

Jimma University
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Department of English Language and Literature
MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Assessment of the Implementation of Continuous Oral Skills
Assessment: The Case of EFL Teachers at Sokoru, Deneba and
Kumbi Secondary Schools, Grade 10 in Focus

By

Adugna Beyan

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master of Arts in TEFL

August, 2015

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Declaration, confirmation, approval and evaluation

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Declaration

I, declares that this thesis is my own work and that all sources of materials used for this thesis have been properly acknowledged. And I also states that this thesis is not submitted to any other institution anywhere for the award of any academic degree or diploma.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment with reference to EFL teachers at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools. With this intention, EFL teachers' awareness about COSA, and the current practice of COSA and teachers' familiarity with COSA formats, challenges EFL teachers encounter and attempts they make to overcome these challenges were explored. For this study descriptive research design was employed, and in trying to address these issues, mixed research methods which include both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Thus, nine EFL teachers were comprehensively selected whereas 95 students were selected employing a systematic random sampling technique from three schools. Relevant data were collected through written reflection, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation. As to the findings, the study illustrated that EFL teachers had a good awareness of COSA and positive attitude towards it. Hence, the findings showed that students had poor verbal English proficiency, lack of interest, low-level motivation, and negligence of authentic or real life speaking skills to complete the given tasks. Moreover, fear towards national examinations, ample time given for grammar-focused instructions, teachers' lack of practical skills for practical implementation of COSA, large class size, time constraints, the time given for task in the textbook and in the teacher's guide does not match, EFL teachers' heavy workload and focus given to cover vast portions were also found to be other impediments towards students' development of oral communication skills. Finally, recommendations were put forward for EFL teachers based on the findings of the study that are meant to create a sense of accountability of this assessment problem.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations:

AED	Academy for Education Development
CA	Continuous Assessment
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ICDR	Institute of Curriculum Development and Research
I, T1, T2, T3...:	Interview for Teacher 1, 2
WR, T1, T2...:	Written Reflection for Teacher 1, 2

Acronyms:

COSA	Continuous Oral Skills Assessment
TESO	Teacher Education System Overhaul

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study including general and specific objectives, significance of the study, and delimitation of the study and definitions of key terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

The current educational policy has introduced continuous assessment to replace the traditional approach that mainly focuses on end-term examination procedures. Due to the shift in focus from this examination system to formative assessment, continuous assessment nowadays covers 75% of the total points of a semester (MOE, 2003). This implies that most of the assessment of students' language ability is made through continuous assessment. In line with this, Heaton (1997) encourages continuous assessment because it enables teachers to assess language performance over a period of weeks or months that cannot be assessed by means of tests. From an educational perspective, scholars define Continuous Assessment as, "a student evaluation system that operates at classroom level and is integrated with instructional process" (Capper, 1996, as cited in ICDR, 1999, p.144.). Similarly, Yoloje (1984) explain as follows, "Continuous assessment is a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of students in educational institutions." These definitions indicate that continuous assessment is an ongoing type of assessment, or learning from assessment which helps to facilitate learning as it often engages students in work by using various techniques of assessment.

Continuous assessment, unlike summative assessment, is suitable in assessing students' overall communicative abilities. For instance, it measures oral skills as an integral part of an ongoing instruction. It also has a huge contribution in alleviating the time constraint end-term examinations have in testing oral skills. In connection to this, Underhill (1987) and Teshome (1995) pointed out that continuous oral skills assessment procedures avoid the practical problem of finding the time which is inherent in terminal oral examinations.

In addition to this, continuous assessment provides natural context in assessing students' oral performance. In support of this idea, Heaton (1990, p.122) states that, "Continuous assessment creates ways in which teachers are able to assess their students' oral skills by observing them while they are engaged in real communication." Thus, oral/speaking skill in real life situations is an important skill that should take a priority in any language assessment. Here, continuous assessment, particularly, continuous oral skills assessment has boundless advantages for assessing the students' oral skills in real life situations compared to summative terminal tests. For instance, Ellington and Earl (1997) have attempted to state the advantages of COSA as follows: COSA focuses to enhance and improve learning speaking skills, encourages regular learning from assessment, it usually uses collection of different assessment techniques. More considerably putting, it offers an ongoing picture of how individual students develop and mature as they work their way through a course.

The doubtful issue, here, is on the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment. This is to mean that since nearly all teachers might have been devoting themselves to help students develop their oral skills, to what extent do they contribute what is expected of them in implementing continuous oral assessment is a suspicious concern. For instance, most of the English syllabus designed for high school EFL students recommend some assessment of speaking skills which is supposed to be implemented at the end of each unit. As noted in the new grade 10 English Syllabus (2003, p. 98) "Teacher assesses speaking in class." Here, the speaking skills which are meant for regular assessment in English syllabus are insufficient and unbalanced with the amount of speaking sections provided in the English text.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Since the introduction of continuous assessment up to the current practice, the practitioners, especially teachers and students, have not been taking commitment for the proper implementation of continuous assessment. This may be because of various misconceptions about such method of assessment. They may consider continuous assessment overload, tiresome and it was introduced /implemented to make teachers busy. These notions have their own adverse implications on the basic aims of continuous

oral skills assessment (COSA). All this confusion might have happened because of lack of awareness (Baker & Westrup, 2000).

This is to mean that however hard EFL teachers might have been trying their best to create interactive English classroom, the motivation or desire they have in putting COSA into practice might be inadequate. Therefore, on the one hand, such a practice may hinder the opportunity of the students to be assessed under a real life situation and on the other hand, it may diminish the development of the target language-spoken interaction.

In addition, from eight years' experience of teaching English in one/ the same governmental school, the researcher has observed various challenges as regards implementing continuous oral skills assessment. For instance, large class size may be one of the factors that impede the implementation of COSA. In line with this, COSA seems to be time consuming and tiresome. Based on this observation, the researcher resolved to propose a study on this area.

With regard to the study which was conducted on this area, many studies were conducted on different issues about continuous assessment both in Ethiopia and abroad. For example, Kapambwe (2010) studied teachers' implementation of continuous assessment in Zambian schools at length. His findings indicated that teachers emphasized continuous testing instead of continuous assessment. Kapambwe assumed that this happened because of the past influences of traditional objective-based assessment of continuous assessment, and instead gave continuous testing.

In Ethiopia the researcher has come across the study that investigated challenges EFL teachers face in implementing continuous oral assessment. It was conducted by Mebea Fetene (2008) under the setting of Debre-Birhan Teachers' Education and Vocational College. In this study, the researcher attempted to use various methods like closed and open-ended questionnaires, in-depth interview as well as focus group discussions. As to the findings, Mebea Fetene found out structural constraints including large class size and workloads. He also came up with results related to absence of adequate course specific assessment policy and negligence of continuous oral assessment. The other research was conducted by Abiy Yigzaw (2013) on examined high school teachers' and students' perceptions, attitudes and actual practices of continuous assessment. The investigator

used different methods like questionnaires, interviews and content analyses were used to gather data. Based on his findings, he concluded that the participant English teachers did not properly practice continuous assessment in their schools.

This study, however, focuses on assessing the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment of EFL teachers face at high schools level. It also targeted to assess to what extent English language teachers have an awareness of continuous oral skills assessment and put oral skills assessment methods into practice. It also attempted to find out the challenges and the strategies used to overcome them. In general, the current study mainly deals with assessing the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment that EFL teachers face at Sokoru, Deneba, and Kumbi Secondary Schools.

1.3.Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment with reference to EFL teachers at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools, Grade 10 in focus.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the EFL teachers' awareness towards of continuous oral skills assessment.
2. investigate the current practice of continuous oral skills assessment.
3. investigate the teachers' familiarity with COSA formats.
4. find out the challenges that EFL teachers encounter in implementing continuous oral skills assessment.
5. explore EFL teachers' attempt to overcome the challenges they encounter while implementing continuous oral skills assessment.

1.4. Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to assess the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment with reference to EFL teachers. Therefore, the study tries to address following questions.

1. Do EFL teachers' have an awareness of continuous oral skills assessment?
2. To what extent do teachers in the schools currently practice COSA?
3. To what extent teachers of Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools are familiar with COSA formats?
4. What could be the challenges that EFL teachers at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools might encounter in implementing continuous oral skills assessment
5. How do teachers of Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools try to overcome the challenges they encounter while implementing continuous oral skills assessment?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study could be seen from different angles. First, it may open a path regarding understanding/investigating the role of continuous oral skills assessment in motivating students towards the excessive practice and use of oral interaction. Second, it is also believed to create or maximize the teachers' awareness pertaining to the relevance of continuous oral skills assessment. Thirdly, it may provide teachers with information in order to look for means to overcome the challenges of continuous oral skills assessment. Moreover, the finding may also serve as a spring board to the language teachers and the interested researchers to conduct further studies in the area.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to three secondary government schools, namely Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools which is found in Oromia Regional State, Jimma Zone and Sokoru District grade 10 level in particular. The study attempted to address problems English language teachers might encounter while implementing continuous oral skills

assessment of the year 2014/15. Besides, the study was limited to find out challenges that EFL teachers might have face in implementing COSA, exploring EFL teachers' understanding towards COSA, investigating the practice of this assessment procedure in the target schools and examining English teachers' attempt to overcome the challenges.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The quality of a research work increases if it covers large population from different area. However, due to different constraints like time, budget and resource materials the research was limited to only one Woreda Secondary Schools of Jimma Zone, Sokoru District. Similarly the research done only on one District including three Secondary Schools with 9 English teachers and 95 students were representative of the study which can't represent the realities of other Secondary Schools. Therefore, the result of the study can't generalize the contexts of other Woredas in Oromia Regional State of Secondary Schools and the whole Country.

1.8. Definitions of Key Terms

Formative Assessment: an ongoing, often daily process by which teacher educators gather and interpret information about aspects of students' learning and their own teaching (AED, 2006).

Summative Assessment: a procedure for gathering information about the students' achievements in line with the curriculum goals or objectives at the end of instruction or unit (Nitko, 1995).

Continuous Assessment: is an assessment done formally or informally on a regular and continuous basis. It is integrated with instruction in order to improve learning and to help, shape and direct the teaching-learning process (ICDR, 1999).

Continuous Oral Skills Assessment: is form of assessment that is continuously conducted to assess speaking skills as an integral part of instruction (Weir, 1990).

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the theories about continuous assessment in connection with concepts of continuous oral skills assessment. It gives a brief theoretical background of continuous oral skills assessment, the link between assessment and teaching, concepts related to continuous assessment and its classifications. Issues like, good qualities, approaches, formats, procedures of designing, the role of feedback in continuous assessment of speaking skills have been elaborated.

2.1. Theoretical Background of Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

Continuous oral skills assessment is one aspect of assessment method which is supposed to measure speaking skills as an integral part of instruction. This innovative approach of evaluation has become popular as opposed to more traditional assessment forms. For instance, many educators have found that traditional testing like; end-term final exams do not always accurately reflect the perception of students' abilities. O'Malley and Valdez (1996, p. 2) point out that, '... current assessment procedures do not assess the full range of essential students' outcomes; teachers have difficulty using the information gained for instructional planning.' Hence, Heaton (1997) encourages continuous assessment because it enables teachers to assess over a period of weeks or months, language performance that cannot be assessed by means of tests.

In connection to this, the shift from summative assessment has contributed immensely for learners to be assessed under real life context using continuous assessment. Particularly, continuous oral skills assessment plays a great role in promoting students speaking skills. As noted in TESO (2003), the shift in interest from summative to formative assessment, opened a way for wide range use of continuous assessment and it is currently covering almost 75% of the total assessment of students' performance. It is, therefore, through this change that continuous assessments of speaking skills appear to gain the opportunity to be assessed under authentic context.

2.2. The Link between Assessment and Teaching

Assessment includes testing and other ways of gathering information about students' language ability. In favor of this idea, Hedge (2000, p.375) states: "Assessment is a more inclusive term: it refers to the general process of monitoring or keeping track of learners' progress. Testing is a kind of the assessment." Therefore, testing is, one of the various forms of assessments that can be used for gathering information about the students' achievements on the course. The link between teaching and testing /assessment/ is compared as follows. This is done acknowledging that testing and assessment vary in their meaning content from inclusive to specific concept respectively.

Teaching language and assessing language cannot be seen in isolation. They are the two constituents of the whole teaching learning process. In favor of this idea, Heaton (1988) notes: "It is virtually impossible to work in either field without constantly considering the other." Similarly, Dejene (1994) elucidates that testing is like a vehicle to the well-being of the total teaching-learning activity. Furthermore, Venkateswaran (1995) indicated that students and teachers gain much information from assessments. The information gained in turn affects teaching positively. He, too, added that assessment can help students to develop positive attitudes towards their class, mastering the language as well as promoting learning by their diagnostic nature.

In general, it is legitimate or imperative to understand that assessment can support teaching learning progress. Hughes (1989, p. 2) reveals the following: "The proper relationship between teaching and testing is surely that of a partnership." As a result, they make students develop a sense of achievement and success which in turn motivates them to plan their own strategies for better performance. Similarly, for teachers, assessments are mechanisms employed to know weaknesses and strengths in real instruction. They provide a kind of information that helps teachers follow the appropriate method of teaching.

2.3. Continuous Assessment

In formal educational contexts, there are two main components of assessment techniques. They are continuous assessment and end-term ways of assessment. Continuous assessment is defined by scholars from educational perspective, “Continuous assessment is a student evaluation system that operates at classroom level and is integrated with instrumental process” (Capper, 1996, p.144 as cited in ICDR, 1999). Similarly, Yoloye (1984) explains as follows, “Continuous assessment is a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of students in educational institutions.” Hence, from these views we can understand that continuous assessment is ongoing type of assessment which helps facilitate learning as it often engages students in work by using various techniques of assessment.

Various literatures suggest that today schools and universities are emphasizing the use of continuous assessment for it has various advantages in teaching-learning process. ICDR (1999, p.33) mentions the following advantages of continuous assessment for learners and instructional process.

Continuous assessment encourages students to take part in participation in learning situations helps them analyze their level of knowledge and skills, guide them to determine their weaknesses and strengths. It also motivates learners to regularly practice and study, and increases the reliability of their cumulative scores.

Continuous assessment has a role to play for instructional process. For instance, it determines the extent to which the school is working towards achieving its set of objectives; it provides information from which teachers can find insights in to their own effectiveness in teaching and it finds out the degree to which the methods of instructional materials employed are up-to date and effective. In addition to this, it gives incentives in learning process and makes assessment of student’s ability more reliable.

Generally, continuous assessment system brings teachers and students together in a supportive effort to attain the objectives of classroom instruction. It ensures students' progress and the effectiveness of teachers' instructional methodologies.

2.3.1. Types of continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is divided into two namely, formative and summative continuous assessments and both of which have their own benefits in measuring students' language performance.

2.3.1.1. Formative Continuous Assessment

Formative continuous assessment is a form of assessment that is conducted throughout the teaching- learning process from the very start to the end of instruction. Because of this fact, it is called an ongoing assessment method which occurs during instruction with an intention of guiding learning and teaching. According to MOE (2003) and AED (2006), formative continuous assessment refers to any assessment done throughout the academic year that is intended to advance learning and direct the teaching.

Furthermore, it is a continuous assessment that focuses on monitoring the learning progress and diagnosing learning difficulties while teaching is being implemented. It can normally be conducted at the end of units, chapters or at any necessary part of lessons. On the other hand, continuous assessment has a paramount role to play in assessing learners' language performance. For example, as one excellent quality, it is a way in which students have the opportunity to be assessed under real life situation. In addition to this, it creates boundless chance through which teachers sort out information about their students' oral performance, as the instruction is ongoing. In strengthening this idea, Brown and Youle (1983, p.104) confirm that formative assessment would be both more informative for the teachers and fairer to the students to have some continuous record of their spoken performance on different occasions and for different purposes.

Therefore, formative continuous assessment allows classroom teachers to assess the various aspects of their students' speaking skills through different assessment tasks that involve the use of oral English for different purposes and situations. Moreover, planned

formative continuous assessment, as it is conducted at regular intervals, can, at least, minimize the problems related to the inaccuracy and unfairness of assessment results.

2.3.1.2. Summative Assessment

In contrary to formative continuous assessment, summative assessment is a term synonymously used with achievement tests. It is the type of assessment that occurs at the end of instruction; aiming at the evaluating students' achievements over a period of time in line with the objectives of the curriculum. Hughes (1989) noted that such a test is firmly rooted to classroom experiences and syllabus contents. Similarly, Weir (1993) describes that since formative (progress) test is viewed as an integral part of the learning process, it works best if it contains items and tasks that are familiar to students.

