UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА
SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

FAKULTETI I GJUHËVE, KULTURAVE DHE KOMUNIKIMIT
ФАКУЛТЕТ ЗА ЈАЗИЦИ, КУЛТУРИ И КОМУНИКАЦИЈА
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND COMMUNICATION

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES - SECOND CYCLE

Thesis:

The importance of continuous assessment in improving students' performance - A case study of primary school 'Liria' in Tetovo

Candidate:

Berin Ismaili

Mentor:

Prof. Dr. Brikena Xhaferi

Tetovo, April 2020

Thesis:

"The importance of continuous assessment in improving students' performance – A case study of primary school Liria in Tetovo"

Teza:

"Rëndësia e vlerësimit të vazhdueshëm në përmirësimin e performancës së nxënësve.Studim rasti në shkollën fillore Liria në Tetovë"

Теза

„Важноста на континуираното оценување во подобрувањето на изведбата на учениците – студија на случај во основното училиште „Лириа„ – Тетово„

Acknowledgement:

First, I want to express my gratitude to my thesis mentor, Prof. Dr. Brikena Xhaferi, without whose supervision, sincere guidance, help and valuable suggestions, it would have been impossible for me to complete my thesis. I would like to thank the committee members for all their guidance through this process.

Secondly, I would like to thank my family for their love, support and constant encouragement I have gotten over years. In particular, I would like to thank my parents, my sister and my brother.

I undoubtedly could not have done without you. I will be grateful forever for your love.

Finally, I would like to thank all the participants in my survey, who have willingly shared their precious time during the process of interviewing and observation. I am grateful to all of you.

Abstract

This MA Thesis examines the importance of continuous assessment (CA) in improving students' performance. Continuous assessment is a type of assessment that deals with a learner's continual performance. In addition, it helps teachers to understand the quality of teaching. Learning a new language is a continuous process and evaluation should be continuous at the school level. We as EFL teachers should constantly evaluate our pupils' language output and compare what they say and students do with words. If we assess our students continuously, we will become aware of how much our students know and of the steps that we need to take in order to move forward. Continuous assessment should be used by EFL teachers and they should be informed about learners' continuous progress.

The students' oral and written language was used for the purpose of this study. The participants were students from the primary school "Liria". The research was conducted in the primary school with a class of 22 students aged between 8-9 years old. To conduct the study two research methods were used (i.e. the qualitative and quantitative methods). The data was collected from the 22 students and 10 EFL teachers through a questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations. This was an attempt to define the importance of continuous assessment of EFL learners, and to compare alternative assessment versus traditional assessment and identify EFL teachers' and students' perceptions about continuous assessment.

The study showed that CA had a positive effect on the pupils' communication skills and uncovered some effective techniques that could be implemented to enhance language learning when using continuous assessment.

Parathënie

Ky është hulumtim që shqyrton rëndësinë e vlerësimit të vazhdueshëm në përmirësimin e performancës së studentëve. Vlerësimi i vazhdueshëm është lloj i vlerësimit që merret me progresin e vazhdueshëm të nxënësve. Përvec kësaj, ai u ndihmon mësimdhënësve të kuptojnë cilësinë e mësimdhënies. Të mësuarit e një gjuhe të huaj është proces i vazhdueshëm dhe vlerësimi duhet të jetë i vazhdueshëm në shkollë. Ne si mësimdhënës të gjuhës së huaj duhet pandërprerë të vlerësojmë përvetësimin e gjuhës se nxënësve dhe të krahasojmë çfarë ata thonë dhe çfarë bëjnë me gjuhën. Nëse i vlerësojmë nxënësit vazhdimisht, ne do të kuptojmë se sa nxënësit dinë dhe cilët duhet të jenë hapat qe duhet të marrim për të ecur para. Si mësimdhënëse, unë përdor vlerësimin e vazhdueshëm dhe jam e informuar për progresin e vazhdueshëm të nxënësve.

Pjesëmarrësit ishin nxënësit të shkollës fillore Liria. Ky studim është realizuar në shkollën fillore, në një klasë prej 33 nxënësish të moshës 8-9. Për realizimin e studimit, janë përdorur dy metoda hulumtuese (d.m.th. kualitative dhe kuantitative).Të dhënat janë mbledhur prej 33 nxënësve dhe dhjetë mësimdhënësve të gjuhës angleze nëpërmjet pyetësorëve, intervistave dhe vëzhgimeve. Kjo është përpjekje për ta definuar rëndësinë e vlerësimit të vazhdueshëm tek nxënësit, krahasimin e vlerësimit të vazhdueshëm dhe vlerësimit tradicional dhe për të identifikuar perceptimet e mësimdhënësve dhe nxënësve për vlerësimin e vazhdueshëm.

Studimi tregon se vlerësimi i vazhdueshëm ka efekt pozitiv në aftësitë e komunikimit të nxënësve dhe zbulon disa teknika efektive që mund të zbatohen gjatë të mësuarit të një gjuhe të huaj.

List of figures and tables

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The English language is undoubtedly the most spoken language in the world and EFL earners are immersed in the English language from an early age. When learning a second language, especially in schools, assessment plays a crucial role because it collects and interprets the learners' achievements. One of the most effective types of assessment that enhances the learning habit is continuous assessment. With the implementation of continuous assessment in English as a subject, the learner performs better in communication skills and teachers get continuous feedback about the learners' performance and of what is being taught. The teacher's role is to identify good and weak students and find activities that will enhance the learning habit and assess their work continuously. The assessment of students shouldn't be considered as a final exam at the end of the course it should be a continuous process. It should be seen as a continuous process that concerns all aspects of a student's development. If we want to assess our students properly, we should plan, record and inform the learners about their development and continuous assessment does all of these things.

It is widely believed that continuous assessment is necessary in the EFL teaching and learning process. (Cheng, Rogers, & Hu, 2004, p. 361) stated, "Every model of the teaching-learning process requires that teachers base their decisions, instruction, grading and reporting on some knowledge of the students' attainment of and progress towards desired learning outcomes".

Therefore, teachers should continuously assess their students in order to help the teaching and learning process (Fuchler & Davidson, 2004). The assessment process should not measure the quantity of knowledge or lack of knowledge. On the contrary, it should take into consideration all tasks realized throughout the year. Furthermore, continuous assessment allows learners to get involved in the process of assessing their performance. This study also uncovers the positive effect that CA has on learners. If students are allowed to assess their own work, they will feel more comfortable with their teacher. They will be motivated and this will develop positive attitude and a willing personality in students and teachers, too.

1.1 Objectives of the study

This research aims to discover the impact of continuous assessment on EFL learners. In addition, this research will help us to discover the differences between CA and alternative assessment. The interviews and questionnaires are intended to explore teachers' attitudes and opinions about the implementation of CA in the classroom. The observations are intended to discover the effectiveness of CA and techniques of CA on EFL learners.

Research aims

- to demonstrate that Continuous Assessment is beneficial for improving students' English language knowledge;
- to highlight the characteristics and techniques of Continuous Assessment;
- to highlight the advantages of CA;
- to differentiate between CA and Summative Assessment;
- to discover the attitudes and opinions of EFL teachers about the implementation of CA in the classroom;
- to discover the effectiveness and strategies of CA on EFL learners.

1.2 Research questions and hypotheses

Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

a) Does CA have positive impact on EFL learners?
b) What are the effective techniques of CA while learning a foreign language?
c) What are the teachers' opinions and attitudes toward CA ?

3.3 Research Hypothesis

a) Continuous Assessment has positive impact on EFL learners because learners are evaluated about four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) continuously.

b) The most effective techniques of CA are discussions, role-plays and peer-assessment

c) Teachers believe that continuous assessment helps to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in learning EFL

1.3 Relevance of the thesis

In modern education, continuous assessment is considered as the most reliable and objective method of assessment. Assessment should not be understood in the end as a way to get better grades, but it should take into consideration all the progress that students have made throughout the year. Our assessment on daily bases helps us to see what we are teaching, what learners learn and what we can do in order to make improvements in the teaching and learning process.

The positive impact of continuous assessment was noticed through the feedback I got while I was teaching. The learners' communication skills were used and they were informed kindly about their progress. In addition, parents were informed about their child's communication skills through different CA techniques of. Parents were informed about their children because, together with the teachers, they are responsible for correcting and guiding their children. In order to master a language, all communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) must be taken into account. If we tell our students about their weaknesses, we can help them improve from an early age.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Assessment

Assessment plays an important role in teaching and learning. There are many definitions given about assessment. According to (Huba & Freed, 2000), "Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning." (p.12). In other words, assessment helps us to gather information from various sources in order to understand the learners' needs and helps us to see the improvements that we should make in order to get better results.

Accordingly, (Erwin, 1991, p. 14) points out that, "Assessment is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase students' learning and development." Similarly, (Paloma & Banta, 1999, p. 4) believe that, "Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development." According to (John, 1999, p. 141) "What and how students learn depends to a major extent on how they think they will be assessed." If students know that they are going to be assessed continuously, they will study continuously about a particular subject.

Consequently, assessment is a critical process that provides information about the effectiveness of teaching and the progress of students and makes clear what teachers expect from students (Biggs, 1999, pp. 57-75). (Goodrum, Hackling, & Rennie, 2001, p. 2) state that, ideally, assessment "enhances learning, provides feedback about student progress, builds self-confidence and self-esteem, and develops skills in evaluation".

In addition, the above-mentioned authors distinguish between two other terms aligned with assessment:

1) test, "an instrument for measuring a sample of behavior" and

2) measurement, "the process of obtaining a numerical description of the degree to which an individual possesses a particular characteristic" (Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 26).

As (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005) argue, the impact of assessment is significantly observable on students' performance. The way students approach learning determines the way they think about classroom assignments and tests (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005).

2.1 Types of assessment

According to the literature on student assessment, there are three main types of assessment: Diagnostic assessment, Summative assessment and Continuous assessment. Diagnostic assessment is a type of assessment that occurs before learning. It helps teachers to determine learners' strengths and weaknesses before learning. In order to determine learners' strengths and weaknesses, teachers use some strategies of diagnostic assessment such as pre-tests, interviews, etc.

The second type of assessment is summative assessment. Summative assessment is a type of assessment that occurs after learning. It usually takes place after learning is completed, at the end of course. Exams, final exams and projects are seen as types of summative assessment.

The third type of assessment is continuous assessment. As the name suggests, this type of assessment occurs continuously throughout the year. The biggest benefit of this type of assessment is that teachers and learners get continuous feedback about their performance.

```
                        TYPES OF ASSESSMENT
```

Diagnostic Assessment

● this type of assessment measures learner's knowledge before teaching takes place.

●helps teachers to design the curriculum based on students' strengths and weaknesses.

●Types of diagnostic assessments: pre-tests, self-assessments, interviews.

Summative Assessment

●this type of assessment measures learner's knowledge after the learning has been completed in the end of the year.

●provides feedback about teaching and learning process in the end of the year.

●Types of summative assessment: exams, projects, portfolios etc.

Continuous Assessment

●this type of assessment measures learner's knowledge continuously. Learners and teachers get continuous feedback about learning and teaching process.

●CA doesn't only measures learner's progress but also measures teacher's progress.

●Types of CA: observations, homework, question and answers projects, in-class activities etc.

