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**Libyan EFL Petroleum Training and Qualification Institute
Students' Attitudes towards Peer Assessment of Oral
Presentation Skills**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for an MA Degree in
Applied Linguistics

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents for their love and encouragement.

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I am thankful to Allah, may He be praised and exalted, who blessed me with the strength and will to pursue my dream and achieve it.

I am forever deeply grateful to my outstanding supervisor, Dr. Salama Embark. This endeavour would not have been possible without his guidance, crucial feedback, encouragement, and patience.

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate students' attitudes towards peer assessment of oral presentation skills, as well as the challenges students faced undergoing this form of assessment. The study sampled 37 adult students taking a general English course at the Petroleum Training and Qualifications Institute. Peer assessment was used to assess oral presentations during speaking sessions. To collect and analyse data, a mixed-methods approach was utilised using a survey and semi-structured interviews . The study revealed that students had positive attitudes towards the learning and achievement gained from PA, as well as giving and receiving assessments from and to their classmates. However, students expressed facing a number of issues including friendship marking, some level of distrust in peers' assessments, arising conflict, a lack of confidence in assessing, and some level of dissatisfaction with the rubric criteria.

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

PTQI: Petroleum Training and Qualification Institute.

PA: Peer Assessment

AFL: Assessment for Learning

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

From my experience as a member of staff in the Petroleum Training and Qualification Institute (henceforth referred to as PTQI) all language skills (such as speaking and reading) and areas (i.e., grammar and vocabulary) are taught as separate subjects in the PTQI. However, they are all assessed by means of standardised tests where numerical and letter grading systems are used to measure the student's ability. The inauthenticity and restricted nature of traditional assessments (Baily, 1998), in which a letter grade that does not provide satisfactory feedback on the student's

performance is often given, shifts the students' focus from developing and acquiring language skills to memorising phrases and expressions to get higher results. This might happen due to the fact that the types of assessments students complete have an impact on how they approach learning (Dochy et al., 2001). This issue becomes more prevalent in speaking assessments.

In speaking assessments (i.e., assessments that use oral presentations as an assessment task), where the teacher is the only authority, provider of assessment material, and judge of students' performance, feedback, and future development, students take on a passive role as they become more detached from their learning process and more reluctant to identify and rectify their issues in their oral performances. Therefore, the incorporation of a democratic alternative assessment is much needed to compensate for the shortcomings of traditional assessment.

In the last two decades, there has been a shift in the way assessment is viewed. Scholars, teachers, and assessors have become more drawn to the incorporation of adult students in their assessments. This comes from the concept of learner empowerment as first suggested by Fymer, Shulman, and Houser (1996). When the concepts of learner empowerment are applied to assessment, students are seen as being able to participate in decision-making, not only in their learning process but also in their assessment. Dochy et al. (2001) as well as Leach et al. (2010) all agree that the student should take on an active role and be responsible for their assessment and reflection. The method of alternative assessment selected for this research was peer assessment, as it is seen as an effective and sure way to involve students in the judgment of their performance and, hence, their learning.

This research provided an investigation into the attitudes displayed by PTQI students towards the implementation of peer assessment of oral presentation skills.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

From my experience as a speaking skill teacher in the PTQI, assessment in general falls entirely on the shoulders of the teacher. Teacher's assessment is not always reliable or valid (Race, 2001) and is to a very high degree subjective when it comes to the assessment of speaking in general and consequently oral presentations. When assessing oral presentations, students are left with the unsatisfactory assessment of a letter grade, which only indicates whether they passed or not and who performed better than the others did in the particular instance of the day of the exam. In addition, most students do not take part in the assessment of their performances due to their reliance on the teacher to provide that. This causes students to be reluctant to participate, think critically, and even make decisions about improving their presentation skills. Therefore, there is a need to investigate new alternative forms of assessment that would encourage students to participate as assessors and not only assessees, as well as explore their attitudes towards such methods.

1.3. Aims of the Study

The aims of the present study are to:

- explore PTQI students' attitudes towards peer assessment of oral presentation skills;
- investigate the challenges that students face during peer assessment.

1.4. Research Questions

- What attitudes do EFL PTQI students have towards peer assessment of oral presentation skills?

- What challenges do they face during peer assessment?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Even though there is a plethora of evidence in the literature (see Chapter 2) that proves the efficiency and acceptability of peer assessment by both teachers and students, it is not common to use this method in the PTQI. The findings of the study can be the first step towards implementing peer assessment as a form of assessment in the PTQI, thus taking a step towards empowering students and encouraging them to take ownership of their assessment.

1.6. Research Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was adopted in the investigation of the attitudes that students expressed towards peer assessment of presentation skills. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected sequentially.

In the initial stage, quantitative data were drawn using a survey consisting of close-ended questions on a Likert scale. Based on the generalised results of the students' responses collected from the initial stage, the second stage was built. Through semi-structured interviews, more detailed and in-depth responses were collected using open-ended questions constructed from the quantitative results of the previous stage. The qualitative data triangulated the survey results, thus increasing the credibility, reliability, and validity of the data collection tools and findings.

The sample consisted of 37 adult pre-intermediate students in the PTQI. Convenience sampling was used for the survey, whereas volunteer sampling was used for semi-structured interviews. As for data analysis, the quantitative data was analysed using frequency distribution via Microsoft Office Excel, while the qualitative data was analysed using content analysis.