This assessment method is usually implemented from the intention that it measures students' progress in language skills in relation to the syllabus they have been following, Harmer (2001). In the same way, Weir (1993) states, "The overall aim of achievement test is to try to get students to use language receptively and productively that they have learned during the course." From this, one can understand that summative / achievement tests are used to realize the extent of students' achievements with the already set objectives of the target language course.

Therefore, Nitko (1995) highlighted the difference between formative (continuous) assessment and summative assessment in such a way that formative (continuous) assessment occurs during instruction to guide learning and teaching. It mostly occurs as informal assessment. The assessment occurs frequently to facilitate teaching, give practice, and provide feedback.

On the contrary, summative assessment occurs at the end of instructions to evaluate students' achievements of the curriculum attainment goals and objectives. Mostly, it is employed as formal assessment. Here, the assessment occurs periodically to determine achievement of curriculum objectives, assign grades, certify attainment, and in combination with other assessments to place students.

On the other hand, the input summative assessment has in assessing students oral performance is very low as compared to formative continuous type of assessment. This is

due to the time constraint end-term examinations have in assessing oral skills. It seems thus evident that summative oral assessment does not represent the overall oral abilities of learners. One of the reasons for this could be the lack of opportunity for end-term exams to include a variety of oral assessment activities

2.3.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Continuous Assessment

As different scholars have forwarded, continuous assessment has its own advantage and disadvantage. For instance, in listing the merits and demerits of continuous assessment, Ellington and Earl (1997) have attempted to state the way they support and affect students' learning. In dealing with the advantages of continuous assessment, the scholars above discussed that continuous assessment presents much more extensive syllabus representative sample than the end term assessment. It usually uses collection of different assessment techniques. In such assessment method, the focus is on worthwhile learning. It mainly encourages regular, systematic study and discourages last minute study. Continuous assessment does not only provide early warnings students are experiencing a problem with the course, but it also provides early signals of the likely performance of students. More considerably putting, it offers an on-going picture of how individual students develop and mature as they work their way through a course.

On the contrary, continuous assessment has diverse disadvantages. To begin with, it may make students have a sense that every error that they make along the way can count against them. Students who are under this assessment method may feel that they are over-assessed. The relationship between students and teacher may be affected by this assessment method. This evaluation system may make learners sense/feel that it turns to be nothing more than a series of tests or 'mini examinations'. To sum up, it may require tutors with a high level of experience in assessment.

2.4. Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

In designing language assessment, it is a good idea to reflect the concept of content validity. This is to mean that the assessment we set will have chance to hold the representative sample of all language skills. In relation to this idea Weir, (1990) describes content validity as "the extent that tests sample as widely as possible relevant; critical and

communicative items from the syllabus in order to have a beneficial wash back effect on teaching.” This implies that the more the emphasis in testing or assessment lies on each skill, the more likely students will become competent in each skill. Specifically, since the main intention of teaching oral skills is to enhance students’ spoken interaction, teachers need to have a representative sample of speaking skills in whatever aspect of assessment they want to employ. In strengthening this notion, Brown and Youle (1983) state as the main aim of English teacher is to make the students effectively use spoken English in conveying any message. Unlike summative assessment, continuous assessment is very conducive in assessing students overall communicative ability. This is because continuous assessment measures students’ oral skills as an integral part of lessons in an ongoing instruction. Comparing it again with continuous assessment, summative assessments fail to provide natural environment in assessing students’ oral ability. However, continuous assessment, according to Heaton (1990), creates ways in which teachers are able to assess their students’ oral skills by observing them while they are engaged in real communication. Thus, the fact that students’ communicative oral assessment is carried out under the authentic situation rather than in non-natural environment, continuous assessment is considered a highly appropriate means of assessment.

2.5. Qualities of Good Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

As suggested by different scholars, a good assessment has to fulfill various qualities like, validity, reliability, practicality, backwash, and authenticity, so that it can contribute profound supports for teaching and learning process. Just to describe the vital ones, good assessment qualities such as, validity, reliability and practicality are discussed below.

First, validity is one of the assessment qualities which refers to the extent to which a given assessment or any of its component parts should measure what it is intended to measure, not anything else, Weir (1993). Putting other ways, in language assessment, validating assessment means being able to establish a reasonable link between a test taker’s performance and individual’s actual language ability. The question of validity, therefore, is “Does the test measure what it is intended to measure?” (Lado, 1961, p. 30).

Secondly, as another important concept of a good continuous assessment of speaking, reliability, refers to the degree to which a group of learners being examined in two-assessment situations show consistent assessment scores (Anderson, Clapham & Wall 1995). Moreover, it seems likely that continuous oral assessment procedures minimize the problem of reliability which is a common feature of an end of course formal oral tests. In connection to this, Bachman (1990) also confirms, “Individual’s performance may be affected by differences in testing conditions, fatigue, and anxiety and they may thus obtain scores that are inconsistent from one occasion to the next” (1990, p. 24). This is to say that the average scores that the test taker obtains from a set of continuous tests are likely to be more reliable than those obtained from an end of course examinations.

Thirdly, practicality is one aspect of a good continuous assessment quality. It refers to the situation where the assessment should be economical wise in terms of finance and time allotted to it, and which is easy towards its scoring and administration. As to Harrison (1983) states, test practicality refers to the consideration of financial capacity, administrative capacity, and scoring capacity of the target setting.

To sum up, Hughes (1989) and Alderson (1991), claim that assessments should be valid when they measure what they are supposed to measure and it should be reliable to have a consistent continuous oral assessment scores across different characteristics of assessment situations. Practicality of a test is another important quality which refers, to whether a test should be economical and easy to administer and score.

2.6. The Backwash Effect of Continuous Assessment of Oral Skills

It is clear that expectation of end-term examination procedures has a harmful wash back effect on learning; learners prepare for examinations and organize knowledge in the way they are able to recall in the light of how they are going to be tested with written questions on the sheet. This implies that the procedure of measurement affects both the quality and quantity of learning. This goes with what Hughes (1989) claims, as wash back is the effect of testing on teaching and learning. Here, teachers who teach the language areas which are anticipated to occur on exams and at the same time students who study and practice giving more emphasis during testing may result in harmful back

wash. From this, one can infer that the potential terminal examinations have to lead to negative wash back is very high. The position of the continuous assessment procedure of oral skills with the syllabus creates a difference between classroom based assessment and summative examinations. As stated by Golden (1989, as cited in Burrows, 2004), the distinction between terminal examinations and classroom continuous assessment is its deliberate attempt to avoid connection with particular learning environments. On the contrary, classroom assessment is directly concerned with progress and learning of speaking skills. Therefore, the continuous assessment of oral performance is closely connected to instruction; its potential effect on the classroom may be different from the effect of a terminal examinations.

Moreover, the continuous oral assessment is expected to exert positive wash back effects on the classroom. This could be in such a way that the students practice their speaking skills since the assessment goes in an integrated manner with their regular speaking instructions.

2.7. Holistic and Analytic Approach to Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

Assessing spoken language can be divided into two main ways. It can be seen from the perspective considering language in a holistic way, or then one can divide the language into pieces (grammar, pronunciation etc.) and look at them separately, which is called an analytic way of assessing (Bachman 1991, pp. 301-330). Holistic way means assessing the situation overall, and how the subject handles and performs in a situation that is being assessed. Holistic way of assessing is based on the idea that we cannot see grammatical, or other language function that take place inside one's mind, therefore, we cannot judge them. We have to judge the functions we are able to observe: the learner's ability to perform in a given task.

Analytic way of assessing means looking at certain, predetermined points, for instance pronunciation, grammar, rhythm etc. According to Knight (1992, p. 300), teachers should focus on using the latter way of assessing, since it is important that the teachers know what exactly needs to be improved in the learners speech, and that they are able to give helpful feedback.

2.8. Formats of Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

As can be deduced from the above discussions, encouraging communicative language teaching to develop oral skills is good for nothing unless our teaching is supported by assessment of these skills. Therefore, in order to implement this procedure effectively and efficiently, various formats to assess oral skills need to be employed. For example, Heaton (1990) points out that observation and self-assessment are the main components of formative oral skills assessment. In addition to this, Hughes(1989) states that interview, interaction with peers, response to tape-recordings, questions and requests for information, pictures, role play, interpretation and discussion provide enormous opportunity for comprehensive assessment. Weir (1995) also suggests assessment formats such as, information gap exercise, the free interview/ conversation, the controlled interview, role-play and information gap assessment.

In the implementation of oral skills assessment formats, it is a good idea if students are the main agent so that they interact with one another in the real assessment context. Weir (1995), for example, points out that they have an opportunity to choose in advance, with whom they wish to perform the task so that they interact with somebody they know and feel free to speak. On the other hand, Weir indicates that there are different oral assessment formats which can be accomplished interacting student with examiner or interlocutor. For example, the free interview conversation, the controlled interview, role-play, and information gap activities are the continuous assessment of speaking she considers (1995, pp. 46-61).

I. Oral Interview

If used appropriately, interview may be observable method in assessing students' oral interaction. With regard to this assessment formats Hughes (1989, p. 104)) notes that "the most obvious format for the testing of oral interaction is the interview." Similarly, Pierce and O'Malley (1992) in Shaaban (2001) point out that using visual cues in oral interviews is the best method of assessing the students' speaking skills in a continuous way. This type of assessment may provide opportunity for the students to choose pictures to talk about. Unlike the traditional oral interview procedures, teachers' role may be restricted to

guiding the students by asking questions that require the use of related structure and vocabulary.

From the explanation given above, oral interview can usually be used to assess students' speaking skills. However, the ways of presentation vary from simple oral questions forwarded to the students to some visual clues to guide the oral interview questions.

II. Role Play

Role-play is the situation where the candidates are given a role they can identify with and pretends to act like someone else in a particular context. This technique creates an authentic situation in which students can orally perform in assessment as well as during speaking classes using the target language. (Weir, 1995) note "... candidate is expected to play one of the roles in an interaction which might be reasonably expected of him or her in the real world."(1995, p. 62).

In addition to this, 'it would seem to be a practical and potentially a highly valid and reliable means of assessing a candidate's ability to participate effectively in oral interaction.' Hence, role-play is a technique in which valid and reliable assessment of students' oral performance can be done in actual situation.

Moreover, Shaaban (2001) notes that children of all ages, when assessed through these techniques, feel comfortable and motivated, especially "when the activity lends itself to cooperative learning and is seen as a fun of learning" (2001, p. 18). Similarly, Lindsay and Knight (2006) confirm that role-play that involves information gap activities can provide students with the real purpose for using English in class. In relation to this, Heaton (1990 p. 118) Points out that "since it is always essential to give students a reason for speaking, we should devise suitable activities with this in mind."

This implies that students should have the opportunity to use English in a meaningful way when they are assessed on their oral communicative ability. Teachers are required to design appropriate and purposeful oral assessment tasks that encourage the spontaneous use of oral English for genuine communication.

III. Observation (Using Rating Scales, Checklist, etc)

Observation is another prominent method in assessing students' oral performance being

held as an integral part of classroom instructions. It is also believed to come up with opportunities that ended –term exams cannot cater.

Confirming this idea, Heaton (1990) states that observation is the best method of assessing. “Those aspects of communicative language performance that are less easy to capture in a traditional paper and pencil format” (1990, p. 116). Putting other ways, Hedge (2000, p. 388) points out that “ with an increase in focus on communicative activities in the classroom such as information-transfer tasks, role play and tasks designed to promote oral interaction” it can be argued that observation is a valid means of collecting information about the development of language skills.

Implementing observation as continuous oral skills assessment method teachers should move around the organized group, observe them, and jot down one or two notes discretely about certain students while the oral activity is taking place, Heaton (1990, P.116) As a procedure, he also suggests teachers “use a card or small note pad. Never make it obvious that you are assessing the students in any way. And do not try to observe every student.” Therefore, observation as a continuous oral skills assessment method provides opportunity for classroom teachers to assess their students' oral skills in a non-threatening condition. As it is carried out while the students are performing classroom-learning tasks, it is likely that it shows the true pictures.

IV. Presentations

As one important technique, classroom presentation provides opportunities for the teacher to assess diverse aspects of oral skills. It can also be taken as the system in which the students demonstrate a range of various oral performances. As to Shaaban (2001, p. 18), for example, presentations “cover a wide range of meaningful activities including poetry reading, plays, role plays, dramatizations and interviews.” This implies, as presentation is also relevant for the assessment of students’ speaking skills under diversified ways of real life tasks.

From the above discussion, one can infer that presentation is one of classroom based continuous oral Skills assessment procedures which directs students to perform authentic activities as an integral part of classroom speaking activities.

V. Story Re-telling

Story re-telling is considered an effective way to integrate oral and written language skills. In addition to this, it offers an authentic environment in assessing students' oral performance.

It creates an opportunity in such a way that students who have just read or listened to a story might be asked to retell the story or to summarize the main idea, O'Malley and Valdez (1991).

Thus, the more regularly the learners involve in such real life tasks the more chance they have to develop their speaking skills. The scholars mentioned above also argue that when pictures, topic monologues, cue cards, or story re-telling techniques are used, instead of typical interview patterns between students and teachers, opportunities will be opened for students for more oral production.

This implies that story re-telling can be used as one best alternative in assessing students' oral performance as an integral part of instruction. It is also believed to make students more active than the teacher is. This is due to the fact that teacher no longer have the chance to ask and wait for the response as in patterns of interviews.

VI. Discussion

Learner- learner joint discussion can be regarded as effective way of assessing students' progress in language learning; especially, it has a vital role in continuous oral assessment. Here, usually, in such method of assessment, the assessors give little attention to the perfectness/ factuality the information that they put forward in their speech. As a result, students will have a chance to participate freely without fear of making mistakes. With this regard, Underhill (1987, p.20) points out that "Learners are told beforehand that the assessment will be based on the way they express and justify their opinions, and evaluate those of others, and not just on the factual content of what they say." Hence, in such type of assessment students feel comfortable to express their ideas with the partners they join.

2.9. Procedure of Designing Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

As mentioned above, as part of continuous assessment one needs to have a representative sample of continuous oral skills assessment. In doing so, the oral assessment methods/formats should elicit behavior that exactly represents the students' ability and its score should be valid and reliable, Hughes (1989, p. 101). Thus, in the procedure of designing continuous oral skills assessment, we should also obey the role of content validity.

According to Hughes, in setting the continuous assessment tasks, it is advisable to specify all appropriate tasks. This should be in such a way that tasks which will be set as a representative sample should consider the level of students' target skill performance. In addition, in the process of designing and employing oral assessments English teachers are required to make the oral skills assessment as long as it is feasible. This does mean that the time allotted for candidates to elicit their performance should be reliable and reasonable. Another important point is that it is a good idea if they plan for oral assessments that consist of as wide sample of specified content as possible in the time available and the assessment should carefully be intended.

Another important issue in the procedure of planning and conducting oral assessment is that assessment should obtain a sample that properly represents each student's ability and which can be reliably scored to obtain valid and reliable scoring. In connection to this, the candidates should be given as many fresh starts as possible. This encourages the teacher to use various assessment formats so that the students can be addressed according to their need of assessment styles and level of understanding. Moreover, in planning the oral assessment tasks, for example, interviewers should carefully be chosen and trained, tasks and topics set should be expected to cause candidates no difficulty in their own language.

2.10. The Marking /Grading of Continuous Oral skills Assessment

The measurement of oral performance in continuous assessment requires criterion referenced assessment, rather than the norm-referenced model. Here, AED (2006), reports that continuous assessment requires the use of criterion referenced grading scale for assessing students' performance. One of the aims of criterion- referencing is to focus

on individual assessment based on descriptions of performance across a range of levels. In line with this, Brown (1988, p. 4) notes that “an evaluative descriptions of the qualities which are to be assessed (for example, an account of what pupils know and can do) without reference to the performance of others.”

In relation to this, rating scales are other recommendable concerns which should be used in assessing the students’ oral skills as integral part of instruction or in teacher- made informal classroom speaking tests. Heaton (1990), for instance, suggests teachers to formulate their own rating scales for assessing their students’ oral performance.

In opposition to this idea, Ellis (2003), argues that the use of standardized rating scales for classroom based oral assessment fills the gap created by teachers deficiency in producing valid and reliable rating scales. However, in continuous assessment of speaking, as to Heaton (1990) teachers should make notes about individual students’ oral performance by using either a small card or note pad. Doff (1988); on the other hand, suggests the use of a simple marking framework for measuring students’ oral performance.

