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Department of English

Self-assessing Speaking Skill among EFL Students

Case of Second Year EFL Students at Tlemcen University

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master's Degree in Language Studies

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Dedications 1

I dedicate this work to all the members of my family in general.

To my mother and father, sunshine of my days and the pillar of my life. May Allah bless them.

To my grandmother whom day and night wish me the best and success.

To my lovely sister and brothers to their attention and support.

To my dearest nieces Meriem, Amira and Hanane.

To my wonderful friend and my peer in this wrok Charif Douae.

To all those who believed in me.

Chekroun Souhila

Dedications 2

To my father and mother, source of my happiness and success in life

To all my family overseas, in Jordan and Algeria

To my great uncle Ch. Abdullah, the source of knowledge, love and wisdom

To my brothers: Obada, Hothaifa and mohammed

To my sisters: Huda and Oula

To all my teachers
To my best teachers and supporters Mr.Belbechir Mekki , Mr. Herarsi Djilali and Mr Benhammadi Mohammed

To the never ending list of my friends especially those in Tlemcen

To my cousins, especially my lovely source of inspiration Hiba for her unconditional support and encouragements

To my great friend the peer of my work Chakroun Souhila and her family

To my students

To all those who believe in me and pray for my success

CHARIF Dua'a

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Abstract

Speaking lies at the heart of language learning. From this stand point the majority of students wish to be communicatively competent in the target language. Therefore, the use of speaking self-assessment will help them to monitor their progress and to recognize their own learning needs. Hence, this study aims at discussing the use of speaking self-assessment among EFL students and to what extent they are familiar with this notion. The participants were Five (5) EFL teachers and thirty (30) EFL students from Tlemcen University. Two questionnaires were used to collect data; one was addressed to second year students and the other one to the teachers of oral production. The data collected were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results revealed that the speaking skill is the most skill wanted to be mastered by EFL students. Despite the fact that speaking self-assessment use can help them to achieve this, most students do not know what is meant by self-assessment. The study concluded with some suggestions and recommendations for students and teachers in order to help them to achieve a better understanding and use of speaking self-assessment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

OE   Oral Expression

GVC   Global Virtual Classroom

List of Graphics, Figures and Tables

(National Board of Education, 2002)

General introduction

The English language has become a global language. This encourages EFL students to learn it, and to become proficient English speakers. In this sense, in order to develop speaking skill students should use different methods or strategies .Yet, student self-assessment can have a significant role in enhancing language learning in general and speaking skill in particular.

This research work attempts to give a clear image about self-assessment and its use within speaking skill. Its objective is to make EFL teachers and students aware of the importance of using such a method in improving speaking skill.

Thus, the researchers aim to provide convincing answers for the following research questions:

1. What is the main language skill that EFL students want to master?

2. To what extent EFL students are familiar with the concept of self-assessment?

3. Can the use of self-assessment help students to improve their oral performance?

From the above mentioned questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. Speaking is the most desirable skill to be master by EFL students.

2. The majority of EFL students are not familiar with the notion of self-assessment.

3. Self-assessment use has a significant role to play in improving EFL students' oral performance.

In order to investigate the validity of the hypotheses, the researchers has used two questionnaires as research tools for gathering data from EFL teachers and second year EFL students at Tlemcen University. The data have been analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

This research work consists of two chapters. The first chapter is a review of literature which attempts to clarify key concepts and explain the role of speaking self-assessment in enhancing student's performance. It is divided into two parts. The first part gives an overview of assessments in general and self-assessments in particular as a part of assessment, including definition, types, its use in language learning, advantages and disadvantages and its relation to self-regulation and self-monitoring. While the second part deals with the definition of speaking skill and certain important elements related to this skill. In addition, this part sheds the light on speaking self-assessments as it is the main concern of the research.

The second chapter starts with the objectives of this research work and then gives information about the participants. Moreover, it describes the research instruments that have been used for collecting data which have been analyzed and discussed. Based on the results obtained from the case study. In addition it offers some suggestions for the betterment of speaking self-assessment.

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General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature which attempts to clarify key concepts and explain the role of speaking self-assessments in enhancing student's performance. The first part of this chapter gives an overview of assessments in general and self-assessments in particular as a part of assessment, including definition, types, its use in language learning, advantages and disadvantages and its relation to self-regulation and self-monitoring. While the second part deals with the definition of speaking skill and certain important elements related to this skill. In addition, this part sheds the light on speaking self-assessments as it is the main concern of the research.

1.2 Assessment in Education

Assessment is used as a tool to measure the learning outcomes for the individual progress. It is argued that **"Assessment is an integral part of instruction....effective classroom assessment is relevant to immediate learning''** (Carr and Harris, 2001: 35). Furthermore, assessment will vary across programs and should be designed to be ongoing and sustainable to support continuous improvement of student learning.

1.2.1 Definition of Assessment

In general, assessment is often referred to as the act of making a judgment about something. However in education, assessment is about the divers methods and tools used by educators or teachers to check the learning progress, to measure and document the academic readiness, skill acquisition or the educational needs. In fact assessment is a continuous process, and its aim is to use these results positive or negative to make a decision about how instruction and curriculum may be modified to effectively engage students in the learning process. According to Palomba and Banta, **"Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.''** (Palomba and Banta, 1999: 4)

Additionally, the National Research Council (2001) mentioned that every assessment rests on **Three Pillars** which are referred to as:

1. A model of how students represent knowledge and develop competence in a content domain.

2. Tasks or situations that allow one to observe students' performance

3. An interpretation method for drawing inferences from performance evidence.

1.2.2 Types of Assessment

Assessment can take a variety of forms, and is generally divided into three types which are assessment **for** learning, assessment **of** learning and assessment **as** learning.
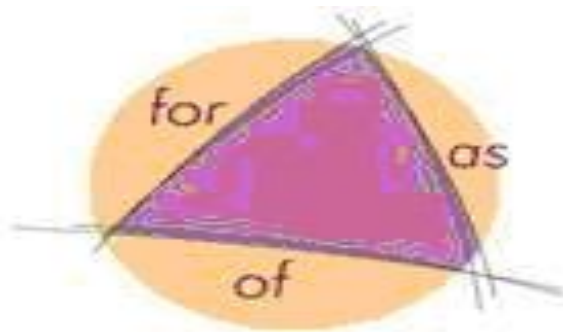
Figure 1.1: The three types of assessments of, for and as learning

1.2.2.1 Assessment for learning (Also known: Formative Assessment)

The first thing that we should put in mind about assessment for learning is that it occurs through the learning process, from the beginning of the course of study to the time of summative assessment often more than once. In addition it comprises two phases; initial or diagnostic assessment and formative assessment. Torrance and Pryor assert that **" formative assessment is about discovering what the learners know, understand or can do''** (Torrance and Pryor,1998: 153).

Moreover it offer the opportunity to teachers to check the ongoing teaching learning progress so they adjust their instruction to keep students on track, similarly students are provided valuable feedback on their own learning.

1.2.2.2 Assessment of Learning (Also known: Summative Assessment)

Is the use of a task or an activity to measure, record and report on a student's level of achievement in regards to specific learning expectations. It usually occurs at the end of unit , term or semester, and may be used to rank or grade students.

Assessment of Learning is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or symbols about how well students are learning. It often contributes to pivotal decisions that will affect students' futures. It is important, then, that the underlying logic and measurement of assessment of learning be credible and defensible.

The effectiveness of assessment of learning for grading or ranking depends on the validity and reliability of activities.

1.2.2.2.1 Comparing Assessment *for* Learning and Assessment *of* Learning

Both assessments are used to see what the students have achieved, either in a continuous way or at the end of a term. Crooks (2002) explain this:

> **Firstly, assessment of learning (often described as summative assessment) aims to provide a well-founded, clear and up-to-date picture of a student's current capabilities or attitudes, progress over time or further growth needs and potential. Secondly, assessment for learning (often described as formative assessment) is focused on enhancing student development, and often involves relatively unstructured interactions between student and student or teacher and student rather than a planned formal assessment event.**
>
> *(Croks, 2002: 241)*

Further, the difference is clearly clarified by Black, he stated that **"When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative assessment; when the customer tastes the soup, that's summative assessment"** (Black, 1998, quoted in Benmostefa, 2014: 88). However, summative assessment is considered to be a powerful tool, as it contributes to

text marks, academic reports and qualifications. On the other hand, formative assessment creates space for competence constructing narratives of students and it informs current teaching.

1.2.2.3 Assessment as learning

Assessment as learning occurs when students are their own assessors. In other words is the use of ongoing self-assessment by students in order to monitor and reflect on their own learning so they make adjustment in order to achieve deeper understanding and to select the appropriate strategy that fill up their learning style, it builds metacognition as it involves students in understanding the standards expected of them.