1.7. Organisation of the Study

The dissertation is divided into five chapters, which are:

1. chapter one, introduction, contains a short description of the background of the study, a statement of the problem, the aims of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, and an explanation of the organisation of the study;
2. chapter two, literature review, includes a literature review that provides a description of alternative assessment and traditional assessment. Most importantly, it also contains detailed explanations of concepts related to peer assessment, the strengths of using peer assessment, an elaboration of the assessment cycle, the challenges that occur when using peer assessment in the classroom, and an explanation of peer feedback. In addition to that, a detailed description of the different oral presentation skills is included. Finally, attitudes are discussed;
3. chapter three, methodology, describes the research design, including the context of the study, the participants, sampling methods, the data collection process, and ethical considerations;
4. chapter four, results, contains a presentation of the quantitative and qualitative data as well as their analysis; and
5. chapter five, discussion and conclusion, presents a discussion of the findings, implications, recommendations, and limitations of the study, as well as the summary and conclusion.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review of the different aspects related to peer assessment. It begins with a general description of alternatives of assessment, from which the concepts of peer assessment were created. Then, the typology, strengths, and weaknesses of peer assessment are provided. This leads to the next part, where the manner in which peer assessment is implemented in the cycle of assessment is explained. After that, peer feedback is discussed due to its significance and inseparability from peer assessment followed by the different aspects and skills of oral presentations. Finally, this chapter closes with a description of the components and measures of attitudes necessary for this study.

2.1 Alternative Assessments

Traditional forms of assessment, such as tests, can be unreliable, at least within the context of assessing oral presentation skills. Literature related to language assessment revealed how traditional assessments lack authenticity and assess language indirectly (Baily, 1998). In addition, standardised tests or traditional assessments are restricted to measuring single, predetermined instances of the student's linguistic competence and language development (Law & Eckes 1995). In other words, they do not provide an assessment of the student's spontaneous language production or a holistic view of the student's ability. Hence, alternative assessments emerged in response to the deficiencies of traditional assessments.

There is no particular definition of alternative assessment, as it is an umbrella term under which different forms of assessment that are not characteristically identified as standardised or traditional methods of assessment are found (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2018). In pedagogical literature, the terms authentic assessment, performance assessment, and direct assessment correspond to alternative assessment (Monib et al., 2020). What is noticeable about these varieties is that they reflect the characteristics of alternative assessments. According to Brown and Hudson (1998), forms of alternative assessment, unlike standardised assessment, require performance or the production of language in a non-intrusive or spontaneous manner and derive from real-world contexts. According to them, examples of alternative assessments include project work, learner portfolios, self- and peer-assessment, as well as many other forms.

2.2 Peer Assessment

Involving students in the process of their assessment and giving them the responsibility of judging each other's abilities as part of their learning, which eventually equips them with the skills to self-regulate, is the core principle of peer assessment. This form of alternative assessment is the topic of interest in this research; therefore, this section provides insight into what peer assessment is, its typology, as well as its strengths and weaknesses according to the literature.

2.2.1. Definition of Peer Assessment

Peer assessment (henceforth referred to as PA) is based on the concept of students taking on the responsibility of and negotiating their assessments. This is due to the fact that it derives its theoretical principles from cooperative learning (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018), as students

learn within the community and by the community of students (Topping, 1998). Topping (2018, p. 1), one of the pioneer researchers in PA, defined this form of assessment as "an arrangement for learners to consider and specify the level, value, or quality of a product or performance of other learners, then learn further by giving elaborated feedback to and discussing their appraisals with those who were assessed to achieve a negotiated agreed outcome." What we can take away from this definition is that students take on the responsibility of judging each other's performances on a particular task. Also, what is significant about this form of assessment is that students then provide detailed feedback explaining the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' products. Finally, rather than the role of the sole authority in the classroom, the teacher, in PA, takes on the cooperative role of a guide and a facilitator of this process of assessment and learning. It is the researcher's belief that PA is no replacement for teachers or other kinds of formal assessment. Rather than being regarded solely as a means of assessment, it is a complementary method of assessment that aims to increase the effectiveness of education through assessment (Topping 2003, 2009, 2017).

2.2.2. Typology of Peer Assessment

There are many aspects to consider when designing PA that fits a particular classroom context. Topping (2018) created a typology to help teachers navigate through PA by identifying what they want to achieve through this assessment. These characteristics address the type of PA, the manner in which the judgment is to be given, the subject, the frequency of the assessment, and

the way in which PA is communicated. Different types of PA are suitable for different contexts of learning, ages of the students, subjects being studied, and target tasks or activities being assessed.

One major distinction is that a PA can be either summative or formative. If summative, students may be asked to judge the quality of their peers' performances. They may be asked to provide a grade of some sort, and the grade is counted as part of the overall mark of the term or the course (Topping, 2018). Students may require training—discussion, supervision, or providing guides or rubrics for assessment (Sridharan et al., 2018)—in order to produce accurate and consistent judgment (Bloxham et al., 2016). However, even with such training, it was found that students tend to give somewhat inaccurate and lenient grades when they are aware that their grading or judgment will result in the penalisation of their peers (Sridharan et al., 2018). On the other hand, if the assessment is formative, students may be required, in addition to providing judgment, to provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the assessee's performance as well as suggest ways of improving. This form of assessment tends to be informal and can be part of assessing the process as well as the final product (see 2.4.1).