Table 1: Differences between types of assessment

The concept of Continuous Assessment

"Continuous Assessment is listening closely to students, observing students as they are engaged in learning, as they are engaged with materials, and trying to understand what they understand." (Graham, n.d.). Continuous Assessment is useful because it helps teachers to gather information about the quality of teaching while learners are engaged in learning.

 According to Abera (2012), CA is an important tool that carries out both formal and informal assessment, in addition to making valid judgments about the students' progress. According to (Awofala, 2013) " Continuous Assessment occurs on a regular and continuous basis, it is an

ongoing formative and summarized process, involves the monitoring of pupils, is integrated with teaching, involves a systematic collection of marks or grades into a final score, may be used to determine the candidates' final grades, reflects students' abilities over a period of time, allows for improvement, takes care of students learning in the three domain of educational objectives, and it is a cumulative process**."** The importance of continuous assessment is not only pedagogic, for example, to provide students with feedback, to meet the learning outcomes and to motivate students to study. In addition, it provides academics with more control over the assessment within the classroom rather than leaving it in the hands of the central system (Hernandez, 2012, pp. 489-502).

"Continuous assessment has the potential to support student learning through feedback and to increase students' motivation for learning (Hernandez, 2012, pp. 489-502). This could play a vital role in diagnosing and remediating areas of the learner's weakness if properly anchored in what occurs in classroom". (Birhanu, 2013). (David, 2006) argues that, in order to produce feedback that is relevant and informative and meets students' needs, teachers themselves need good data about how students are progressing.

Continuous or ongoing assessment gives both the student and the lecturer detailed up-to-date information on the students' development and learning requirements, and the formative nature of this assessment gives students feedback on their progress during semester when they still have time to modify their practice (Esposto, 2011). Continuous Assessment is an approach that would capture the full range of learner's performance that help teachers understand their learners, plan and monitor instruction and establish a viable classroom culture.

Continuous assessment is regular assessment of the learning performance related to a course module and is separate from examinations, and accompanied by regular feedback. "Continuous assessment of learners' progress could be defined as a mechanism whereby final grading of learners in the cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of their performances during a given period of schooling." (Falayajo, 1986). Students

receive feedback from teachers based on their performance that allows them to focus on topics they have not mastered yet.

Continuous Assessment helps learners to see their developments through data collection. The process of continuous assessment is not only the examination of pupil achievement but also it is a powerful diagnostic tool that enables pupils to understand the areas in which they are having difficulty and to concentrate their efforts on those areas and it allows teachers to monitor the impact of their lessons on pupil understanding and modify their pedagogical strategies. (USAID, 2003).

Effective school-based continuous assessment can be an answer in eliminating the element of risk associated with a single examination, and providing authentic and meaningful feedback for improving student learning and hence giving a valid indication of student achievement (Safarath, 2014).

2.4 Traditional Assessment versus Alternative Assessment

Assessment is one of the aspects of curriculum for which teachers take responsibility. For teachers, assessment is an important aspect because assessment evaluates students learning and provides feedback for teaching effectiveness.

People within the educational community, i.e. policymakers, educators, students, parents, administrators, have different ideas regarding the implementation of assessment strategies (Dietel, Herman, & Knuth, 1991). According to some teachers, traditional assessment methods are more effective while other teachers think that authentic assessment methods are more useful. However, the content of assessment is not a field specific and it can be applied to various instructional settings (Simonson & Smaldino, 2000). Therefore, when we assess the learners' language proficiency, both traditional and authentic assessment can cause positive impact on learners because a mixture of assessments will improve teaching effectiveness and the needs of students and learners will be met.

There has been a movement from traditional assessment toward alternative assessments. Alternative assessment started being used as a means for educational reform due to the

increasing awareness of the influence of testing on curriculum and instruction (Dietel, Herman, & Knuth, 1991). Similarly, Reeves stated that traditional assessment, which is generally called testing, is challenged by alternative assessment approaches (Reeves, 2000).

According to (Bailey, 1998), traditional assessments are indirect and inauthentic. She also adds that traditional assessment is standardized and for that reason, they are one-shot, speed-based, and norm-referenced. (Law & Eckes, 1995) underline the same issue and state that traditional assessments are single-occasion tests. That is, they measure what learners can do at a particular time. However, test scores cannot tell about the progression of child. Similarly, they cannot tell what particular difficulties the students had during the test. (Bailey, 1998) also mentions that there is no feedback provided to learners in this type of assessment. The projects are mainly individualized and the assessment procedure is decontextualized. (Law & Eckes, 1995) point out that most standardized tests assess only the lower-order thinking skills of the learner. Similarly, (Simonson & Smaldino, 2000) state that traditional assessment often focuses on learner's ability of memorization and recall, which are lower level of cognition skills. Additionally, traditional assessment tools require learners to display their knowledge in a predetermined way (Brualdi, 1998).

Alternative assessments, on the other hand, assess higher-order thinking skills. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned. This type of assessment tools focuses on the growth and the performance of the student. That is, if a learner fails to perform a given task at a particular time, s/he still has the opportunity to demonstrate his/her ability at a different time and different situation. Since alternative assessment is developed in context and over time, the teacher has a chance to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the student in a variety of areas and situations (Law & Eckes, 1995).

More authentic assessment tools, such as portfolios, independent projects, journals and so on, let learners express their knowledge on the material in their own ways using various intelligences (Brualdi, 1998). According to Gardner, there are eight intelligences (Brualdi, 1998) "1. logical-mathematical intelligence, 2. linguistic intelligence, 3. spatial intelligence, 4. musical

intelligence, 5. bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, 6.personal intelligences: a. 7.interpersonal intelligence, b. intrapersonal intelligence, 8.naturalistic intelligence.

Logical-mathematical intelligence	People who are strong in logical-mathematical intelligence are good at reasoning, recognizing patterns, and logically analyzing problems.
Linguistic verbal intelligence	People who are strong in linguistic-verbal intelligence are able to use words well, both when writing and speaking. These individuals are typically very good at writing stories, memorizing information, and reading.
Spatial intelligence	People who are strong in visual-spatial intelligence are good at visualizing things. These individuals are often good with directions as well as maps, charts, videos, and pictures.
Musical intelligence	People who have strong musical intelligence are good at thinking in patterns, rhythms, and sounds. They have a strong appreciation for music and are often good at musical composition and performance.
Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence	Those who have high bodily-kinesthetic intelligence are said to be good at body movement, performing actions, and physical control. People who are strong in this area tend to have excellent hand-eye coordination and dexterity.
The personal intelligences	Those who have strong personal intelligence are good at understanding and interacting with other people. These individuals are skilled at assessing the emotions motivations, desires, and intentions of those around them.
Intrapersonal intelligence	Individuals who are strong in intrapersonal intelligence are good at being aware of their own emotional states, feelings, and motivations.
Naturalistic intelligence	According to Gardner, individuals who are high in this type of intelligence are more in tune with nature and are often interested in nurturing, exploring the environment, and learning about other species.

Table 2: Gardner's model of multiple intelligences (1983)

(Reeves, 2000, p. 108) believes the emphasis on performance assessment is the ability of learner in applying his/her knowledge and skills to real life simulations. He further states that there are five main points in performance assessment : "1. It is focused on complex learning, 2. engages higher-order thinking and problem solving skills, 3. stimulates a wide range of active responses, 4. involves challenging tasks that require multiple steps, 5. requires significant commitments of student time and effort." Similarly, (M & Smaldino, 2000) discuss the several advantages of alternative assessment. First, they tend to simulate real-life contexts. Learners have the opportunity to practice the authentic activities that they might encounter in real life. These activities allow them to transfer their skills to various real world related settings. Second, collaborative working is encouraged. Finally, alternative assessments assist instructors to have a better understanding of student learning (Winking, 1997).

The table below shows the characteristics of assessments according to (Bailey, 1998).

TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT	ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT
One-shot tests	Continuous, longitudinal assessment
Indirect Tests	Direct Tests
Inauthentic tests	Authentic tests
Individual projects	Group projects
No feedback provided to learners	Feedback provided to learners
Speeded exams	Untimed exams

Decontextualized test tasks	Contextualized test tasks
Norm-referenced score interpretation	Criterion-referenced score interpretation
Standardized tests	Classroom-based tests

Table 3: The characteristics of traditional and alternative assessment

As we can see from the table below, traditional assessment does not have a positive impact on learners. Firstly, traditional assessment measures learners' knowledge through written tests and tests are usually realized either in the middle or in the end of the year. On the other hand, alternative assessment measures learners' knowledge through different tasks and assessment is usually done throughout the year. If we allow learners to express themselves through different tasks, we will get immediate feedback about their progress and they will be more motivated and grades will be more objective. Another important characteristic of alternative assessment that enhances learning is that group projects are highly preferred. Group works allow learners to get to know each other and have positive impact on learning outcomes. Moreover, learners develop their teamwork and communication skills. Traditional assessment offers individual project for learners. When it comes to feedback, traditional assessment does not provide learners with feedback whereas alternative assessment provides learners with continuous feedback.

Alternative assessments, on the other hand, carry some concerns in terms of subjectivity, reliability and validity. (Law & Eckes, 1995) express their concerns by stating "coaching or not coaching, making allowances, or giving credit where credit is not due are critical issues that have yet to be addressed; we simply do not have answers yet" (1995, p.47).

(Bailey, 1998) agrees with Law and Ecke about the reliability issue; she argues about the high validity in alternative assessments. She gives the portfolio example and claims that the wide variety in student products might cause reliability problems. However, the positive washback they provide to the learner as well as validity let portfolios be a widely used effective assessment tool (1998). Similarly, (Simonson & Smaldino, 2000) claim that "proponents of alternative assessment suggest that the content validity of "authentic" tasks is ensured because there is a direct link between the expected behavior and the ultimate goal of skill/learning transfer" (2000, p. 275).

In my opinion, both assessments should be used when learners are assessed. The mixture of traditional assessment and alternative assessment can be appropriate and have a positive impact on learners. As a conclusion, when we consider the English subject, both types of assessments can be implemented successfully.

2.5 The Areas of Assessment on EFL learners

2.5.1 Speaking assessment

In present day, speaking is considered the most important skill in real life. Learning to speak a foreign language requires a lot of practice and attention. We learn to speak our mother tongue by listening and speaking and when we learn a foreign language, teachers can use the same way.

(Sarsody, 2006)states that speaking belongs to the out stage of language teaching process, when students are working on their language production they are operating toward the communicative competence. (CelceMurcia, 2000) assume that speaking is the most difficult skill to acquire since it requires commands of both listening comprehension and speech production sub skills is unpredictable. Speaking assessment of English language learners aims to check the students' ability to communicate for communicative and academic purposes.

Teachers should organize real-world activities e.g.: giving directions, giving opinions, and provide students with opportunities to use language in real-life situations. When teachers

assess the students' speaking skills, there are some methods that must be taken into consideration such as oral interviews, discussions, debates, role plays, reading aloud, etc.

(O'Malley, 1996) mentions that we should assess oral language at least twice for each student during each quarter or semester. This provides baseline data as well as information on improvement of language proficiency on a continuous basis.

