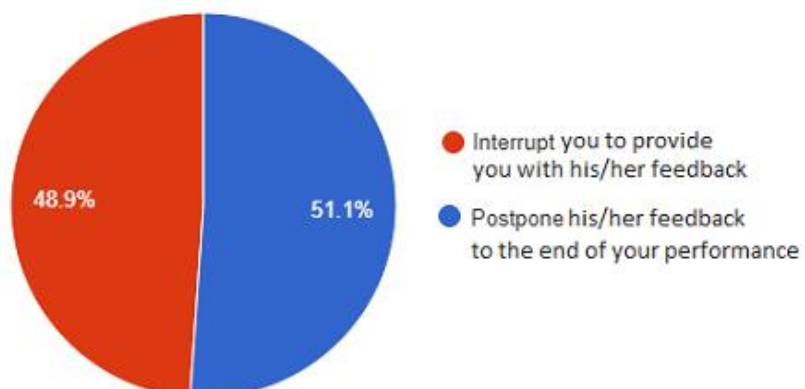
**Q14.** While performing orally, does your teacher provide you with feedback?



**Figure 3.15.1. Teachers Feedback during Oral Performances.**

The fourteenth question was designed to enquire about the provision of teachers' feedback in the process of their learners' oral performances. The aim behind this question was to find out if the participants do receive constantly while speaking. Forty-six (83.6%) out of fifty-five learners reported that they received feedback while only nine students (16.4%) noted that did not. Put otherwise, the majority of the respondents seem to receive feedback in the course of their speaking performance.

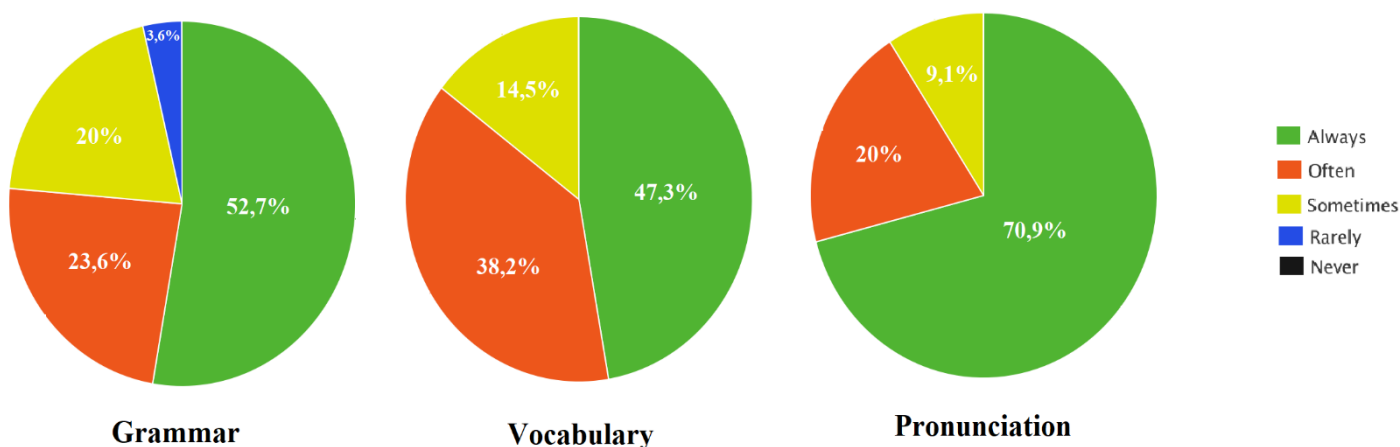
**If yes, does he/she:**



**Figure 3. 16.2. Teachers Approach of Providing Feedback.**

The second part of the fourteenth question aimed at investigating the time learners received feedback from their teachers. Twenty-four students out of forty-seven (51.1%) reported that they were provided with feedback right after they finished speaking. On the other hand, twenty-three (48.9%) of them revealed that the teacher interrupted them to offer immediate feedback. The results of this question are very close. Almost Half the number of students admitted being interrupted while they speak. This denotes that the teachers' over-interruption to the learners' speech might result in inhibiting their learners from producing more oral output. In other words, the teacher should allow the students to speak first and eventually give them feedback to avoid hesitations and misunderstandings.

**Q15.** What component of the speaking skill does your teacher focus on most while assessing your speech?



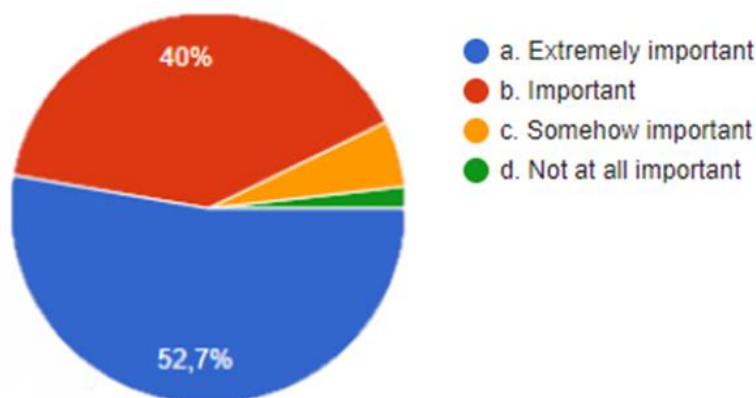
**Figure 3.17. Most Focused Upon Components of the Speaking Skill**

The fifteenth question was designed to discover what component of the speaking skill do teachers of oral expression module focus on most in the assessment process. It aims to see whether or not teachers give a particular focus to a component at the expense of the others, or they give equal importance to all speech components. As for “grammar” component, twenty-nine out of fifty-five students (52,7%) said that they were “always” assessed on it, while thirteen students (23,6%) answered “often”, eleven students (20%)

ticked “sometimes” and only 2 students (3,6%) said “rarely”. With reference to “vocabulary” component, the results of this component are similar to those of “grammar”, as twenty-six participants (47,3%) ticked “always”, twenty-one respondents ticked “often” (38,2%) and eight of them (14,5%) ticked “sometimes”. The third component, namely “pronunciation”, a large majority of the participants, thirty-nine (70, 9%) said that they were “always” assessed on it, while eleven (20%) said “often” and five (9, 1%) said “sometimes”.