Another major distinction is whether the assessment is to be judged qualitatively or quantitatively. According to Topping (2018), in a quantitative peer assessment, students are required to provide a grade of some sort (letter grading, percentage grading, norm reference grading, and so on). One thing to be aware of, though, is that students need to have training and experience in grading in order for their grading to be accurate. Even though several studies demonstrated the accuracy of students' grading as compared to that of teachers (Patri, 2002; Saito and Fujita, 2004; Topping, 2012; ArchMiller et al., 2016), they tend to be highly subjective and unfair at times, as students were found to award higher marks to weaker and non-contributing

students and lower marks to stronger students in PAs (Kwan and Leung, 1996; Cheng and Warren, 2005; Freeman, 1995). In a qualitative PA, students are required to provide verbal feedback rather than marks. Such a method of judgment is easier to dispense by the students; however, that does not mean that some demonstration and practise given by the teacher are not necessary. Rotsaert et al. (2018) argued that feedback given by the students is better perceived than that of the teacher, which makes it more effective.

A third decision that a teacher can make is between classmates providing their judgment or feedback either anonymously, non-anonymously, or both. When provided anonymously, students' feedback was found to be far more critical than when given non-anonymously. Also, students were found to be more likely to generously supply advice for improvement in the comfort of anonymity (Howard et al., 2010). However, among other issues with anonymity, it does not promote the development of the interpersonal skills (social skills) required in real-world contexts (Rotsaert et al., 2018). Receiving feedback from a known person, on the other hand, increases the acceptability of the feedback and consequently its effectiveness (Topping, 2018).

Other less obvious distinctions are between a single piece or multiple pieces of work. It is whether the PA assesses one piece of a student's performance, such as one presentation, or assesses a number of performances; i.e., in an activity where students are required to write an essay, not only is their essay evaluated or assessed, but also their performance in the pre-writing stage is regarded as well as their post-writing edits. There's also the distinction between the subject area and the product to be assessed, whether it is oral presentations, role-plays, essay writing portfolios, or even the products of other subjects such as physics or sports. Finally, PA can be either voluntary or compulsory, though compulsory PA is unfavourable as it draws resistance and a lack of desire to take part in the assessment.

2.3. Strengths of Using Peer Assessment

PA has been thriving for more than 20 years, which has allowed for the accumulation of numerous theoretical and empirical evidences of its efficiency. Throughout the literature related to PA, students expressed positive attitudes towards it (Chen and Warren, 2005; Wen and Tsai, 2006; Peng, 2009; Fazel, 2015; Mutwarasibo, 2016). This is due to the fact that it most prominently contributes to learning and achievement, the development of transferable skills, and the development of learner autonomy and self-regulation.

2.3.1. Learning and Achievement

Some of the most powerful strengths that this form of assessment carries have to do with the way it impacts learning. The literature has disclosed the way in which PA contributes to the enhancement of higher-order or critical thinking skills (Cheng & Warren, 2005; Lai & Hwang, 2014; Harrison et al., 2015; Topping, 2018). Literature also pointed out the way PA fosters a student-centred environment and promotes active and empowered students (Adachi et al., 2017). Contrary to traditional assessment, where students usually take on a passive role, PA requires students' active participation, which, as reported by Brindley and Scofield (1998) in their study of learners' attitudes towards PA, results in increased intrinsic motivation as well as students gaining experience and a deep understanding of the process and content of assessment. Finally, this mode of assessment helps improve the quality of learning (Davies, 2000; Ibarra-Saiz et al., 2020). Ibarra-Saiz et al. (2020), in a 4-year study of undergraduate students' competence development using online PA, were able to link the noticeable improvement in students' competence and achievement to the feedback, evaluative judgment, participation, and self-regulation (the variables) involved in PA. They were even able to construct a predictive model of

students' level of competence based on the relationship between the variables involved in the implementation of PA. Another way in which PA helps improve the quality of learning is through developing a deep understanding of assessment criteria. In a study where 29 undergraduate students were instructed to use PA in an argumentative speaking activity to investigate the impact of PA on learning, Yin et al. (2022) concluded that, in addition to students learning from each other and modifying their goals and tactics in speaking, one of the impacts of PA is the internalisation of criteria as a result of using them as assessors and receiving them as assessees. Successful or useful evaluations necessitate that the evaluator understand the assessment criteria, and such a deep understanding of the criteria ultimately improves the students' ability to self-regulate and self-correct (Peng, 2009; Wen & Tsai, 2006; Cheng & Warren, 2005; Fazel 2015).

2.3.2. Development of Transferable Skills

PA contributes not only to students' (both as assessors and assessees) learning skills but also to long-term transferable skills. As PA involves students emerging in activities that require the ability to formulate evaluative judgment and then give feedback and suggestions for improvement, it was found that students enhance skills including communication skills, teamwork, goal-awareness, self-awareness, and critical thinking skills (Wu et al., 2014; Harrison et al., 2015; Adachi et al., 2017; Topping, 2017).

In a study aimed at designing a model for learning through PA, Reinholz (2015) described the manner in which students develop such skills. Because PA requires students to confer and negotiate rubric criteria and feedback, they gain the opportunity to practise communication and collaboration skills. In addition to that, as students use a rubric to compare their peers'

performances against, their involvement with the rubric(s) enhances their understanding of the standards of assessment, thus developing goal awareness. Finally, Reinholz (2015) concluded that self-awareness (i.e., performance awareness or students' awareness of their own performance) is a definite outcome of PA as the assessment helps individuals get a more accurate sense of their abilities.

In an action research study of 523 elementary school students, Harrison et al. (2015) found that, as a result of using PA, students developed effective social skills in addition to critical thinking skills. They also noticed an increase in students' self-awareness and self-reflection, which contributed to their self-direction or autonomy.