2.5.2 Reading Assessment

As we know, reading is the action or skill of reading or the process that involves word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. (CelceMurcia, 2000, p. 119) ''argue that reading is the process of trying to understand a written text. The reader has to perform a number of simultaneous tasks: decode the message by recognizing the written signs, interpret the message by assigning meaning to the string of words, and finally, understand what the author's intention was''.

Any assessment requires planning and organization. (O'Malley, 1996) mentions that the assessment of reading must begin with the purposes of the assessment which are monitoring student progress, obtaining information not available from other sources, studying, evaluating or diagnosing reading behavior.

When we assess reading skills, the teacher should use different reading strategies in order to identify learners' needs and their comprehension level of reading. Teachers are responsible about students reading skills through different reading strategies. Furthermore, teachers should gather information about learners' reading skills and provide them with feedback. In addition, there is a type of assessment where students can assess themselves, called self-assessment and peer-assessment where students judge the performance of their peers. Self-assessment helps learners to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and informs teacher about the learner's progress. Peer-assessment takes place when learners check each-others' performance and it is believed that peer assessment has positive effect on learner's performance. Reading assessment should take place twice or several times during the semester.

2.5.3 Writing Assessment

Writing is considered one of the most difficult language skills. When learners learn a foreign language, learners face many difficulties when it comes to writing. (CelceMurcia, 2000) state that writing is the production of the written word that results in a text but the text must be read and comprehended in order for communication to take place.

(O'Malley, 1996) mentions that in assessing writing skills, the teacher should first evaluate more aspects of writing which are the knowledge of the context, the procedural knowledge to organize the content and the knowledge of the convention of writing rather than grammar. Writing is a language skill that allows learners to express their ideas. In order to be able to produce a good piece of writing, teachers should guide learners and explain the writing tips whereas students should follow the rules carefully and brainstorm their ideas.

In addition, self-assessment can be applied in writing assessment. Students will assess their piece of writing and be aware about their strengths and weaknesses. Peer-assessment is another good assessment method that can help learners to assess each other and provide each other with immediate feedback.

2.6 The characteristics of continuous assessment

The Major Characteristics of continuous assessment according to (Olatunji & Akanwa, 2004) are that a Continuous Assessment (CA) should be systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance-oriented. While (Maduabum, 2005) added that it should also be formative, diagnostic and prognostic.

Continuous assessment is said to be systematic in the sense that it requires an operational plan. The student's performance should be measured at certain time intervals. This operational plan is made known to stakeholders in the teaching and the learning process such as the teachers, the ministry of education, officials and parents. For instance, at the Nigeria primary and secondary school level, continuous assessment takes place two times within the term before final terminal examinations and this is known to all involved.

Continuous assessment is comprehensive in the sense that it covers all aspects of learning in which desirable changes such as cognitive, affective and psychomotor ones are expected to take place Repeated measures of performance in these domains ensure that an overall or comprehensive assessment is maintained.

Continuous assessment is cumulative in the sense that any final grading should be taken into consideration in whatever decisions to be taken on the learner such as promotion to the next class, going on to other courses etc.

Continuous assessment is guidance oriented because it is a formative type of evaluation, which goes on as the learner proceeds in his/her academic career. The feedback received from this evaluation is used for guidance purposes. The result reveals the learner's areas of strength and weakness to the teachers, parents and even to the students themselves. The teachers thus use the information to help the students solve their academic problems and guide them to choose their career based on their academic performance. For instance, if a student has shown consistent interest and ability in English language, literature, history, civic education and government he may be encouraged to pursue courses in law or mass communication (Olatunji & Akanwa, 2004).

In addition to the above-mentioned features, continuous assessment is also formative diagnostic and prognostic. Continuous assessment is a formative process. It enables teachers to assess learner's progress before the end of the course. Teachers can use continuous assessment information to modify work. Learners use continuous assessment results to improve their performance. To be diagnostic, the information obtained from continuous assessment should help teachers to identify the learner's problems.

Information from continuous assessment data can be prognostic, which means it helps the teacher or guidance counselor to be able to predict or precast the learner's future performances (Maduabum, 2005).

2.7 The methods of continuous assessment

Continuous assessment has different methods to assess students. Teachers should use different assessment methods in order to demonstrate knowledge for students and assess their work. (Mikre, 2010) argue that when the students participate in peer and self-assessment it helps to involve student to explicit what is implicit, not just checking for error or weakness.

2.7.1 Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a type of assessment where students assess their own performance and take responsibility of their own learning. (Harris M. , 1997, p. 12) mentions that self-assessment seen as one of the pillars of learner autonomy and one of the fundamental elements of self-directed language learning, is the opportunity for learners to assess their own learning. (O'Malley, 1996) argues that self-assessment is an effective assessment which involves students and enables them to see their possibility for redirection of their own learning efforts. Through self-assessment, students can learn from their previous mistakes, identify their strengths and weakness and monitor their progress. Moreover, self-assessment can help learner to locate their own strengths and weakness and then get them to think about what they have to do in order to improve their performance. Through the self–assessment method, students become more effective, independent and confident learners.

2.7.2 Peer Assessment

Peer assessment is a type of assessment where students assess their friends' work. (Orsmond, 2004) mentions that peer assessment can be useful in helping students to develop their ability to make judgment on the performance of the other students. (Mikre, 2010) argues that peer assessment is an important component in assessment that helps to realize curricular targets for students' learning.

(Slavin, 1997) refers to peer-assessment as one of the best and perfect successes in educational history. Pedagogically, peer-assessment improves learning of student (Falchikov & Goldfinch,

2000) through "a sense of ownership and responsibility, motivation, and reflection of the students' own learning" (Saito & Fujita, 2009).

2.8 The strategies of Continuous Assessment

As an EFL teacher, I apply the methods and strategies of Continuous Assessment in the classroom and I gather information about students' learning and quality of teaching. There are different kinds of assessment strategies that can be provided to students in order to find out what they know and can do.

2.8.1 Oral Presentation

Oral presentation is a one of the most important assessment strategies. Oral presentation helps learners to practice their speaking skills and gives learners the opportunity to use language in their daily life.

In addition, oral presentation helps learners to develop their public speaking skills.

2.8.2 The Written Test

The written test is a type of test that measures the learners' knowledge, skills and ability. There are different types of written tests. As an EFL teacher, I use tests where I can check the learners' four language skills. The tests that I design are made of four parts. The first part is made of grammar activities that have been explained and studied in the classroom. The second part is made of a reading activity where learners have to read and decide if the statements are true or false or answer the questions. The third part is made of a listening activity where learners have to listen and fill in gaps. The fourth part is made of a writing activity where learners have to write something related to their English proficiency. In addition, there are other writing activities where we can measure learners' writing skills such as multiple choice tests, essays, writing letters and dictations. I work with children and all the activities we do are based on their English proficiency level

2.8.3 Projects

Projects are another good way of assessment where learners can develop their speaking and collaboration skills. There are two types of assessment that I use in the classroom: individual projects and group projects. In English books, there are some good project activities that students enjoy working with. In addition, projects help learners to develop their public speaking skills and boost their self-esteem. Projects are thus considered as an effective strategy of continuous assessment.

2.8.4 Take-Home Assignments

Homework is a good way for learners to practice what they have studied in the classroom. It is also a good opportunity for the teacher to assess the students' learning. Home assignments are given because it helps teachers to get information about learner's language skills and helps learners to see if they have any difficulties with the lessons learned in the classroom. As an EFL teacher, I prefer to assign learners homework. In Macedonia, primary schools offer the English language subject three times a week. Learning a new language requires practice and through homework, learners can practice a great deal. As such, it should be given to learners.

2.9 Advantages of Continuous Assessment

Boosting student motivation with continuous assessment

Students' engagement in assessment activities is influenced by their perception of assessment purpose (Carless, 2015). Making the assessment summative can therefore be an important incentive for students to perform at their best (Carless, 2015). If activities are instead voluntary or serve as prerequisites for an end-of-semester examination, students are less likely to put real effort into the activities. If, however, feedback consists of formative feedback as well as a

summative grade, this can potentially increase student motivation for engagement in the curriculum throughout the course and avoid 'last minute cramming' before the final examination (Trotter, 2006) (Gibbs, 1997)

Using continuous assessment to strengthen practice and the effectiveness of feedback

One example of the learning-enhancing aspects of continuous assessment is the opportunity to practice skills that can be improved when the students are provided with (timely) feedback and the opportunity to follow-up or act upon the feedback (Bearman, 2014). Continuous assessment offers a way of integrating student learning progress into the assessment so that attention is not only on the end result but also on the learning process (Ramsden, 2003) (Dochy & Segers, 2007).

Mirroring real-life tasks with continuous assessment

An interesting aspect of continuous assessment is that it offers a way to test competencies that can be hard to assess in a traditional final exam. This includes competencies such as the ability to collaborate with peers, creative thinking and innovation skills (Bjælde, 2017). However, setting assessment criteria for such authentic tasks and explaining to students exactly how they will be assessed can be challenging (Bridges, 2002)

Helping students to become self-reflective learners

The ability to judge the quality of your own work is a required competence in students' future professions (Boud, 2007). Such activities may generally strengthen the student's beliefs in their own abilities as a learner (Shields, 2015). This effect can be further increased by letting students use criteria to assess the quality of their own work (without marking) (McDonald, 2003).

Exam anxiety

Assessments (and examinations in particular) are potentially very stressful to students (Boud, 2007). It is a highly undesirable situation because assessments are designed to focus on student achievement of learning outcomes and not on their ability to handle stress. It is possible that

low-stake assessments providing timely feedback to students can be experienced as less stressful for the majority of students and increase their confidence (Shields, 2015).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have dealt with the concept of assessment and one of the most effective types of assessment, which is continuous assessment. We have described continuous assessment as the process of gathering continuous information about learners' progress and as a tool of motivation. In addition, we have described the difference between traditional and alternative assessment. Furthermore, we mentioned the characteristics, advantages and strategies of continuous assessment.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology, research aims and research hypotheses. As an English teacher, I have taken into consideration the learner's progress and needs. This research helped me to discover the impact of continuous assessment on EFL learners. In addition, this research helped me to discover the differences between traditional and alternative assessment. The interviews and questionnaires are intended to explore teachers' attitudes and opinions about the implementation of CA in the classroom. The observations are intended to discover the effectiveness of CA and strategies of CA on EFL learners.

Research aims

- to demonstrate that CA is beneficial for improving students' English language knowledge;
- to highlight the characteristics and techniques of CA;
- to highlight the advantages of CA;
- to differentiate between CA and Summative Assessment;
- to discover the attitudes and opinions of EFL teachers about the implementation of CA in the classroom;
- to discover the effectiveness and strategies of CA on EFL learners.

3.2 Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

a) Does CA have a positive impact on EFL learners?
b) What are the effective techniques of CA while learning a foreign language?
c) What are teachers' opinions and attitudes toward CA?

3.3 Research Hypotheses

a) CA has a positive impact on EFL learners because learners are evaluated about four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) continuously.

b) The most effective techniques of CA are discussions, role-plays and peer-assessment.

c) Teachers agree that CA enhances learning habit, improves teaching techniques, allows learners to assess themselves, informs the teacher about the quality of teaching, is a modern evaluation tool, collects information about learners and improves communicative competence.