Black and William view this type of assessment as being often accurate and honest; however, it is problematic when students do not have a **"sufficiently clear picture of the targets that their learning is meant to attain"** (Black and William, 200: 7).

Earl (2003) argues that the traditional assessment model utilizing predominantly Assessment *of* Learning to report progress and compare students should be replaced by a balanced model including all three of the types of assessments. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 below demonstrate Earl's suggested balance for the three types of assessment: Assessment *as* Learning, Assessment *of* Learning and Assessment *for* Learning.

Figure 1.2 Traditional Assessment Pyramid

Figure 1.3 Reconfigured Assessment Pyramid

1.2.3 Importance of assessment

Assessment is important because of all the decisions you will make about students when teaching and caring for them. Cowan referred to the importance of assessment as the engine which drives student learning.

All of the assessment decisions taken as a whole will direct and alter students' learning outcomes and future. yet, assessment is significant since it provides diagnostic feedback, it also assess the progress of the learners performance and the teaching effectiveness. Besides, well-designed assessment can encourage active learning especially when the assessment delivery is innovative and engaging, and for some students may motivated them. Another point that make assessment important is that through it educators and teachers can identify the learner needs.

1.3 Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a process of formative assessment which helps students to improve their motivation, engagement, and learning. The term 'student self-assessment' is interconnected to student self-regulation, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

1.3.1 Definition of Student Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a precious learning tool as well as part of an assessment process in which learners make judgment about their own performance and abilities without always relying on teacher judgment. This idea is supported by Cram (1995) , he pointed that this process **"involves learners in discovering what they know and what they feel as well as what they can do"** (Cram, 1995: 271). Through self-assessment, students can:

- ❖ Identify their own skill gaps, where their knowledge is weak.
- ❖ See where to focus their attention in learning.
- ❖ Set realistic goals.
- ❖ Revise their work.
- ❖ Track their own progress.

Otherwise **" Self-assessment is about promoting learning and achievement, not about grading''** (Brooke & Andrade, 2013: 1). When students self -assess, they are actively involved in the learning process and their independence and motivation is improved.

1.3.2 Self-assessment of language learning

It is widely accepted that self-assessment is a key learning strategy for autonomous language learning, enabling students to monitor their progress and relate learning to individual needs and open their view about language learning. In the same line of thought, Nunan (1998) claim that

> **"In a learner-centered system, learners can be sensitized to their role as learners, and can also be assisted to develop as autonomous learners by the systematic use of self- assessment."**
>
> *(Nunan, 1998:130)*

A part from that students are often passive in their approach to learning, and may become demotivated if they cannot see any clear progress. Self-assessment produces learners who are more active and focused, and better placed to assess their own progress in terms of communication.

Oscarsson (1989), gives six different reasons why self-assessment can be beneficial to language learning. First, he stresses that self-assessment promotes learning. It gives learners training in assessment which results in benefits to the learning process. Secondly, it gives both students and teachers a raised level of awareness of perceived levels of abilities and encourages learners to look at course content in a more discerning way. Thirdly, it is highly motivating in terms of goal-orientation. Fourth, through the use of self-assessment methodologies, the range of assessment techniques is expanded in the classroom. As a result of using self-assessment, the learner broadens' his/her range of experience within the realm of assessment. Fifth, by practicing self-assessment, the students participate in their own evaluation (Dickinson 1987). Finally, by successfully involving students in their own assessment, beneficial post-course effects will ensue.

1.3.3 The Advantages of Self-Assessments

There is general consensus that self-assessment is positive and leads to benefits for students. Self-assessment is substantial for students for the reason that it can increase their interest and motivation and it aids students to think about their own learning progress and problems, and then, find ways and strategies to improve. The second major cause is that it helps them in development of critical and meta-cognitive skills for analysis of their own work. Sadler believe that:

> **"self-assessment is essential for progress as a learner: for understanding of selves as learners, for an increasingly complex understanding of tasks and learning goals, and for strategic knowledge of how to go about improving."**

(Sadler, 1993: 153-169)

In the same sense, the students become self-directed learners and not passive learners, and it gives them the chance to manage their own learning and development more independently i.e. Students can take responsibility for their own learning. As well, when students are collaborators in assessment, they develop the habit of self-reflection.

Furthermore self-assessment may minimize the fear and anxiety students' face before the tests and exams .Because through the practice of self-assessment students learn that assessment is not something apart from learning or something done to them, but a collaboration between teachers and students, and an integral part of how they learn and improve.

1.3.4 The Disadvantages of Self-Assessments

As every process self-assessments has also its drawbacks. Students can be undecided or if they haven't received enough feedback from the teacher, they may have doubts regarding to the progress that they have made; therefore they can provide wrong answers, making the self-assessment process invalid. Another aspect, is that self-assessments required a training because some students are not ready to have a self-assessment task, mostly because they aren't aware of the seriousness impact of the process; therefore they tend to give themselves a higher grade, which alters the final result. Thereby, Students need to have a very high degree of consciousness, so they can be able to analyze the errors that they have made, and most importantly, their performance during the course or unit.

1.3.5 Students Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is the process of taking control and assessing one's own learning and behavior. Zimmerman(2002) asserts that **"Self-regulation is not a mental ability or an academic performance skill; rather it is the self-directive process by which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skills."** (Zimmerman,2002: 65)

Therefore , this process is about the method or procedure that learners use to manage and organize their thoughts and convert them into skills used for learning. Moreover, it's about setting goals then selecting strategies to attain those goals and monitoring progress, restructuring if the goals are not being met, using time efficiently, self-evaluating the methods selected, and, finally adapting future methods based on what was learned this time through. Pintrich and Zucho (2002) state that:

> **" Self-regulated learning is an active constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and monitor, regulate and control their cognition motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features of the environment''.**

(Pintrich and Zucho, 2002: 65)

Student self-assessment is an important aspect of and contributor to greater self-regulation of learning. Hence, the relationship between them is that through self-assessment students can identify their lacks and weaknesses to regulate his/her learning strategies and behavior to better achievement in the future.

1.3.6 Students Self-Monitoring

Firstly, self-monitoring is vital to self-regulation. However it' s about the strategy used by students to self-assess their behavior and record the results. In addition, **"self-monitoring is the process of having individuals record data regarding their own behavior for the purpose of changing its rate"** (Coleman & Webber, 2002: 103). Thus, Self-monitoring provides more immediate feedback to students than is possible when teachers evaluate the behavior.

According to Hallahan and Kauffman (2000) self-monitoring is defined as the practice of observing and recording one's own academic and social behaviors. Therefore, we conclude that self-monitoring consist of two elements: self-observation and self-recording. For, Zimmerman (1995) has indicated that:

> **"self-monitoring activities enhance not only learners' learning but also their self-efficacy in the learning process. Self-monitoring activities give students a sense of personal control that has been shown to be a major source of intrinsic motivation to continue learning on their own.''**

(Zimmerman,1995: 202)

Further, self-monitoring is beneficial for students in the sense that it can produce positive results, increase students' awareness of their own behavior and it incorporates academic and social skills.

1.3.7 Student Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation has been defined by the Business Dictionary as the act of **"Looking at your progress, development and learning to determine what has improved and what areas still need improvement. Usually it involves comparing a "before" situation with a current situation.''**

When students evaluate themselves, they are assessing what they know, do not know, and what they would like to know. They begin to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. They become more familiar with their own beliefs, and possibly their misconceptions. After they self-evaluate they will be able to set goals that they feel they can attain with the new knowledge they have about themselves. They can do this by filling out self-evaluation forms, journalizing, taking tests, writing revisions of work, asking questions, and through discussions.

1.4 Speaking skill

Nowadays, speaking is the most required skill that EFL learners want to develop. In educational contexts,**"...acquiring speaking proficiency is one of the hardest skills for ELL... to achieve"** (Sasson,2013: 24). In language teaching and learning, speaking is considered as a skill that must be practiced fluently and comprehensively.

1.4.1 Definition of speaking

Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. According to Oxford Dictionary, speaking is "**the action of conveying information or expressing one's feeling in speech**" (2009:414). Similarly, Fulcher, (2003, cited in Itkonen, 2010:23) states that speaking is: "**…the verbal use of the language to communicate with others**". Speaking not only means interacting with people about different subjects in different places; speaking is also the resource through which people can reflect on their identity and their culture. According to Kavaliauskienė (2006), language is the tool to convey people's identity in society and for this reason learning to speak in a foreign language is different to other subjects due to its social nature. In addition Speaking is defined as the students' ability to express themselves orally, coherently, fluently and appropriately in a given meaningful context to serve both transactional and interactional purposed using correct pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary and adopting the pragmatic and discourse rules of the spoken language.