In order for students to be more willing to engage in negotiations and discussions regarding peers' performances as well as give and receive assessment that would ultimately enhance their transferable skills, they have to be positively inclined to participate in the different aspects of PA (see 2.8.2). A number of studies showed that students wanted to partake in different aspects of PA. In their study, Wen and Tsai (2006) reported that students willingly participated in discussions regarding their peers' performances. Manalu (2016), however, reported in a study examining how students at the University of Indonesia who were studying English for Academic Purposes (EAP) perceive peer evaluation in a group oral presentation that students did not merely participate in discussions but rather expressed that they enjoyed such discussions in addition to their enjoyment of giving and receiving assessment. They also reported their willingness to work harder on tasks that were peer assessed.

In short, the transferable skills acquired from PA, especially teamwork or collaborative work, help prepare students for real-life contexts, such as workplace contexts where they may have to

receive, negotiate, or provide criticism (Adachi et al., 2017). Thus, these acquired skills add to the authenticity of this form of assessment.

2.3.3. Development of Learner Autonomy and Self-Regulation

One of the core strengths of PA is arguably its inevitable establishment of students' sense of ownership and responsibility for their assessment and, consequently, their learning. In other words, PA nurtures learner autonomy (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Falchikov, 2005; Sambell et al., 2012; Topping, 2018). In an experimental study of 70 English-major college students in China, Shen et al. (2020) studied the impact PA had on learners' autonomy. The control group received assessments and feedback from the teacher, while the experimental group received assessments and feedback from peers. Students in the experimental group showed a gradual decline in reliance on the teacher and an increase in their confidence in their own ability to learn and provide feedback.

If carried out successfully, PA stimulates a number of internal processes that support learning. Students activate self-regulation, cognitions, behaviours, and affects in a systematic and cyclical manner in order to achieve their learning goal (Topping, 2018). This was confirmed by previous literature (Zimmerman, 2000; Boekaerts & Corno, 2005; Kostons et al., 2012; Andrade & Heritage, 2017). In a recent study carried out by Fathi et al. (2019), a noticeable correlation was found between participating in PA and the students' increasing self-regulation. Fathi et al. (2019) justified this heightened sense of self-reflection as an outcome of the ample involvement of students in the process of their assessment. That is, as students gained more knowledge (understanding the criteria and their strengths and weaknesses) as well as control (what to evaluate and what not to evaluate), they gained more self-regulatory learning skills. A second

justification of the findings was the essential role that familiarity with the rubric criteria of the assessment played in the inevitable development of students' self-regulation.

To summarise, PA has myriad benefits, most prominently seen in the enhancement of the learning process and students' academic success, the acquisition of the soft skills necessary for real-world contexts, as well as the promotion of students' ownership and taking responsibility for their learning.

2.4. Implementing Peer Assessment

Given that formative assessment was selected as the type of PA for this study, this section first explains what formative assessment entails. Then the basic elements of the cycle of assessment are provided, followed by a modified cycle of PA that allows for the scaffolding and involvement of students in decisions regarding it.

2.4.1. Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)

One of formative assessment's fundamental tenets is the concept of evaluating for the purpose of improving learning. Therefore, formative assessment is also known as assessment for learning (hereinafter referred to as AFL) (Trillman, 2011; Bartlett, 2015; Panadero et al., 2016; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018). It is "the process used by teachers and students to recognise and respond to learning in order to enhance that learning, during the learning" (Cowie & Bell, 1999, p. 1). Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, p. 8) claimed that AFL generally aims at students being evaluated while they are "forming" their competencies and abilities with the intention of assisting them in pursuing further progress. The key to such formation is the delivery (by the teacher) and internalisation (by the student) of appropriate feedback on performance with an eye towards the

future continuation (or formation) of learning. Due to the feedback, critical analysis, reflection, and self-regulation that continuously recur in PA, many researchers regard it as an essential learning tool in AFL (Sluijsmans, 2002; Grez et al., 2012; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013; Reinholz, 2015; Panadero et al., 2016).

2.4.2 Scaffolding Peer Assessment

When constructing a framework for assessment that advocates the engagement of students, it is necessary to dedicate a stage to training students on how to assess and understand assessment. Previous literature has emphasised the importance of scaffolding, or the process of gradual removal of support, as a way of reducing the complexity of a task and assisting students to become accustomed to PA by providing adequate training (Topping, 2017). Konings et al. (2019) explored whether scaffolding affected the accuracy of PA in the same way it affected domain-skills. The results showed that not only did scaffolding improve the accuracy of PA, but it also reduced both the time spent on the task and the complexity of the "mental effort" students experience during such assessments. However, Konings et al. (2019) stressed that students must have training in or be able to perform the task to be assessed prior to PA. This is to give students that necessary experience, which ought to prevent them from making invalid and unreliable judgments due to the mental strain of understanding the task and the criteria while also assessing their peers. In a literature review investigating the elements of effective PA, van Zundert et al. (2010) concluded that training and experience positively influence students' attitudes towards PA. Furthermore, Cheng & Warren (2005), in a study investigating Hong Kong university students' attitudes towards PA of language proficiency as well as its efficiency and reliability, found that after gaining sufficient experience assessing and comprehending assessment criteria, students held favourable attitudes towards PA and wanted to undergo this form of assessment in

the future. Similarly, in his study of PA of oral presentations used in a speaking and listening course at an Iranian university, Fazel (2015) found that the majority of students recommended using PA in future speaking and listening courses after receiving instruction in PA. Therefore, the researcher believes that including a step to take time to provide training on the different phases of PA is required.