3.4 Research Design and Methodology

This research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research is exploratory or interrogative research and tries to get "under the surface". "The aim is to gather insights into how people live; what they do; how they use things; or what they need in their everyday or professional lives." (Government Design Service Manual, 2016). On the other hand, Interviews are a good example how qualitative research can look like. For designers, they help them to understand the attitudes or mind-sets of a person, by asking for the *"Why"* and *"How"*. "If forces the interviewed person to think about motivations and reasons for a certain behavior." (Barnham, 2015).

The gained results are rich, detailed insights of a person's feelings and thinking. The gathered data is unstructured, and can be notes, drawings or even pictures. Qualitative research includes a small selection of participants, based on the criteria defined by the researcher. The expectation is that this small selection represents a bigger group. This method does not claim that the results are a universal right, nor statistically correct or that they can be reproduced. Qualitative research methods can provide deep insights, and therefore provide the designer with a better understanding for the researched topic.

Surveys are a good example of quantitative research. They ask for the *"How much"* or *"How many"* by a set of clear and predefined questions. Participants then have to choose which

answer ("Yes", "No", "Never", "twice a week") is the best representation for them. Quantitative research is conducted indirectly or off-site. It is a method that includes large groups of participants to gather relevant data. The results of quantitative research are numbers or facts. In contrast, these "facts" can be wrongly interpreted because of the lack of context. Moreover, there is no control if the participant has understood the questions correctly, or what his underlying motivation is. (Barnham, 2015)

3.4.1 Materials and Instruments

This research will deal with three types of data collection methods: interview, observation and questionnaire.

Interviews and questionnaires are conducted with teachers who teach English as a foreign language in different schools. Interviews are in the form of paper printed questions prepared for 20 EFL teachers. Questionnaires are also in the form of paper printed questions prepared for three English teachers. Observations are conducted with students who learn English as a foreign language in primary school 'Liria'. Observation reports were used in order to obtain more reliable data by the observer. Those materials were carefully studied and presented by figures or tables.

For purposes of data collection in this research, these instruments were used: questionnaire, interview and observation. A questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with a specific topic given to the selected sample of the study in order to gather data about the related topic.

Kothari (2004) states that a questionnaire consists of a number of questions in definite order given to the individuals concerned with the request to answer the questions and return the questionnaire. Blaxter et al (2006) state that the questionnaire is one of the most widely used social research techniques. They have the form of written questions meant for those whose opinions or experience is important.

A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. (Kvale, 1996). Interviews are particularly

useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g. to further investigate their responses. (McNamara, 1999).

Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p.79). Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written photograph" of the situation under study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Observation methods are useful to researchers in a variety of ways. They provide researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997).

3.4.2 Participants

The participants of the study were non-native speakers of English who learn English as a foreign language. The participants were eight-year-old primary school students. The total number of students was 22, with 12 girls and 10 boys. All of them come from Tetovo. There were good students and weak students. Through the strategies of continuous assessment, the areas that students have difficulties were noticed and presented.

Ten EFL teachers were participants in the questionnaires and five in interviews. Teachers who participated in questionnaires and interviews were working both in private and public schools.

Data analysis

Chapter 4

This chapter presents the results form observations, questionnaires and interviews. Through observations, strategies and methods of CA were discovered and applied in the classroom.

Through questionnaires and interviews, teachers' attitudes about CA were discovered and discussed.

4.1 Results from observations

The first instrument used in this research was observations. I have been working in primary school "Liria" for two years. I have taught English to students from the first to the fifth grade.

The classroom, which was observed and where the CA techniques were applied consisted of 22 students. I had the chance to experience the effectiveness of CA on learners firsthand. The participants were eight or nine-year-old primary school students. Four areas of assessment (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) were assessed continuously.

Observation

The first area that was assessed and observed was *speaking*. There are different ways to assess learners' speaking skills such as presentations, role-playing, discussions, projects, etc. All of techniques of speaking assessment were observed and reported below.

The second area of that was assessed and observed was *writing*. Writing is considered the most difficult communication skill. During the course of the assessment, different methods, such as writing paragraphs, dictations, essays, etc. were used. Writing topics were related to the units that learners had already studied.

Listening is another important communication skill that must be assessed continuously. There are many techniques that help learners to improve their listening skills. Songs, dictations and short videos were used during the assessment and reported below.

Reading was the last area of assessment. Reading can be challenging for Albanian learners too but if you find good methods of reading comprehension, learners can overcome this problem. Reading and listening were used at the same time and it had a positive impact on learners'

---

reading skills.

Speaking assessment

Presentation

Presentation was the first technique that was observed. 22 students were observed and were analyzed one by one. Presentations were given to pupils as an assignment after each unit. Different kinds of topics were given each month and all topics were related to the units. All the topics were suitable and prepared for learners' English proficiency. Topics such as all about me, my house (there is, there are), my family tree, my favorite restaurant were given to students.

Presentation is a technique that allows teachers to assess students' speaking skills development. Presentations were given to pupils because it helped learners to improve their speaking skills and to develop their public speaking skills form an early age. From the observations, the positive impact of oral presentations was noticed. In the beginning, learners faced with difficulties to present in front of their friends but later they got adjusted to it. Furthermore, presentations helped learners to get rid of their fears and improve their public speaking.

Role-playing

Another technique that was observed and used to assess learners' speaking skills was role-playing. Role-playing was provided in each unit. In each unit, there were dialogues where learners had to listen and read. Dialogues such as They're American, Where is it?, I have got green eyes, Help I can't swim, How old are you?, were acted out in front of the classroom. After listening and reading the dialogues, learners had to come to the board and act out the stories. This way, learners improved their speaking skills and had fun at the same time.

Discussions

Discussion was another technique that was observed. Discussions were used to check learners' speaking skills and their critical thinking. All of the discussions were related to the

lessons. Before starting the lesson, the teacher asked questions to learners in order to raise their awareness. Learners, guided by the teacher, were discussing about different topics such as What is your ideal house?, What is your favorite day?, What are your abilities (using can, can't)?, What is your favorite type of weather?, Have you ever been in a festival?, etc. Through these topics, learners were prepared and informed for the next lesson.

Projects

Projects were another useful technique. Projects helped learners to learn new things and to enhance their team collaboration skills since learners had to work with each other. Projects were prepared in groups of four or five pupils. Project topics were related to the units and each project was prepared and presented in the end of the unit. Each pupil had from three up to five minutes to present his or her part. These techniques helped me to see learners' continuous speaking progress. Projects helped learners to overcome shyness and to become self-confident, to cooperate, to share, and to become well-rounded individuals. Projects such as A holiday house, amazing animals, my school day, festivals, etc. were given to pupils.

Strong and weak points:

First, presentations are useful both inside and outside the classroom. Learners who presented in front of their classmates shared their ideas and practiced all language areas and they built their confidence in public speaking. In the beginning, learners were nervous, as they were not used to presentations in English Language. English teachers should encourage learners to present, share their ideas and improve their public speaking skills.

Secondly, when the recordings were played, learners were told to listen and to imitate the characters from the book; this way they learned to imitate English native speakers' tones and body language and to be immersed in English language from an early age. In addition, imitation is one of the best ways to improve language skills. Some students had poor listening skills and they had difficulties imitating the characters.

Thirdly, discussions helped learners to think differently and helped the teacher to keep learners engaged. Through discussions, learners' interests were increased. Some of the

learners were not able to understand the questions and the teacher had to prepare simple questions or even translate in order to help them understand the questions.

Listening assessment

Songs

Songs are one of the best techniques that helped learners to improve their listening skills especially songs with actions. In each unit, learners enriched their vocabulary by learning new words. Songs such as How are you today?, My daily routine, What's the weather like today?, Days of the week, Actions, were played in each unit. Learners learned new words and new actions at the same time.

Short videos

Listening to a story is another important technique that helped learners to improve their listening and speaking skills. When learners listened to a story, they learned new expressions and their vocabulary was enriched. After each video, learners had to share the things they had listened to. Learners listened to English books too. Books such as Frida Kahlo, Martin Luther King, Maya Angelou were listened and read, too. After listening and reading the books, learners had to present the story in front of their classmates, write questions about the books and analyze the characters.

Listening to a dialogue

In every unit learners had to listen to a dialogue. The recordings were played many times until the learners got the idea of the dialogue. Learners were told to close their books and to listen to the first part of the dialogue, then they listened to the second and third part of the dialogue and then they acted out the dialogue. In order to check learners listening skills, there were questions in the books that were to be answered. There were activities such as true/ false, answer the questions or fill in the gaps. These activities provided the teacher with some useful information about learners' listening skills.

Strong and weak points:

Through songs, learners improved their listening and speaking skills and they learned how to pronounce the words accurately. Some of the students did not enjoy singing the song but I always encouraged them by saying them that those who learn the song will get a better grade and this way it worked.

Watching short videos and listening to the books were two effective methods for improving learners' listening skills. Learners noticed that they learned many new words after each video and book. Their grammar was improved too. Not only they learned about English but they also learned about cultures.

Listening to dialogues was an effective method too. Some of the students had difficulties while listening to dialogues since their English knowledge was poor. For weak students the dialogues were played many times until they understood the idea of it.

Writing assessment

Writing paragraphs

Writing is considered the most difficult communication skill. In order to check learners' writing abilities, they had to write paragraphs. In each unit, learners had writing activities. While assessment was carried out, there were different writing topics about learners such as, everything about me, my favorite food, my hometown, my family tree and so on. Writing topics were related to the unit that the learners had already studied.

Dictations

Dictations were another way of writing assessment. Learners had dictation three times in a semester. The texts were taken from the book. Dictation is another good technique because it helped me to check learners' writing skills. Some of the texts that were used during dictation were: A boy in the woods, The English language, There are fifteen bathrooms, Our houses, Amazing animals, Weather in USA.

Exams

Exams were another good way to check learners' writing abilities. Learners had two exams per semester. In each exam there were different writing activities such as write a short text about yourself, put the scrambled words in the right order, describe the house using there is/there are, What do you look like (have got)?, Describe your daily routine, Describe your favorite restaurant, etc.

Strong and weak points:

Writing is known as the most difficult communication skill. Even those who were fluent in speaking made many mistakes in writing activities. Albanian students faced many difficulties in writing since the spelling and the pronunciation of English words are different whereas in Albanian language they are the same.

Dictations were useful because it improved learners' writing and listening skills. Dictations helped the teacher to notice that learners had many difficulties when it comes to writing even those who speak English fluently. Learners had dictation after each unit. In addition, writing paragraphs helped learners to improve their writing skills.

Reading assessment

Reading the text or book

In each unit, there were dialogues and some texts that were related to English culture. After listening the dialogues and the texts many times, each learner had to read the dialogues and the texts. Some of the texts that they had to read were as follows: Where is it, I have got green eyes, Weather in USA, Do you like this T-shirt, Amazing houses, etc. In order to see if they had understood the text or not, questions were asked by the teacher. The answers they gave determined whether they had understood the text. While assessing learners' reading comprehension, pre-reading activities, while-reading activities and post-reading activities were used continuously. In order to encourage learners to read more, some English books were read. The books were suitable for learners' English level. Books such as Frida Kahlo, Maya

Angelou, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks were read and listened through Youtube. This way, the learners' general and English knowledge was expanded and they were motivated to tell their parents about the English books that they had read.