From the results above, we can deduce that teachers of oral expression module do not neglect any of the three components of the speaking skill, but they have a slight preference to “pronunciation”. The majority of the involved participants said that they were “always” assessed on of the three aforementioned components, with no one ticking “rarely” or “never” for both “vocabulary” and “pronunciation”, and only two participants out of fifty-five (3.6%) opted for “rarely” for “grammar”. In order to fully master the speaking skill, EFL students have to master its three core components, and when assessing this skill, teachers should give equal importance to all three components, without neglecting any of them

**Q16.** To what extent do you consider your oral expression teacher’s feedback to your oral performance helpful to improve your speaking skill?



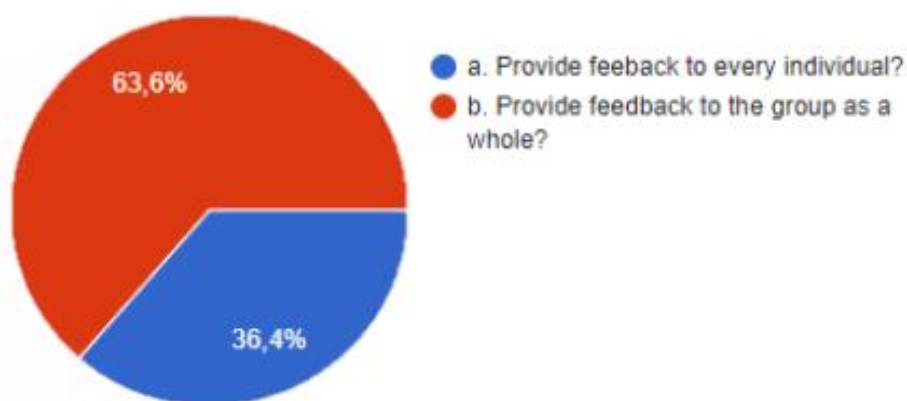
**Figure 3.18. Students’ Perspective on the Importance of Teacher Feedback.**

The sixteenth question was designed to elicit information about the learners' perception of their teacher's feedback. This question aims at indicating whether the participants consider feedback important to enhance their performances. Twenty-nine participants (52.7%) out of fifty-five reported that feedback was "extremely important" in improving their speech while twenty-two (40%) ones noted that feedback was "important". Three students out of fifty-five (5.5%) regarded feedback "somehow important" and only one student (1.8%) considered it "not at all important". The results signify that the majority of the respondents are aware of the importance of feedback to improve their speech.

In order to get further insight, the participants were asked to justify their answers. Thirty-eight (69%) of fifty-five students provided justifications, the major ones are summarized as follows:

- Teacher's feedback boosts their confidence and helps them overcome their fears of making errors.
- Teacher's feedback assists the students in memorizing new vocabulary.
- Teacher's feedback enables the students to acknowledge their areas of weaknesses whether its grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation.

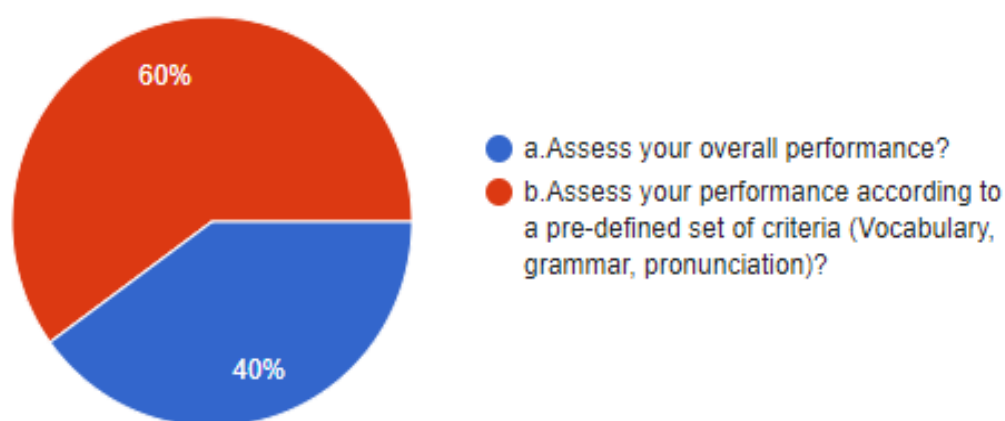
**Q17. When addressing feedback, does your teacher:**



**Figure 3.19. Types of Teachers' Addressed Feedback.**

The seventeenth question of this questionnaire was set to know how the participants are exposed to their teachers' feedback during OE sessions. According to the pie chart above, thirty-five out of fifty-five respondents (63.6%) reported that the teacher provided feedback to the group as a whole, while twenty-one (36.4%) noted that they were exposed to individual feedback. Thus, it is fair to say that the participants were exposed to both group and individual feedback, with a large focus on group feedback. This may reflect that the teachers are relying, primarily, on giving feedback to the whole class. Given that, the learners are more likely to learn from each other's mistakes and take into account the teacher's feedback.