The measurement of continuous oral performance in continuous assessment requires criterion –referenced assessment, rather than norm-referenced grading model. Here, one of the aims of criterion referencing is to focus on individual assessment based on descriptions of performance across a range of levels. In line with this Brown (1988, P.4) notes that “an evaluative description of the qualities which are to be assessed (e.g. an account of what pupils know and can do) without reference to the performance of others.”

2.11. The Role of Feedback in Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

The contribution of feedback in continuous oral assessment is described by various scholars in nearly the same way. For example, Ellis (2003) argues that feedback is considered the most important agenda of formative assessment. Similarly, Hedge (2000) points out that the feedback for instruction oriented continuous assessment has an important part to play. Other scholars, Brown and Yule (1994, P.33) also state, “Receiving feedback can be an excellent motivator, especially when valid criticism is

supported by appropriate praise and commentary.” This implies that feedback is regarded as the key element in facilitating and motivating students’ learning.

Moreover, Black and William (1998) also highlight the role of feedback in learning and elaborate on the ways feedback can be made effective for students’ learning. They claim that giving students only grades is not beneficial feedback. For feedback to impact learning, they say, it needs to provide each learner with specific guidance on strengths and weaknesses. Feedback is beneficial when it is given on time and in terms that students can understand. The best feedback is highly specific, or highly descriptive of what actually resulted, clear to the performer, and offered in terms of specific targets and standards (Wiggins, 1998). Such information can motivate students to improve if they are doing poorly or to maintain their Performance if they are doing well. Therefore, in continuously assessing the speaking proficiency of the students’, immediate and frequent feedback plays a considerable role. Thus, from the description given by the scholars mentioned above, feedback can be regarded as a vital element in assisting an ongoing instruction and the implementation of continuous assessment. Particularly, if teachers appropriately make use of feedback with valid criticism, it will have remarkable contribution for students’ oral performance.

2.12. Challenges in the Implementation of Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

Most of the time, it has been heard that teachers in a number of EFL countries report as there are various challenges in developing and assessing their students’ oral skills. This is due to lack of communicative competences, large class size, time constraints and lack of effective and efficient oral skills assessment tools. With regard to the challenges in the implementation of oral skills assessments (Patricia et al 2003, pp. 64-65) state as follows:

Assessing students orally is indeed a challenging endeavor; especially, for two reasons. First, all teachers have different teaching practices and pretend that all teachers understand and teach the same is impossible. However, it is possible to think about a consensus on similar assessment and feedback practices. Second, teachers may be somewhat reluctant to assess oral language in the classroom. A possible explanation for this involves issues related to time, logistics, and lack of adequate training on how to assess oral language performance. This justifies, the need for professional development on assessment and evaluation programs.

Thus, from the above explanation, scholars felt that it is difficult to assess oral skills, and the most common reason for this was lack of time, which again was the cause of large class sizes. It also seemed that the assessment EFL teachers used to make is not consistent, and that there are many personal differences between teachers and these differences influence that classroom massively. When they did find time for assessment, teachers focused mostly on aspects of oral language that are possible to assess even from a short utterance, such as vocabulary and pronunciation.

On the other hand, the wash back effect of terminal examinations is another widely reported constraint on the implementation of continuous assessment of speaking skills. As can be understood from the current practice of English as foreign language curriculum, it requires students to elicit their knowledge of language structure in national examination with a little bit practice of reading performance. Here, in attempting to become competent towards these sub skills, the teachers as well as students give low regard/attention to the practice and assessment of major language skills, particularly the oral skills performances. According to Hughes (1989) an assessment in which major areas are identified in the specification are under- represented or not considered at all, unlikely to be accurate leads to harmful backwash; thus, areas which are not tested are likely to become areas ignored in teaching and learning. This discussion implies that as teachers and students placed less value on the practice of speaking skill, it is clear that this skill will be underrepresented in the assessment, specifically in continuous assessment.

2.13. Continuous Assessment in Reducing Pupils' Anxiety

One of the very advantages of continuous assessment is that it is believed to reduce the anxiety pupil may experience about the terminal examination they are going to take at the end of each semester or year. For example, as it is evident from various teachers' and students' experience, one problem with traditional testing methods was the use of testing which inevitably was accompanied by high anxiety among pupils as they were preparing for and taking tests.

Continuous assessment reduces anxiety that many students experience when preparing and sitting for terminal examinations. Chapelle and Douglas (1993) stated that the CA approach could help to rectify the problem of mismatches between tests and classroom activities. When assessment is built into the instructional process, the confusion and frustration that test takers often face is reduced. This is because it creates tremendous opportunities for the students to have a repeated experiencing of the various assessment methods in the progress of teaching and learning.

In general, the researcher discusses in the review of related literature: the theoretical background of COSA, the connection between assessment and teaching, continuous assessment as well as types of continuous assessment, continuous oral skills assessment, and qualities of good continuous oral skills assessment. In addition, the researcher discuss the procedure of designing COSA, the role of feedback, the challenges in the implementation of COSA, and continuous assessment in reducing pupils' anxiety are mainly discussed in the review of related literature.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains in detail the research methodology. It incorporates an account of the research design, sample and sampling techniques, description of the participants, data gathering tools, procedures of data gathering as well as method of data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

In order to address the intended research purpose, descriptive research design was employed. With regard to the research method, mixed research method was used. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007b, p.4), State “Mixed research approach is a research in which the researcher collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study.” Thus, in conducting this research, written reflection, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, as well as questionnaires were used in combination to collect data. This, in turn, is a design called sequential mixed-methods research (Creswell, 2003), whereby qualitative data collection and analysis is undertaken first, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis.

Objectives were the influencing factors for the selection of such an approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Creswell and Piano (2007), qualitative method provides a better understanding of research problems and meaningful ways of understanding human behavior, feeling and exploring rich data for the research. In case of the quantitative method, the researcher aimed to be flexible and contextual with expected ideas of the respondents by triangulating the results to be obtained through collecting data via tools in this study. Therefore, in selecting mixed-methods research, the researcher believed to obtain, relatively, fuller, richer, and more comprehensive information of a research question of this study by merging both qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

3.2. Study Population and Sampling Techniques

The study was conducted in governmental schools called Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools at Sokoru District, Jimma Zone, and Oromia Regional State in general and in grade 10 in particular. The participants of the study were 95 grade 10 students and nine EFL teachers of the schools in the Sokoru District in 2014/15. The schools were selected purposefully as they were closer to the researcher's current living and teaching place in the district as they were enable him to be in the schools to make a thorough study. In conducting this research, comprehensive sampling technique was used in the selection of the EFL teachers who were supposed to be included in the study. This technique helped the researcher to include all the teacher participants due to their being small in number in the target schools. Hence, nine grade 10 EFL teachers were the participants of the study from three schools that is Sokoru (seven),Deneba (one) and Kumbi (one) English teachers' Secondary Schools were considered for current study.

With regard to the students, the researcher selected the students to encounter check the sample size that in turn, permitted the quantitative analysis. The number of grade 10 students who were registered at the beginning of 2007 E.C academic year in Secondary Schools was Sokoru 630, Deneba 200 and Kumbi 120. Since the number was large, it was difficult to include all the students in the study. So, a systematic random sampling technique was employed in the study to select a representative sample. Accordingly, from the total number of grade 10 students, 10% of the students were selected for the study; that are Sokoru 63, Deneba 20 and Kumbi 12 students. Then, 95 students were the participant of the study. This was because, Gay and Airasian (2000, as cited in Best & Kahan, 2003) argued, it is fair and appropriate to use ten percent of the representative sampling if the population is less or equal to 1000. To select the students as part of the study, systematic random sampling was used. Thus, 95 students were included from the three target schools; 63 from Sokoru, 20 from Deneba and 12 from Kumbi.

3.3. Data Gathering Instruments

In order to gather the relevant data for this study, four data gathering instruments namely written reflections, semi-structured interview, classroom observation and close-ended questionnaire were employed to assess the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment with reference to EFL Teachers at targeted Schools.

3.3.1. Written Reflections

In order to obtain rich information on challenges in the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment and on the attempts EFL teachers were making to overcome obstacles, the researcher decided to use written reflection questions to nine EFL teachers of grade ten in the study areas. Written reflective involves consideration of target context, meaning and implications of an experience or action (Branch &Paranjape, 2000). In favor of this idea, Moon (1999) states that written reflective involves the sorting out of bits of knowledge, ideas, feelings, and awareness of how one is behaving and so on. Here, the information that the respondents had about the challenges and struggles to overcome COSA was assessed with this instrument.

The researcher planned to have appropriate items that correspond to the predefined research questions. This provided the target respondents with time to think about their continuous oral skills assessment practices and reflect on the challenges and strategies used to overcome the challenges of implementing COSA. It also gave them freedom to include whatever they had in mind about factors that minimize the proper implementation of continuous oral skills assessment in Sokoru, Denaba and Kumbi Secondary Schools.

3.3.2. Semi-structured Interview

Semi- structured interview is a data collection instrument that permits a high level of in-depth information, free response and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures (Selinger& Shohamy, 1989). Semi-structured interview was also used to get first hand and genuine information from the respondents (Cohen, 2007). Therefore, the researcher conducted semi-structured interview with five purposely-selected English

teachers to respond to the first research question which specifically dealt with the teachers' awareness about continuous oral skills assessment.

Because the researcher assumed that considering five EFL teachers for this tool due to various reasons; time constraint as one reason, secondly, adequate number of teachers for the sample, thirdly, since this is not the only tool in the study and also taking into account the data analysis from such tools. Thus, relatively rich information was collected from five purposely selected English teachers from Sokoru three teachers and one from each the rest of two Schools were included. Most of the interview questions were designed to identify whether principles of continuous oral skills assessment (direct oral performance via continuous assessment) were being practiced or not. In conducting the interview, the researcher recorded the responses of all the respondents and conducted one interview per day for each respondent. But, from purposely-selected English teachers two respondents were not voluntary to be recorded due to religious reasons. This interviewing of the selected respondents was completed within two weeks during the study periods. Each interview-session was scheduled to last for 15-20 minutes. This helped the researcher to avoid boredom on the side of the interviewees during gathering data.

3.3.3. Close- ended questionnaire

In order to get a relevant picture of the common challenges to be faced by the respondents in written reflection and interview, the researcher used close ended-questions, in the questionnaire. This primarily helped to look for both answers to the research questions that are targeted to investigate the current practice of continuous oral skills assessment and teachers' familiarity with continuous oral skills assessment formats. In doing so, the researcher developed around 15 close-ended questions which were presented to 9 teachers' and 95 students who were included in the sample. Here, these items were used together with Likert scale with five items (1-5) containing options such as: 'strongly disagree,' 'disagree,' 'neutral,' 'agree' and 'strongly agree' which were labeled as 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 respectively. Some of the items were provided with 'Yes'/ 'No' types of responses in the questionnaire for teachers to check how much EFL teachers have familiarity with formats of COSA. The items were constructed based on both the

literature review and the purpose of the study. The close-ended items in the questionnaire were carefully translated into Afan Oromo for clarity of meanings for students to obtain genuine information. Therefore, the researcher had a chance to triangulate the results of the data that was gathered through different tools such as classroom observation, written reflections and interviews.

3.3.4. Classroom Observation

The researcher observed the classes to get an applicable picture of the prevalent challenges raised by the respondents during reflective writing, close-ended questions as well as interview questions. This helped the researcher to record answers for the second and the third research questions also as a main data-gathering tool especially with close-ended questions that are targeted to investigate the practice of continuous oral skills assessment and teachers' familiarity with formats of oral skills assessment. Here, the researcher also considered the importance of triangulating the results of the teachers' responses obtained through written reflections, close-ended questions and semi-structured interview as methodological triangulation facilitates validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources (Selinger&Shohamy, 1989). In addition, according to Selinger and Shohamy (1989), data collected through classroom observations provide insights not available through research methodologies dependent of single approach. Therefore, speaking lessons of the five EFL teachers who were purposively selected for semi-structured interview were also observed in the class room by the investigator using observation checklist. Each of the sample teachers was observed two times within two month. Therefore, the researcher has a chance to triangulate the results of the data to be gathered through various tools like the questionnaire, classroom observation and interviews.

3.4. Procedures of Data Gathering

The data gathering procedure was sequentially held. At first, written reflection was presented to find out the challenges EFL teachers encounter in implementing continuous assessment of speaking skills and the attempts teachers make to overcome these challenges. Because of whatever they had in mind about factors that minimize the proper

implementation of continuous oral skills assessment. Then, semi- structured interview was conducted to the sample EFL teachers. This semi- structured interview was presented systematically to get in-depth, rich information and to enhance the credibility of the study. Thirdly, close ended-questions, in the questionnaires were distributed. The intention here was to answer the research questions that were designed to investigate the current practice of continuous oral skills assessment and teachers' familiarity with continuous oral skills assessment format. Finally, classroom observation was made, with the help of observation checklists to conduct the observation on a natural setting and with the aims of triangulating the results of the data obtained through the questionnaires.

3.5. Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data collected based on the research objectives via different tools. In order to have a comprehensive picture of the challenges that EFL teachers encounter in implementing continuous oral skills assessment, the data gathered through reflective writing, questionnaires, semi-structured interview as well as classroom observation data were analyzed qualitatively. Firstly, the data gathered through written reflection were coded and sorted out based on the explanations and elaborations given by the teachers. Then, the data obtained through semi-structured interview were categorized based on the emergent themes and sub themes and coded according to the responses obtained from each respondent and analyzed in an integrative way with certain responses from the closed ended-questions in the questionnaire since triangulation should be at the center to validate this study. Then, the researcher analyzed the data gathered through classroom observation by triangulating the results to be obtained from teachers' and students' responses of close ended- questions. The researcher also employed quantitative data gathering instrument, using close- ended questions. The aim was to investigate the current practice of continuous oral skills assessment and to observe whether there is a clear manifestation of oral skills assessment methods in enhancing spoken interaction.

The rating procedure was made from maximum points given 5 to the minimum point 1 for certain items and the ideal mean is expected to be 3, ($\frac{5+1}{2}$), five plus one divided by two). Therefore, the mean value greater than 3 indicated that the participants have

adequate awareness about the issue being studied. Whereas the mean value below 3 indicated that the respondents wrongly perceived the issue considered. In addition, percentages were used to observe the range of the respondents that agree or disagree on a particular issue. An attempt was made to show what percent of the respondents used a particular continuous oral skills assessment method (Mebea Fetene, 2008).

To sum up, the data obtained was classified and organized according to their similarities, differences and types. Therefore, the researcher attempted to analyze the data obtained from interview in integrative way with responses from close-ended questions in the questionnaire and classroom observation. This, in turn, helped the researcher to draw inferences on the EFL teachers' awareness of COSA. Similarly, in exploring the practice of this assessment procedure, the researcher analyzed data from closed-questionnaire by incorporating it with classroom observation. The data from written reflection was analyzed in combination with teachers' response of the interview and data from classroom observation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were critically made in line with the research questions and objectives.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

After receiving official letter of cooperation from Jimma University, the researcher was communicated with Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools Administrators. Then, respondents were informed that they had the right to complete questionnaires/withdraw from the study at any time. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality the participants' names were not written on the questionnaires. Additionally, they were informed that their responses /data were used only for the intended research purpose but not for anything else without their will. Regarding the study was to assess the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment with reference to EFL teachers at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools, Grade 10 in focus.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents analyses and discusses data obtained through written reflections, interview, questionnaires and classroom observations. Themes generated from interviews, written reflections, questionnaires and classroom observations are discussed under five major categories; namely, Characteristics of Respondents, EFL teachers' awareness about COSA, the current practice of this assessment in the target schools and teachers' familiarity with COSA formats, challenges that EFL teachers come across in implementing COSA during English classes and EFL teachers try to overcome the challenges.

4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

This section shows the description of the characteristics of all respondents involved in the study (gender, age, educational status and work experiences).