2.4.3. Levels of Learner Involvement in Assessment

In order for assessments run by students to be reliable and achieve better learning outcomes, students should be given the opportunity to discuss and decide on the criteria they wish for their performances to be judged upon. In other words, they should be involved in criteria setting (Falchikov & Goldtinch, 2000; Falchikov, 2005). Adult students, in particular, are perfectly capable of and have the right to have a role in the process of their assessment (Leach, 2001). In the context of PA, students are disposed to be involved in decisions regarding their assessment as it amplifies their awareness and understanding of assessment criteria the more they use them, which means they also become aware of the issues that the criteria may have (Smith et al., 2002).

There are many ways to involve students in their assessments. One approach that Leach (2001) suggested was to provide a list comprising a number of criteria and information to facilitate their selection process. Except for the fact that the assessment is to take place, students have the freedom to negotiate and decide upon anything, starting from the type of assessment (standardised or alternative) all the way to what to observe in the assessment. As for the engagement of students in the process of setting assessment criteria, Falchikov (2005) classified three levels of learner involvement based on Brew's typology. Those levels are:

Level 1:

The first and lowest level of involvement is when students are asked to judge each other's performances on a given task based on set criteria, model answers, or marks decided by the teacher.

Level 2

At the next level, students are somewhat more involved, but not entirely. Here, students are permitted to decide which criteria they choose for their work to be critiqued upon.

Level 3

As for the final and highest level of student inclusion, students are encouraged to judge the criteria and are provided with sufficient training to do so. It is the least restricted form of involvement. Brew (1999) explained that it is where the students' ability to critically view and alter the criteria shapes the assessment, and then the assessment reflects the students' understanding of the criteria.

2.4.4. The Cycle of Assessment

A sound and practical framework for PA which contains a scaffolding and learner involvement is fundamental for a successful PA, Therefore, Peng's (2009) cycle of PA was adopted for this study. The cycle consists of three main stages: 1) pre-implementation; 2) implementation; and 3) post-implementation.

The pre-implementation stage mainly consists of the training and preparation of staff and students. First, it involves preparing and, if necessary, training teachers, as well as preparing the required technology. Second, students are trained. They learn about PA and its benefits. What is significant about this stage is the sufficient chances students get to practise and become familiar with using criteria and feedback techniques. Third, the rubric criteria of the assessment are explained, discussed (what they learn from a certain criteria), and negotiated (whether to add or remove a criteria). Finally, measuring methods are explained, discussed, and negotiated (whether or not rating is involved, what kind and how, whether a checklist will be used instead, and so on).

As for the implementation stage, it contains the two steps of actual application and evaluation of PA. The actual application involves providing a model of how to implement PA to promote confidence and reduce anxiety, as well as enhance reliability and validity (Topping 2017). It also involves monitoring and modifying PA as required, discussing possible problems and concerns that may arise, and monitoring the quality of peer feedback. As for the evaluation step, it encompasses assessing performances by both the teacher and peers, group discussion prior to the announcement of the final judgment, and providing the judgment and feedback for further development.

The post-implementation stage consists of three steps. One is examining peer appraisal and comparing it to the teachers' for validity. Next is interviewing students for perceived advantages and challenges (this step was added for the sake of Peng's (2009) research). Finally, pinpointing modifications and improvements to the scheme is what ensues.

2.5. Challenges of Using Peer Assessment

Even though PA has numerous strengths, the literature revealed that it has challenges that the researcher thinks teachers considering using this mode of assessment should be aware of. These issues are related to reliability and validity, negative social and intrapersonal processes, and time and resource concerns.

2.5.1. Reliability and Validity

One issue that emerged persistently in the literature is reliability, or the agreement between students' ratings or judgment, and validity, or the agreement between the students' assessment and the teacher's (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000). Because of how novice and inexperienced students are, the reliability and validity of their judgment are oftentimes questioned (Van Steendam et al., 2010; Rotsaert et al., 2017a). However, literature comparing expert or teacher assessment against student assessment proved otherwise (Adachi et al., 2017).

One argument in favour of the accuracy of PA is that teacher assessment can also have questionable reliability (Topping, 2017; 2018). In addition to that, students' assessments are more readily available than the teacher's (Topping 2017). However, Topping (2017) stressed that students should be informed that their feedback may not always be correct and encouraged to discuss the feedback or correction and check its accuracy using resources or the teacher. The final and most prominent argument is that research has revealed how the reliability and validity of students' assessments increase with their understanding of assessment criteria. One of the significant studies that confirmed this was Falchikov & Goldfinch's (2000) meta-analysis of 48 qualitative studies that compared peer and teacher ratings. PA was found to be as valid as the teachers' under the condition that students properly understood the set rubric criteria. That is, the more familiar and relaxed students are with the procedure of PA and the criteria, the more their

judgment closely resembles the teachers' (Panadero et al., 2013). Furthermore, regardless of the level of the students (beginner or advanced), they garnered similar reliability and validity.