1.4.2 The Importance of speaking

Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. Communication takes place, where there is speech. Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. The importance of speaking skills hence is enormous for the learners of any language. Nazara (2011) regard speaking as the most important skill that EFL learners need to acquire and she claims:

> "**Along the history of foreign language teaching and learning, speaking has always been considered as the most essential skill to be mastered for several reasons. First, approaches and methods for teaching speaking have long been major focuses of language teaching researches and conferences. Second, a huge number of conversation and other speaking course books, audios and videos are continuously published. In addition, many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language**".
>
> *(Nazara, 2011: 29)*

Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community. We use language in a

variety of situations. People at their work places, i.e. researchers working either in a medical laboratory or in a language laboratory, are supposed to speak correctly and effectively in-order to communicate well with one another. Any gap in commutation results in misunderstandings and problems.

1.4.3 Purpose of speaking

It is stated that the purpose of speaking can be either transactional or interactional discourse. The purpose of transactional way is "message" oriented rather than "listener" oriented (Nunan, 1989:27) In this type of interaction accurate and coherent communication of the message is very essential. Richards (1990:54-55) gives examples of language used for transactional purposes which are : news broadcasts, descriptions, narrations and instructions . While the purpose of interactional way is to establish relationship, it is known as the "interpersonal use of language" (Yule, 1989:169). The language used in the interactional node is "listener" oriented, i.e. Speaker's talk tends to be limited to quite short turns (Richards, 1990:54-55). The best examples of this type are: greetings, small talks and complements.

1.4.4 Aspects of speaking

In the speaking process, some features are present while people are involved in interaction, Riggenbach, (1998, cited in Itkonen, 2010) states that pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, accuracy and fluency are commonly thought as the principal components of speaking; however, Itkonen (2010) mentions other relevant features as proficiency and coherence. Equally, Louma (2003) includes components of speaking as pronunciation, and spoken grammar. Below, the description of some of the relevant components of speaking is present.

- **Fluency**: Richards (2006) defines fluency as the natural language use, which despite limitations in the communicative competence, the speaker engaged in an interaction maintains an understandable and current communication. Jones (2007:18) claims that:

> **Fluency doesn't mean speaking really fast without hesitating.**
> **It's being able to express yourself despite gaps in your**

knowledge, despite the mistakes you're making, despite not knowing all the vocabulary you might need. It means hesitating in such a way that others keep listening and wait for you to continue, rather than finishing your sentences for you.

(Jones, 2007:18)

This means that fluency is the speaker' ability to express himself. In addition, Nunan (1999) states that fluency is the speakers" ability to use the language quickly and easily.

- **Accuracy**

Richards (2006) defines accuracy as the creation of correct examples of language use. In the same way, Bryne, (1988) states that: **"accuracy refers to the use of correct forms where utterances do not contain errors affecting the phonological, syntactic, semantic or discourse features of a language".**

(Bryne, 1988, cited in Lan, 1994)

In other words accuracy refers to the right use of the grammatical structures, pronunciation, syntax, and meaning of messages of the language in the oral production without mistakes that can interfere in interaction.

- **Pronunciation**

In oral production, the term pronunciation is defined as the way that the sentence is spoken (Harmer, 2009). It also involves several components as pitch and intonation. Dalton & Seidlhofer (2001) define pronunciation as the production of significant sounds in two senses; the first one is that pronunciation is the production and reception of sounds of speech, and the second one is that it means acts of speaking depending on the way and contexts in which sounds are produced. For Louma (2003), pronunciation is the sound of speech that **"can refer to many features of the speech stream, such as individual sounds, pitch, volume, speed, pausing, stress and intonation"** (Louma, 2003:11). Therefore, learners who want to develop the speaking skill should practice pronunciation.

Nunan (1999) says that:

Linguistic competence is not sufficient for someone who wants to communicate competently in another language. The speaker needs

communicative competence which includes not only linguistic competence but also a range of other sociolinguistic and conversational skills which help him know how to say what to whom and when.

(In Tuan and Mai, 2015:9)

Thus, language learners have to develop this competence because it is necessary for effective communication.

1.4.5 Communicative Competence

The term communicative competence was first introduced by Hymes in 1972 as a reaction to Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence. Hymes 1972 states that: **"Communicative competence is that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts"**

(Hymes, 1972 as cited in Brown, 2007:219)

Thus, communicative competence refers to the language user's ability to convey and understand messages in particular situations.

Canale and Swain (1980) view communicative competence in terms of four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence.

1.4.5.1 Grammatical Competence

According to Canale and Swain (1980:29) grammatical competence is that aspect of communicative competence that encompasses **"Knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics, and phonology".** Therefore, students should have the ability to produce the language correctly.

1.4.5.2 Discourse Competence

This competence is related to the knowledge of achieving coherence and cohesion in a spoken or written text (Canale and Swain, 1980). According to Brown (2007:220), discourse competence is "The ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to

form meaningful whole out of a series of utterances". It means the ability to combine sentences into a cohesive text.

1.4.5.3 Sociolinguistic Competence

This type of competence requires:

> **"an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction. Only in a full context of this kind can judgment be made on the appropriateness of particular utterances"**

(Savignon, 1983: 37)

Hence, language users should be able to use sentences appropriately in various social contexts.

1.4.5.4 Strategic Competence

Canale and Swain (1980) define strategic competence as:

> **"The verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence".**

(Canale and Swain 1980:30)

Thus, strategic competence is related to the knowledge of how to use communication strategies. Developing students' communicative competence requires regular practice inside the classroom through performing different activities.

1.4.6 Speaking Problems Encountered by EFL Students

Speaking is regarded as one of the difficult skills to develop for the majority of EFL students who are incompetent in expressing themselves orally in English. As Loama (2004:01) argues**: "Speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence on**

speaking takes a long time to develop". Therefore, during the speaking classes, EFL learners encounter many problems that detain their learning process. Among these difficulties the: students' pronunciation level, lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar and the use of the mother tongue.

1.4.6.1 Inadequate Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the discovering knowledge of new words through several means as Beck, Mckeown, and Kucan (2008:01) define it: **"words that a reader reorganizes in print"** and **"learning meanings of new words"**. Most EFL students find that lack of vocabulary make them unable to show and share their opinions with others in a comfortable way. Some students claim that when it comes to speaking, some words and phrases may never come to their mind, so their expression may not deliver their intended meaning precisely. One other stated **"In some social situations that involve use of highly colloquial language, you'll find that you face a shortage of vocabulary and you can't express accurately what you want to say."**

1.4.6.2 Grammar as a Stumbling Block

Ur (1980:04) defines grammar as: **"the way a language manipulates and combines words or bits of words in order to form longer units of meaning ".** Some students reported that to ensure grammatical accuracy, they would think about the particular grammar item being involved before producing the utterance.

Under such circumstance, their learned grammatical knowledge serves as an 'editor' or 'monitor' (Krashen, 1988). But many EFL learners are not able to produce correct grammatical sentences; this is due to the ignorance of the rules and instructions, such as: the use of two negatives in the same sentence, the mis-use of modifiers, the production of fragment sentences and the mixture between tenses. Therefore, the inappropriate grammar leads to misunderstanding communication.

1.4.6.3 Imperfectly Learned Pronunciation and Intonation

Pronunciation is necessary in foreign language learning because it makes EFL learners more competent in communication. Morley (1991:488) argues: **"intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence".**

Most students produce words without caring about their pronunciation because of their low awareness of supra-segmental features, such as: intonation which is important as it is used to contrast ideas; 'rising intonation' is used for questioning, inquiring or invitation while 'falling intonation' is used for agreement and confirming. As well as, the inadequate official sessions for practicing speaking lead students to be less aware about their pronunciation mistakes. Besides, the interference between the American and British accents which make learners confuse on their pronunciations.

1.4.6.4 Input-Poor Environment outside Class

In cases where the majority if not all the students share the same mother tongue, they prefer to use it outside and even inside the classroom rather than the target language since they feel more at ease.

In addition, in the Algerian context there are poor chances to practice English outside the classroom since Arabic is the students' mother tongue and French is considered as the second language. In this since students will face a difficulty in using and communicating with English outside the classroom and this will affect their ability to develop speaking skill.

1.4.7 Assessing speaking

Although the speaking skill is considered by several authors as the main ability to be worked in an EFL classroom, some authors agree with saying that it is also the most complex skill to evaluate. Kitao & Kitao (1996) say that speaking is the most difficult skill to test since it involves several factors as the phonology, grammar, and coherence, which implies a difficulty at the time to be objective with the speaking aspects to be tested. Lado (1961:239) wrote:

> **The ability to speak a foreign language is without doubt the most highly prized language skill, and rightly so. . . . Yet testing the**

ability to speak a foreign language is perhaps the least developed and the least practiced in the language testing field.