Table 4.1 : Profile of Respondents Characteristics

Items	Variables	Respondents				
		Students		Teachers		
		F	%	F	%	
1	Gender	Male	50	52.63	9	100
		Female	45	47.37	-	-
		Total	95	100	9	100
2	Age	15-20	65	68.42	-	-
		21-25	30	31.58	-	-
		26-30	-	-	5	55.56
		>30	-	-	4	44.44
		Total	95	100	9	100
3	Educational status	Diploma	-	-	-	-
		BA	-	-	9	100
		Total	-	-	9	100
4	Work experience	1-5	-	-	2	22.22
		6-10	-	-	3	33.33
		>15	-	-	4	44.45
		Total	-	-	9	100

As shown in Table 1, about 52.63% of the respondents are male students and the remaining 47.37% are female's students. All of the teachers are male.

When we see age distribution of the respondents about 65(68.42%) students were between 15 to 20 years, 30(31.58%) of the students were between 21 to 25 years old. However, concerning the teachers age 5 teachers between 26-30 and the rest of them above 30 years old.

Regarding to the educational status of the teachers, all of them are Bachelor Degree (BA) holders in English language. However, concerning the service years of the teachers, as item 4 of Table 1 reveals that, two (22.22 %) of them served between 1 to 5 years, three (33.33%) between 6 to 10 years but the remaining teacher had above 15 years of service or four (44.45%)

4.2. EFL Teachers' Awareness of Continuous Oral Skills Assessment

Since EFL teachers' awareness of continuous oral skills assessment is very important for practical and successful implementation of continuous oral skills assessment, the researcher attempted to know the awareness of the EFL teachers at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools. For this reason, teachers were asked what COSA is, the opportunities it provides for both the teachers and students, what its practical implementation involves, the role of continuous oral skills assessment in encouraging students to practice and use the target language both inside and outside the classroom.

Accordingly, respondents were asked what COSA is and the teachers reflected that COSA is a procedure of assessment which meaningfully engages students and let them learn by doing. In line with this, one respondent pointed out as

I express it in a good sense because it is a meaningful engagement that the students have with teachers to perform different oral activities. In case of the learning process, it is learning by doing. It is very important to enhance the development of oral proficiency and the students' language background determines the way it is implemented. (I: T4)

In this reflection, the respondent seems to be aware that COSA is a procedure in which students and teachers meaningfully engage to practice oral skills. The teacher emphasized that as it is part of learning process, COSA is considered as learning by doing. Brown (1998) asserts that regular assessment of oral performance requires students to carry out, create, generate or do something. The respondent also confirmed that assessing students speaking skill as integral part of instruction is very important despite the fact that students' verbal background determines its implementation. In connection to this, the data obtained from the following Table 2 seem to indicate that in order to implement this procedure practical; students' verbal background plays a major role.

Table 4.2: EFL Teachers' Response on COSA versus Students' Poor Verbal Background

No	Items	Response Category										Mean
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
7	Continuous task-based oral assessment procedures are not suitable to students with poor verbal background.	8	88.89	1	11.11	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.88

As shown in the above Table 2, the data obtained showed that most of the English teachers 8(88.89%) strongly agreed and 1(11.11%) agree that continuous task- based oral assessment procedures are not suitable to students with poor verbal background and showed their agreement with the highest mean value of 4.88. Therefore, from the above discussions, one can infer as the respondents aware continuous assessment of speaking skills as a procedure of assessment that encourage students to be engaged with practical speaking performance tasks in developing their oral performance despite the problem that arises from students' poor verbal language proficiency. Another respondent added that:

I can define continuous assessment of oral skill based on the significance it has in making students to practice their speaking skills and assessing in what way they are strong or they have certain problems using different mechanisms. We are expected to assess students language ability day by day/ continuously, particularly, the speaking skill. But the time given for task in the textbook and in the teacher's guide is not matched due to this the teachers jump to next lesson (I: T1)

In this reflection, the EFL teacher seems to be aware of the significance of continuous assessment of oral performance in providing opportunities to practice and assess students' speaking skills of the target language. The respondents asserted that this assessment method could be a mechanism in which the EFL teachers identify students' strong side as well as the problem they experience in the course of assessment and practice. Similarly, in table below EFL teachers confirmed their agreement, as continuous assessment is suitable in providing opportunities for practice, assessing and indicating the weaknesses and strengths of students.

Table 4.3: EFL Teachers' Response on the Function of COSA

No	Items	Response Category										Mean
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Continuous assessment provides opportunity for assessing students' communicative ability more effectively than terminal examination.	5	55.55	4	44.44	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55
5	Continuous assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students.	6	66.66	3	33.33	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.66
8	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for students to practice the speaking skill itself.	4	44.44	5	55.55	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.44

Thus, as can be seen from Table 3, item 8 of the close-ended questions above, EFL teachers shows that 4(44.44%) strongly agree and 5(55.55%)agree with the feature that COSA offers opportunities for students to practice the speaking skills itself. This was

noted with the maximum mean value of 4.55 which is above the expected ideal mean value 3.

Similarly, as can be understood from item 5, 6 (66.66%) strongly agree and 3(33.33%) agree from Table 3 they seem to perceive COSA as suitable procedure to provide early indicators of the likely performance of students speaking proficiency; here they showed their strong agreement with the mean value of 4.66. In support of this reflection, Brown (1998, P.654) goes on to add, "Continuous assessment provides information about both the strengths and weaknesses of the students." Thus, the discussion emanated from the interview and questionnaires seem to imply that English teachers have better awareness of the function of the regular assessment of speaking performance.

The researcher attempted to identify about the opportunities continuous oral skills assessment provides for EFL students. Thus, English teachers expressed that this assessment procedure offers students an exposure to practice, develop and use oral ability. For instance, one respondent stated, "It creates exposure for students in order to say something and it develops their speaking ability by offering opportunities to practice such kinds of activities." (I, T1) In line with this, the data from Table 3, item 1 revealed that EFL teachers showed that 5(55.55%) strongly agree and 4(44.44%) agree with the notion that COSA provides students with opportunities to practice and demonstrate their communicative ability with the mean value of 4.55. This does mean that EFL teachers were aware of the contribution COSA have in opening a path for practicing and using English, particularly, for their oral ability. Similarly, in expressing the information they have about what opportunities COSA provides them, EFL teachers suggested that they are beneficiary from it. The respondents argued that this could be in such a way that this assessment technique helps in supporting and developing their students English oral skills through persistent practice and assessment. For example, one of the interviewees pointed out that "It does have huge importance; it helps us in building and developing our students' speaking ability. Because it has a vital value for the students' future career, it also makes students to have an interest on the target language." (I, T2) In this discussion, the respondent seems to argue that COSA could also have an opportunity for the teacher to use it as a procedure of constructing and advancing students' oral performance.

According to Heaton (1990) continuous assessment provides opportunities for the classroom teachers to assess the students' oral skills by observing them while they are engaged in genuine communication. Here, one can realize that the EFL teachers were aware of the issue that COSA helps them to arouse students' interest towards speaking the target language.

The EFL teachers asked to reflect on what successful and actual implementation of COSA involves and they pointed out that proper implementation of COSA incorporate varieties of real life spoken activities. They also expressed that proper implementation of COSA should involve oral activities which is believed to consider what students are able to do. They stressed that this procedure should handle the students by varying the mood of the assessment formats from day to day. In line with this idea, the respondent claimed that

In continuous assessment of speaking skills, students need to be given varieties of activities. For instance, today, if they are told to describe about their personal detail, the next day, he should change the mood and let the students talk about their background, interest, needs, what they likes and dislikes, and the teacher should also think of the following day's activities accordingly depending on what his students able to do. (I: T4)

The above reflection implies that the EFL teachers were aware that proper implementation of COSA involves various real life activities which make students describe or express their ideas on different issues. One can identify that the respondents seem to conceptualize that practical implementation of COSA involves consideration of students' ability and providing them with oral performance tasks that they are able to do. According to Munoz et al (2003) In the case of oral assessment, teachers should identify what students should be able to comprehend and produce. The data obtained from classroom observation showed that in teaching speaking ability English teachers dealt accordingly with the variety of oral performance tasks distributed in the text. However, there was no evidence where varieties of oral assessment format were used to provide for students' different assessment style. This indicated that there is a mismatch between the

level of English teachers' awareness about the implementation of COSA and its actual classroom practice. EFL teachers also mentioned that COSA has a great contribution in encouraging students to practice and use oral English in and outside the classroom. They expressed that when this assessment procedure is held in the classroom by marking students for what they performed orally, it was encourage them to do more for the proceeding continuous oral assessment. They were emphasized that this COSA may encourage them to apply the English they had practiced/used in the classroom to any real life context they face.

COSA has a wonderful role in encouraging students to practice and use oral English in and outside the classroom. In addition, students who are being assessed and marked continuously for what they have spoken will get motivated. Moreover, this assessment procedure helps the students to use what they practiced in the classroom with their friends in any real life context. Thus, COSA has great role relevance in a classroom and this can in turn help the students to use oral English outside. (I: T4)

The very important matter in this reflection is that the respondent seems to be aware of the significance of COSA in encouraging students to practice and use oral English in and outside the classroom. The respondent was also noticed arguing that if students are marked under continuous assessment of oral skills, they were inspired to perform speaking tasks in and outside the classroom. One respondent in written reflection confirmed "Giving more time for speaking skills, specifically, in continuous oral skills assessment, and relating it with the marking system in order to increase students' attitude and participation towards the practice and use of speaking skills can be a good alternative." (WR, T2) In relation to this idea, (Howatt, 1984, as cited in Rodgers, 2006) asserts that learners should be offered opportunities through communicative activities to practice their communication skills meaningfully in different contexts.

From this, one can infer that the EFL teachers have information of ways in which they can encourage their students towards the assessment of speaking skills as an integral part of instruction. The respondents also seems to have a concept that students were

benefitted when they are continuously assessed under real life context rather than providing them with written-tests/ examinations.

Furthermore, EFL teachers were also asked to reflect on the difference between continuous assessment of oral skills and the traditional approach to testing oral skills and they pointed out that a big difference lies between the two procedures. They stated that traditional approaches assess oral performance limited to fixed time as terminal examinations in written form. On the other hand, they stressed that COSA has a direct relationship with teaching-learning process and allows students to be assessed under this firmly tied and inseparable ongoing process. They also noted that COSA creates suitable opportunity for the students to obtain immediate feedback for what they had been assessed performing orally. As also expressed by the respondents, COSA leads the students to directly perform speaking in real life context in the course of assessment.

COSA is different from the traditional assessment of speaking in that it continuously assesses students' speaking ability. In case of the traditional one, there is a mid/final exam, which is not continuous and has its own fixed time to be given for students. CA has direct interrelationship with teaching and learning; assessment for learning, you cannot isolate from the instruction. Here, in case of COSA, students can obtain immediate feedback. Moreover, the students have a chance to be assessed directly by speaking, but the traditional one can hardly have the accessibility of such activities rather it requires students to take written examination. (I: T5)

The essential implication from this reflection is that the respondent seems alert that COSA continuously engage students with the assessment of speaking skills as instruction is ongoing. The teacher also seems to have accepting that this assessment procedure has direct relationship and inseparable from the teaching and learning process. The EFL teacher seems aware that unlike the traditional approach to testing, continuous assessment of oral performance is conducive to give the students immediate feedback and help students learn from the mistake they came across. Thus, in confirming this discussion, the data gained from the table below (Table 4) indicated that teachers placed huge value on

CA than traditional approach to testing speaking skills since CA is suitable to give students immediate and frequent feedback

Table 4.4: EFL Teachers' Response on COSA in Offering Feedback

No	Items	Response Category										Mean		
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA				
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
6	Immediate feedback should be an essential component of continuous oral assessment.	7	77.78	2	22.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.77

Here, the data obtained from Table 4 above item 6, denoted that EFL teachers showed that 7(77.78%) strongly agree and 2 (22.22%) agree which highly perceive the essence of COSA in providing immediate and frequent feedback with the mean value of 4.77. Hence, as to the discussion constructed from interview and questionnaire, one can infer that EFL teachers have awareness the distinction between COSA and traditional assessment of speaking skills and are aware of the role of COSA in immersing students to be assessed within authentic tasks and comfortable for the students to receive prompt feedback.

In general, the findings indicates that the EFL teachers' had a good awareness of the significance of the proper implementation of COSA and the role it has in promoting students' oral English proficiency.

4.3. The Current Practice of COSA in Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools

In exploring the current practice of continuous oral skills assessment and teachers' familiarity with formats of this assessment procedure, reflections were gathered through close –ended questionnaires and classroom observations. With regard to the questionnaires, the table is formed thematically with the corresponding list of concepts and percent with the ideal mean values were calculated to justify whether the EFL teachers and students are aware of the concepts and practicing COSA as integral part of oral skill practicing and learning. In addition, in attempting to check if the standards or features of COSA listed in close- ended questionnaires were implemented in English speaking classes, classroom observations were conducted and analyzed in an integrative way with perceptions from close- ended questionnaires accordingly.

4.3.1. Usefulness of COSA than Terminal Examinations and its Current Classroom Practice

The table below (Table 5) shows that EFL teachers have common awareness on to what extent continuous oral skills assessment is more useful than end-term examinations with regard to improving teaching and learning of the target language skills. Particularly, the table marks that the EFL teachers paid huge attention on the essence of continuous oral skills assessment to improve students' speaking performances.

Table 4.5 : EFL Teachers' Response on the Usefulness of COSA than End-term Examinations

No	Items	Response Category										Mean	Rank
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Continuous assessment provides opportunity for assessing students' communicative ability more useful than terminal examination.	5	55.56	4	44.44	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55	2
5	Continuous assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students.	6	66.67	3	33.33	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.66	1
11	Continuous assessment reduces the intense stress that many students experience when preparing for and sitting terminal examinations.	3	33.34	3	33.33	1	11.11	2	22.22	-	-	3.77	4
15	Continuous assessment provides a more natural assessment.	5	55.56	2	22.22	2	22.22	-	-	-	-	4.33	3

As shown in Table 5 above, item 1, 5(55.55%) and 4 (44.44%) strongly agree and agree respectively to indicate that the importance of CA than terminal exam. Regarding item 5, 6(66.66%) strongly agree and 3(33.33%)agree this implies that EFL teachers gave attention for CA that indicate students' performance and the result for item 11 and15 denoted as the mean values were greater than the anticipated ideal value 3. From this, one can understand that the EFL teachers seem to have clear understanding on the essence of implementing continuous oral assessment for assessing oral performance. For instance, the mean values were found to be (4.6), (4.5), (4.3) and (3.77) in descending order. Therefore, the maximum mean value 4.6 of the second item explicitly demonstrates that EFL teachers gave high consideration for the importance of continuous assessment in assessing English-speaking performance.

The following Table (Table 6) was also presented with EFL students' awareness on the importance of the practice made about continuous assessment of speaking/oral skills. Here, EFL students placed significant attention on the importance of continuous assessment in a very similar way with the EFL teachers as stated in Table 5 above.

Table 4.6: Students' Response on the Usefulness of COSA than End-term Examinations

No	Items	Response Category										Mean	Rank
		SA		A		Und		DA		SD A			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Continuous assessment provides opportunity for the students to demonstrate their communicative ability	62	65.26	23	24.11	10	10.53	-	-	-	-	4.54	1
5	Continuous assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students.	48	50.53	25	26.32	16	16.43	6	6.3	-	-	4.21	3
11	Continuous assessment reduces anxiety that many students experience when preparing and sitting for terminal examinations.	30	31.58	55	57.89	6	6.32	4	4.2	-	-	4.16	4
15	Continuous assessment provides a more natural assessment than terminal examinations	50	52.63	36	37.89	9	9.48	-	-	-	-	4.43	2

As indicated in Table 6, item 1, 62(65.26%) strongly agree, 23 (24.11%) agree and 10 (10.53%) undecided as well as item 5, 48(50.53%) strongly agree, 25(26.32%) agree and 16(16.43%) the rest 6(6.32%) disagree, these and the rest items 11 and 15 implied that most of the EFL students seem agreed upon the usefulness of COSA. Therefore, the mean values for these different concepts related to continuous assessment, particularly, continuous oral assessment is also above 3. The mean values yielded from items (1), (5), (11) and (15) are (4.54), (4.21), (4.16) and (4.43) respectively. The result related to these

mean values implies that EFL students are also considered to give remarkable position for the relevance of COSA than the examinations/ tests conducted at the end of the semester or the year.

For example, the students seem to realize that continuous assessment is suitable in providing opportunities for the students to demonstrate their communicative ability, in indicating the likely performance of students, in reducing the level of anxiety students experience when preparing and sitting for terminal examinations and in providing a more natural assessment.