2.5.2. Negative Social and Intrapersonal Processes

Another disadvantage of PA is that students' intrapersonal beliefs and relations influence the results of PA. (Topping, 2017; Panadero et al., 2013; Rotsaert et al., 2018; Sridharan et al., 2018). These intrapersonal beliefs are "possible reciprocity effects and negative feelings caused by interpersonal variables such as friendship marking due to friendship bonds, psychological unsafety, fear of disapproval when giving a low score or negative feedback..." (Rotsaert et al., 2018, p. 3). One example of such issues was apparent in Harris and Brown's (2013) study, which examined three case studies of teachers and students' perceptions of PA. Among other findings, they pointed out that students confessed to friendship marking, as referred to by Prins et al. (2005), or awarding inflated and false judgment to their peers for the purpose of appeasing their peers or saving face. Similarly, Mutwarashibo (2016), in his study inspecting university students' attitudes towards PA of writing, reported that even though most students stated they were fair most of the time, some admitted to dabbling into friendship marking for the sake of encouraging their peers at times. However, he reported that more students expressed that they felt their peers were biased in their assessments, thus concluding that students were less pleased with receiving assessments than providing them. Carvalho (2012) reported, in a study surveying 120 students in a problem-based course at a Portuguese university undergoing PA for seven semesters, how a number of students perceived PA as unfair as a number of their peers provided inaccurate feedback and marks due to either friendship bias or conflict arising between the classmates.

Other intrapersonal beliefs have to do with "distrust in one's own and others' evaluative capabilities." (Rotsaert et al., 2018). One example of that is Ryan, et al.'s (2007) study implementing a forced distribution grading method (grading by comparing students against each other) with 96 students. The students reported a number of negative opinions towards PA, such as believing the assessment was unfair, disagreeing with the grade received, and believing they did not know their classmates well enough for them to assess them. The general strong displeasure with PA was intensified by the concept of being criticised by another student. Cheng and Warren (2005) provided their own findings regarding the issue of self-confidence and feeling comfortable assessing peers, which had fewer negative attitudes than those expressed in Ryan et al.'s (2007) study. They reported that even though students expressed feeling unconfident in their ability to assess and uncomfortable assessing due to how unqualified and unfit they stated they were, these concerns were less expressed by students who had previous experience using PA. Cheng and Warren (2005) believed that training students and having them experience PA more enhances their self-confidence and comfortability.

Teachers must be able to understand these issues. This is due to the fact that what students experience directly feeds into their beliefs and attitudes about the value of this mode of assessment (Rotsaert et al., 2018). To increase the quality of feedback and reduce the effect of a number of intrapersonal issues, firstly, training on how to provide accurate grades and feedback techniques is key to the reduction of negative feelings or beliefs about one's own ability to give and/or receive judgment (Topping, 2017; 2018; Zundert et al., 2010). Secondly, involving the students in the process of deciding their rubric criteria helps them gain a sense of ownership as well as familiarity, hence reducing favouritism (Cheng & Warren, 2005; Falchicov & Goldfinch, 2000; Van Zundert et al., 2010). Lastly, anonymity is an effective method of scaffolding PA,

which reduces favouritism and biases and increases genuineness of judgment (Cheng & Warren, 1997; Rotsaert et al., 2018).

2.5.3. Time and Resource Concerns

Even though there are studies that claim PA can be time-saving for teachers (Boud & Holmes, 1995), many other studies disclose otherwise (Falchikov, 1986; Nortcliffe, 2012). PA can be time-consuming. This is especially the case when it is used for high-stakes summative assessments, or when the teachers implementing PA are inexperienced with this form of assessment. It is the training and unexpected problems and concerns that arise, as well as the attempts to simplify the steps for the students, that require hefty amounts of time and, consequently, resources (Adachi et al., 2017). Kennedy (2006) doubted the effectiveness of PA. In his study investigating the validity of PA as well as its impact on the objectives of a course at an Australian university, he found that the procedure took a long time to be implemented, added to the workload of the teachers, and caused issues of doubt and distrust between students. He concluded that the impracticality of PA procedures rendered the assessment less worthy of being implemented.

However, there is plenty of evidence to vouch for the merits of this form of assessment when implemented successfully (see 2.3.1). Compared to the beneficial outcome of this process, it is time well spent (Topping, 2017).

In conclusion, negative implications of PA such as reliability, self-confidence, comfortability, time consumption, and assessee biases were all correlated throughout the literature with students, and sometimes teachers, lacking training and experience using PA. Wen and Tsai (2006) conducted a study investigating the attitudes and perceptions of 280 Taiwanese university

students. In their study, most students neither agreed nor disagreed or mainly agreed with survey items covering negative aspects of PA (referred to as NAS). For example, most students felt neutral towards a survey item asking about whether PA is time-consuming. They correlated these responses to students not having sufficient experience, explaining that "students who had used PA before had lower scores in NAS than those who had never tried," which showed that students who previously underwent PA expressed more positive attitudes towards it than those who lacked experience (Wen & Tsai, 2006, p. 14).

2.6. Assessment Peer Feedback

The present part discusses the role of feedback in PA as the concepts and components of feedback in general and peer feedback in particular are explained. Finally, a feedback method that was used in the study is described.