(In Fulcher, 2003:18)

Lado emphasizes the necessity of providing a clear definition of speaking and developing the field of assessing the ability of speaking.

The difficulty of assessing speaking stems from the nature of this skill as being a momentary procedure and time-consuming since examinees are assessed one after one. Moreover, the assessment of speaking is often subjective and affected by many aspects. This problem can be solved by implementing relevant rating scales (Pawlak & Waniek-Klimczak, 2015).

. Knight exposes that when teachers have to assess the speaking skill, one of the principal problems is the difficulties they have at the moment to choose the correct criteria. Standowiks (2007) states that even if speaking tests have been relevant, the lack of proper criteria for testing oral production has given written test a most significant role in EFL classrooms. Knight presents 8 categories as criteria for the assessment of the oral production: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, conversational skill, sociolinguistic skill, and content. Hence, teachers should choose different assessment designs according to the type of information they need, possibly guided by the tasks that the students know. Speaking scales are efficient tools that teachers can use in order to assess students' performance.

1.4.7.1 Speaking Scales

Rating scale design and development for testing speaking is generally conducted using one of two approaches: the measurement-driven approach or the performance data-driven approach. The measurement-driven approach prioritizes the ordering of descriptors onto a single scale. Meaning is derived from the scaling methodology and the agreement of trained judges as to the place of any descriptor on the scale. The performance data-driven approach, on the other hand, places primary value upon observations of language performance, and attempts to describe performance in sufficient detail to generate descriptors that bear a direct relationship with the original observations of language use. Meaning is derived from the link between performance and description. Speaking scores

express *how well* the examinees can speak the language being tested. They usually take the form of numbers, but they may also be verbal categories such as 'excellent' or 'fair'. The table below represents an example of a speaking rating scale:

6	Speaks fluently with few if any non-native features, such as a foreign accent. Is capable of expressing even subtle nuances of meaning with precision, and also makes varied and appropriate use of idiomatic expressions. Is able to describe even a complicated topic and to include sub-themes in the description, to develop different viewpoints and to bring the presentation to an appropriate conclusion.
5	Speaks fluently without frequent obvious need to search for an expression. Delivery characterised by naturalness, coherence and appropriate length. Is able to present a clear and detailed description of even a complex topic. Can use idiomatic expressions and everyday expressions, and is able to express nuances fairly well.
4	Copes fairly well even in less familiar speech situations. Makes a distinction between formal and informal registers, at least to some extent. Is able to present and justify an opinion comprehensibly. Is able to talk about and describe sights, sounds and experiences. Is obliged only rarely to use circumlocutions in everyday communication because of inadequate language proficiency
3	Copes with the most familiar speech situations and is able to take the initiative in everyday language-use situations. Speech may be quite slow but there are few unnatural pauses. Is comprehensible despite transferring native or foreign language structures and vocabulary to the target language. Pronunciation may clearly deviate from target language standards.
2	Copes with routine speaking situations that require a simple exchange of information. Nevertheless, the speaker's language proficiency considerably restricts the range of matters that can be dealt with. Successful communication of a message presupposes that the interlocutor is willing to help the speaker in forming the message. Pronunciation may deviate clearly from the target language norm, thus requiring special effort from the interlocutor and impeding successful communication.
1	Is able to ask and reply to simple questions dealing with immediate everyday needs. Can make use of simple polite forms. Copes with the very simplest speaking tasks, but communication is slow and very fragmented. Often obliged to resort to nonverbal means in order to be understood.

Table 4.1 The National Certificate descriptive scale (National Board of Education, 2002)

1.5 Speaking Self-Assessment

Self-assessment of second or foreign-language ability refers to the language learner's evaluation of his or her own language skills. Self-assessment of speaking refers to students' self-ability to evaluate their oral performance. Speaking self-assessment, as a formative assessment tool, promotes learning, establishes a goal-oriented activity,

alleviates the assessment burden on teachers, and finally continues as a long-lasting experience (Kirby & Downs, 2007; Mok, Lung, Cheng, Cheung, & Ng, 2006; Ross, 2006).Speaking self-assessment also relies on the social dimension of learning, as Orsmond and Merry (2013) noted, in which self-directed progressive learning is a key aspect in the appropriation of the learning objectives and the involvement of teachers and learners in collaborative learning.

1.5.1 Benefits of Speaking Self-Assessment

Previous research on speaking self-assessment has suggested that learners as reflective practitioners are encouraged to develop more responsibility when assessing their own performance. Self-assessment of speaking have many benefits, according to (Babaii et al. 2016:11) the use of speaking self-assessment can (1) increase self-awareness and detection of weak points followed by improved learning; (2) the positive influence of the use of speaking scoring criteria on the accuracy of self-assessment; (3) the long-lasting effect of self-assessment, in comparison to teacher assessment, on learning.

1.5.2 Characteristics of Effective Speaking Self-Assessment

In order to give students the ability to practice and to master this key self-regulatory process they need input (i.e., instruction and feedback). Research has shown (Brown & Harris, 2013; Ross, 2006) that realistic self-assessments are more likely when:

1. Students are involved in the process of establishing criteria for evaluating work outcomes.

2. Students are taught how to apply those criteria.

3. Students receive feedback from others (i.e., teachers and peers) to help move students toward more accurate evaluations.

4. Students are taught how to use other assessment data (e.g., test scores or graded work) to improve their work.

5. There is psychological safety when self-evaluation is used.

6. When rewards for accuracy are used.

7. When students are required to explicitly justify to their peers their self-evaluations.

These insights give us a basis for developing a curriculum that could guide the implementation of student self-assessment as a necessary competence for self-regulation.

1.5.3 Limitations of Speaking Self-Assessment

Although of the positive benefits to say about speaking self-assessment, some limitations pointed out. Two major themes under this category are presented below.

1- The unreliable nature of self-assessment

The disadvantage of self- assessment is the lack of being assessed and commented by a specialist who can see all aspects better and can criticize based on standards. Most students see themselves as not capable to assess their performance because they are not aware of the exact criteria of scoring, and they think that it would be more helpful, if someone else gave them a score.

2 - The time-consuming nature of self-assessment.

1.5.4 Tools Can Be Used For Speaking Self-Assessment

There are various tools and activity that can be used by students in order to assess their speaking skill. Some of the main used are listed as follows:

1.5.4.1 Rubric

Rubrics are a valuable tool for self-assessment. Because rubrics not only list the success criteria but also provide descriptions of levels of performance, students are able to use them to monitor and evaluate their progress during an assessment task or activity. Brown claims that rubrics are **"used for measuring and describing proficiency in a specific task''** (Brown,1998: 219). As they work to complete the activity, students monitor their work to ensure that it demonstrates the required skills, knowledge or understanding. Hence, they reflect on their progress and evaluate what they need to do if they wish to improve their performance and they get a strong sense of the quality of their work. An example of a rubric used for speaking is below:

	1	2	3
Circle one number for each statement.	I need more practice.	I can do this with some help.	I can do this on my own.

Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Themes and topics:

Speaking			
• I can ask for directions to a local address.	1	2	3
• I can ask for help.	1	2	3
• I can give directions to a local address.	1	2	3
• I can describe a local building or place.	1	2	3
•	1	2	3

Figure 1.4 An example of a rubric used for speaking self-assessment (Adapted from Learner Self-Assessment Toolkit, Kilner et.al 2012: 76)

1.5.4.2 Checklist

A checklist is similar to a rubric in that it lists the learning targets, or criteria (what counts), but it does not include the gradations of quality, which is characteristic of rubrics. Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) assert that   rubrics are excellent tools for guiding self-assessment and also checklists can work equally, or better, depending on the assignment. For larger, complex assignments, rubrics typically work best. For shorter, less complex assignments, checklists are often more. The table in the next page is an example of a checklist used for speaking self-assessment.

Name:		Level:	Date:			
Speaking				Very well	Well	Okay	Not very well

Speaking	Very well	Well	Okay	Not very well
I can participate in a small group discussion and express my opinions, feelings and reservations about a topic.				
I can express and respond to gratitude, appreciation, complaint, disappointment, dissatisfaction, satisfaction and hope.				
I can give clear instructions and directions related to moderately complex, familiar, technical and non-technical tasks.				
I am comfortable speaking about almost any topic that comes up in normal conversation.				
I am comfortable speaking formally or informally, on topics involving problem-solving or decision-making. I can make a detailed comparison.				
I can research, develop and deliver a 10-minute presentation.				
I can use a variety of sentence structures and idioms.				
I sound fluent when I speak. When I know that people do not understand me, I can correct myself or rephrase what I said.				
I am comfortable talking on the phone about familiar and routine matters. I can take a message for someone else and pass it on with specific details.				
I use a number of strategies to keep the conversation going. I can change the topic.				