As demonstrated in the above presentation and discussion of Table 5 and 6 EFL teachers as well as students seem to place huge value on CA as it is meant to provide a natural assessment environment for COSA, more useful than terminal examinations and as it indicates the likely performance of students. In support of this idea, Brown and Yule, (1983) suggested that to make students communicate effectively in spoken English, the teacher may wish to be able to assess, at regular intervals, how his students are progressing and to find out if there are areas of performance which are consistently weak and require additional attention. This implies that CA not only provides the students the exposure to practice and to be assessed under the authentic situation, but serve as a good tool that indicates whether students are performing effectively or poorly.

On the contrary, the data gained from classroom observation indicated that in teaching oral skills the teachers were noticed to be providing the students with real life tasks. For example, the EFL teacher in speaking lesson provided the students with Re-tell the story entitled: "Ben and the Devil.", but the problem observed was that the teacher had been facing difficulty to give chances for all students because of the large class size. In addition, as evident from the classroom observation, no attempt was made to address all students. Even, students did not get the chance to demonstrate their communicative ability by re-telling the story and the opportunities were forwarded only for small number of students. From the analysis made above, one can understand that the result obtained through classroom observation contradicts with the concepts (features of COSA) to which the EFL teachers and students showed agreement with more than the expected ideal mean value 3. This may in turn indicate that teachers and students have adequate

theoretical knowledge of the standards asked in close-ended questionnaires, however, they fail to put them into practice by providing all the students opportunities to demonstrate their communicative ability.

4.3.2. Significance of Regular Assessment of Oral Skills and its Current Classroom Practice

The following table (Table 7) dealt with those EFL teachers may experience when they were aiming towards the practice of continuous assessment of speaking skills. The close-ended questionnaires were designed to check the effect COSA have on the student versus teacher relationship, wasting time, on the authenticity of oral assessment tasks and its importance compared to terminal examination.

Table 4.7: EFL Teachers' Response on the Importance of Continuously Assessing the Oral skills

No	Items	Response Category											
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA		Mean	Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
2	Continuous assessment can positively affect the relationship between students and their teachers.	7	77.78	2	22.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.77	1
3	Assessing the speaking skills on a continuous basis is not a waste of time.	5	55.56	.	-	-	-	4	44.44	-	-	3.66	3
4	Authentic and meaningful tasks are appropriate for assessment purpose.	4	44.45	3	33.33	2	22.22	-	-	.	-	4.22	2
13	Terminal examination is not as useful as continuous assessment in assessing students speaking performance.	5	55.56	3	33.33	1	11.11	-	-	.	-	3.22	2

Concerning item 2, in Table 7 above, 7(77.78%), 2 (22.22%) are strongly agree and agree respectively, the respondents seem to be confident enough in suggesting the strong agreement they have about CA can positively affect the relation between teachers and students. Regarding item 3,5 (55.56%) strongly agree and 4 (44.44%) disagree these implies that more than half of the respondents were strongly agree the conduciveness of COSA in relation to assessing student's oral performance under the real life situations. Additional item 4 and 13 shows that the majority of the respondents were strongly agree and agree. This was concluded from the point that the mean values of the above listed concepts are found to be above the expected ideal mean³

As demonstrated in Table 7, the mean values ranges from the maximum value 4.77 to the minimum value 3.22; this shows that there was a clear and common awareness about the suitability of continuous assessment for assessing speaking skills. For example, the respondents seem to have awareness that the practice with regard to COSA builds good relationship between students and teachers, and useful than terminal examinations in assessing students' oral performance with authentic and meaningful tasks without simply being a waste of time.

Similarly, the table below (Table, 8) emphasizes to ensure students perception towards the practice of continuous assessment of speaking skills. Here, the propositions set in a table are concerned with the effect COSA have on the students and teachers relationship, on wasting time, on the authenticity of oral assessment tasks and its importance in relation to end –term examinations.

Table 4.8: Students 'Response on the importance of continuously assessing the oral performance

No	Items	Response Category										Mean	Rank
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
2	Continuous assessment can positively affect the relationship between students and their teachers.	6	6.31	6	6.31	7	7.37	26	27.37	50	52.63	1.921	
3	Assessing the speaking skills on a continuous basis is not a waste of time.	5	5.26	5	5.2	7	7.37	25	26.31	53	55.79	1.832	
4	Authentic and meaningful tasks are appropriate for assessment purpose.	-	-	5	5.2	10	10.53	40	42.10	40	42.10	1.78	4
13	Terminal examination is not as useful as continuous assessment in assessing students speaking performance.	7	7.37	-	-	10	10.53	30	31.58	48	50.53	1.823	

Concerning Item 2 in Table 4. 8, (Major of the students seems to shows that low-level awareness with Continuous assessment can positively affect the relationship between students and their teachers.) 6 (6.31%) and 6 (6.31%) strongly agree and agree respectively and 7 (7.37%) undecided, others 26 (27.37%) and 50 (52.63%) disagree and strongly disagree regard to the concepts mentioned in the Table 4.8 of item 2. Hence, the mean value was found to be below the mean value of 3. In addition the mean value for item 2, 3, 4 and 13 which is (1.92) and (1.83),(1.78%) and (1.82%) respectively, the results that the EFL students wrongly perceive as CA in general and COSA in particular positively affect the relationship between students and teachers. Moreover, in the practice of COSA, students seem to have not aware and they seem to consider assessing oral performance, as integral part of spoken classes as a waste of time. The respondents seem to lack knowledge on the appropriateness of authentic and meaningful tasks for actual practice of continuous assessment of speaking skills. From the discussion made under

Tables 4. 7 and 4. 8, results shows that the level of awareness of students have towards the positive affect of COSA, the suitability and usefulness of COSA in providing authentic and meaningful tasks to assess the oral performance is low when compared to the teachers' perceptions. As can be seen from Table 7; for instance, more than half percent of the EFL teachers agreed as an assessment of speaking held regularly was not considered as a waste of time. They noted that it positively affects the relationship between students and teachers; as authentic and meaningful tasks are appropriate and terminal examinations are less important than COSA with of mean value 3.66.

Although the data obtained from classroom observation shows that EFL teachers were noticed while rushing over speaking sections. As it was observed from English speaking classes; (for example, Grade 10 Student English Text: "How to do something" Section B10.8: P.174 "guessing game" Section A9.5: p: 156, "Talking about the future", section A11.3: P: 194,). EFL teachers were observed while standing in front of the students, give chances for the preformed groups, and letting them discuss as quickly as possible for few minutes, and jumped to another lesson to cover the portion on time.

From this, one can conclude that EFL teachers seem to give less attention to the continuous practice and assessment of speaking skills. In addition, they seem to give low value for the practicality of the advantage of CA in strengthening the relationship between students and teachers while jointly practicing and attempting to develop the speaking proficiency, presenting real life oral assessment techniques and serve being very useful than terminal examinations. These all failure is despite the fact that they have good awareness.

4.3.3. The Common Implication of COSA and its Current Classroom Practice

The following table (Table 9) mainly focuses on the overall significance of continuous oral assessment in regularly assessing students' oral performance on the basis of the ongoing process of spoken classes.

Table 4.9: EFL Teachers' Response on the Common Implication of COSA

No Items		Response Category					Mean	Rank
		SA F %	A F %	Und F %	DA F %	SDA F %		
8	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for students to practice the speaking skill itself.	4 44.44	5 55.56	- -	- -	- -	4.44	1
9	Continuous oral assessment is synonymous with good teaching.	4 44.45	2 22.22	1 11.11	2 22.22	- -	3.88	2
10	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for teachers to assess the various aspects of oral English.	3 33.34	3 33.33	1 11.11	2 22.22	- -	3.77	3
12	Continuous oral assessment provides teachers and students with the opportunity to reflect back on their practice.	5 55.56	3 33.33	1 11.11	- -	- -	3.22	4

As can be noticed from Table 9, the majority of respondents seem to conceptualize the significance of continuous assessment in regularly assessing students' oral performance on the basis of the ongoing process of spoken classes. For example, item 8, 4 (44.44%) 5(55.55%) strongly agree and agree respectively. This is concluded from the fact that all of the ideal mean values found out are above the anticipated mean value 3. For instance, the mean value for items (8), (9), (10) and (12) are ranging from (4.4), (3.88), (3.77) and (3.22) respectively. This shows that the EFL teachers commonly recognize continuous oral assessment as a major path through which teachers can help their students practice, assess and reflect back on their practice.

The following table (Table, 10) aims to illustrate students opinion on the contribution of regular assessment of oral performance have inseparable way from speaking sections. In doing so, 4 close-ended questionnaires had been forwarded to EFL students and yielded the ideal mean which is greater than the estimated value.

Table 4.10: Students' Response on the Common Implication of COSA

No	Items	Response Category										Mean	Rank
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
8	Students enjoy practicing classroom oral activities if they are regularly assessed on their ability to speak	50	52.63	30	31.58	10	10.53	5	5.26	-	-	4.31	1
9	Continuous oral assessment is inseparable from good teaching.	30	31.57	50	52.64	15	15.79	-	-	-	-	4.15	4
10	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for students to use oral English in different occasions and for various purposes.	48	50.52	28	29.47	12	12.64	5	5.27	-	-	4.18	3
12	Continuous oral assessment provides students with the opportunity to reflect back on their practice.	45	47.37	35	36.84	9	9.48	6	6.31	-	-	4.25	2

From the illustration made in Table 10 above, most of students strongly agreed on the issue that COSA is very useful in regularly assessing students' oral skills when compared to terminal assessment procedures. For example item 8, 50(52.63%) and 30 (31.58%) strongly agree and agree respectively, on other hand 5(5.26%) disagree and the rest of respondent 10 (10.53%) didn't decide to give response. Here, it is evident in Table 10 that the mean value is found to be greater than the expected ideal mean value 3. For instance, the mean values for item (8), (9), (10) and (12) are respectively ranging from (4.31), (4.25), (4.18) and (4.15). This implies that the respondents become aware about the implication of continuous oral assessment procedure in assessing and encouraging students towards practicing speaking skills of the target language jointly serving along with good teaching of the English speaking skills. In addition, as can be seen from the mean value for item 12, which is (4.25), the students seem to give huge value for the special practice that can be done through implementation use of COSA in providing students with the opportunity to reflect on their practice.

To sum up, what have been discussed in Table 9 and 10 above, it is clear that both EFL teachers and students have nearly common awareness on the spirit of continuously assessing students speaking skills as integral part of the spoken classes.

On the other hand, during classroom observation, it was noted that the target EFL teachers do not create opportunities for students for persistent practice and assessment of English speaking skills. However, as can be infer from the mean value given in Table 9 above, they showed as they agreed with the mean value of 4.44. In addition, when the respondents were asked about the basic ways to the proper implementation of COSA they stated that practical and successful implementation involves creating an opportunities for students to practice over varieties of oral tasks. One respondent in the interview reflected “...in continuously assessing students speaking skills, for example, students need to be given varieties of activities. For instance, today, if he gives students to describe about their personal detail, the next day, he should change the mood...” (I, T3) This response of EFL teachers were aware of that COSA gives an example for practice and are a way for the development of speaking proficiency. Even so, teachers simply introduce activities (topics) on speaking section and move to other tasks which specially focus on language structure; for example, in speaking lesson entitled “So and neither” the teachers were observed while giving detailed explanation on the blackboard. Therefore, it can be apparent from the EFL teachers’ spoken classroom speaking skills practice that students seem to lack opportunities to be assessed and this may in turn discourage them in order not to practice properly.

As demonstrated in Tables 8 and 9 above, EFL teachers and students showed that they support the idea that COSA is inseparable from implementing spoken classes. They noted that COSA is a path through which an opportunity can be created for the students to use oral English in different occasions and for various purposes so that students can reflect back on their practices. In relation to this idea, Hedge (2000) confirms that students should view continuous assessment as an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate their effort, progress and improvement. On the contrary, the result from the classroom observation showed that EFL teachers seem to give high value for terminal examination by neglecting COSA. This, in turn, indicates that teaching of speaking skills and continuous assessments of this performance do not go together.

Despite the fact that the activities that found in English textbooks and the time given in the teacher’s guide are unbalance for the procedure of continuous assessment and the

EFL teachers avoid employing the opportunities of continuous practice and assessment of oral performance. Moreover, the classroom observation result revealed that the various aspects of oral tasks distributed within different sections come up with nothing in enhancing the development and advancement of students' speaking proficiency.

4.3.4. The Role of Feedback over COSA and its Current Classroom Practice

The Table below (Table11) denotes the implications of immediate and persistent feedback in the practice of continuous assessment in assessing and developing students' oral proficiency. Hence, the respondents' perception was treated with their corresponding mean value accordingly.

Table 4.11: EFL Teachers' Response on the Role of Feedback

No	Items	Response Category										Mean	Rank
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
6	Immediate feedback should be an essential component of continuous oral assessment.	7	77.78	2	22.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.77	1
14	Continuous oral assessment opens a path in which the teachers encourage their students by giving frequent and immediate feedback.	5	55.56	4	44.44	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55	2

The result in Table 11, Concerning item 6, 7(77.78%) and 2(22.22%) strongly agree and agree, item 14, 5(55.55%) and 4 (44.44%) strongly agree and agree respectively revealed that the respondents seem to perceive that immediate and constant feedback integrated in continuous assessment of speaking performance plays a great role in encouraging frequent practice and advancement of the students in the target language oral skills. As can be demonstrated in the Table 11 above, the mean values are more than the expected ideal mean value 3. For example, most of the respondents are considered to reach common agreement upon the concept that immediate and frequent feedback would be

essential if incorporated with COSA. The maximum mean values for items 6 and 14 indicate that the EFL teachers placed huge value on the use of feedback along with continuous oral assessment. In a very similar way, the Table below specifically indicates the functions of instant and frequent feedback in the practice of continuous assessment in assessing and developing students' oral proficiency. Hence, the students' responses on different concepts related to the relevance of feedback were shown with their corresponding mean value accordingly.

Table 4.12: Students' Response on the Role of Feedback

No	Items	Response Category										Mean	Rank
		SA		A		Und		DA		SDA			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
6	Immediate feedback should be an essential part of continuous oral assessment.	45	47.36	23	24.21	10	10.53	10	10.53	7	7.37	3.96	2
14	Students should receive constructive and complete feedback on their oral performance	48	50.53	40	42.10	7	7.37	-	-	-	-	4.43	1

From Table 12 above, when we see the response of students to items 6 and 14 (one can deduced that the respondents seem to perceive as immediate and frequent feedback incorporated in continuous assessment of speaking performance plays a remarkable role in encouraging regular practice and improvement of the students' oral performance.) for example, item 6, 45(47.36%) and 23(24.21%) strongly agree and agree, on other hand 10 (10.53%) and 7(7.37%) disagree and strongly agree. The rest of 10 (10.53%) didn't decide to give response. The data shown in the Table also revealed that the mean values are more than the expected ideal mean value 3. For example, most of the students are considered to have nearly common awareness upon the concept that immediate and frequent feedback would be essential if incorporated with COSA. The mean values for items (6) and (14), (3.96) and (4.43) respectively shows as the EFL students placed

greater significance on the usefulness of feedback when jointly served with continuous oral skills assessment.

From the discussions made above under Tables 11 and 12, the result showed that EFL teachers and students have common awareness on the relevance of immediate and continuous feedback in developing students' communicative ability when used in collaboration with the practice of oral skills assessment held as integral part of speaking classes.

However, results from classroom observation revealed that EFL teachers sometimes give immediate feedback as vital element of teaching and continuous assessment of speaking skills. Five English teachers were observed at different times and place while they were systematically giving immediate feedback on the mistakes or errors students came across. For example, English teachers were observed on the assessment of speaking which requires the students to describe Pictures/objects/ with different adjectives and adverbs (Grade 10 Student English Text: Assessment: p: 199). A good practice observed that on the way to practice and use of oral English, students were noted while mixing the use of adjectives, adverbs and they wrongly use verbs in the situation given. Here, the students were given immediate feedback for the mistakes or errors they did. Another teacher was also observed while providing feedback and encouraging students on what the learners had spoken wrongly by writing the correction on the black board. As can be inferred from classroom observation, the idea about feedback which is found at conceptual level was put into practice. Hence, the finding revealed that the English teachers seem to have a good awareness of the functions of feedback and they seem eager to apply immediate and frequent feedback in the practice of CA in encouraging, assessing and improving students' oral proficiency.

The following table (Table, 13) aimed to highlight the summary of EFL teachers' actual classroom practice of continuous oral skills assessment and their response to the close-ended questionnaires which targeted to obtain data about the familiarity of the use of COSA with formats.