**Q.18** When the teacher assesses your oral performance, does she/he:



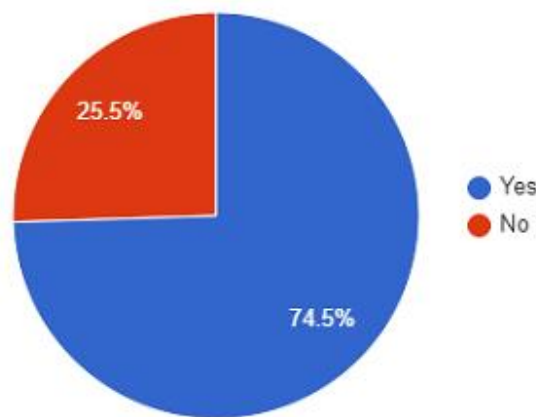
**Figure 3.20. Types of Scoring Rubrics Used by Teachers**

This question was addressed in order to see whether involved participants are assessed on their overall performance, or according to a pre-defined set of criteria. Put differently, the aim behind it was to know whether the participants are being assessed using analytic or holistic scoring rubrics in the course of their oral performance. The data gathered showed that thirty-three out of fifty-five students (60%) believed that their teachers assessed their performance according to a pre-defined set of criteria, while twenty-two (40%) reported that their performance is assessed as a whole. These results



demonstrate that analytical scoring rubrics are used more than holistic scoring rubrics, which means that their performances are assessed based on a predetermined list of criteria. Analytic-scoring rubrics allow the teachers to get detailed information about students' current level and progress, and thus find out about their weaknesses and help them to improve more effectively.

**Q.19** When assessing you, does your oral expression module teacher draw your attention to the mistakes you made while performing orally?



**Figure 3.21. Teachers' Assessment and Oral Performance mistakes**

The nineteenth question was addressed to investigate about teachers' interference in their students' oral performance. The results showed that the majority of participants, forty-one out of fifty-five (74,5%) claimed that their teacher drew their attention to the mistakes they made while performing orally. Only fourteen students (25,5%) affirmed that their teachers did not. Hence, the findings demonstrate that teachers lean towards addressing corrective feedback immediately instead of postponing it. Correcting students' committed mistakes while they are speaking is not recommended, as it might inhibit them and make them feel anxious and stressed. Therefore, there is no best alternative than postponing addressing feedback to the end of the performance.

This question had a second part in which the participants were requested to state the ways their oral expression module teachers drew their attention to the committed mistakes, the majority of the answers were quite similar. Most of them claimed that teachers “directly” corrected the mistakes in the middle of their oral performance, while some others claimed that their teachers “made signs” in order to make them mindful about the committed mistakes. Few participants reported that that their teachers took notes and postponed the correction of mistakes to the end of their oral performances.

**Q20.** Are there any comments or suggestions that you would like to make about the ways your oral expression module teacher assesses your speaking skill?

The participants were asked to make further comments about the way their oral skills are being assessed. Fifteen out of fifty-five students (27%) proposed some suggestions, they are summarized subsequently:

- Some learners prefer analytic over holistic rubrics.
- Teachers should give equal opportunities and avoid over-correction because it might inhibit the student.
- Teachers should pay more attention to pronunciation and grammar in order to help the learners develop their skills.
- Teachers should use more authentic materials (videos, movies, etc...) to make the learning process easier.
- Administration should add more oral sessions because of the significance of the speaking skill.

### 3.2.1.2. Discussion of Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire administered to first year students provides pivotal information about the speaking skill, classroom assessment practices in general, and the assessment of speaking in particular.

The first section of the questionnaire was initiated with three general questions about students' background information. In this section, most students reported that they have been studying English for seven to eight years. Additionally, the majority of them evaluated positively their speaking skill level, and considered this skill as the most important to master.

The second section comprised some general and specific questions about the speaking skill. It started with two questions investigating the attitudes of the first year EFL students towards the importance of the speaking skill. As the section attempted to enquire about the matter of practicing the aforementioned skill outside the classroom context. The obtained results showed that an overwhelming majority of students considered speaking to be important and frequently practice it outside the classroom context.

These answers prove that EFL students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia's University, Jijel focus greatly on and practice the speaking skill. The following two questions asked about the most important components of speaking according to students and the problems they faced when speaking English. The answers to these two questions were somehow surprising. On the one hand, students held that they considered vocabulary and pronunciation to be the two most important components, and on the other hand, they ticked lack of vocabulary and pronunciations errors as the most faced problems when speaking, which means that students do recognize the importance of these two components and admit they have some lacks in them. Then, students reported that teachers used a variety of

activities and materials to teach speaking; role-plays and information-gap as activities, videos, cassettes and audio-tapes, and handouts as materials.

The third section was concerned with classroom assessment practices and comprised two questions. The results showed that, according to the students, they are mostly assessed at different intervals of the school year. From their perspectives, teachers used interim assessment to assess their performance. Additionally, they held that teachers involve them in the assessment process, by letting them assessing their own performance and that of their peers, with a slight tendency of relying more on peer assessment.