Comments:

Figure 1.5 An example of a checklist used for speaking self-assessment (Adapted from Learner Self-Assessment Toolkit, Kilner et.al 2012: 60)

1.5.4.3 Rating Scale

A rating scale is a tool used for assessing the performance of tasks, skill levels, processes, qualities, quantities, or end products, such as reports. These are judged at a defined level within a stated range. Marking on a continuum Two end points are assigned a meaning and performance is rated in relation to the two extremes e.g. 0=never 5=always. The table below is an example of a rating scale used for speaking.

Name:	Date:

This week I talked with _____ about _____.

Part I: Place an X on each line to show how much you agree or disagree.

1. I think that I was successful.	Disagree ⊢——+——+——+——⊣ Agree
2. The person I spoke to understood me.	Disagree ⊢——+——+——+——⊣ Agree
3. I felt comfortable speaking with another person in English.	Disagree ⊢——+——+——+——⊣ Agree
4. I understood everything that this person said to me.	Disagree ⊢——+——+——+——⊣ Agree
5. I could do this again with no problem.	Disagree ⊢——+——+——+——⊣ Agree

Part II: Complete the sentences below.

6. When someone doesn't understand me, I...	
7. When I don't understand someone, I...	
8. Now I know...	

Figure 1.6 An example of a rating scale used for speaking self-assessment (Based on "Self-Assessment of Speaking Ability" p. 73 *Authentic Assessment)*

1.5.4.4 Voice / Video Record Portfolio

Students can use a voice or video record to review their oral performance; this allows students to view their communication and body language. Then they can rate their performance according to the rating criteria they have been provided with, afterwards they can know their mistakes and weaknesses and this will allow them to overcome their difficulties and develop their performance.

Using such a tool several times can give the students a clear image about their progress and the difference in their performance, this advantage in its part can help student to be more confident during speaking tasks.

1.6 Conclusion

At the end of this chapter, one can conclude that: in general, self-assessment is a part of assessment and it has a significant impact on students' learning. Further, when students use it for the purpose of improving their speaking skill, it can have great results especially if they apply the characteristics of effective speaking self-assessment. The following chapter will be devoted to the case study and data analysis in order to investigate the hypotheses of this research work.

2.1 Introduction

The second chapter deals with explaining and analyzing the data that have been collected during the research. The main data collection instrument employed was two questionnaires. In addition, it introduces the sample population and it provides the reader with the main objectives of this research work, it also provides some suggestions and recommendations for both teachers and students. It proposes some roles that the teachers should perform in EFL classrooms in order to help students to use speaking self-assessment effectively and furnish the students with the appropriate skills that he/she must use so as to have valid and reliable results.

2.2 Research Objectives

This research work aims to show the significant role that self-assessment plays in improving students' oral performance. In addition, the present research work intends to see if students know this type of assessment, and if oral production teachers give students the opportunity to practice it. The students and teachers are considered as the main sources of this study. Their views and opinions are very crucial to test the hypotheses that have been formulated.

2.3 Sample Population

Informants were second year EFL students as well as experienced and novice oral production teachers from the University of Tlemcen. They were targeted to respond to the research instruments addressed to them. In fact, from the larger population, a sample of thirty students and six teachers was chosen so as to represent the whole population.

2.3.1 Students' profile

Thirty (30) second year students of English at Tlemcen University were randomly selected to respond to a questionnaire discovering their point of view about the role of self-assessment in enhancing their oral performance. And they were observed during oral production sessions.

2.3.2 Teachers' profile

In addition to second year students, five (5) EFL teachers of oral expression module were involved in this study. Three (03) of them held the doctorate degree whereas the others were all magister holders. The researchers choose those teachers because they taught the oral expression module. So, they can enrich this research work by their different opinions about the use of self-assessment and its role in developing EFL learners' speaking skill.

2.4 The Research Instruments

There are various types of research instruments such as questionnaire, interview and observation. In this study the researchers used two questionnaires to collect data, one administered for the students and another for teachers.

2.4.1 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a means by which the researchers collect data from the respondent indirectly. Gay and Airasian (2000) define the questionnaire as **"several questions related to a research topic"** (as cited in Griffee, 2012:135).A questionnaire can take one of the three types: structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Additionally, the use of such tool can provide the researchers with quantitative and qualitative data.

In this research work, the researcher has used two questionnaires. One was devoted to EFL teachers and the other one to second year EFL students in order to investigate the research questions and hypotheses. The administration of the questionnaires took place in April 2017. The participants were kindly requested to answer the given questions. The students' questionnaire was given randomly to 2nd year students, and the teachers' questionnaire was delivered to five oral production teachers.

2.4.1.1 Students' Questionnaire

Thirty students were asked to respond to the questionnaire, the questions were formed from three types: close-ended, open-ended and multiple choice questions (see Appendix A).Thus the questionnaire consists of nine questions:

Question one: aims to know which language skill students prefer to master more.

Question two: asks to know Students' English Language self- evaluation.

Question three: seeks to know whether students are satisfied with their level of speaking English.

Question four: asks if the students are familiar with the notion of self-assessment.

Question five: tries to know if students are able to assess their oral performance.

Question six: this question is designed to discover how students assess their oral performance.

Question seven: attempts to figure out if teachers give students the opportunity to assess their speech.

Question eight: seeks to know students' opinion about the impact of self-assessment practice on their speaking skill.

2.4.1.2 Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was addressed to five English oral expression teachers. It consists of eight questions; as students' questionnaire different types of questions were used. Whereas four questions were close-ended, two were open-ended and one was multiple choice questions.

Question one: Attempts to know teachers beliefs towards the time given to oral expression sessions.

Question two: is asked to discover if teachers know self-assessment.

Question three: attempts to know teachers' thoughts about their students' ability to assess themselves.

Question four: seeks to an explanation in reference to the answer of question two.

Question five: aims at knowing if teachers give students the opportunity to self-assess.

Question six: wants to know through what activities teachers give their students the possibility to assess themselves.

Question seven: look for the teachers' opinion towards the effect of self-assessment in developing their students' performance.

Question eight: tries to give an explanation in relation to the answer of question six.

2.5 Data Analysis

2.5.1 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

As it was mentioned earlier, the questionnaire was addressed to second year EFL students. Thirty of them were taken as a sample to respond to this questionnaire. They were asked to answer some questions concerning the role of self-assessment in enhancing the speaking skill.

Question one: What is the skill you prefer to master more?

- The reading skill   - The writing skill

- The speaking skill   - The listening skill

The aim of this question to know which language skill students prefer to master more. The Bar graph below shows that twenty one (21) students have chosen speaking. (4) students have chosen writing, and listening was the choice of one student.
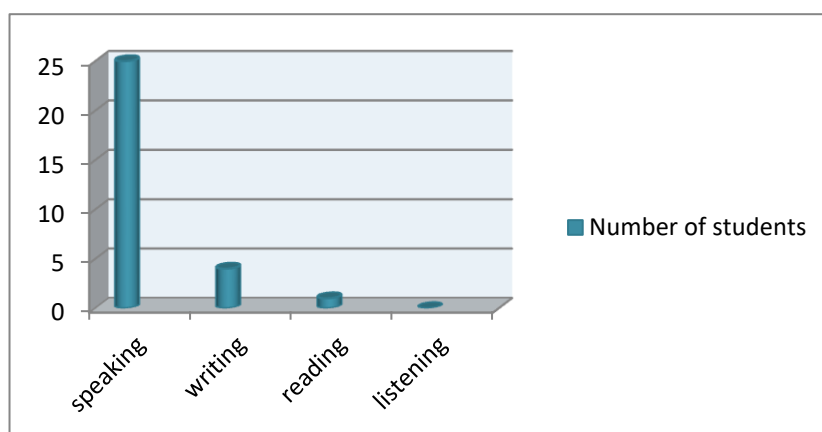