Table 4.13: Classroom Observation Result about EFL Teachers' Familiarity with COSA Formats

No	COSA Formats	Number of teacher respondents employing the formats(Close-ended questionnaires)	Number of Teachers employing the formats(classroom observation)
1.	Storytelling	9	1
2.	Presentation	9	5
3.	Reporting	3	-
4.	Observation using rating scales, checklist...etc	3	-
5.	Problem solving tasks	5	1
6.	Describing pictures	9	2
7.	Response to a tape –recording	3	-
8.	Questions and requests for information	7	2
9.	Role play	3	-
10.	Discussion	9	2
11.	Debate	7	-
12.	Oral interview	5	-
13.	Interpreting	1	-

As illustrated in Table 13 above, the result found out from classroom observation mismatches with the EFL teachers response on the current practice and familiarity of COSA formats. The data emanated from the questionnaire indicated that 9 EFL teachers have been using storytelling, presentation, picture description, and discussion while continuously assessing their students' oral performance. On the other hand, the classroom observation shows that 5 of the teachers were observed. Thus, the number of teachers who used storytelling is 1; the number of teachers who used presentation is 5; the number of teachers who used picture description is 2; the number of teachers who used questions and requests for information is 2 and finally, the number of teachers who used discussion is 2. These shows that EFL teachers' currently practice COSA with less practical implementation when compared from Table 13.

As can be seen from the response given to the close-ended questionnaires above in Table 13 the majority of respondents were familiar to used formats of the COSA such as 'Reporting', 'Observation (using rating scales, checklists, cards etc.)', 'Response to a tape-recording' and 'Role play,' Debate,' Oral interview' and Problem solving tasks. On the contrary, from the classroom observation held, none of the EFL teachers were observed while using these assessment formats in their actual classroom for measurement of oral English skills.

In general, the findings indicates that EFL teachers' theoretical orientation and familiarity with formats of continuous oral skills assessment does not assure that they directly put their knowledge of this procedure into practice.

4.4. Challenges in the Implementation of COSA

The researcher attempted to gather data using various tools to find out the major challenges EFL teachers encounter in implementing continuous assessment of oral skills. For instance, written reflection was used as a major data-gathering instrument, however, the researcher triangulated this with some questions from the semi-structured interview and the classroom observation as well. The data generated through these instruments showed that EFL teachers faced challenges in implementing continuous assessment of speaking skills in the context under the course of study. The result of the analysis of written reflection indicated that hinders were connected with teachers, students and recourses. All these were analyzed independently.

4.4.1. Teacher Related Challenges

The researcher tried to know and make sure about nature of assessment methods that the respondents' came through when they had been at lower and higher institutions. Besides this, an attempt was also made to realize the impact of the assessment methods they undergone have upon the current teaching and assessment procedures. In view of this, respondents were asked in the interview to reflect on the assessment method they experienced when they had been attending their education at lower and higher institutions. They declared that they gained boundless experience; however, there were

several challenges in the implementation of continuous assessment of oral performance. EFL teachers reported that they experienced more of written examinations which used to cover grammar items and the teaching situations were teacher-centered approach. For instance, one respondent noted that

Most of the assessment method I came across is more of writing. It was the teacher, who used to take ample time to talk and the students rather listen being passive. Therefore, it was through such approach that I attended my education, especially in language classes. Most of the time, we were given written examinations, which were usually given as final examination, and sometimes we take tests. (I: T2)

From this idea, it is clear that the respondent experienced teacher-centered approach which did not provide them with opportunities to practice and use the oral English skills. Moreover, one can understand that the teacher came across grammar-oriented assessment approaches which were even given as a terminal examination at the end of the semester.

Another respondent added that

Well, when I was in lower and higher institutions my English teachers were applying different assessment procedures. Regarding English language classes, I experienced lot of things. However, when we were students, since students did not want to speak, the teacher did not have any plan to let us participate in such activities. Consequently, since I have been a teacher I have encountered the same thing. (I: T3)

Similarly, it was evident that negligence of oral skills while actual classroom instruction and not letting students participate in various speaking activities leads to having a huge attention to grammar-focused teaching. Data obtained from classroom observation revealed that most of English language teachers were not seen creating adequate opportunities for practice and assessment of oral skills. In addition, this can adversely affect the implementation of assessment procedure, particularly; it directly affects the wish to assess students' target language performance as an integral part of instruction.

From this view, one can understand that the teacher simply presents grammar-focused terminal examinations/tests or it may continuously assess language structures.

Therefore, EFL teacher's experience of grammar-based instruction and assessment as well as teacher-centered language teaching approach can affect their current practice of assessment with particular situation to continuous assessment of oral skills. In connection to this (Wagner, 1991, as cited in Karavas, 1996) states that if mismatches between the philosophy of an approach and teachers' theories exist, teacher will tend to interpret new information in the light of their own theories, and will tend to translate innovative ideas to conform to their own style of teaching.

Respondents acknowledged that they do not have practical skills and knowledge to implement continuous assessment of oral skills. They informed that the education program they came through at both lower and higher institutions, especially, at universities, did not equip them with the necessary practical skills and knowledge to employ the continuous assessment of oral performances in their classes. The basic point in this discussion is that the teachers did not get opportunities to advance the practical skills which help them in assessing speaking performance, as instruction is ongoing. In line with this, another teacher added that

When I was at university, there was no chance to practice how to apply/ put COSA in to practice. Here, it is rare to see teachers to talk about issues of assessing students speaking performance as integral part of classroom instructions. More of university classes are theory oriented; it was not suitable for sustainable practice and use of these assessment methods, specifically, it was difficult to get adequate knowledge about continuous assessment of the communicative ability of students. It is even not considered as part of evaluation while practicum since it has insufficient time. (I: T4)

From this reflection, one can understand that unless it is supported by practical engagement, theory can do nothing for the practical implementation of continuous assessment of speaking skills. As indicated by the respondent above, there was rare case to notice continuous assessment of speaking skills since huge attention was given for theoretical aspect of assessment procedures.

This may lead EFL teachers to have inadequate knowledge/skills on how to put the target assessment method in to practices.

To sum up, teacher-centered and grammar-based language learning approaches that EFL teachers experienced in both lower and higher institutions have been found to hinder the proper implementation of continuous oral skills assessment. Furthermore, the attention given to learning the theoretical aspect of assessment methods as part of university courses rather than practicing how to employ the assessment methods, particularly, continuous assessment of oral skills can lead the trainee towards improper implementation.

4.4.2. Students Related Challenges

The researcher inquired to know whether the EFL teachers prepared oral skills in their continuous assessment activities. The respondents were also required to provide evidences that they used formats of assessing speaking skills as an integral part of English classroom. They were expected to report the reason why they did not use the formats.

Therefore, in the written reflection respondents reported that students' linguistic background, shyness, lack of confidence, reluctance and anxiety towards national examination were obstacles for the practical implementation of continuous assessment of oral/speaking in their classes. The result of the investigation revealed students poor verbal English language as a challenge for EFL teachers in continuously assessing students' spoken/oral skills. They stated that students could not talk about daily activities, express their ideas and perform speaking/oral classroom activities due to poor English background. For instance, one respondent suggested that "First, the problem is poor linguistic or speaking ability of most students. Second, the background knowledge or experience of most students' on oral skill tasks is very poor." (T3: WR)

From this reflection, one can get that students' poor verbal English proficiency was an impediment for active participation in oral activities while classroom instruction. In support of this idea, Ozsevilik (2010) confirms students' poor communicative abilities makes teachers to avoid communicative activities that are essential in developing

student's spoken English abilities. As a result, students' poor verbal English language proficiency can enforce EFL teachers to quit communicative activities that are essential in developing students' oral English skills. This negatively affects the need for assessing students' oral performance under continuous assessment procedure. Another most challenging impediment EFL teachers encounter was students' lack interest for spoken activities. They stressed that students do not feel comfortable and they are less motivated and reluctant to carry out oral tasks. For example, as one respondent stated in the written reflection "Most of the time, I face the problem that students loss or lack interest to speak in English is due to fear of the mistake they made. They lack confidence to speak, argue, discuss, and explain what I ordered them to do." (T2: WR) In nearly the same way, another respondent in the interview expressed that

From my experience, the very challenge for the regular practice and assessment of oral skills is that students do not have interest and motivation. This mainly arises from the problem of language background. This leads them to get frustrated and afraid of making mistakes in front of their friends. Rather they give huge value to learning language structures which may appear on national examination. Thus; they sit silent or discuss unrelated issues in their first language during speaking classes.

According to the above respondents, students lacked interest and motivation to practice/use speaking skills and to be assessed the oral performances under the real situation of continuous assessment. They seem to consider students' poor language proficiency as one of the main factors which makes them feel ashamed about the mistakes they may commit while speaking in front of their peers. The data presented above also exposed that students' interest was placed on grammatical based language instruction. From this reflection, one can deduce that students were more interested in assessment/test which focuses on grammar than being directly engaged with assessment of speaking skills; this in turn affected the chance the students have to be assessed under real environment as an integral part of instruction. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that students' lack of interest towards oral tasks lead teachers to give huge value for assessing grammar in their continuous assessment. As the study indicated the reason that students'

have low level motivation to use English in and outside the classroom may be a challenge for EFL teachers' in order not to properly implement continuous oral skills assessment. For example, one respondent stated that, "The students feeling, interest and motivation to practice oral task based activity is very less. This may be because of the fact that the students' word power is weak and they have problems of using the language effectively." (T1: WR)

According to this respondent, students' lack of motivation is one reason that discourages teachers not to use continuous assessment method to measure persistent oral performance of students. From the notion above one can assume that teachers may encounter challenges to provide students with opportunities to practice speaking skills and at the same time to assess them under the authentic situations of continuous assessment. This situation can in turn have an impact on the development of students' communicative ability. The other challenge which is revealed by the study was that authentic or real life oral skill tasks were given less value. EFL teachers stressed that they do not want to assess students' speaking skills because the students are not interested to be assessed continuously under real life situation. The teachers also said that the students wanted them only to focus on portions which frequently appear on national examinations and he added on stating that the students do not pay attention to practice speaking skills. Even if they showed, as they need, they want their teacher to focus on written dialogue tests or examinations since it usually appears on national examinations. As stated by one interviewee

Students do not want you to assess them by directly involving them into oral skill performance which requires students to speak directly in a real life situation. They do not want to be assessed by speaking. This is because their aim is to know what types of speaking skill questions will appear in the national examinations, and they want to have it in written

From the above reflection one can infer that the low interest students' have may discourage the teachers in order not to assess students' speaking skills using various authentic tasks as instruction is ongoing. Similarly, the data from classroom observation revealed that students signaled two different characteristics when they were presented

with real life speaking tasks. For example, the observation made in the speaking class entitled with “Group Discussion: Asking and giving opinion)” confirmed that students lack interest to talk or discuss in English, rather they were noticed while turning the pages of the textbook, chatting and whispering in their L1.

On the contrary, from the speaking class entitled with ‘Role-Play a conversation’ and Using ‘so’ and ‘neither’, the teachers were observed giving explanations relating these oral performance tasks to grammatical structure and how they appear on exams; this time students kept silent to listen to the lecture. Therefore, from what EFL teachers pointed out and from what the classroom observation revealed, one can deduce that the huge attention students gave for national examination was another serious challenge that hinders the proper implementation of continuous oral assessment. Here, teachers reported that their students were not interested in continuous oral assessment, but rather they want an oral assessment which is presented in written form having dialogues.

Another severe challenging problem EFL teachers reported was students’ frequent expectation of L1 translation as well as using L1 in English classes. These teachers informed that students always expect translation into L1. In addition to this, they simply discuss or share ideas in their L1 whenever they are told to do in foreign language L2 (English). For example, one teacher pointed out that,

One of the greatest challenges is, normally, students want me to discuss or tell them everything in their L1 / their native language. They usually use Afan Oromo whenever they ask and answer questions. When I ask them to discuss or ask questions in English, they avoid speaking even in their mother tongue. (T8: WR)

The above discussion stressed that students are usually in need of learning the content of subject matter in their L1 through direct translation done by EFL teachers. In opposition to this, Harmer (1991) argues that translation into students L1 in English lessons restricts the students’ exposure to English. Secondly, most often they are accustomed to discuss issues forwarded from the teacher using their L1 as well. This shows that since the students neither use English to ask nor to be asked, the value given to use oral performance is very low. Therefore, from the above result it can be concluded that EFL

teacher faced a considerable challenge to create a classroom which uses spoken English whatever the way they use may be. Second, its challenge had contributed a huge problem on the implementation of continuous assessment of oral skills.

To sum up, students' lack of verbal background, lack of interest to use oral English, low level of motivation towards using English in and outside the classroom, anxiety towards national examinations and their expectation of L1 translation have been found as challenges that teachers faced in implementing continuous assessment of oral skills.

4.4.3. Challenges Related to Instructional Resources in Implementing COSA

The present study indicated that large class size, lack of authentic materials, EFL teachers' heavy workload and time constraints are impediments that make the proper implementation of COSA diminish in the target schools.

According to EFL teachers of Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi the most discouraging factor that hinders the implementation of COSA is large class size. In their reflection, they emphasized that they usually encounter challenges in attempting to put this assessment method into practice. In line with this, one interviewee noted "I do have large class size; in each class, you get 70 students learning together. Therefore, attempting to apply continuous oral skills assessment is very difficult because it is impossible to address each student in the class additional difficult to goes with daily and annual plan" (I, T4) likewise, data obtained from classroom observation confirmed that English classrooms were facing challenges with the high number of students having 60-70 students to the minimum within each class. Consequently, the English classrooms under observation were not suitable to organize students to engage them in speaking tasks and the teachers were not noticed while engaging students in speaking tasks because of the crowdedness of the class. Baker and Westrup (2000) state that teachers in large classes can face difficulties in keeping everyone's and provide assistance to weaker students. Here, one can conclude that the challenges related to large class size do not only impede the practicality of teaching speaking skills under authentic environment but also it is an obstacle to assess students' oral performance continuously. The result of the study also revealed that in order to assess the students' oral performance as an integral part of instruction, time constraint is considered as another challenging factor. EFL teachers

noted that because of heavy workload (20-24 periods in the week for one teacher) in finishing the portion, they lack time to employ continuous assessment of speaking skills. As can be understood from the interview held with a teacher

On the other hand, if I keep assessing the speaking skills of each student I cannot cover the portion. As long as time constraint is concerned I do not always use, but sometimes I use this assessment methods. Therefore, if I effective implementation of continuous oral skills assessment I do not complete academic lesson. (I: T3)

The reflection above shows that EFL teachers' pay huge attention on finishing or covering the portion of the course intended for the semester or year. This implies that the time provided for continuous practice of speaking skills as well as their assessment under real life situation is very low. Moreover, one can conclude that time constraint and EFL teachers' workload which results from teachers struggles to cover a portion is the very challenge for the actual implementation of continuous assessment of oral performance. In line with this, data generated from the classroom observation illustrated in Table 13 that almost none of the teachers were observed while using these oral skills assessment formats. In connection to this, in discussing the way continuous assessment of oral skills should be carried out, another interviewee added that

It should be implemented by organizing students into group of two or three within a class or by arranging students out of the class, then calling them one by one to assess them separately, but here again, the problem is you can't cover the portion which is allotted for a semester or a year. Whenever you think of the implementation of continuous assessment of oral performance, you worry about that. (I: T2)

The above discussion implies that, EFL teachers may have a good awareness about the essence of assessing students' speaking skills now and then, as part of the ongoing instruction. However, the problem is, as can be realized from the above-mentioned reflection, teachers do not want to spend their time on letting students practice speaking

skills and at the same time assess them this communicative ability as an integral part of instruction. This may be because of the time taken by continuous assessment of speaking skills that would shorten the time allotted for the total time allotted for the whole portions within a semester or a year. Data from classroom observation confirmed that the time English teachers spend for practicing as well as assessing oral Performance using varieties of assessment formats is very little and almost neglected. In short, time constraint and an attempt teachers make to finish/cover the portion is a severe problem for the implementation of continuous oral assessment.

4.5. Attempts EFL Teachers Make to Overcome the Challenges

The researcher tried to know the attempts that the respondents were making to ease the challenges they face in implementing continuous oral assessment in their classes. The investigation showed that EFL teachers practical effort to overcome the obstacles even though they suggested some solutions.