Strong and weak points

Reading was another communication skill in which learners faced difficulties. Some of the students were very good at reading whereas the others faced difficulties. There were extra books that were given to students in order to improve their reading comprehension and it worked really well. After each book, learners got better and their speaking skills were improved too. The best way to improve reading is listening and reading at the same time, which was put into practice as such.

Table 4: The results from observations

4.2 Results from interviews

This sub-section presents the results from the teacher interviews. The second instrument used in this research was teacher interviews. Teachers who participated in the interviews were working both in private and public schools. Their opinions about CA have been presented in tables. Each interview contained ten questions. Three teachers participated in the interviews. Teacher A works in a private school with a small number of students. Teacher B works in a public school with a big number of students. Teacher C works both in a public and in a private school.

Question 1: How do you define Continuous assessment?

Teacher A: Continuous assessment is a type of assessment that assesses learners throughout an academic year.
Teacher B: I define CA as assessing aspects of pupils' language throughout their course and then producing from it a final evaluation.
Teacher C: It is a modern educational tool, which is used in progressive educational systems.

Table 5: Interview Question and Answers No: 1.

Question 2: As a foreign English teacher, do you think that CA should be implemented in teaching and why?

Teacher A: In my opinion, it should definitely be implemented especially when teaching a foreign language.
Teacher B: As a foreign English teacher, I think that CA should be implemented in teaching because it enhances the student's learning, improves the teachers' teaching skills and improves the system of the institution.
Teacher C: I agree with this statement because CA is recognized as a valid educational methodology; especially for language courses.

Table 6: Interview Questions and Answers No: 2.

Question 3: What are the challenges of CA?

Teacher A: In my opinion, CA is challenging only when there are over 30 students in the classroom. I work in a private school and I plan the techniques of continuous assessment before I start teaching and it always has positive effect on learners' language development.
Teacher B: Continuous assessment can be challenging because in public schools classroom are stuffed with 30-35 students and as a result, it is hard for the teacher to assess the

learners continuously and is time consuming.
Teacher C: A heavier burden is placed upon teachers due to the fact that they must plan and execute the additional amount of work which is required by CA.

Table 7: Interview Question and Answers No: 3.

Question 4: Does CA improve learners' language performance?

Teacher A: It definitely does.
Teacher B: Yes.
Teacher C: Yes.

Table 8: Interview Questions and Answers No: 4

Question 5: Which are the techniques of CA that you use?

Teacher A: I use questions, essays, debates and so on.
Teacher B: I personally use Q&A in the lesson, short tests and quizzes, homework exercises, group exercises and exercises with multiple-choice questions.
Teacher C: I like using "Pop Quizzes" every week and "Peer Assessment" in the classroom.

Table 9: Interview Questions and Answers No: 5

Question 6: What are benefits of CA?

Teacher A: Learners get continuous feedback about their performance.
Teacher B: CA provides immediate and repeated feedback to the student about their academic progress; it also reduces the peak of intense pressure under the traditional examination system.

Teacher C: Increases in student involvement, parental participation and overall feedback for all parties.

Table 10: Interview Question and Answers No: 6

Question 7: What are the drawbacks of CA?

Teacher A: Drawbacks of CA assessment are that many teachers do not know the techniques of CA accurately and they do not prefer them when there are over 30 students in the classroom.
Teacher B: Drawbacks of CA are plagiarism and increase of students' workload.
Teacher C: More direct work in teacher planning and execution of CA in the classroom.

Table 11: Interview Question and Answers No: 7

Question 8: Do you think that students' assessment should be a continuous process and why?

Teacher A: Yes, it should be, because learning a foreign language never stops as a process; there are new lessons every day and learners should be assessed continuously.
Teacher B: Yes, because it gives chances to students to make some gradual improvement. CA also allows students to enhance their ability for future success. It is important for students to work with their strengths and weaknesses rather than just get marks.
Teacher C: Yes, because it works, and because education is also a process!

Table 12: Interview Questions and Answers No: 8

Question 9: Do you think that continuous assessment develops positive attitude toward learners?

Teacher A: Yes, because learners know that they are going to be assessed continuously.

Teacher B: Yes, I think that Continuous assessment is an innovative idea. CA is a strategy to spur students to work hard. They work hard in order to achieve good grades not only at the final examination but also during the year.
Teacher C: Absolutely.

Table 13: Interview Questions and Answers No: 9

Question 10: Do you think CA allows learners to collaborate with each other?

Teacher A: It definitely does.
Teacher B: Yes, I do think that CA allows learners to collaborate with each other.
Teacher C: Yes.

Table 14: Interview Questions and Answers No: 10

4.3 Results from the questionnaires

In this section, the following charts provide us with the teachers' answers from the questionnaires. The questionnaires were carried out with twenty EFL Teachers. All of the teachers work or had worked in schools and in different institutions. There are fifteen statements. Likert scale was used. Through questionnaires, the teachers' opinions and attitudes about CA were determined and presented.

Responses of Statement 1: "Continuous assessment enhances learning habit."

0   0   0

5

15

Strongly agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly disagree
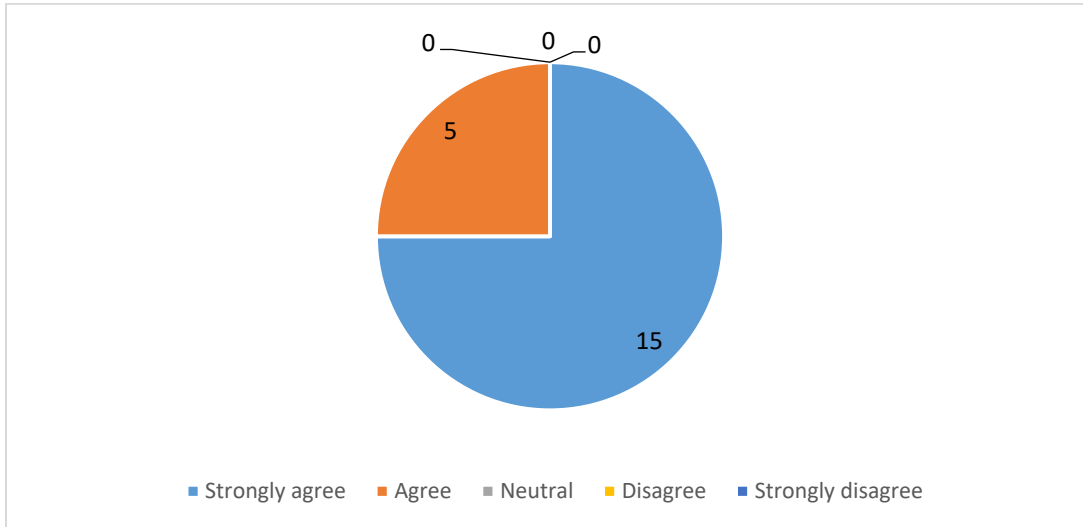
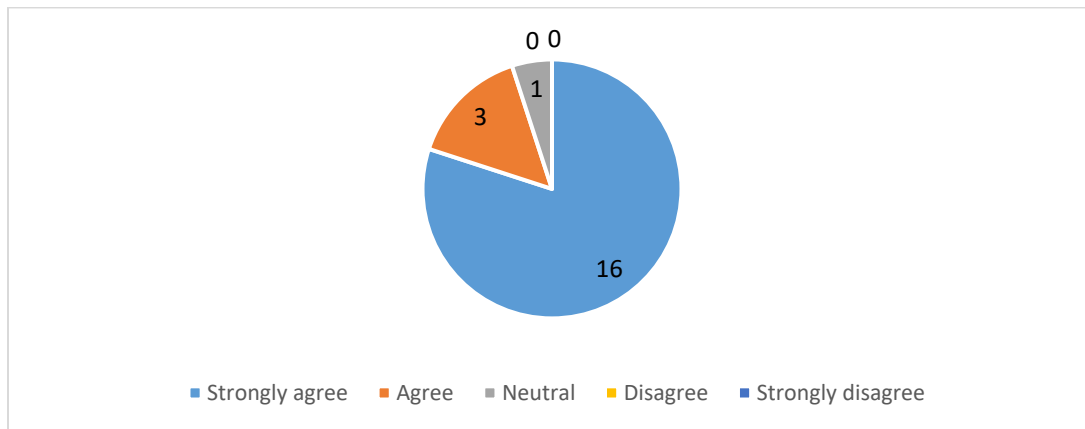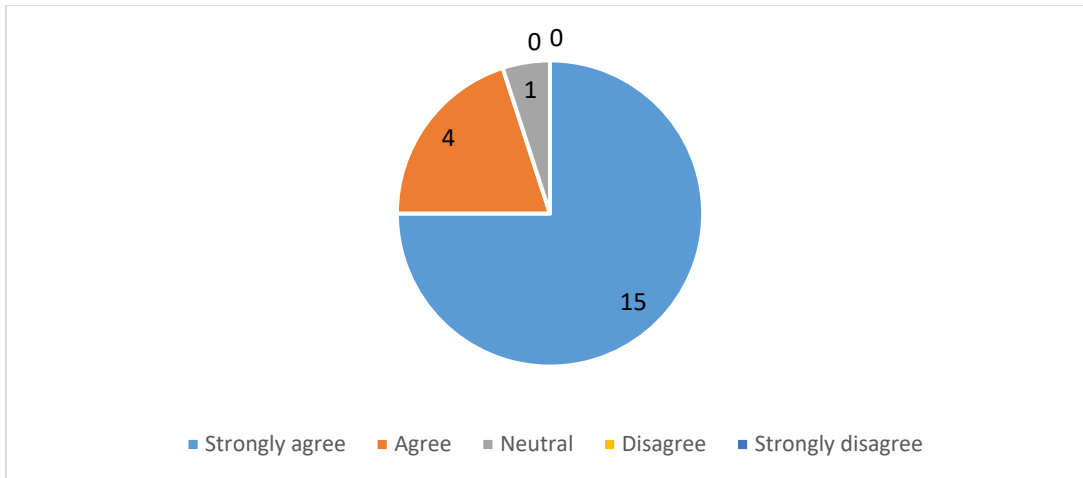*Figure 1-Results from questionnaire No:1*

Figure 1 shows that fifteen out of twenty respondents strongly agreed that CA enhances learning habits. When learners are regularly informed about their progress, their learning enhances and they perform better in given tasks.

Responses of Statement 2: "Continuous assessment gives the teacher a chance to assess learners' performance and to improve teaching techniques."