Figure 2.1: The Skills Preferable to Master more by EFL Students

Question 2: **What do you think about your level in speaking English?**

- **Good**

- **Average**

- **Poor**

The second question asks to know Students' English Language self- evaluation. (19) Students refer to their level as average, (10) students answered with good and only one student answer with poor.
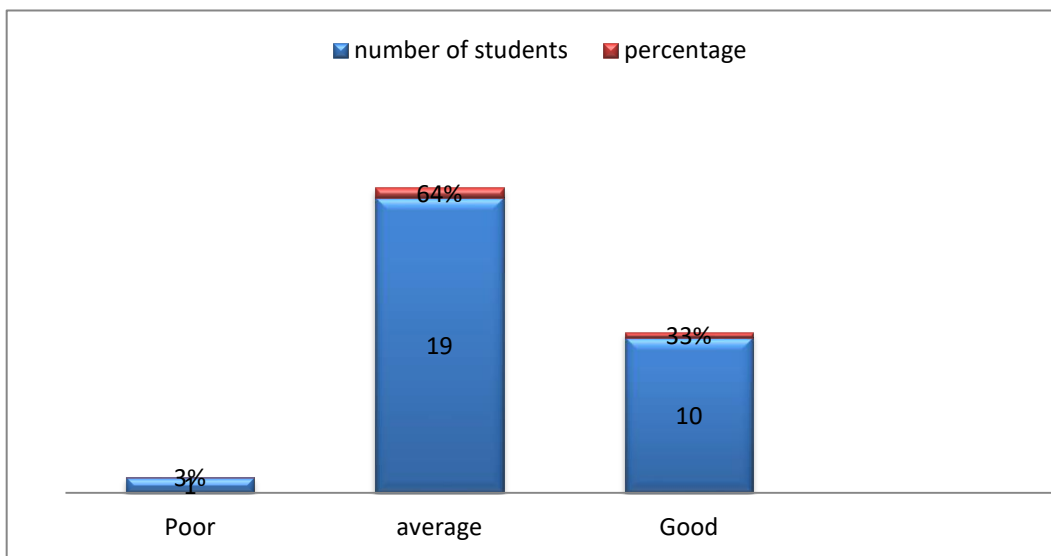

Figure 2.2 Students' English Language Self- Evaluation

Question three: Are you satisfied with your level in speaking?

-Yes   - No   -Little bit

This question seeks to know whether students are satisfied with their level of speaking English. 22 students were a little bit satisfied with their level in speaking while 05 of them were satisfied and 05 others were not. The pie chart below displays the results of the third question:
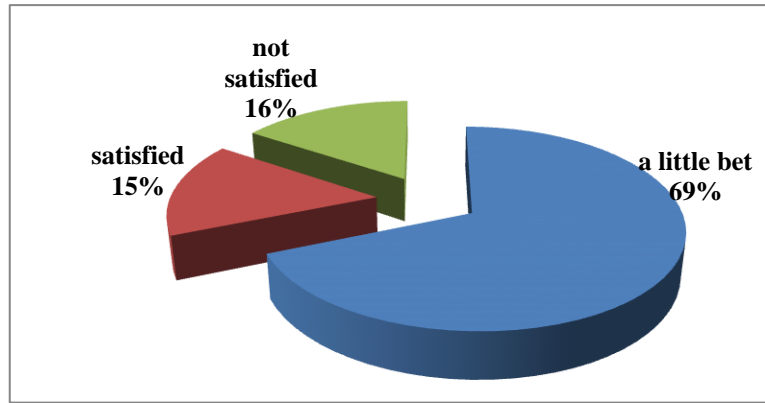
Figure 2.3: Students' Satisfaction with their Level of Speaking

Question four: Have you ever heard of self-assessment?
o **Yes**
o **No**

This question asks if the students are familiar or not with the notion of self-assessment. Only (12) students have heard of self-assessment and more than the half of the population have never heard of it (18) students.
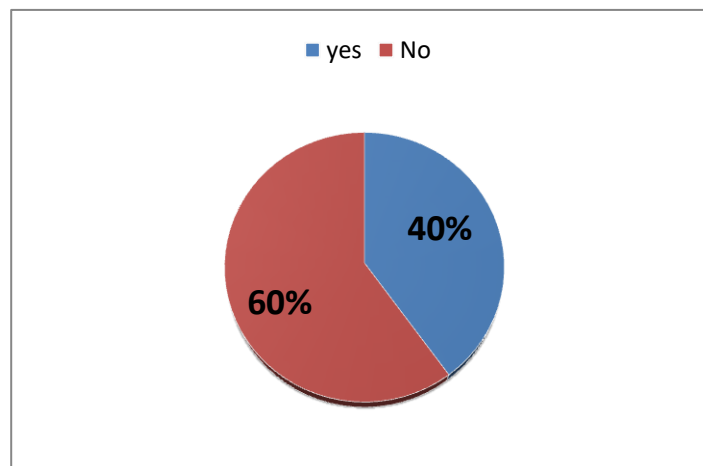

Figure 2.4 Students' Familiarity with the Notion of Self-Assessment

Question Five: if your answer of question 2 is yes, are you able to assess your performance in speaking?

- **Yes**
- **No**

This question tries to know if students are able to assess their oral performance. (11) students answered with yes, another (11) students answered with No, and the rest of students did not answer (9).
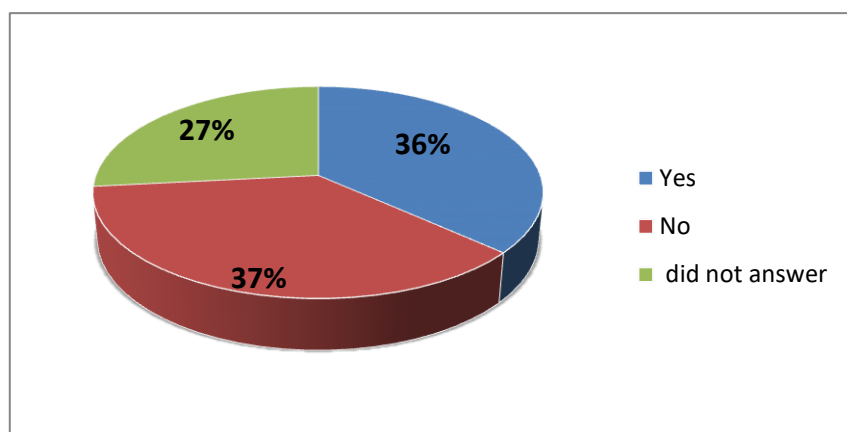

Figure 2.5 Students' Ability to Assess their Oral Performance

Question six: if your answer of question 3 is yes, how do you assess your speaking performance?

This question is designed to discover how students assess their oral performance .therefore while analyzing the students' answers the researchers found that only (6) students which represent 20% from the whole sample population use some activities to assess and develop their oral performance. Mainly four different activities were used by these students; practicing English outside the classroom with native speakers or EFL learners were the most used activity. Secondly, watching videos and documentary films in the target language were used by two students. Further, three students claimed to use reading books and the last activity mentioned was the participation on GVC program used by only one students.

Question seven: Does your teacher give you the opportunity to assess your oral performance?

This question attempts to figure out if teachers give students the opportunity to assess their speech. From the whole population, 25 students answered with yes, three of them answered with No and two of them did not answer.
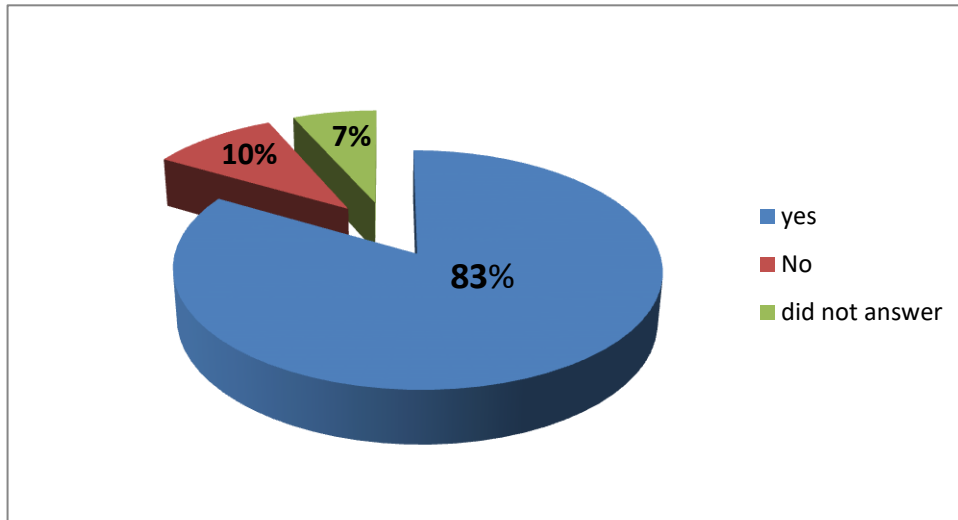
Figure 2.6 Students' Chance to Assess Their Oral Performance

Question eight:

If you knew that self-assessment is a process by which students can monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behavior when learning and identify strategies that improve their skills. Do you think that the results of self-assessment practices will improve your performance?