Respondents pointed out that the challenges they faced in implementing continuous assessment of speaking skills were not something which can be solved as ease. For instance, one EFL teacher revealed, “It is not easy to overcome the challenges in short period of time. It takes long time practice of the method to change the ability of students in case of oral communicative skills.” (T1, WR) This reflection implies that EFL teachers felt that it is difficult for them to overcome the challenges. They also expressed that it takes long time to improve this challenges unless persistent practice of the method is made. Similarly, the data attained from classroom observations signified that they did not attempt to overcome the challenges found in assessing students in ongoing process of instruction.

On the contrary, EFL teachers declared that a few of the challenges they came across while putting continuous assessment of oral performance into practice could be overcome with certain dedication of them. They noted that they use varieties of techniques to overcome the challenges. With regard to the problem which arise from the students’ unwillingness to take part in speaking activities as well as students’ lack of

interest/motivation to be assessed under real life situation of continuous oral skills assessment, one respondent stated that

Give more time for speaking, especially, for oral assessment; relating with the marking system to increase students' attitude towards speaking, giving several topics which can allow them in speaking particularly, with current issues of the world. (T4: WR)

According to this view, the teachers have willingness to overcome the challenges related to the implementation of continuous assessment of oral performance despite the difficulty level of all obstacles discussed above. They considered giving ample time for the students to practice speaking to take part in direct performance of the skills in continuous assessment, and relating the assessment with the marking system can at least maximize the value students give for spoken activities as well as their willingness to be assessed continuously as instruction is ongoing. However, as it was evident in the classroom observation made, the teachers were not seen as applying any of these strategies. From this, one can conclude that they have difficulty to put what know in theory into practice.

In general, even so, teachers seem to have a willingness to implement continuous oral skills assessment by initiating communicative classroom; in practice, they have been experiencing techniques apart from employing speaking skill tasks and continuous assessment of oral performance. Thus, if such real life based assessment is not used, it is clear that the traditional testing is the most dominating assessment system which is being practiced in the target schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

The main objective of this study was to assess the implementation of continuous oral skills assessment with reference to EFL teachers at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools, Grade 10 in focus. Here, the study focused on examining how the EFL teachers' have an awareness towards of continuous oral skills assessment, current practices of COSA in the target Schools and teachers' familiarity with COSA formats and challenges English teachers came across in the implementation of this procedure. The study also investigated how these teachers attempted to overcome the challenges they encounter while implementing continuous oral skills assessment.

For this study, descriptive research design was employed, and in trying to address these issues, mixed research method which includes both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Thus, nine EFL teachers were comprehensively selected whereas 95 students were selected employing systematic random sampling techniques from three schools. Relevant data were collected through written reflection, semi- structured interviews, close- ended questionnaires and classroom observation.

The study revealed that EFL teachers and students had a good awareness and positive attitude towards COSA standards and features. However, the actual practice in English speaking classes did not correspond with their awareness of COSA. The classroom instruction was more of grammar- focused and teacher- centered which did not give students opportunities to practice and use oral English in and outside the class. This can, in turn, contribute for improper implementation and negligence of continuous assessment of speaking performance. This was associated with obstacles that originate from different students and teachers related grammar-based instruction. Moreover, lack of authentic materials, time constraint related to teachers heavy workload in finishing the portion and

large class size are instructional resource related impediments. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

5.2. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached.

1. Teachers perceived continuous assessment of oral /speaking skills as a procedure of assessment that encourage students to be engaged in practical (direct performance) or real life tasks in developing their oral performance. Hence, we can say that EFL teachers have adequate theoretical orientations and awareness of COSA values and features and hold positive attitudes towards it.
2. Actual classroom practice of speaking and its assessment is disregarded due to EFL teachers and students focus on grammar- based lessons. The study revealed that the observed practices were using few minutes for speaking lessons, rushing over the sections, difficulty to address all students, creating no opportunities for the students for persistent practice and assessment of speaking skills, not using varieties of COSA formats. It seems that there was a gap between the EFL teachers' theoretical knowledge of COSA and their practical skills of implementing this procedure in the actual classes.
3. It was made clear that there were obstacles that hinder the proper implementation of COSA. The common challenges mentioned were students poor verbal English proficiency, students lack of interest, students low-level motivation, negligence of authentic or real life speaking skill tasks, fear towards national examinations, ample time given for grammar- focused instructions, teachers' lack of practical skills for actual implementation of COSA, large class size, time constraints and EFL teachers' heavy workload in finishing the portions. EFL teachers reported that these impediments influenced their classroom practice and assessment of speaking skills as integral part of speaking lessons.

4. The study revealed giving sufficient time for the practice of direct performance of speaking skills and relating the assessment with the marking system could at least maximize the place students give for oral performance activities and their willingness to be assessed as instruction is ongoing. Even so, the English teachers were not observed while attempting to alleviate and implement COSA.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on findings and conclusions stated above, the following recommendations were put forward.

1. It is very important that students should be provided with authentic/ real life oral tasks and need to be assessed on the continual basis. In practicing this assessment procedure, tolerating students' poor verbal background and providing special support for such students is advisable. It is a good idea if EFL teachers strictly spend sufficient amount of time on the practice and assessment of oral skills rather than rushing or skipping over the sections. As well, the load of the teacher should be reduced to put COSA into practice.
2. It is vital that EFL teachers in collaboration with the students as well as the concerned bodies should employ their orientations and knowledge about COSA by creating huge opportunities for the practice and direct continuous assessment of English oral skills in real life situations.
3. The school along with the administrative bodies should look for means to provide access to authentic materials that enhance the proper implementation of COSA. In addition, they should look for ways to have extra classrooms to alleviate the obstacles that relate to large class size. Furthermore, Curriculum developers should consider the time given for activities in textbook and teacher's guide. Woreda Education Office, Zone Education Office and Regional Education Bureau Should reduce workload from the teachers for implementation COSA. English Department and School Administrator should work with English

Department of near University to give in-service short training to improve the practical implementation of COSA.

4. Finally, it is recommended that EFL teachers should develop a sense of responsibility to improve the challenges they face in the implementation of COSA. They should be alert to overcome the obstacles or contribute their own share in minimizing the difficulties instead of unwillingly being led traditional practices.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A-Written Reflection Items for Teachers

The purpose of this written reflection is to gather information about the EFL teachers face during implementing continuous assessment of speaking skills at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools. Therefore, you are kindly requested to reflect on the assessment of implementation of continuous oral Skills assessment and the attempt you have been making in order to alleviate hinders of implementations of COSA.

Thank for your collaboration.

Background Information

Direction: Put a tick (✓) in the appropriate space.

1. **Sex:** Male Female
2. **Level of Education:** Diploma First Degree Second Degree
3. **Working Experiences English Teacher:** 1-5 years 5-10 years
Above 10 years

1. How do you express the role of continuous assessment in assessing students' oral skills? What contributions does it have in enhancing students' to develop their speaking skills?

2. Do you prepare oral skills in your continuous assessment activities? If your response is 'yes' mention the assessment methods you use in continuous assessment of speaking skills? If 'no' why?

3. What impeding factors do you encounter during attempting to use real life situations in continuous assessment approaches?

4. To what extent do you face in attempting to organize students for teaching and assessing speaking skills?

5. What do you think are the major methods that you use while trying to assess your students' oral communicative ability as an integral part of classroom instruction?

6. Do you think the challenges you encounter when implementing can be overcome? If 'yes', to what extent and how? If no, why?

7. How to assess your students to overcome the implementation of COSA? Please mention them if any.

8. How do you think continuous assessment of speaking skill is different from the traditional approach to assessment oral skills?

9. What student- related factors discourage you in order not to assess students under authentic situations? Please clearly elaborate.

Appendix–B: Interview Items Presented for the EFL Teachers

The purpose of interview questions to be designed to gather information which deals with the EFL Teachers' awareness towards of continuous oral Skills assessment at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools. So, you are kindly requested to give a response for all questions based on the instruction given. In attempting to give answers to the requests, please note that statements raised here are equally important to reach the objectives of the study. All your responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purpose.

Thank you for participating in this important study!

1. How do you define continuous assessment of oral/ speaking skills?
2. How do you assess student's speaking skills?
3. What assessment methods did you experience when you were a student at lower and high institutions? Did you get opportunities to be assessed under real life environment, especially in continuous assessment? What kind of activities did you experience? Does your experience as a student have any impact on your current way of assessing students' oral skills? If 'yes' how?
4. What opportunities do you think continuous assessment of oral/speaking skills offer you and your students?
5. In your view, what does effective implementation of continuous oral skills assessment involve?
6. How do you think the role of continuous oral skills assessment in encouraging students to practice and use the language both inside and outside the classroom?
7. How do you think this continuous assessment of oral skills should be carried out? Who do you think should play greater role in putting this evaluation method into practice? Why?

8. Do you prepare oral skills in your continuous assessment activities? If your response is 'yes' mention the assessment methods you use in continuous assessment of speaking skills? If 'no' why?
9. How do you think continuous assessment of speaking skill is different from the traditional approach to testing oral skills?
10. What do you think are the major methods that you use while trying to assess your students' oral communicative ability as an integral part of classroom instruction?

Appendix–C: Close-ended questionnaires Items to be filled by EFL Teachers

i. 1-5 Likert scales

This questionnaires to be designed to gather information regarding the current practice of Continuous assessment in assessing speaking skills and EFL teachers' familiarity with continuous oral skills assessment formats at Sokoru, Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools. So, you are kindly requested to give a response for all statements or requests based on the instruction given. In attempting to give answers to the statements, please note that statements raised here are equally important to reach the objectives of the study. Failure to complete any of them will affect the overall study. All your responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purpose.

Thank you for participating in this important study!

Section 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Direction: Put a tick (✓) in the appropriate space.

4. **Sex:** Male Female
5. **Level of Education:** Diploma First Degree Second Degree
6. **Working Experience as English Teacher:** 1-5 years 6-10 year
Above 15 years

Direction: *For each of the following statements, please indicate your agreement by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate column according to the following scales.*

5: Strongly Agree 4: Agree 3: Neutral 2: Disagree 1: Strongly Disagree

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1.	Continuous assessment provides opportunity for assessing students' communicative ability more effectively than terminal examination.					
2.	Continuous assessment can positively affect the relationship between students and their teachers.					
3.	Assessing the speaking skills on a continuous basis is not a waste of time.					
4.	Authentic and meaningful tasks are not appropriate for assessment purpose.					
5.	Continuous oral skills assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students.					
6.	Immediate feedback should be an essential component of continuous oral skills assessment to identify weakness of the learners in order to address the weakness.					
7.	Continuous task-based oral assessment procedures are not suitable to students with poor verbal background.					
8.	Continuous oral skills assessment provides opportunity for students to practice the speaking skill itself.					
9.	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for teachers to assess the various aspects of oral English.					
10.	Continuous oral assessment is synonymous with good teaching.					
11.	Continuous assessment reduces the intense stress that many students experience when preparing for and sitting					
12.	Continuous oral skills assessment provides teachers and students with the opportunity to reflect back on their practice.					
13.	Terminal examination is not as useful as continuous oral skills assessment in assessing students speaking performance.					
14.	Continuous oral skills assessment opens a path in which the teachers encourage their students by giving frequent and immediate feedback.					
15.	Continuous assessment provides a more natural assessment than terminal examination.					

ii. 'Yes' or 'No' Questions

Below are list of formats of continuous assessment which can possible be used to assess the oral ability of learners. Please, indicate whether you use it or not for assessing your students' oral skills by putting a tick (√) in the "Yes" or "No" column respectively.

No.	Continuous Oral skills Assessment Formats	Yes	No
1.	Storytelling		
2.	Presentation		
3.	Reporting		
4.	Observation (using rating scales, checklist, card etc.)		
5.	Problem solving tasks		
6.	Describing pictures		
7.	Response to a tape –recording		
8.	Questions and requests for information		
9.	Role play		
10.	Discussion		
11.	Debate		
12.	Oral interview		
13	Interpreting		

Source: Weir (1995: 46-63), Hughes (1989:101-115)

Appendix–D: Closed- questionnaires Items to be filled by students

This questionnaires to be designed to gather information regarding the current practice of Continuous assessment in assessing speaking skills and EFL teachers' familiarity with continuous oral assessment formats at Sokoru , Deneba and Kumbi Secondary Schools. So, you are kindly requested to give a response for all statements or requests based on the instruction given. In attempting to give answers to the statements, please note that statements raised here are equally important to reach the objectives of the study. Failure to complete any of them will affect the overall study. All your responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purpose.

Thank you for participating in this important study!

Section 1: **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age: 15-20 21-25 26-30 above 30
3. Grade level:

5- Likert scales

Direction: *For each of the following statements, please indicate your agreement by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate column according to the following scales.*

5: Strongly Agree 4: Agree 3: Neutral 2: Disagree 1: Strongly Disagree

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1.	Continuous assessment provides opportunity for assessing students' communicative ability more effectively than terminal examination.					
2.	Continuous assessment can positively affect the relationship between students and their teachers.					
3.	Assessing the speaking skills on a continuous basis is not a waste of time.					
4.	Authentic and meaningful tasks are appropriate for assessment purpose.					
5.	Continuous assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students.					
6.	Immediate feedback should be an essential component of continuous oral skills assessment.					
7.	Continuous task-based oral assessment procedures are not suitable to students with poor verbal background.					
8.	Students enjoy practicing classroom oral activities if they are regularly assessed on their ability to speak.					
9.	Continuous oral skills assessment is inseparable from good teaching.					
10.	Continuous assessment reduces anxiety that many students experience when preparing for and sitting terminal examinations.					
11.	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for teachers to assess the various aspects of oral English.					
12.	Continuous oral assessment is not as useful as terminal examination because it makes students feel a sense of being over assessed					
13.	Continuous oral skills assessment provides teachers and students with the opportunity to reflect back on their practice.					
14.	Continuous oral skills assessment opens a path in which the teachers encourage their students by giving frequent and immediate feedback.					
15.	Continuous assessment provides a more natural assessment than terminal examination					

Appendix – E :Waraqaa Gaafannoo Barattootaaf Dhiyaate

Kaayyoon qorannoo kanaa madaallii walittifufaa dandeettii dubbachuu madaaluu hojiiirra oolchuuiratti xiyyeeffata. Irracaalatti, xiyyeeffannoon gaafannoo kanaa, madaalliin walittifufaa hagam takka Mana Barumsaa Sadaraka Lammaffaa Sokorruu, Dannaba fi Qumbii keessatti raawatamaa akka jiru xinxala.Kanaafuu, deebiiwwan dhugaarratti hunda'uun gaaffilee kanaaf naalachuun daran barbaachisoo dha.

Gargaarsa naa gooteef galatoomi

Kutaa 1ffaa: Seenaa Dhuunfaa

1. Saala: Dhiira Dhalaa
2. umrii: 15-20 21-25 26-30 30 ol
3. Kutaa:

5- Likert scales

Ajaja: Yaadolee sanduqa kessatti kennamanii waliin hagam akka walii galto malattoo cuftuu kessati kenname kan ka'uun agarsiisi.

5: Baay' ee waliigala 4: Waliin gala 3: Waliigalus hin mormus 2: Nimorma 1:
Baay'seen morma

Lk	Gaaffii	5	4	3	2	1
1	Madaalliin walittifufaa madaallii waliigalaa (terminal examinations) irra dandeettii waliigaltee keessumayyuu dandeetti idubbachuu madaaluuf carraa guddaa bana yoo kan kenna.					
2.	Madaallii walittifufaan walitti dhufeenya badaa barsiisaafi barataa giddutti uuma.					
3.	Dandeetti dubbachuu madaallii walittifufaatti fayyadamanii madaaluun yeroo gubuu miti.					
4.	Dalagaaleen qabatamoon yknhiika qabeessa ta'an kaayyoo madaalliif mijatoo dha.					
5.	Madaalliin walittifufaan dandeettii waan tokko dalaguu barattootaa jalqa bumairratti akka beeknu eertuunuuf laata.					
6.	Sirreeffamni hatattamaa /immediate feedback/ qaama barbaachisaa madaallii dandeettii dubbachuu madaaluuti.					
7.	Madaallin walittifufaa dalagaan/task-based/dandeettii dubbachuu madaalu, barattoota dandeettii afaaniin boodatti hafoo ta'aniif mijataa miti.					
8.	Barattooni dandeettii dubbachuu saanii madaallii walittifufaan yoo yeroo yerootti madaalaman, dalagaalee dandeettii dubbachuu saanii guddisuuf daree kessatti shaakaluudhaaf onnatoo ta'u.					
9	Madaalliin walittifufaa barsiisun gaarii waliin walitt hidhata qaba.					
10	Madaallin walittifufaa yaaddoo/soda/ barattooni qormaata waliigalaaf /end-term exams/ qophaa'uuf akkasumas qoramuuf qaban hir'isa.					
11	Madaallii walittifufaa dandeettii garaagaraa Ingiliffaan dubbachuu madaaluuf carraa guddaa barattotaaf kenna					
12.	Dandeettii dubbachuu barattootaa madaaluuf qormaati waliigalaa akka madaalii waliigalaa barbachisaa miti.					
13.	Madaalliin walii galaa barsiisotaafis ta'e barattootaaf carraa shaakalasa dandeettii dubbachuu saanii irraatti akka yaadalaatan isaan garagara.					
14.	Madaaliin walittifufaa daandii/ mala/ ittii barsiisonni barattootaaf sirreeffama battalaa walirraa hin cinne/ immediate and frequent feedback/ laachuudhaan jajjabeessani dha.					
15.	Madaalliin walittifufaa madaallii haala qabatamaa keessatti gaggeessuuf mijataadha.					