0   0   0

2

17

Strongly agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly disagree
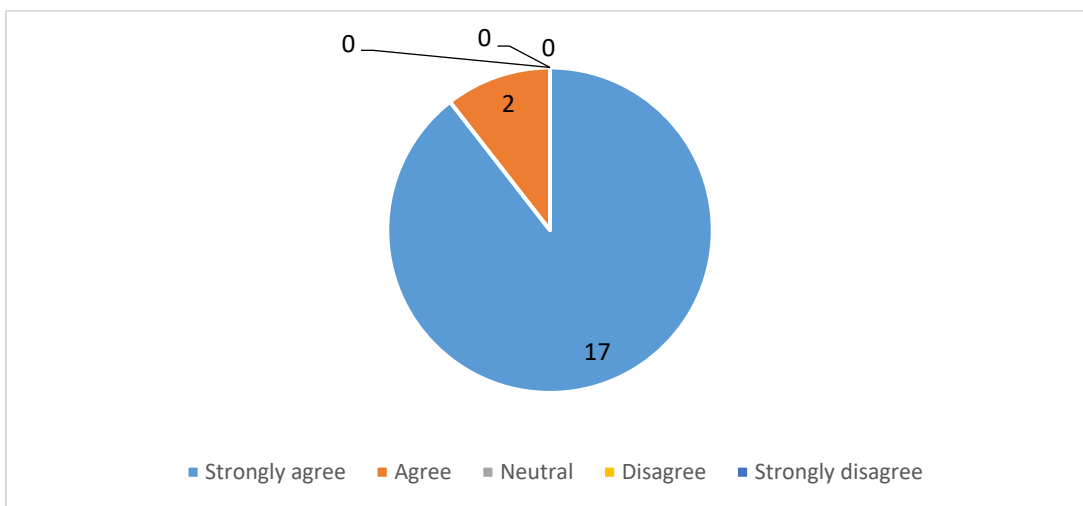
Figure 2-Results from questionnaire No:2

Figure 2 shows that seventeen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that continuous assessment gives the teacher a chance to assess learners' performance and to improve teaching techniques. When learners are assessed continuously, teachers know the steps that they need to take in order to improve learners' English knowledge.

Responses of Statement 3: "CA helps students to assess themselves. "

Figure 3-Results from questionnaire No:3

Figure 3 shows that sixteen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA helps students to assess themselves. It means when the students are allowed to get their assessment results, they will know their weaknesses and they will judge their own learning.

Responses of Statement 4: "Continuous assessment informs the teacher about the quality of teaching. "

Figure 4-Results from questionnaire No: 4

Figure 4 shows that fifteen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA informs the teacher about the quality of teaching. It means that the techniques of CA help the teacher to see if the teaching was done properly. When learners are assessed regularly, they will not only get feedback about their progress but teachers will get feedback about their teaching methods too.

Responses of Statement 5: "Continuous assessment helps parents to know about their child's progress."
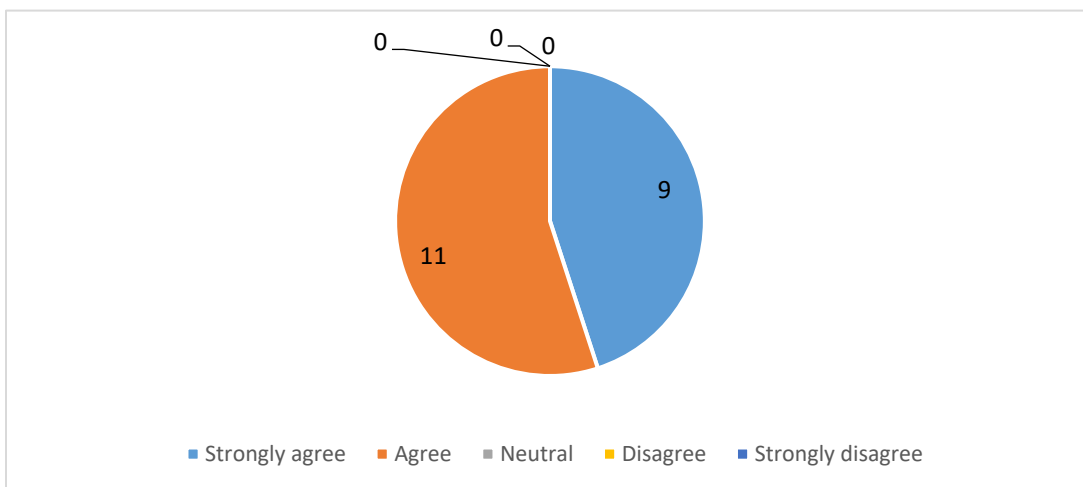
Figure 5-Results from questionnaire No: 5

Figure 5 shows that ten out of twenty respondents agree that CA helps parents to know about their child's progress. If learners' language is assessed continuously, the teacher will have a better picture of his or her students and their opinions about the students would be more objective and clear and as a result, parents will be informed accurately about their child's progress.
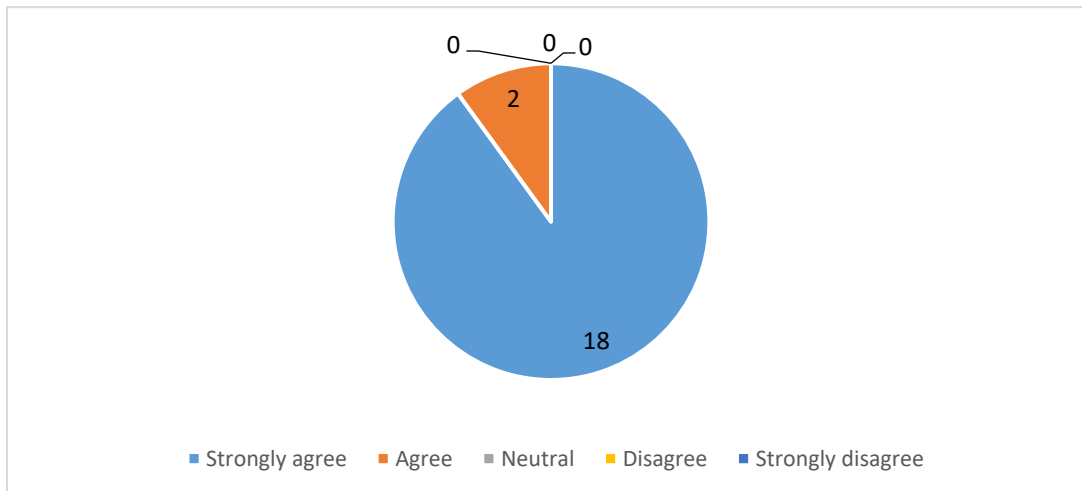
Response of Statement 6: "Continuous assessment is a modern evaluation tool. "

Figure 6-Results from questionnaire No: 6

Figure 6 shows that eighteen out of twenty respondents agree that Continuous assessment is a modern evaluation tool. It means CA is a modern way of assessing learners. Learners' achievements should not be seen as a way to get a score, but rather as a continuous process.

Response of Statement 7: "CA techniques help students to interact with each other and with the teacher.
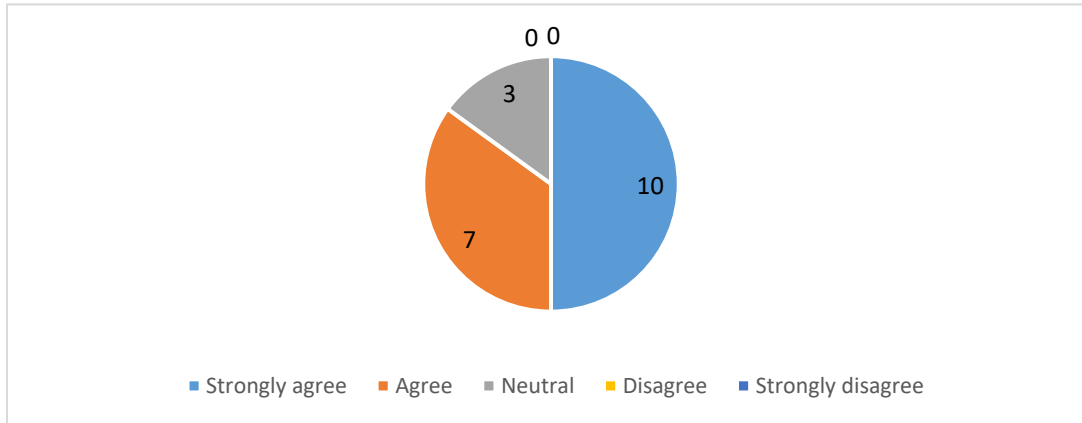

Figure 7-Results from questionnaire No: 7

Figure 7 shows that ten out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA techniques help students to interact with each other and with the teacher. When learners collaborate with their friends, their motivation increases and this develops positive attitudes among them.

Responses of Statement 8: "When learning new language learners should be informed continuously about their language knowledge."
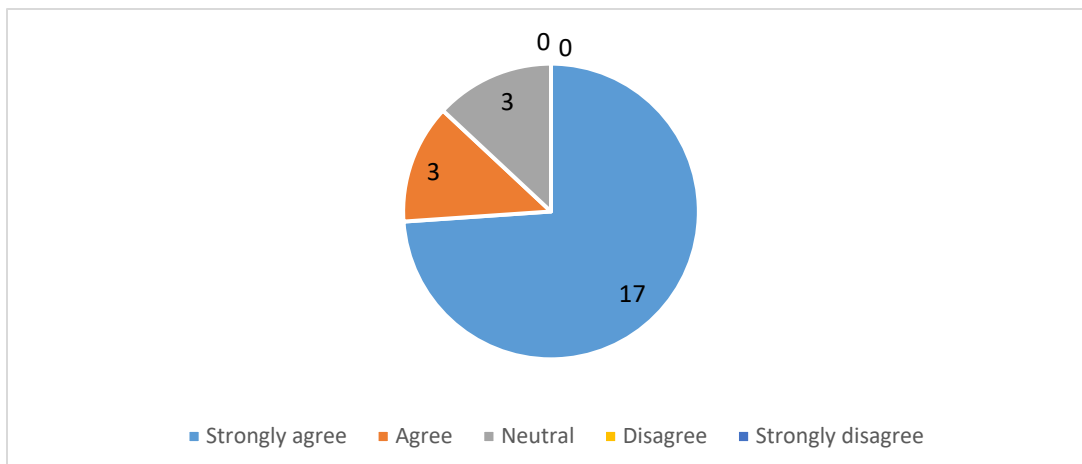
Figure 8-Results from questionnaire No: 8

Figure 8 shows that seventeen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that when learning a new language, learners should be informed continuously about their language knowledge. Learning a new language is a continuous process and learners should be informed about their strengths and weaknesses regularly.

Responses of Statement 9: "CA is a tool to collect information about learners."
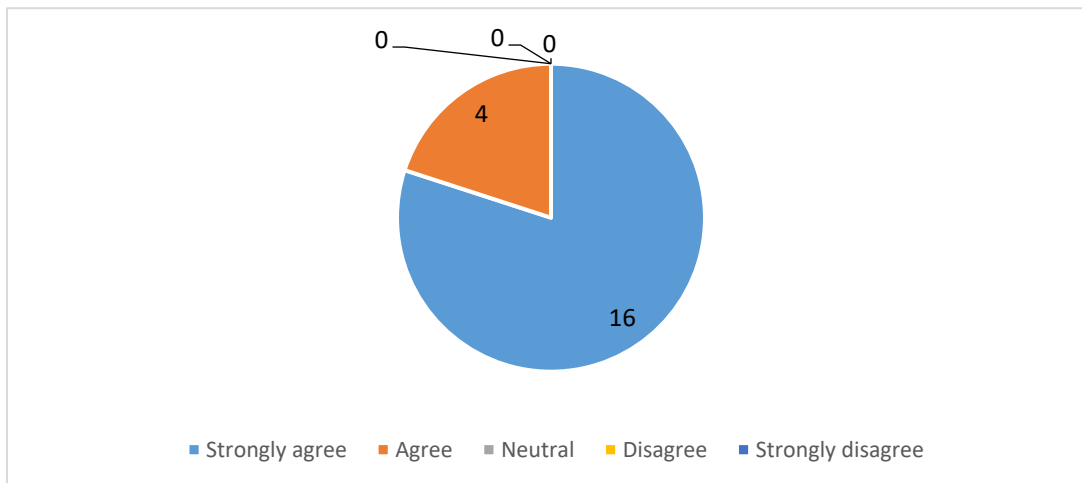

Figure 9-Results from questionnaire No: 9

Figure 9 shows that sixteen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA is a tool to collect information about learners. When learners are assessed continuously, the teacher always follows them and she or he knows his/her learners' weaknesses and strengths. CA helps teachers to deal with all aspects of learners' development.