- **Yes**
- **No**

Question eight seeks to know students' opinion about the impact of self-assessment practice on their speaking skill. (28) Students answered that the practice of self-assessment can help them to develop their performance and two of them answered with No.

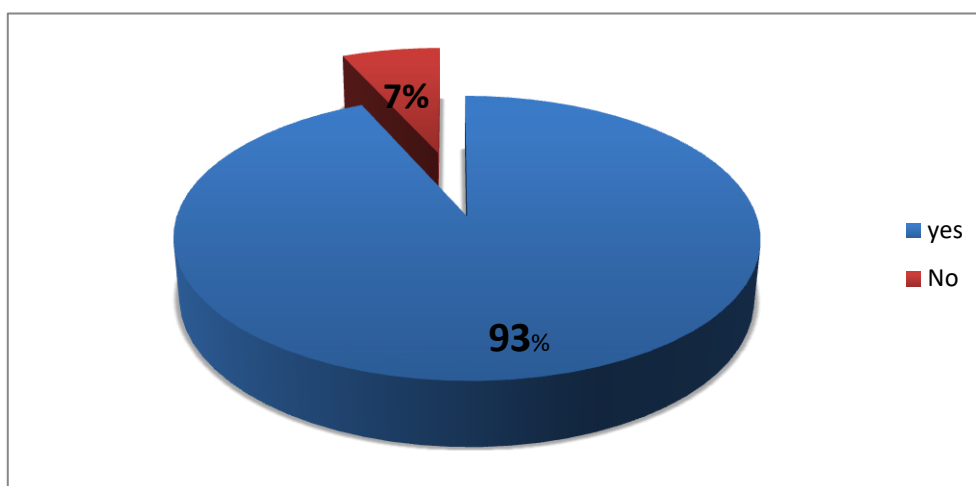**Figure 2.7** Students' Opinions about the Practice of Self-Assessment

2.5.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

In order to have a different points of view concerning the role of self-assessment in enhancing the students' speaking skill, another questionnaire was designed in addition to students' one; it was directed to another sample. This sample consisted of six (05) EFL oral expression teachers from Tlemcen University.

Question one: Do you think that two sessions per week enough for teaching oral expression?

✓ **Yes**

✓ **No**

In this question, the whole sample population which is (5) teachers had the same point of view which was that two sessions per week were not enough for teaching the OE module.

Question two: Have you ever heard of self-assessment?

✓ **Yes**

✓ **No**

This question is asked to discover if teachers know self-assessment. (5)Teachers which represent 100% of the population answered with yes.

Question three: If your answer to question 2 is "yes", do you think that your students are able to assess themselves?

- ✓ **Yes**
- ✓ **No**
- ✓ **Not All of Them**

This question seeks to know teachers' thoughts about their learners' ability to assess him/her self. (2) Teachers answered with yes (2) others answered with Not all of them, and only (1) answered with No. The pie-Chart 2.6 below represents the results of this question.
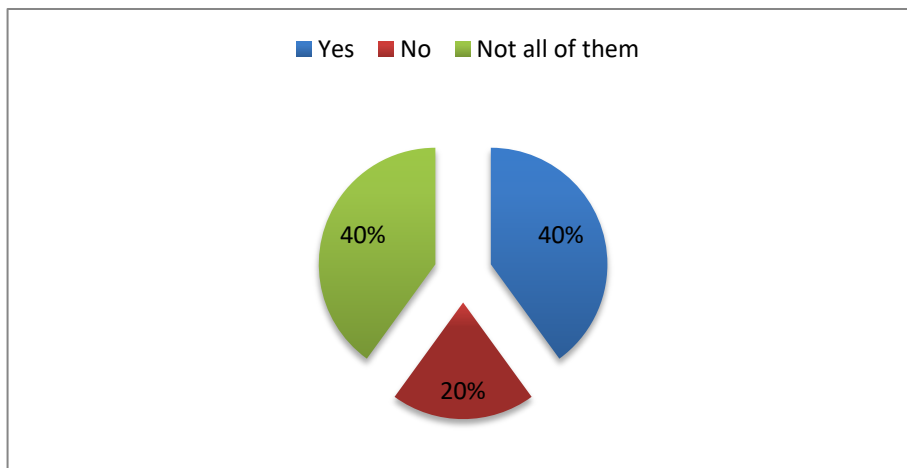
Figure 2.8 Teachers' Thoughts about their Learners' Ability to Assess Themselves

Question Four: in references to your answer to question 2, please, explain why?

This question seeks to an explanation in reference to the second question's answer. Teachers claimed that there are many problems that can affect the students' ability to assess themselves. Some students are not motivated to assess themselves, some others are not sure about their level, and the last problem as they claimed is that students do not know how to assess themselves.

Question Five: Do you give your students the opportunity to self-assess?

- ✓ **Yes**
- ✓ **No**

Question five aims at knowing if teachers give students the opportunity to self-assess. (5) Teachers which represent 100% of the population answered with yes.

Question six: **If your answer to question (5) is "yes", is it through:**

a) **Assessing their own home or classwork**
b) **Assessing their peers' home or classwork**
c) **Other, please specify?**

This question has a relation with the answer of question four; it aims to know the ways that teachers use in order to give his/her students the opportunity to assess themselves. Therefore from the three choices given, the (5) teachers representing the whole population pick out the choices (a) and (b).

Question seven: Do you think that the use of self-assessment practices will improve your students' performance?

- ✓ **Yes**
- ✓ **No**

Question seven look for the teachers' opinions towards the effect of self-assessment in developing their students' performance. (4) Teachers from the whole population agreed that the use of self-assessment will improve students' performance. In the other hand only one teacher disagreed with the statement.

Question eight: If your answer to question 7 is "yes", please explain how?

This question tries to give an explanation in relation with the answer of question seven. Teachers stated that the use of self-assessment will show students their mistakes and weaknesses. In this sense students will avoid their mistakes and will develop their weaknesses which will affect their language proficiency level.

2.6 Discussion of the Results

For the sake of testing the hypotheses which were formulated by the researchers at the beginning of this research work, two different questionnaires were used as research instruments for collecting data from both EFL learners and teachers. After analyzing the students' and teachers' questionnaires, the following results came out:

The analysis of students' questionnaire revealed that the speaking skill is the preferable skill that most EFL students want to master. However, more than the half of the population is not satisfied with their oral performance level. Moreover the analysis indicated that most of the participants have never heard of self-assessment.

The students' questionnaire demonstrated that most of students agreed that they are able to assess their oral performance, but another question analysis showed that students are confused between speaking self-assessment and speaking practice.

It is clear from the analysis that the students are given the opportunity to assess themselves by teachers in classroom. In addition, from the definition given to students, the majority of participants believe that the practice of self-assessment can help them to develop.

The analysis of teachers' questionnaire demonstrated that teachers agreed on the fact that two sessions per week are not enough for teaching OE and for a better mastery of speaking skill.

The teachers' questionnaire analysis showed that all teachers have a previous knowledge about self-assessment. The majority of teachers assumed that not all the students are able to assess themselves for many reasons as lack of motivation, lack of awareness about their level and lack of knowledge about how to assess themselves.

Moreover, It is pointed out that teachers usually give their students the opportunity to self- assess through assessing their own home or class work or by assessing their peers home or class work.

At the end of the teachers' questionnaire analysis, the majority of teachers asserts that the use of self-assessment can improve their students' performance since it give them the opportunity to recognize their mistakes, to discover their weaknesses and to monitor their learning.

To develop this research work, the researchers suggested three hypotheses. The first one was that speaking is the most desirable skill to be master by EFL students. This hypothesis was proved after the data collected were analyzed because the students expressed their desire to master the speaking skill. In addition, they mentioned that they use different activities in order to practice and develop this skill.

The second hypothesis proposed by the researchers was that the majority of EFL students are not familiar with the notion of self-assessment. The results of this research work proved this hypothesis because most students assured that they do not know what self-assessment is. In addition, another question analysis showed that students are confused between speaking self-assessment and speaking practice. This was confirmed by the teachers' answers in which they mentioned that not all students are able to assess themselves, because they do not have the enough knowledge to do so. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers stated that they give their students the opportunity to assess themselves by assessing their own or peers work.

The third hypothesis stated by the researchers was that self-assessment use has a significant role in improving EFL students' oral performance. This hypothesis was proved after the data collected were analyzed, because the majority of the teachers agreed that there was a positive correlation between self-assessment and students' performance. This hypothesis was also confirmed by students' agreement after realizing what is meant by self-assessment.