Appendix –F: Classroom Observation Checklists

The main purpose of conducting this checklist is to come up with evidence about the practice of continuous oral skills assessment and EFL teachers’ familiarity with formats of continuous oral skills assessment.

Background Information

1. Grade Level _____ Section _____
2. Date _____ Session _____ Period _____
3. Time interval: _____
4. Topic of the Unit _____
5. Skill(s) being treated _____
6. Section: _____, and page _____
7. Topic of the Section: _____

Classroom Observations Checklist

No.	Items	Yes	No	Suggestions on the observed situation
1.	Do the teacher and the students have their own role?			
2	Does the teacher use varieties of activities/ methods during teaching speaking skills?			
3	Are these activities used similarly in assessment of speaking skills as an integral Part of instruction, particularly in spoken			

	classes?			
4	Does the teacher use authentic/ real life tasks in teaching and assessing students' oral abilities?			
5	Does the teacher use varieties of continuous oral skills assessment methods to cater for students' different learning and assessment styles?			
6	Does the teacher give opportunities for the students to practice and use English in a classroom?			
7	Is the teacher attempting to assess the various aspects of oral Skills?			
8	Does the teacher give feedback as of the implementation of COSA?			

The following checklist is used to ensure whether the teachers use the continuous oral skills assessment formats or not.

No.	Continuous Oral skills Assessment Formats	Yes	No
1.	Storytelling		
2.	Presentation		
3.	Reporting		
4.	Observation (using rating scales, checklist, card etc.)		
5.	Problem solving tasks		
6.	Describing pictures		
7.	Response to a tape –recording		
8.	Questions and requests for information		
9.	Role play		
10.	Discussion		
11.	Debate		
12.	Oral interview		
13	Interpreting		

Source: Weir (1995: 46-63), Hughes (1989:101-115)

N o .	Items											Mean
		SD		A		Und		DA		S D A		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Continuous assessment provides opportunity for assessing students' communicative ability more effectively than terminal examination.	5	55.56	4	44.44		-	-	-			4.55
2.	Continuous assessment can adversely affect the relationship between students and their teachers.	7	77.78	2	22.22		-	-	-			4.77
3.	Assessing the speaking skills on a continuous basis is not a waste of time.	5	55.56	-	-	4	44.44	-	-			4.11
4.	Authentic and meaningful tasks are appropriate for assessment purpose.	4	44.45	3	33.33	2	22.22	-	-			4.22
5.	Continuous assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students.	6	66.67	3	33.33		-	-	-			4.66
6.	Immediate feedback should be an essential component of continuous oral skills assessment.	7	77.78	2	22.22		-	-	-			4.77
7.	Continuous task-based oral assessment procedures are not suitable to students with poor verbal background.	8	88.89	1	11.11		-	-	-			4.88
8.	Continuous oral skills assessment provides opportunity for students to practice the speaking skill itself.	4	44.44	5	55.56		-	-	-			4.44
9.	Continuous oral skills assessment is inseparable from good teaching.	4	44.45	2	22.22	1	11.11	2	22.22			3.88
10.	Continuous assessment reduces anxiety that many students experience when preparing for and sitting terminal examinations.	3	33.34	3	33.33	1	11.11	2	22.22			3.77
11	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for teachers to assess the various aspects of oral English.	3	33.34	3	33.33	1	11.11	2	22.22			3.77

12	Continuous oral skills assessment provides teachers and students with the opportunity to reflect back on their practice	5	55.56	3	33.3 3	1	11.1 1	-	-	-	-	3.22
13	Terminal examination is not as useful as continuous oral skills assessment in assessing students speaking performance.	5	55.56	3	33.3 3	-	-	1	11. 11	-	-	3.22
14	Continuous oral skills assessment opens a path in which the teachers encourage their students by giving frequent and immediate feedback.	5	55.56	4	44.4 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55
15	Continuous assessment provides a more natural assessment than terminal examination	5	55.56	2	22.2 2	2	22.2 2	-	-	-	-	4.33

Appendix - H: Students' responses on various concepts of COSA

No	Items											Mean
		SD		A		Und		DA		SDA		
		f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	
1.	Continuous assessment provides opportunity for assessing students' communicative ability more effectively than terminal examination.	62	65.26	23	24.11	10	10.53	-	-	-	-	4.54
2.	Continuous assessment can positively affect the relationship between students and their teachers.	6	6.31	6	6.31	7	7.37	26	27.37	50	52.63	1.92
3.	Assessing the speaking skills on a continuous basis is a not waste of time.	5	5.26	5	5.26	7	7.37	25	26.31	53	55.79	1.83
4.	Authentic and meaningful tasks are not appropriate for assessment purpose.	-	-	5	5.27	10	10.53	40	42.10	40	42.10	1.78
5.	Continuous oral skills assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students.	48	50.52	25	26.31	16	16.43	6	6.32	-	-	4.21
6.	Immediate feedback should be an essential component of continuous oral skills assessment to identify weakness of the learners in order to address the weakness.	45	47.36	23	24.21	10	10.53	10	10.53	7	7.37	3.96
7.	Continuous task-based oral assessment procedures are not suitable to students with poor verbal background.	40	42.10	30	31.57	20	21.05	5	5.26	-	-	4.10
8.	Students enjoy practicing classroom oral activities if they are regularly assessed on their ability to speak	50	52.63	30	31.58	10	10.53	5	5.26	-	-	4.31
9.	Continuous oral skills assessment is inseparable from good teaching.	30	31.58	50	52.63	15	15.79	-	-	-	-	4.15
10.	Continuous assessment reduces anxiety that many students experience when preparing for and sitting terminal examinations.	48	50.52	28	29.47	12	12.64	5	5.27	-	-	4.18
11.	Continuous oral assessment provides opportunity for teachers to assess the various aspects of oral English.	30	31.57	55	57.89	6	6.32	4	4.21			4.16

12	Continuous oral skills assessment provides teachers and students with the opportunity to reflect back on their practice.	45	47.37	35	36.84	9	9.48	6	6.31			4.25
13	Terminal examination is not as useful as continuous oral skills assessment in assessing students speaking performance.	7	7.37	-	-	10	10.53	30	31.58	48	50.53	1.82
14	Continuous oral skills assessment opens a path in which the teachers encourage their students by giving frequent and immediate feedback.	48	50.53	40	42.10	7	7.37	-	-	-	-	4.43
15	Continuous assessment provides a more natural assessment than terminal examination.	50	52.63	36	37.89	9	9.48	-	-	-	-	4.43

Appendix - I: EFL Teachers' Written Reflection Transcripts

Sample written reflection from teacher-2(T2)

1. How do you express the role of continuous assessment in assessing students' oral skills? What contributions does it have in enhancing students' to develop their speaking skills?

T2: It is vital especially, students' speaking skill will develop and they can express their ideas and thoughts. If it is appropriately applied, really it can bring many changes up on our students.

2. Do you prepare oral skills in your continuous assessment activities? If your response is 'yes' mention the assessment methods you use in continuous assessment of speaking skills? If 'no' why?

T2: From my experience of teaching English as a second language, I like to teach speaking skill, in the form of debating, arguing and reflecting their ideas. However, in the process of oral assessment I really use it in the classroom because of time constraints. I did not use oral skill continuous assessment always in the classroom.

3. What impeding factors do you encounter while attempting to use real life situations in continuous assessment approaches?

T2: The impeding factors are lack of time to assess speaking, lack of words and linguistic problems to express in real life situations, inequality of participation among the learners, absence of materials and access to the area to implement speaking in the form of debate, presentation, report, visitation, etc.

4. To What extent do you face in attempting to organize students for teaching and assessing speaking skills?

T2: Most of the time, I face the problem that some students loss or lack interests to speak in English due to fear or the mistake they can make. I face this great problem. They lack confidence to speak, argue, discuss, explain what I order them

to do. In addition, lack of word power and organization of ideas are among the problem students have. In contrary to this, they do not give adequate time to practice the speaking skills and they are not ready to use many opportunities I provided them unless I order and take marks and use as one of continuous assessments.

5. What do you think are the major methods that you use while trying to assess your students' oral communicative ability as an integral part of classroom instruction?

T2: Students lack of interests to do as they are ordered, student's lack of confidence to use the word or vocabulary they knew, the problem of fear and failure to make mistake, and lack of time to focus on speaking always in the classroom. In order to reduce these challenges I use asking and answering questions, describe picture and role play...

6. Do you think the challenges you encounter when implementing can be overcome? If 'yes', to what extent and how? If no, why?

T2: Yes, that means we can overcome the challenges by providing awareness that their mistake is not their failure and they can overcome by providing ample opportunities for the students so that they can develop their speaking outside classroom lessons and enforcing them to use merely English both in and outside the classroom.

7. How to assess your students to overcome the implementation of COSA? Please mention them if any.

T2: Giving more time for speaking skills, especially, in continuous oral assessment, and relating it with the marking system in order to increase students' attitude and participation towards the practice and use of speaking skills can be a good

alternative. Giving several topics which can allow them in speaking particularly, with the current issues of the world is another important measure.

8. How do you think continuous assessment of speaking skill is different from the traditional approach to testing oral skills?

T2: It is different, in the areas like student- centered ways of teaching- learning process. It takes more emphasis and most of the students talk, not teachers talk to students in the classroom. On the other hand, continuous assessment of oral skill is a modern ways of teaching speaking skills. Whereas traditional approach is teacher- centered method of teaching for assessment/fixed time for mid/final exam. The learners learning form assessment.

9. What student- related factors discourage you in order not to assess students under authentic situations? Please explicitly elaborate.

T2: However, English language is not our mother tongue students' attitude and interest to improve their speaking skills is the most impeding factor that affects the assessment of oral skill. Lack of words and inability to use their words and vocabularies they know, especially, organization of ideas in order to convey the message is one of the greatest problems.

Appendix-J: Sample Transcript from English Teachers' Interview

Sample interview with Teacher 4 (T4)

1. What assessment methods did you experience when you were a student at lower and high institutions?

T4: Most of the assessment method I came across is more of writing. It was the teacher, who used to take ample time to talk and the students rather listen to the teacher being passive. Therefore, it was through such approach that I attended my education, especially in language classes.

- Did you get opportunities to be assessed under real life environment, especially in continuous assessment?

T4: Sometimes we get opportunities to be assessed under real life situations this really depends on the teacher and it is better to say there was no assessment which focuses on measuring students speaking skill under real life environment.

- What kind of activities did you experience?

T4: They were exams most of the time we were given written examinations, this were usually given as final examination, and sometimes we take tests.

- Does your experience as a student have any impact on your current way of assessing students' oral skills? If 'yes' how?

T4: It does have an impact because for me it is difficult to implement what I had experienced now. Mostly, before I take certain training, I simply apply/ put into practice what mastered formerly.

2. How do you assess student's speaking skills?

T4: Nowadays, I assess students' speaking skills in various ways. I present them with different activities, for example, I may ask them to describe personal details, the other day I encourage them to describe what is there in their background knowledge. My students are not as such good at speaking and I have time constraint in assessing their oral performance.

Most often, I dedicate myself to cover the portions. If the portion is not covered, since the students are large in number, it is difficult to address all students with continuous assessment of oral skill. For this reason, I used to asking few questions, I try to give class works and I order them to discuss orally in a classroom, and my attempt is not more than this.

3. How do you express or define continuous assessment of oral/ speaking skills?

T4: If the situation of implementation is too conducive, I express it in a good sense because it is a meaningful engagement of that the students have with teachers. In case of the learning process, it is learning by doing and it is very important, but as I have told you the students background determines the way it is held. In addition, this, the society from which the students come is illiterate. This can in turn make students lack exposure of the language where they can practice as in off-school conditions. So these all can determine as I mentioned above.

4. What opportunities do you think continuous assessment of oral/speaking skills offer you and your students?

T4: It does have huge importance, it helps us in build our students, in developing their English oral skills. Because it has a paramount value for the students' future

career, it also makes students to have an interest on the target language. Furthermore, since they learn all subjects in English it offers them the ability to read and understand different materials. Even, they can also understand something they listen to, for example, TV. Therefore, it is very important for both students and teachers.

5. In your view, what does effective implementation of continuous oral assessment involve?

T4: Specially, in continuously assessing students speaking skills, for example, students need to be given varieties of activities. For instance, today, if he gives students to describe about their personal detail, the next day, he should change the mood and let the students talk about his background, interest, needs, what he likes and dislikes, and he should also think of the following day's activities accordingly depending on what his students able to do.

6. How do you think the role of continuous oral assessment in encouraging students to practice and use the language both inside and outside the classroom?

T4: Here, this continuous assessment by itself has a psychological makeup since the student is eager to study other subject matter; s/he benefits more from speaking English. If he develops this English oral skills its importance is not only for the target language advancement, but also it helps to understand the concept of other subject matters. For this reason, if students get access to effective implementation of continuous oral assessment it would have been acceptable.

7. How do you think this continuous assessment of oral skills should be carried out?

T4: It should be! It should be implemented. By organizing students into group, for instance, by making two or three groups in class, and or by arranging students out

of the class , then calling them one by one to assess them separately, but, here again, the problem is you can't cover the portion which allotted for the semester or a year. Whenever you think of the implementation of continuous assessment of oral performance, you worry about that.

T4: Another obstacle is that students who have been coming from lower levels come with nothing regarding the oral skills. At grade 8, they attend their education in their native language (Afan Oromo), when they join grade 9 they face a new curriculum to learn all the subjects in English. These have a severe challenge on the students' language skills, particularly, on their speaking skill.

- Who do you think should play greater role in putting this evaluation method into practice?

T4: In putting this evaluation into practice, both teacher and students should play greater role. But, the administrative body or the institution by itself. I said this because of the reason that to cover the portion the lessons should be very short and speaking sections need to be given ample time. Unless you finish the portion, it is too difficult. Moreover, the schedules should consecutively be set.

- Why?

T4: It is comfortable to assess students' oral skills using continuous assessment, but the students are very shy and they are very reluctant.

8. Do you prepare oral skills in your continuous assessment activities?

T4: Yes, I usually conduct a dialogue between students and I let them to have a talk upon certain issues with one another, for example, on issues like personal details, I provide them with topic and them simply to talk about. For example, they discuss on use of money, therefore, they exchange ideas in the form of dialogue. This way I can even assess two students at the same time. In assessing one student, I can also get two students through dialogue.

9. How do you think continuous assessment of speaking skill is different from the traditional approach to testing oral skills?

T4: As we have mentioned it before traditional approach is more writing there is no talking. Nowadays, oral/ speaking skills have been somewhat on practice. Therefore, there is a big difference between the two. This because in previous times there is no activity or assessment which was done through speaking or oral performance rather it had been more of writing. However, this time, there are several ways like, dialogue, introducing oneself. Therefore, these all makes it different from the past form of assessment.

10. What do you think are the major methods that you use while trying to assess your students' oral communicative ability as an integral part of classroom instruction?

T4: From my experience, the major methods for the regular practice and assessment of oral skill are that students do not have interest and motivation. This mainly arises from the problem of language background. This leads them to get frustrated and afraid of making mistakes in front of their friends. Rather they give huge value to learning language structures which may appear on national examination. Thus; they sit silent or discuss unrelated issues in their first language during speaking classes. To reduce these problems I use some major methods like self-reflection, debate, role play, interview...