At last, the final section of the questionnaire dealt with the assessment of the speaking skill. Students reported that their teachers used a variety of activities to assess their speaking skill, mainly presentations and oral interviews, and that all criteria are taken into account equivalently in the process of assessment. Moreover, students stated that their teachers provided them with feedback, mostly group-feedback, which they considered to be important and helpful to improve their oral performances. Besides, they held that teachers assessed their performance according to a set-of criteria, and that none of these criteria is neglected, hence, teachers prefer to use analytic scoring rubrics. It is also noteworthy to mention that students reported that their teachers drew attention and addressed corrective feedback to them while they are still performing which might be a problematic issue to those shy and reticent students as the provision of immediate feedback may lead to communication breakdown.

### **3.2.2. The Interview's Results**

#### **3.2.2.1. General Analysis**

The results of the interview questions are analyzed below:

**1. What component (s) of the speaking skill do you focus on most while assessing your students and why?**

The first question addressed to teachers in the interview was set to inquire about the components of the speaking skill that they took into consideration in the assessment process. The aim behind this question was to see whether teachers had a particular preference to one (or more) component at the expense of others, or they rather gave equal importance to all components. The answers gathered showed that all the interviewed teachers agreed on giving equal focus to the three main components of the speaking skill which are: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Interestingly enough, two out of four (50%) of teachers added two side components, namely fluency and comprehension, and one teacher (25%) said that the component focused-on depended on the nature of the task. The teachers justified their answers by stating that these components “complete” each other, and that they cannot focus on one component at the expense of another.

**2. What type of activities do you use to teach the speaking skill?**

The second addressed question was set to elicit information about the different types of activities that first year oral expression module teachers at the English Language Department of Jijel University used to teach the speaking skill. The answers were quite different as all the interviewed teachers mentioned a variety of types. Some of these types of activities are traditional ones such as role-plays (which seems to be the most frequently used as three teachers out of four mentioned it), presentations, debates, and short talks . Some other types stated by one teacher seem to be less common, namely taboo, hot seat, and Pictionary games. The findings yielded from this question denote that the four teachers of oral expression module rely on diverse types of activities to instruct the speaking skill. Interestingly, this fact might motivate learners to take more initiative to participate in the

speaking classes. It is worthy to state that the more classroom activities are varied, the less bored the learners might feel in the classroom. Given that, their enthusiasm to participate orally in classroom is likely to promote.

### **3. What are the materials you make use of while teaching the speaking skill?**

The third question of the interview was set to shed light on the materials that oral expression module teachers use to teach the speaking skill. Three out of four teachers (75%) mentioned videos (including movies and short films), audio-tracks, while one teacher (25%) said that s/he used the materials of the communicative approach, handouts and realia. Furthermore, one teacher added that s/he also made use of “animated cards” and “authentic materials” for teaching the speaking skill. Teachers’ answers denote that, in most cases, the materials used for teaching the speaking skill are not very diversified and are mainly audiovisual, with videos, movies and short films, which are authentic materials, being the most used. This proves that teachers generally follow the CLT approach, which preconizes the use of authentic materials in teaching speaking. Authentic materials help students to get an insight about how real-life spoken English sounds, and allows them to develop a genuine speaking skill that can be used outside the academic context.

### **4. Which type of assessment do you usually rely on? & why?**

The fourth question was designed to explore the different types of assessment used by the teachers of oral expression module and more precisely, to identify the reasons behind adopting this (these) type (s) specifically. Moreover, this question was aimed, as well, to investigate when and how first year learners’ speaking skill is being assessed. The results show that four teachers of out four (100%) opted for formative assessment in their classes. Moreover, two teachers out of four (50%) admitted that they also made use of summative assessments by the end of the instruction/semester. The teachers validated their

answers by stating that formative assessments helped them track the learners' development, identify their weaknesses and made the learning/teaching process significantly better. The teachers also explained that summative assessments were needed at the end of the term/semester in order to test the effectiveness of the course, and identify how much the learners have achieved. One might conclude that using continuous assessments is vital for the teacher to know the students' progress and also to adjust his instruction according to what the learners need.

### **5. What are the criteria upon which you assess your learners' speaking skill?**

This question was set to explore the main criteria that oral expression module teachers relied on in assessing their learners' speech. The target behind this question was to investigate what aspects of the learner's language are more important in the views of the teachers in the process of assessment. The findings demonstrated that some teachers have a large list of criteria. However, all of the four teachers mentioned the elements of accuracy and fluency as two of the most essential criteria to assess speech. Moreover, three teachers out of four (75%) reported that they took into account interaction as another marker for the students' speaking abilities. Two out of four teachers (50%) stated that complexity, creativity and the content of learners' speech are significant in assessing their speaking skill. Another interesting criterion is intonation that was mentioned by one teacher (25%) out of four. The findings denote that the involved teachers in the current study do make use of a wide range of criteria in assessing the oral skill. Yet, they more or less give precedence to accuracy and fluency.

### **6. How and when do you address feedback on the learners' oral presentation?**

Feedback is a crucial element in the process of assessment and to the learners' development. The sixth question was set to enquire about the strategies used by the

teachers in addressing corrective feedback to their learners' speech. According to the answers gathered, four out of four teachers revealed that they tended to give feedback to their learners after they finished performing orally. The teachers justified their answers by stating that postponing feedback benefited the whole group as it enabled them learn from their mistakes decreased their anxiety. Nevertheless, only one (25%) of the four interviewees admitted that they interrupted their learners whenever they made grammatical or pronunciation errors. According to the data gathered, it is obvious that teachers avoid interrupting their learners while performing orally. This can be a good sign for the whole group to be as communicative and talkative as possible, and also for some students who can be easily inhibited if they get interrupted.