2.7 Suggestions and Recommendations

2.7.1 Teachers' Role

The use of self-assessments by students is not an easy task, especially if they are not aware about its importance and its process. Thereby, the teachers must play some roles in order to facilitate and guide their students to achieve their objective suitably. Among the roles that can teachers play there is the role f tutor, trainer, guider and evaluator.

Primarily, the teachers need to be a tutor in order to introduce to their students the concept of self-assessment. In addition to point out its benefits and select for them the appropriate tools that can be used within speaking self-assessment according to their level such as those mentioned in chapter one page (24). According to McDonald and Boud (2003) teaching students how to self-assess contributes to more accurate self-assessment and to higher student achievement. Yet, introducing self-assessment does not mean that instructors are giving up their responsibility of assessing learners' performance, however is about sharing responsibility.

Secondly, after the teachers have finished with equipment their students with the necessary information about speaking self-assessment his task at this stage is to be a trainer. In the opinion of Boud "...the introduction [of student self-assessment] should be made at the earliest possible stage, and the skills practiced thereafter, most desirably in a sequence of courses through the years of a program"(Boud,1995:12). Thus, teachers need to carry to their student some models of activities and tools of self-assessment. Besides giving them the opportunity to use these models in the classroom with the presence of the teacher in order to engage them in the process of making judgments about their work.

Thirdly, at this level, the teacher performs the role of a guider. It is important for the teacher to guide the students in self-assessment and not to lead them to a self-assessment. Because, leading the students will not effectively present how the students feel about what is being assessed, it will only reflect how the teachers feel. However if the students are guided in self-assessment their feelings on the work being assessed will be effectively shown, and will not reflect the teacher feelings. Teacher feelings on student work should only show up in the teacher evaluations. Further, in guiding students self-assessment teachers can ask open ended questions, so this way the students must answer how they feels about their work, Wait for their response and do not answer the questions for them, and listen to them.

The forth and the last role is about the teacher as an evaluator. Here the teacher's aim is to check if the students have used self-assessment procedures correctly, if the goal stated by students before using self-assessment is achieved and if the outcomes' judgment made by students is reliable. Additionally the teachers can mark the students' work as well as to do not, giving marks at this level is an option just for pushing students to make more efforts.

2.7.2 Students' Role

To take the benefit of self-assessment practice, students in their part have to play some roles and to be aware of the skills needed so as to use speaking self-assessment adequately and effectively. In fact, they have to be autonomous, self-judgment and self-reflection learners.

Primarily, students need to be autonomous in order to develop the necessary meta-cognitive skills to use self-assessment appropriately. Autonomous learners are those who take the responsibility towards their own learning development, in this sense students' self-assessment and students' autonomy are interrelated.

Moreover, for practicing self-assessments students need to be able to judge themselves adequately in order to get reliable outcomes. Because it is ultimately through self-assessment that individuals evaluate their actions and work to adjust future behaviors and ideas. In the view of Boud (1995) " students should be involved in establishing the criteria for judgment as well as in evaluating their own work (Boud, 1995: 11). Therefore, students have to learn how to make these judgments, and to make them well.

Finally, since the purpose of using self-assessments is to be engaged and to promote learning, it is important for students to be able to reflect on their own outcomes. Yet, a reflective student is one who examines his/her practices, comes up with some ideas as how to improve his/her performance and puts these ideas into practice. Schon (1983) refers to this cycle as appreciation, action and re- appreciation. Thereby, it is significant to students to reflect on their own assessment results so as to recognize their weaknesses and strengths for better performance and to boost their speaking skill and learning strategies.

2.7.3 Suggestions for the Betterment of Speaking Self-Assessment

In addition to the teachers' and students' roles these are two suggestions to make the process of speaking self-assessment more fruitful.

2.7.3.1 Encouraging Ongoing Conduction of Self-Assessment

   To make self-assessment more beneficial, it has to be an ongoing process and done on a regular basis; it should be repeated regularly with the better standard and it can help the students to progress more and more.

2.7.3.2 Providing Perfect Models

   Learners should be provided with perfect models of language performance under the assumption that exposure to such models helps them get familiar with all aspects of effective speech and paves the way for them to become like those models in the long-run. For example to present a practical standard, maybe a recording of an expert that knows the criteria and performs according to them can be helpful.

2.8 Conclusion

   The second chapter provided an overview of the research design. It gave a clear idea about the objectives of this research work and the research tools used by the researchers to collect data from both EFL learners and teachers. In addition, this chapter attempted to analyze the data collected through the questionnaires and discuss the results.

   The obtained results confirmed the hypotheses proposed by the researchers at the beginning of this research work, which were: the students desire to master the speaking skill, self-assessment is not known by all EFL students and the use of self-assessment can help students to improve their oral performance. The next chapter attempts to provide some suggestions and recommendations concerning the use of speaking self-assessment.

.   In addition it clarified the role of teachers and students in practicing speaking self-assessment, in addition to two others suggestions. Hence, teachers need to perform four roles which are tutor, trainer, guider and evaluator whereas students have to act three roles as being autonomous, self-judgment and self-reflective.

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General Conclusion

EFL learners' desire is to master the speaking skill. Therefore, they need to improve their abilities to better oral performance. Thus, the current study has investigated self-assessment practice and its role in improving learners' speaking skill.

This research work was divided into two chapters. The first chapter was a literature review in which the researchers dealt with certain concepts related to self-assessment and the speaking skill. The second chapter was devoted to a case study and data analysis.

Two questionnaires were used as research instruments to collect data from the participants; one was directed to second year EFL students and the other to EFL teachers. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and then discussed.

The obtained results confirmed the three hypotheses. This means that most students desire to master speaking skill and become communicatively competent. The findings also showed that students are not familiar with self-assessment process, in addition the analysis confirmed that both EFL teachers and students believe on the use of self-assessment as a tool to enhance students' speaking skill.

In addition, the second chapter presented suggestions and recommendations for both teachers and students. Mainly, consist of pointing out to the task of teachers in raising their students' awareness towards the importance of self-assessment. On the other hand, provided students with the skills needed to use speaking self-assessment effectively.

Finally, as any research, the current one has in its parts some limitation. Such as the problem of time and difficulty in analyzing some students' answers because a number of them did not answer accurately or just miss some questions. To conclude, the researchers expect that it would be interesting to make further research in this area.

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Appendix « A » :
Students' Questionnaire

- **Dear student.. Please read the following questions carefully and answer them , it is just a study, do not be worry about the mark . Please try to give us real answers, thanks in advance.**

1- What is the skill you prefer to master more?

- The reading skill   - The writing skill

- The speaking skill   - The listening skill

2 - What do you think about your level in speaking English ?

*Good

*Average

*Poor

3 - Are you satisfied with your level in speaking?

-Yes   - No   -Little bit

4 – Have you ever heard of self-assessment?

*Yes

*No

5- if your answer of question 2 is yes, are you able to assess your performance in speaking?

*Yes

*No

6 – if your answer of question 3 is yes, how do you assess your speaking performance?

7 - Does your teacher give you the opportunity to assess your oral performance?

*Yes

*No

8 - *If you knew that self-assessment is a process by which students can monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behavior when learning and identify strategies that improve their skills.* Do you think that the results of self-assessment practices will improve your performance?

Yes

No

Thank you

Appendix « B » :
Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher .. we are gathering data for our thesis study about self-assessment of speaking. For this reason, we hope that you can help us by answering the following questions in order to get more realistic results. Thanks in advance.

1 - Do you think that two sessions per week are enough for teaching oral expression?

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No

2 - Have you ever heard of self-assessment?

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No

3 - If your answer to question 2 is "yes", do you think that your students are able to assess themselves?

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No
- ✓ Not all of them

4-in references to your answer to question 3, please, explain why?

5 - Do you give your students the opportunity to self-assess?

- ✓ Yes

- ✓ No

- ✓

6 - If your answer to question 4 is "yes", is it through:

 a- Assessing their own home or classwork

b- Assessing their peers' home or classwork

 c- Other, please specify?

7-Do you think that the use of self-assessment practices will improve your students' performance?

*Yes

*No

8- I f your answer to question 6 is "yes", please explain how?

Thank you

Chapter One
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1.2.2.2 Assessment of Learning

1.2.2.2.1Comparing Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning

1.2.2.2 Assessment as Learning

1.2.3 Importance of Assessment

1.3 Self-Assessment

1.3.1 Definition of Student Self-Assessment

1.3.2 Self-Assessment of Language learning

1.3.3The Advantages of Self-Assessment

1.3.4The Disadvantages of Self-Assessment

1.3.5 Student Self-Regulation

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1.4 Speaking

1.4.1 Definition of Speaking

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1.4.5 Communicative competence

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2.5 Data Analysis

2.5.1Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

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2.7.1Teachers' Role

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