Responses of Statement 10: "CA improves the communicative competence".
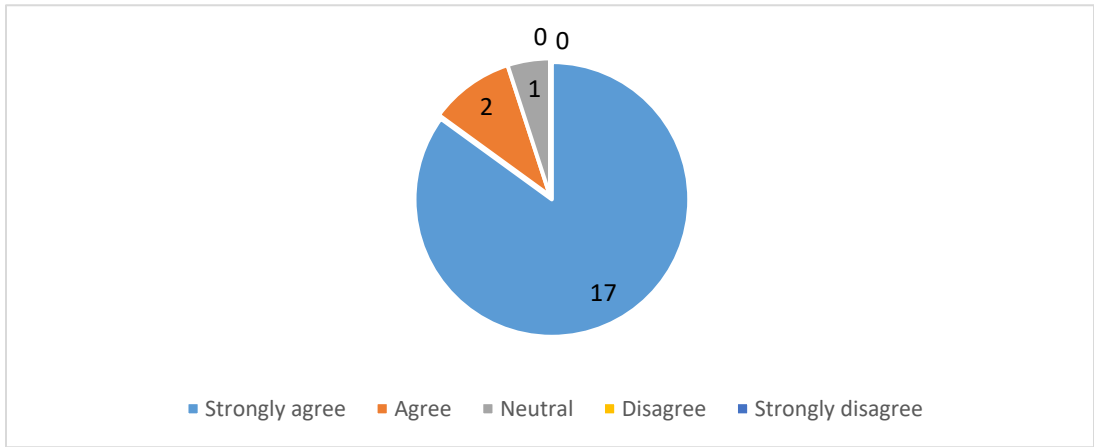
Figure 10-Results from questionnaire No: 10

Figure 10 shows that seventeen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA improves the communicative competence. It means that the strategies of CA, such as presentations, role-plays, projects, discussions, etc. give students the opportunity to use language in everyday life situations.

Responses of Statement 11:"CA reduces the stress of exams among learners".
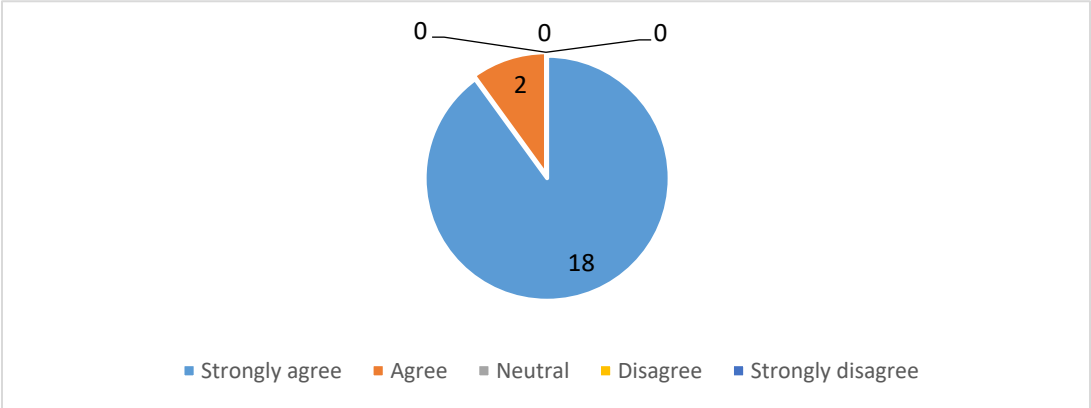

Figure 11- Results from questionnaire No: 11

Figure 11 shows that eighteen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA reduces the stress of exam among learners. CA reduces the stress of the exam because learners know that their knowledge is not going to be measured in the end of the year but it will be measured continuously and this way their motivation will be increased.

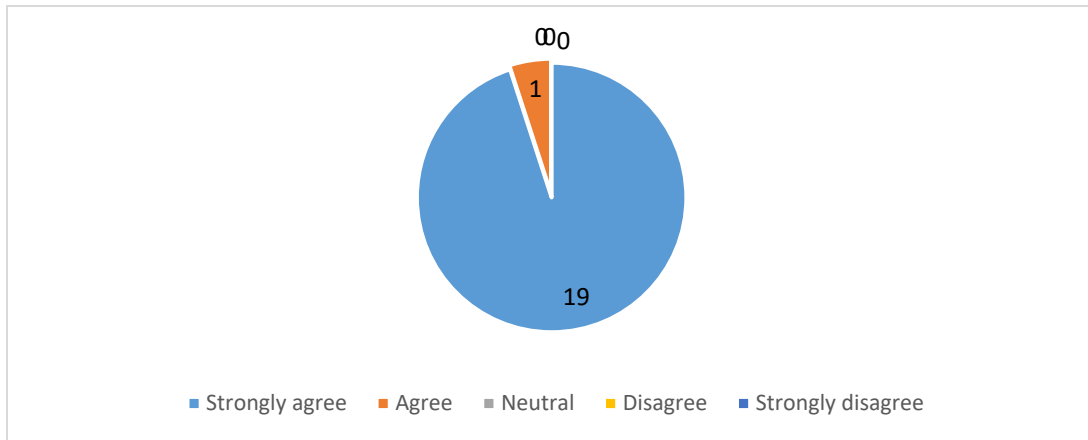**Responses of Statement 12: "CA can be challenging".**

Figure 12-Results from questionnaire No: 12

Figure 12 shows that nineteen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA can be challenging. CA is challenging because teachers need to plan it accurately. Teachers also think that there should be trainings that would help teachers to apply CA properly in the teaching and learning process.

Response of statement 13: "CA allows learners to get involved in the process of assessing their peers' performance".
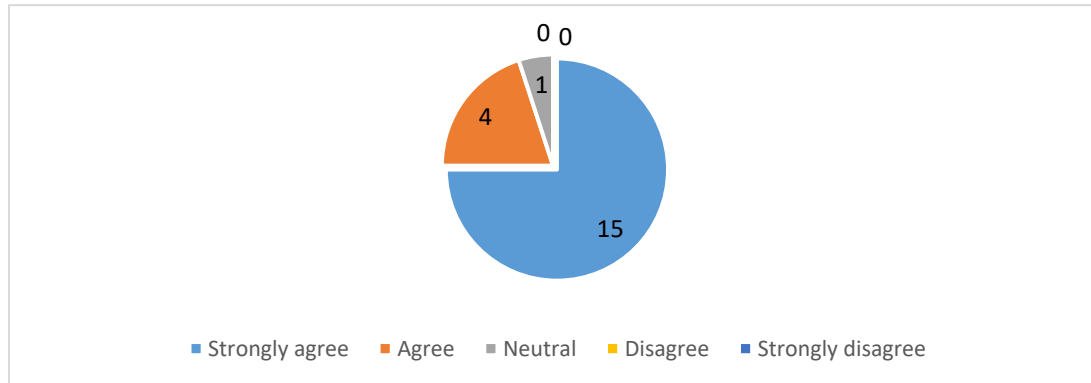

Figure 13-Results from questionnaire No: 13

Figure 13 shows that fifteen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA allows learners to get involved in the process of assessing their peers' performance. Peer assessment is one of the most useful methods of CA. Peer assessment occurs when students are involved in assessing the performance of their friends. It means that peer assessment develops students' judgment skills and provides relevant feedback to students.

Responses of Statement 14: "CA gives quick feedback to students and parents"
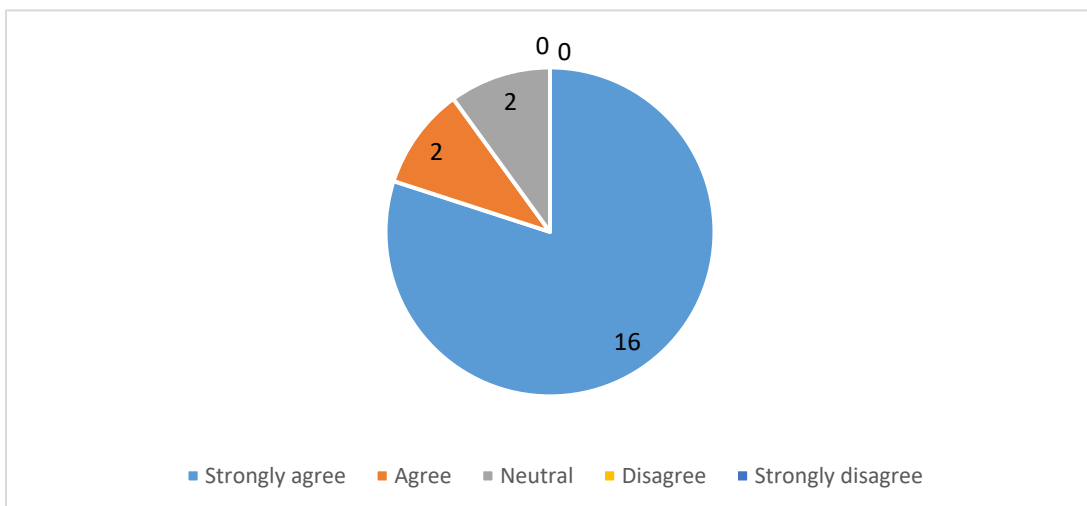
Figure 14-Results from questionnaire No: 14

Figure 14 shows that sixteen out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA gives quick feedback to students and parents. CA does not only inform the students about their performance but it also helps parents to be informed about their child's language knowledge. CA helps teachers and to become aware of their students' attitudes, strengths and weaknesses.