#### **7. What type of activities do you use to assess the students' oral proficiency?**

The seventh question in the interview was designed to investigate the types of activities that first year oral expression module teachers use to assess their learners' speaking skill. The collected answers were divergent from one teacher to the other, for instance; two teachers (50%) out of four held that they started their process with a warm-up consisting of an informal chat, and then they moved on to more serious activities such as role-plays, presentations, and dialogues. Other teachers mentioned placement tests, interviews, as well as the different types of speaking (intensive, extensive ...) as activities they used for assessing speaking. From the gathered data, it is clear that similarly to teaching speaking, each teacher involved in the current study has his own method and activities for assessing this skill, although some activities are commonly used by the involved four teachers, namely role-plays and presentations. Nonetheless, placement tests seem to be less implemented in the assessment process.



**8. How do you assess shy and reticent students' speaking skill who refuse to participate?**

The eighth question was set to elicit information about the process of assessing shy/inhibited learners. The aim behind this question was to demonstrate the way teachers deal with learners who do not take part in oral expression module classes, how they involve them in classroom interaction, and more importantly how they assess their spoken language. The answers gathered demonstrated that all the involved teachers make use of different strategies to deal with reticent learners. Two teachers (50%) out of four stated that in order to motivate their students to speak, they tended to highlight the importance of speech in the learners' academic career. Additionally, two teachers (50%) out of four claimed that they involved them in speech activities through group works with their peers to make them less anxious and more talkative. The teachers also provided some alternative solutions such as targeting the learners directly by their names or giving them bonus marks to enthruse them to participate more. Hence, one might assume that the OE teachers are using a variety of strategies in approaching shy learners. This can be a positive sign for the less talkative students, since teachers are giving equal opportunities to all the learners and not only the excellent ones.

**9. Do you involve your students in assessing their own and their peers' speaking skill? Why?**

The ninth question was designed to unveil whether oral expression module teachers involve their learners in the process of assessment or not. The goal behind this was to discover if the teachers are using alternative assessment methods such as self/peer assessment. The answers showed that there was a diversity of opinions among the teachers. Two teachers out of four noted that they did not allow their students to interfere in the

assessment process. The same two teachers stated that in order to maintain objectivity, credibility and reliability they prefer to take the responsibility of assessment themselves. On the other hand, the rest two teachers reported that they had no issue with involving their learners in the process of assessing themselves or their peers. They explained that the students would feel more comfortable assessing themselves and would accept giving and receiving criticism on their performances. Hence, it is fair to say that every teacher should be responsible for the assessing speech. However, alternative assessments can be used, occasionally; to make the instruction notably better for the learners by incorporating them, to a limited extent, in the assessment process of their peers' speech, as well as their own.

**10. Do you assess your learners' speaking skill performances holistically (assessing the whole presentation) or you rely on definite criteria in the process of assessment?**

The last question in the interview was addressed to identify whether the teachers assessed their learners' speaking performance using a set of criteria or as a whole. Put otherwise, the goal behind asking this question was to identify whether oral expression module teachers rely on holistic or analytic scoring rubrics along the process of assessment. Three teachers out of four held that they assessed their learners based on a definite set of criteria that were mentioned before (Interaction, accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, communication, creativity, peer's evaluation, grammar, conversational skill, content, intonation). One teacher maintained that s/he assessed the whole presentations. The findings denote that the majority of the involved teachers do prefer to use analytic scoring rubrics and assess the speaking skill according to a set of criteria, rather than using holistic scoring rubrics and assessing the presentations holistically.

### 3.2.2.2. Discussion of the Interview's Results

The following interview was used in order to complete the research paper and elicit relevant information from teachers of OE concerning the process of assessing the oral skill of first year English students at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel.

The first section of the interview consisted of three questions which were dedicated to the speaking skill. According to the collected responses, the teachers gave equal importance to the three main components of speech which were: vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. In addition to this, the respondents reported that they make use of multiple activities to teach speaking. The interviewees reported that they utilize traditional methods such as: roleplays, debates, presentations, as well as non-traditional methods like Pictionary games, taboo, or hot seat. Furthermore, the teachers expressed that while teaching speaking they tended to rely more on authentic materials mainly videos, audio-tracks or movies, which means that the majority follow the CLT approach in teaching the speaking skill

The second section was composed of seven questions. It was set to gather information about the practices involved in assessing speaking. The results show that teachers prefer to depend on formative assessment for the reason that it gives them the opportunity to be aware of the student's level, to pursue their development, and adjust the instruction according to what the students need. Besides, the teachers indicated that they focus on accuracy and fluency as the primary criteria to assess the student along with interaction, complexity and the richness of content as additional ones. Furthermore, OE teachers stated that, during oral performances, they prefer to let the students finish speaking and then, eventually, provide them with feedback in order not to confuse or inhibit them. The answers from the seventh question of the interview showed similarities with the ones from question number two. Teachers reported that they use a variety of

activities to assess speech. Some of them were compatible with the ones used to teach speaking (presentation, dialogues, and roleplays). In addition to these, interviews, placement tests as well as intensive and extensive speaking were implemented in the process of assessment. Concerning reticent students, the teachers asserted that they use different methods to involve them in their OE sessions, and thus assess their language. They reported that they motivate them to speak through highlighting the importance of acquiring the skill, incorporating them with their peers in group works and also through bonus marks. In the ninth question, there was a divergence of opinions regarding alternative assessments (peer and self-assessments). Half of the teachers believed that assessment should be their own responsibility, while the other half had no issue with including their students in the process. In the final question of the interview, the majority of OE module teachers noted that they prefer analytic scoring rubrics rather than rating the student's oral performance holistically.