2.6.1. Feedback

In general, feedback is an outcome of performance resulting from previous instruction. That is, it is "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, or experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding." (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 81). However, Henderson et al. (2019) argued that such a definition, and many other similar definitions, tend to be insufficient as they only regard feedback as a transaction between the 'agent' and the student without much regard to its impact on learning or the fact that feedback is a continuous process that should not end once a student's work is handed back to them. They instead suggest that feedback consists of "processes where the learner makes sense of performance-relevant information to promote their learning." (Henderson et al., 2019, p. 17). What makes this definition more comprehensive, in the researcher's opinion, is that it exceeds

the concept of feedback as information about the weaknesses and strengths provided by the teacher and acknowledges that a) feedback is a process or processes; b) feedback is not always one-way "provided" information; c) it is inclusive of students' active role; and d) the impact on learning is directly linked to feedback.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) identified three questions that constitute the essence of well-formulated feedback. The first question was "*Where am I going?*" or feed up (Rotsaert et al., 2017 b). That means feedback is constructive when the criteria for achieving the learning goal are transparent. As for the second question, "*How am I going?*" or feedback (Rotsaert et al., 2017 b), feedback is considered constructive when both teachers and students recognise the role of feedback, resulting in seeking it and using it to achieve that goal. The final question was "*Where to next?*" or feed-forward (Rotsaert et al., 2017 b). This means feedback is improved when it is close to or ahead of where the task's cognitive nature is focused (Hattie & Gan, 2011), i.e., when it provides activities or information on how to improve.

2.6.2. Peer Feedback

As a result of the pedagogical shift from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness, feedback should make a similar shift as well. Feedback should shift from only focusing on the quality of teacher feedback and instruction to the quality of feedback as a process and whether it prompts students' learning and involvement (Boud, 2015; Rotsaert et al., 2017 b; Henderson et al., 2019). Peer feedback, also known as peer review (Carless & Boud, 2018), refers to "an arrangement whereby students evaluate and make judgments about the work of their peers" (Nicol et al., 2013, p. 3).

Even though teacher observations and feedback have an essential role in learning, relying solely on them has numerous issues. First of all, expecting instructors to deliver more and more feedback to large groups of students is both unproductive and unrealistic (Carles & Boud, 2018). Another issue is that teacher feedback is often reported to generate misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and confusion (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Henderson et al., 2019). Lastly, the lack of student involvement makes teachers question whether feedback is worth their time and effort (Henderson et al., 2019).

Peer feedback, on the other hand, garnered satisfactory results across the literature. First, it is more readily and generously available than the teacher's (Topping 2017, 2018). Also, it has more successful outcomes than the teacher's, as it was found to be better accepted and efficiently comprehended by students (Rotsaert et al., 2017a, 2017b). Another benefit is that it is well perceived among students (Rotsaert et al., 2017a). Finally, peer feedback often, when carried out properly, promotes discussion and self-regulation due to the elements of negotiation and seeking clarification (Kuyogsuy, 2019). Therefore, both teacher and peer feedback should be utilised in unison.

Because peer feedback is a stage of the PA cycle (see 2.4.2. and 2.4.5.), the concerns regarding peer feedback are similar to those discussed previously in peer assessment (see 2.3.2.), such as students not understanding the criteria.

2.6.3. A Feedback Method

Positive and negative feedback have different effects on the recipient. Positive feedback is reported to be well received as it generates feelings of comfort and enthusiasm, whereas negative feedback is said to generate feelings of distress and dejection (Jacobs, 1974). However, positive

feedback that precedes negative feedback helps make the undesirable feedback more accepted (Jacobs, 1974). Therefore, the affective impact of feedback has to be addressed (Carless & Boud, 2018). Furthermore, factors such as the manner in which feedback is conveyed (e.g., written, face-to-face, or anonymous) and creating a positive atmosphere that encourages discussion and inquiry (Carless, 2013) can all help students accept the feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018).

The 'Feedback Sandwich' method was used in this study to train students on how to give feedback effectively. In a five-year study of students' perceptions of formative peer and self-assessment, Nortcliffe (2012) suggested that formative peer assessment components can be made more impactful if a 'Feedback Sandwich' method is used. 'Feedback Sandwich' or 'Sandwich Feedback' "consists of one specific criticism 'sandwiched' between two specific praises" (Dohrenwend, 2002). In other words, it provides a helpful framework through which students can round up their comments about what they believe are the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' performances (Nortcliffe, 2012).

One aspect of Nortcliffe's (2012) assessment was a group presentation. Thus, the peer feedback employed for the assessment required students to provide one positive comment about their classmates' performances, followed by two negative criticisms, and then another positive comment. The findings related to this method indicated that students appreciated peer feedback more than the teacher's as it provided comments on students' performance in group presentations, and Nortcliffe (2012) concluded that peer feedback was valid and reliable.

Some of the perceived benefits of this method in formative peer assessment are: the feedback highlights key aspects of strengths and weaknesses of presentation performances; and the

immediacy of feedback reception makes it "relevant and fresh," thus allowing the opportunity for students to act upon feedback during the course.

2.7. Oral Presentation Skills

PA was found to be effective with oral presentations in literature. Several studies vouched for the reliability and validity of students' assessments of presentation skills (Peng, 2009; Grez et al., 2010; Ahangari, 2013). Ahangari (2013) further emphasised that the more students understood and had more experience with the assessment criteria, the higher the quality of both the assessment (which became similar to the teacher's) and the feedback received.

An oral presentation is a form of extensive speaking that requires long stretches of discourse (Brown, 2018). It is "a talk or speech given by a presenter (sometimes more than one) to an audience of two or more people." (Levin & Topping, 2006, p. 4).

2.7.1. Components of Oral Presentations

Merely standing in front of an audience and delivering information or ideas is not enough for an effective presentation. The success of an oral presentation relies on many skills, mainly on the presenter's awareness of the audience as well as conveying the message using both verbal and non-verbal communication (e.g., eye contact and body language) (Ivkovi, 2014). Presentation skills are divided into two sections: content components and delivery.