Responses of Statement 15: "CA motivates learners to study".
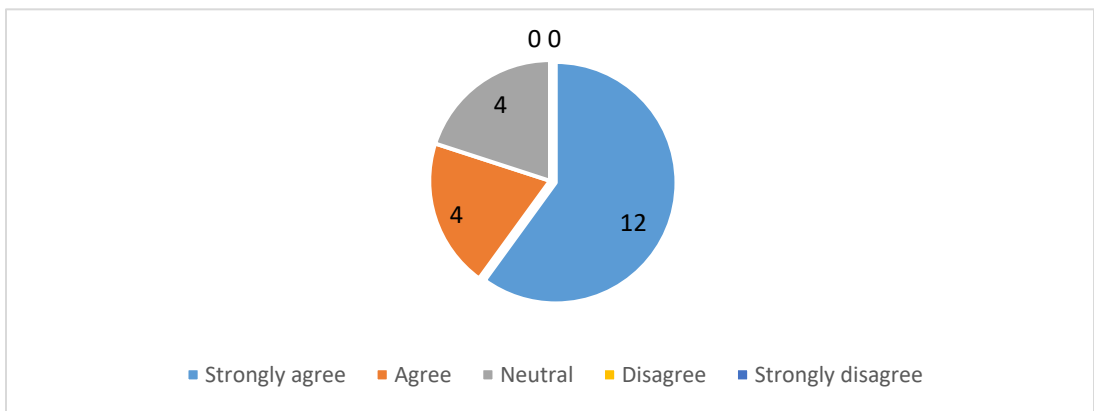

Figure 15-Results from questionnaire No: 15

Figure 15 shows that twelve out of twenty respondents strongly agree that CA motivates learners to study. Through the techniques of CA that were applied in teaching and learning process, it was proved that CA motivates learners to study. CA offers a variety of activities to learners and helps pupils to develop effective learning habits.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward continuous assessment. Their responses were presented through figures. The next chapter will provide a summary of the study and recommendations.

5. Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the study. The focus of this research was to investigate the importance of CA in improving students' performance. The case study of this research was carried out in primary school "Liria". The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of CA in improving students' performance and to find out the differences between alternative and traditional assessment.

In this research, descriptive design was used. Observations were used as a research instrument to determine the positive impact of CA on learners who learn English as a foreign language. In addition, questionnaires and interviews were used as a research instrument to gather information concerning teachers' perceptions about the continuous assessment.

5.1 Discussion of the Results

The study showed that the techniques of CA enhanced learning habits. In addition, the study revealed that the techniques of Continuous assessment provide a complete picture of each student. The learning habit is enhanced by the activities the teachers use. If teachers find innovative assessment methods such as continuous assessment, learners get motivated, and this develops a positive attitude towards them.

This study revealed that the techniques of CA such as presentations, role-playing, discussions, songs, story listening , paragraph writing, etc. helped learners to improve their language skills. If these methods were used continuously, learners would perform better in communication skills. One of the methods that was applied in this research was self and peer assessment. Through self-assessment, learners took responsibility of their own learning and they became independent learners. In addition, self-assessment allows learners to know their strengths and weaknesses and the things they need to do in order to improve their level. Another important method that was used was peer assessment. When learners are involved to assess their peers, they make judgments of the other students and this develops their judgment skills.

CA helped teachers to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses and to see if what they have taught was effective. The study has showed most of respondents strongly agreed that CA enhances learning habit. Most of the respondents said that continuous assessment is a modern evaluation tool. Most of the respondents indicate that CA improves the communicative competence since four communication skills are used properly.

In addition to, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that CA reduces the stress exam among learners. Learner's knowledge is not measured in the end of the year, it is measured throughout the year. Most of the teachers strongly agreed that CA can be challenging to and time consuming. Teachers need to prepare a good plan of CA and to apply it among learners.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on data collection, the study recommends the following:

* CA should be applied in classroom as an innovative assessment method. Teachers should be trained about the proper use of CA in classroom in order to have an effective teaching and learning process.

*Teachers in classroom should use a variety of assessment techniques to provide students opportunities of what they know and to tell if what they have taught was effective.

*Teachers should allow learners to judge their own learning and to judge their peers because self and peer assessment improves the quality of teaching and develops positive attitudes among learners.

*Teachers should provide learners with continuous feedback and comments because students need to focus on their weaknesses and work on improving them.

References

Abera, A. (2012). Continuous Assessment (Ca) Vis-À-Vis the Attainment of Major Educational Domains of Physical Education in Ethiopia. In *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research.* (p. 14).

Awofala, A. (2013). Examining Attitude towards Continuous Assessment Practices among Nigerian Preservice STM Teachers. In *Journal of Education and Practice Vol.4(13).*

Bailey, K. (1998). Reinventing assessment: Speculations on the future of large-scale educational testing. ETS. Princeton, NJ: Policy information center.

Barnham, C. (2015). Quantitative and qualitative research: perceptual foundations,International Journal of Market Research.

Bearman, M. D. (2014). "Guide to the Assessment Design Decisions Framework." .

Biggs, J. (1999). What students does:Teaching for enhanced learning. In *Higher education research &development.*

Birhanu, M. (2013). Continuous Assessment Issues and Practices in Secondary Schools of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia: The "Big Picture" of Assessment Mechanism: Palgo Journal of Education Research. .

Bjælde, O. &. (2017). Innovativ formidling af førsteårsstuderende somet design-based research-forløb.

Boud, D. &. (2007). Assessment and emotion: the impact of being assessed. London: Routledge.

Bridges, P. C. (2002). Coursework Marks High, Examination Marks Low: Discuss, Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education.

Brualdi, A. (1998). Implementing performance assessment in the classroom. In R. E. Practical Assessment.

Carless, D. (2015). Excellence in University Assessment. London: Routledge.

CelceMurcia, M. O. (2000). Discourse and context in language teaching. USA: Cambridge university press.

Cheng, L., Rogers, T., & Hu, H. (2004). ESL/EFL instructors classroom assessment practices: purposes,methods, and procedures. In *Language Testing* (pp. 360-389).

David, J. N. (2006). Formative assessment and self regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice. Journal of Studies in Higher Education, Vol. 31, No. 2, .

Dhindsa, H., Omar, K., & Waldrip, B. (2007). Upper Secondary Bruneian Science Students'Perceptions of Assessment. In *International Journal of Science Education.*

Dietel, R., Herman, J., & Knuth, R. (1991). What does research say about assessment?

Dochy, F., & Segers, M. G. (2007). Assessment engineering. London: Routledge.

Erwin. (1991). Assessing student learning and development: A guide to the Principles, Goals, and Methods of Determining College Outcomes.

Esposto, A. S. (2011). Continuous Team Assessment to Improve Student Engagement and Active Learning. Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice: Vol. 8, Issue, 1.

Falayajo, W. (1986). Philosophy and theory of continuous assessment. A paper presented at a workshop for inspectors of Education in Odor State, Nigeria.

Falchikov, N., & Goldfinch, J. (2000). Student Peer Assessment in Higher Education: A Meta-Analysis comparing peer and teacher marks.

Fuchler, G., & Davidson, F. (2004). Language testing and assessment: an advance resource book. New York: Routledge.

Gibbs, G. L. (1997). Coursework assessment, class size and student performance:1984-94. Journal of Further and Higher Education, Vol 21, no 2, pp 183-.

Goodrum, D., Hackling, M., & Rennie, L. (2001). The status and quality of teaching and learning ofscience in Australian schools. Canberra: Deparament of Education,Training and Youth Affairs.

Graham, C. (n.d.). *Sagepub*. Retrieved from The Essence of Continuous assessment: https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/7144_carlson_ch_1.pdf

Harris, M. (1997). Self-assessment of language learning informal settings,ELT Journal . Oxford university press.

Harris, T., & Hodges, R. E. (1995). In *The literacy dictionary: The vocabulary of reading and writing.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Hernandez, R. (2012). Does continous assessment in higher education support student learning? In *Journal of High Education.*

Huba, M., & Freed, J. (2000). Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

John, B. (1999). What the student does:Teaching for enhanced learning,Higher Education Research & Development . London: Routledge.

Law, B., & Eckes, M. (1995). Assessment and ESL. Manitoba, Canada: Peguis Publishers.

Linn, R., & Miller, M. (2005). Measurement and assessment in teaching . NJ: Prentice Hall.

M, S., & Smaldino, S. A. (2000). assessment for distance education. In T. a. Education. Upper Saddle River,NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Maduabum, M. A. (2005). handbook for effective continuous assessment. Owerri: Versatile Publishers.

McDonald, B. &. (2003). The impact of self-assessment on achievement: the effects of self-assessment training on performance in external examinations. .

Mikre, F. (2010). The role of assessments in curriculum practice and enhancement of.

Olatunji, S., & Akanwa, U. &. (2004). Measurement and Evaluation of Learning Outcomes. Lagos: Naphtali Prints.

O'Malley, J. a. (1996). Authentic assessment for English language learners. United States of America: Addison-Wesley.

Orsmond, P. (2004). Self and peer assessment. Great Britain: by center of Bioscience,the higher education Academy.

Paloma, C., & Banta, T. (1999). In *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ramsden, P. (2003). Learning to teach in higher education. London: Routledge.

Reeves, T. (2000). Alternative assessment approaches for online learning environments in higher education.

Safarath, B. K. (2014). Implementation of School Based Continuous Assessment (CA) in Tanzania Ordinary Secondary Schools and its Implications on the Quality of Education: Journal of Developing Country Studies.

Saito, H., & Fujita, T. (2009). Peer assessing peers contribution to EFL group presentations.

Sarsody, J. B. (2006). Applied linguistics 1 for BA studentsin. Cambridge: cambridge university press.

Shields, S. (2015). 'My work is bleeding': Exploring students' emotional responses to first year assignment feedback.

Simonson, M., & Smaldino, S. A. (2000). Assessment for distance education. In *Teaching and Learning at a Distance: Foundations of distance education.* Upper Saddle River,NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Slavin, R. (1997). Educational psychology: theory and practice (5th ed.). MA.

Struyven, K., Dochy, F., & Janssens, S. (2005). Students' Perceptions about Evaluation and Assessment in higher education: A Review. In A. a. Education.

Trotter, E. (2006). Student perceptions of continuous summative assessment. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, Volume 31, 2006 - Issue 5. .

USAID. (2003). educational quality in developing world.

Winking, D. (1997). Critical issue: Ensuring equity with alternative assessment assessments. Oak Brook:IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

Appendix

Appendix 1

The interview questions

Dear teacher,

The following questionnaire aims at finding the importance of CA in improving students' performance.

I would be grateful if you could answer this questionnaire as truthfully as you can. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Continuous assessment enhances learning habit.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2. Continuous assessment gives the teacher a chance to assess learners' performance and to improve teaching techniques.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3. CA helps students to assess themselves.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4. Continuous assessment informs the teacher about the quality of teaching.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5. Continuous assessment helps parents to know about their child's progress.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

6. Continuous assessment is a modern evaluation tool.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7. CA techniques help students to interact with each other and with the teacher.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8. When learning a new language, learners should be informed continuously about their language knowledge.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. CA is a tool to collect information about learners.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10. CA improves the communicative competence.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. CA reduces the stress of exam among learners.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12. CA can be challenging.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
13. CA allows learners to get involved in the process of assessing their peers' performance.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14. CA gives quick feedback to students and their parents.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15. CA motivates learners to study.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Appendix 2

Interview questions

Dear teacher,

The following interview aims at finding the importance of CA in improving students'
performance.

I would be grateful if you could answer these questions as truthfully as you can. I thank you in
advance for your cooperation.

1. How do you define CA?
2. As a foreign English teacher, do you think that CA should be implemented in teaching and why?
3. What are the challenges of CA?
4. Does CA improve learners' language performance?
5. Which are the techniques of CA that you use?
6. What are the benefits of CA?
7. What are the drawbacks of CA?
8. Do you think that students' assessment should be a continuous process and why?
9. Do you think that continuous assessment develops positive attitude toward learners?
10. Do you think CA allows learners to collaborate with each other?