To sum up, the findings gathered reveal that teachers of the OE module at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, are constantly working to enhance the teaching and assessment of the speaking though varying their practices, activities and approaches. Thus, the teachers acknowledge the difficulties EFL students might encounter while speaking the language, and the confusions they face in the assessment of their oral performances

### **3.3. Comparison of the Questionnaire's and the Interview's Results**

Given that the questionnaire and the interview attempted to answer questions relating to the same matters, it is imperative to compare between the results. The goal of this comparison is to consider the correlation between the results of both tools used in data collection.

The findings gathered from both tools revealed that none of the components of the speaking skill was neglected along the process of assessing the speaking skill. That is to say, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, in addition to fluency and comprehension were all taken into account in the assessment of the EFL learners' speaking skill.

Moreover, the analysis of the data yielded from both the interview and the questionnaire revealed that the criteria upon which the speaking skill is assessed were the same. Put otherwise, teachers of the oral expression module reported to implement many criteria such as: accuracy, fluency, complexity, in addition to creativity and interaction in the process of assessing their learners' speaking skill. The aforementioned criteria were the same listed in the learners' responses to the same addressed question. Furthermore, when the participants in this piece of research, being teachers or learners, were asked to state the types of activities and materials used in the teaching/ assessment of the speaking skill, both reported that role-plays, presentations, debates and interviews were the most used types of activities, while videos, audio-tracks and handouts were the most used types of materials.

Regarding the most used type of assessment, all of the four teachers asserted that they used formative assessment most, while students selected interim assessment, followed by formative assessment as the most used types. In addition, teachers held that they did address feedback to their students yet they preferred to postpone it to the end of the performance. Similarly, the majority of the involved students confirmed that they received feedback from their teachers and considered it to be important because it helps them to learn new vocabulary and find their weaknesses, with a majority stating that their teachers prefer to postpone the feedback until the end of the performance, which backs up teachers' claim. Additionally, half of the teachers held that they had no problem involving their students in the assessment process and using alternative assessment methods such as self-

assessment and peer-assessment. Likewise, the majority of the students said that they were indeed involved in the assessment process by their teachers.

### **3.4. Pedagogical Recommendations**

On the light of the findings of the present study, the following pedagogical recommendations are addressed to the students to raise their awareness about speaking and speech assessment. Likewise, some proposals are suggested to OE module teachers that could assist them in the assessment of their first year EFL learners' oral performances.

#### **To EFL students**

- Learners need to ameliorate different aspects of their speech instead of focusing on one area over the others.
- Students should be conscious of the importance of speaking English, not only during assessments and examinations, but also during their whole academic, professional, and social experiences.
- Learners should consider teacher's assessment as a beacon of opportunity to acknowledge their areas of weaknesses and reinforce them.
- Students should be more autonomous and should attempt to develop their speaking skills through practicing it more in and outside classroom contexts.

#### **To teachers of OE**

- Teachers of OE should make their EFL students aware of their expectations as students while practicing the language.
- Teachers should use relevant materials and activities while teaching and assessing the speaking skill to enthuse them to take more initiatives to speak in the classroom.
- Teachers should create a stress-free atmosphere because the more they do, the more they help their first year students overcome shyness, anxiety and inhibition.

- Teachers of OE should adjust their instruction to satisfy more their students' needs and interests.
- While addressing group work tasks, teachers should give equal chances for all the members in order to assess them fairly.
- Teachers should train their students to exercise self-assessment to make them more autonomous.
- Teachers should make the criteria upon which they assess and evaluate their oral performances clear to their students.
- Teachers should resort to alternative assessments such as peer assessment, portfolios ...etc instead of focusing on traditional types of assessment.

**To authorities and Policymakers:**

- Teachers should be equipped with the necessary materials to ensure the effectiveness of the course.
- Extra hours of the oral expression module should be added due to the significance of the speaking skill.
- There should be a unified assessment typology that should be adopted by teachers of oral expression module and which would facilitate the task of assessing EFL first year learners' speaking skill in a fair and similar way.

**3.5. Limitations of the Study**

The present study achieved its goal by exploring teachers' practices in assessing speaking performances and answered the research questions, nonetheless it had some limitations, mainly practical ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

-We did not have access to any of the materials and documents of the English Language Department's library.

-We could not meet enough times to discuss the issues of the dissertations and had to settle on online discussions.

-At the start, we wanted to get seventy (70) first year students to answer our questionnaire, but due to the sanitary conditions, it took us three weeks to get only fifty-five (55) answered questionnaires. Additionally, the interviews had to be conducted online as well.

- At the preliminary stage of conducting this research, and before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemics, we planned to conduct a classroom observation for a whole semester with different first year classes of OE. It could really pave the way for us to be more insightful about the types of assessment teachers do implement to assess their learners' oral performances.

### **3.6. Suggestions for Further Future Studies**

The followings are some issues that can be suggested to future researchers:

- Conducting in-depth studies about the process of assessing the students' spoken language should be a necessity, especially with the global growing interest and demands for having fluent speakers of English in all domains.
- It is important to conduct researches on the assessment of the speaking skill in different with different levels (intermediate, advanced...etc)
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was impossible to rely on experimental methods to explore the effectiveness of applying different types of assessment on the oral performance of EFL learners.
- Applying other alternative tools of research to investigate the current issues such as classroom observation via checklist, interviews, and attending different classes of OE module devoted to the assessment practices would shed more light on these practices to consider the extent of their effectiveness in developing the EFL learners' oral performances.



**Conclusion**

The final chapter represents the practical part of this research. The necessary data about the assessment of the speaking skill was gathered through two research tools, namely a students' questionnaire and an interview directed to teachers. This chapter portrayed the analysis and discussion of the results, which revealed that students gave a particular focus to the speaking skill and considered it to be the most important skill to master. In addition to that, one of the main findings was that teachers preferred to use formative assessment coupled with analytic scoring rubrics, without neglecting any of the speaking components in order to assess their students' speaking performances. Furthermore, half of the interviewed teachers believed that students should be involved in the assessment process. Finally, the limitations of the study were stated, along with some pedagogical recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

### **General conclusion**

Learning English as a foreign language has become a priority nowadays. Thus, the ability to speak the language is needed. However, some EFL learners struggle while performing orally. Likewise, teachers find the assessment of speaking problematic. Hence, the current research paper attempted to explore and investigate the teachers' practices in the assessment of the student's oral performances. The study in hand stated that the learners' oral performances can be positively influenced when teachers adopt different assessment types and practices, as well as varying their assessment criteria.

This study was composed of three main chapters. The first chapter was devoted to the theoretical background of the speaking skill. The second chapter provided a detailed interpretation of the assessment process. Moreover, the third chapter of the study was practical and it was dedicated to discuss data collection procedures and issued a description of the research instruments and the main results of the questionnaire and interview. Accordingly, the findings were interpreted and analyzed and the questions set at the preliminary stage of this research were answered.

The results of this research showed that first year EFL students at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel gave a particular focus to the speaking skill. The findings also revealed that teachers did not neglect any of the components of the speaking skill along the assessment process, and they mostly used role-plays, presentations, and dialogues as activities to assess the speaking skill, while the materials used to teach this skill included videos, audio-tracks, handouts, and other authentic materials. Additionally, the results also indicated that half of teachers had no problem in using alternative assessment methods and involving students in the assessment process, and one out of four teachers preferred to assess the students' oral performance holistically rather than analytically. Furthermore, students considered their teachers' feedback crucial in order not to repeat the same

mistakes again, to be more confident while performing, and more importantly to improve their speaking skill, whilst teachers asserted that group feedback is more beneficial for the students. It is also worth mentioning that teachers did vary their strategies to assess all of the learners' spoken production, including the less talkative ones. Hence, the hypothesis upon which this research was grounded was confirmed as OE teachers do make use of different types of assessment to evaluate their first year EFL learners' speaking performances. Moreover, the criteria teachers used to assess the aforementioned skill were well known to the students involved in the current research, therefore, students' oral performances will get better.

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## Appendix A

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

We would like to kindly ask you to complete the following questionnaire, in order for us to finalize our current research entitled “*An Investigation of Teachers' Practices in Assessing EFL Learners' Speaking Performance.*”

Would you, please, tick the small box (es) corresponding to the items you think more appropriate, and justify when necessary. Your answers and personal viewpoints will be treated anonymously and confidentially. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

#### SECTION ONE: Background Information

**1. How many years have you been studying English?**

..... Years.

**2. How would you evaluate your English speaking skill?**

- a. Excellent ☐    b. Very good ☐    c. Good ☐    d. Average ☐    e. Poor ☐    f. Very Poor ☐

**3. As an EFL student, which of the followings do you consider the most important skill (s) to be mastered?**

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

- Would you please explain why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

## SECTION TWO: The Speaking Skill

**4. As an EFL student, how important do you consider the speaking skill?**

- a. Extremely important ☐      b. Important ☐  
c. Somehow important ☐      d. Not at all important ☐

**5. Do you practise your English speaking skill outside the classroom context?**

- a. Yes ☐      b. No ☐

• If yes, how often do you do?

- a. All the time ☐      b. Frequently ☐      c. Sometimes ☐      d. Rarely ☐

**6. Which of the following (s) do you consider the most important component (s) while speaking?**

- a. Correct grammar ☐      b. Richness of vocabulary background ☐      c. Pronunciation ☐

• Would please explain why?

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

**7. Which of the following (s) do you most face as problems while speaking in the classroom?**

- a. Lack of vocabulary background ☐  
b. Fear of making pronunciation mistakes ☐  
c. Fear of composing ill- structured sentences grammatically speaking ☐  
d. Anxiety ☐  
e. Others ☐ .....

.....  
.....

**8. What are the types of speaking activities that your teachers assign you most in the classroom?**

- a. Information-gap activities ☐
- b. Jigsaw activities ☐
- c. Role-plays ☐
- d. Simulations ☐

• **If there are others, please mention them:**.....

**9. Which of the following teaching materials does your teacher rely on while teaching the speaking skill?**

- a. Textbooks or coursebooks ☐
- b. Handouts ☐
- c. Cassettes or audio materials ☐
- d. Videos ☐
- e. Other computer-based materials ☐

### **SECTION THREE: Classroom Assessment Practices**

**10. Does your teacher assess you:**

- a. **During** the lesson? ☐
- b. **At different intervals** of the academic year (e.g. semester quizzes and exams)? ☐
- c. **At the end** of a course? ☐

**11. Does your teacher involve you and your classmates in assessing your own performance?**

- a. Yes ☐
- b. No ☐

- **If yes, does s/he:**

- a. Set you to assess yourself? ☐
- b. Set students to assess each other? ☐

#### **SECTION FOUR: Assessment of Speaking**

**12. Which type of activities does your oral expression module teacher use to assess your speaking skill?**

a. Direct tests (Oral interviews) ☐

b. Performance tests (Question/answer) ☐

c. Presentations ☐

d. Debates ☐

e. Others

☐ .....

**13. Which aspects does your teacher take into account while assessing your oral performance?**

a. Accurate language (no grammar mistakes) ☐

b. Fluency (being able to manage a conversation without communication breakdown) ☐

c. Speaking for a long time using different genres and vocabulary items. ☐

d. Creativity ☐

e. Richness of the context ☐

**14. While performing orally, does your teacher provide you with feedback?**

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

- **If yes, does s/he do it:**

- a. Interrupt you to correct you mistakes while you are performing ☐





b. Assess your performance according to a pre-defined set of criteria (eg. Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation)? ☐

**19. Does your oral expression module teacher draw your attention to the mistakes you make while assessing you?**

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

- If yes how does s/he do?

.....  
.....

**20. Are there any comments or suggestions that you would like to make about the ways your oral expression teacher assesses your speaking skill?**

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

**Thank you so much for your cooperation!**

## **Appendix B**

### **Teachers' Interview**

1. What component (s) of the speaking skill do you focus on most while assessing your students and why? (Grammar, vocab etc.)
2. Which type of assessment do you usually rely on? & why?
  - A- Formative assessment
  - B- Summative assessment
  - C- Interim assessment
3. What are the criteria upon which you assess your learners' speaking skill?
4. How and when do you address feedback on the learners' oral presentation?
5. What type of activities do you use to teach the speaking skill?
6. What are the materials you make use of while teaching the speaking skill?
7. What type of activities do you use to assess the students' oral proficiency?
8. How do you assess shy and reticent students' speaking skill who refuse to participate? (inhibited)
9. Do you involve your students in assessing their own and their peers' speaking skill? Why?
10. Do you assess your learners' speaking skill performances holistically (assessing the whole presentation) or you rely on definite criteria in the process of assessment?

## Résumé

L'évaluation a une importance indéniable dans l'éducation et dans l'enseignement en particulier. Par conséquent, les objectifs principaux de cette étude étaient d'enquêter sur les différentes pratiques utilisées par les professeurs d'expression orale pour évaluer les performances orales des étudiants. En plus, l'étude tente d'examiner les types d'évaluation, de matériel pédagogique et d'exercices utilisés par les professeurs pour enseigner et évaluer la compétence orale au Département d'Anglais à l'Université Mohamed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel. La présente étude est basée sur l'hypothèse que plus les professeurs d'expression orale adoptent différents types et pratiques d'évaluation et plus ils clarifient les critères d'évaluation à leurs étudiants ; plus ces étudiants d'Anglais comme langue étrangère réussissent dans leurs performances orales. L'analyse documentaire de cette étude était composée de deux chapitres dans lesquels « la compétence orale » et « l'évaluation » ont été traités. Le troisième chapitre était de nature pratique et discutait du paradigme descriptif qui a été choisi comme modèle de recherche. Les données ont été récoltées grâce à deux outils de recherche ; un questionnaire adressé à cinquante-cinq (55) sur trois cent trente-deux (332) étudiants de première année licence, ainsi qu'une interview en ligne avec quatre (04) professeurs du module d'expression orale au département d'Anglais. L'analyse des résultats a démontré que les professeurs mettent en œuvre une variété de pratiques et d'exercices pour évaluer la compétence orale de leurs étudiants. De plus, ils prennent en compte différents critères dans le processus d'évaluation, en premier lieu la fluidité et la précision. Sur les bases des résultats cette étude, des recommandations pédagogiques et suggestions pour des futures recherches sont proposées.

**Mots-clés :** Compétence Orale, Évaluation, Pratiques, Critères.

## ملخص

إن الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو التحقيق في الممارسات المختلفة التي يستخدمها الأساتذة لتقييم التعبير الشفوي لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بالإضافة إلى النظر في أنواع التقييم والمواد والأنشطة المستخدمة لتدريس وتقييم مهارة التحدث بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى، جيجل. وفقا لذلك تستند الدراسة الحالية إلى فرضية مفادها أنه كلما اعتمد اساتذة التعبير الشفوي على أنواع وممارسات مختلفة للتقييم مع جعل معايير التقييم واضحة، كلما تحسن الاداء الشفوي لطلبة اللغة الانجليزية. تألف الإطار النظري لهذه الدراسة من فصلين تم فيهما تناول مهارة الكلام واسس التقييم بالتفصيل. اما الفصل الثالث فكان عمليا تطبيقياً حيث تم جمع النتائج من خلال استخدام وسائل البحث اللازمة والتي تتكون من استبيان موجه عشوائياً لخمسة وخمسين (55) من أصل ثلاثمائة واثنان وثلاثون (332) طالب للسنة الاولى انجليزي، بالإضافة الى اجراء مقابلة مع اربعة (4) اساتذة للتعبير الشفوي. وبعد تحليل نتائج هذه الدراسة تمّ تأكيد ان جلّ الاساتذة يعتمدون على مجموعات مختلفة من الممارسات والانشطة ويركزون على معايير متعددة في تقييم التعبير الشفوي اهمها الطلاقة والدقة. وعلى اسس هذه الدراسة تمّ تقديم اقتراحات للباحثين والأساتذة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** مهارة التحدث، التقييم، الممارسات، المعايير.