2.7.1.1. Content Components

Dividing the presentation into meaningful parts makes it easier for the audience to understand it (Platow, 2002). Based on Storz et al.'s (2013) oral presentation skills guideline, a typical oral presentation consists of three components: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

2.7.1.1.1. The Introduction

It is the most significant part of a presentation, as the presenter forms a rapport with the audience. The introduction typically starts with greeting the audience. Then, the presenter has to think of ways to get the audience's attention. There are many ways to intrigue the audience's interest in the topic of a presentation; for instance, using a rhetorical question to engage the audience; using an anecdote; stating an interesting fact; telling a joke; disagreeing with some information; making an outlandish statement to provoke a reaction; or beginning with the conclusion and then asking about what led to it (Levin & Topping, 2006; Storz et al., 2013). Next, the presenter introduces themselves, unless the presenter has been introduced by a host when the presenter is invited to participate. After that, the presenter states the title and provides a general idea or definition of the topic to introduce the subject, followed by stating the objectives of the presentation to help make it memorable. An outline, which consists of some simple points that can be the subheadings of the presentation topic, should be stated. Finally, questions may arise during or after a presentation, so it is useful to inform the audience upfront.

2.7.1.1.2. The Body

It is the part that follows the introduction in which the presenter provides information, such as details or examples, to support the topic. What the presenter needs to consider in this part is, first, *the content* by deciding which information to include and whether it is relevant to the topic and objectives of the presentation. Then, the presenter also decides the amount of information to be included to cover the topic and whether examples, facts, or graphs are required. Furthermore, the presenter plans the sequence in which the information or ideas will be presented, for instance, in a chronological order, a logical order, from general to specific, or cause and effect. To make

the sequencing prominent and effective, appropriate signposting or 'signalling expressions' (e.g., first of all, second, third, furthermore, because the most important point is... and so on) must be utilised properly. Finally, the presenter has to create ways (such as using attractive visuals) to maintain the audience's interest and attention from the beginning of the presentation, throughout, and until the end.

2.7.1.1.3. The Conclusion

It is the final part of the presentation. It consists of four sections. The first one is *the summary*. There are many ways to summarise what was included in the presentation. Some of the ways this could be achieved are by briefly restating the purpose of the presentation and the main points covered, leaving the audience with a final message to remember, or utilising quotes to retain information. The second part is *the conclusion*. The presenter should then provide a sensible conclusion deduced from all that was covered in the body. The conclusion can be a recommendation, a comment, a lesson to be learned, or a call to action. Following the conclusion, the presenter should *thank the audience and then ask for questions, comments, or incite a discussion*.

2.7.1.2. Delivery: Nonverbal Communication

In order for a face-to-face spoken message to be conveyed, both verbal and nonverbal communication are used. Human communication consists of three main components: words, tone and voice, and body language (Bowden, 2010). Words are referred to as verbal communication," and they constitute 7 percent of the 'feeling, attitude, and intent' of the speaker's message (Bowden, 2010). On the other hand, tone of voice and body language are referred to as nonverbal communication," and they constitute 93 percent of the speaker's message (Bowden, 2010).

Therefore, the effectiveness of an oral presentation relies strongly on nonverbal communication and not only on verbal communication.

2.7.2.2.1. Body Language

As mentioned earlier, body language is a form of nonverbal communication that constitutes 55 percent of the message being communicated. Hence, listeners tend to trust and form their impressions based more on body language and tone of voice than the words spoken (Bowden, 2010). Body language includes gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, posture, and movement (Storz et al., 2013).

2.7.2.2.2. Tone of Voice

The tone of voice is paralanguage (the vocal non-verbal elements of language) (Nikitina, 2011), which constitutes 38 percent of what the communicator wants to communicate orally. Nikitina (2011) listed the elements of tone of voice as *pace* or the speed at which the presenter speaks. The pace of speech should not be steady (fast or slow), but rather varied. That is, the presenter should mix between speaking fast and speaking slowly. Another element is *pitch*, which is "a placement of voice on the musical scale ranging from high to low" (Nikitina, 2011, p. 25). Nikitina (2011) recommends that a variation of pitch is an easy way to keep the speech interesting and more colourful, emphasise particular words or phrases, and show confidence. Moreover, *volume* is another component of the tone of voice. It refers to the level of loudness of a voice (Nikitina, 2011). Keeping the volume level at a moderate level is recommended in a presentation. Purposely altering voice loudness, though, can be used to convey certain meanings. The final component of tone is *enunciating* or clearly pronouncing speech, though only to create emphasis.

2.8. Attitudes

It is normal for students to have attitudes towards the learning process that can influence the process as well as be influenced by it. An attitude refers to "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Furthermore, such an evaluative tendency can influence or be influenced by beliefs, actions, and how one feels towards an object (Albarracín et al., 2005).

In an attempt to comprehend the motivation behind certain attitudes, Katz (1960) suggested four psychological functions that attitudes meet:

1. *Instrumental (adjustive or utilitarian) function.* Attitudes help with the achievement of an individual's goal and the minimization of penalties.
2. *Ego-defensive function.* Attitudes help the individual shield themselves from facing basic truths about themselves or hard realities in their environment. This function stems from the psychoanalytic principles related to the preservation or enhancement of self-esteem (Albarracín et al., 2005).
3. *Value-expressive function.* Individuals obtain satisfaction from expressing attitudes that are consistent with their particular values and self-concept.
4. *Knowledge function.* Attitudes help to create a structured and purposeful environment. This function propounds that by offering a schema with which current and new information are integrated, attitudes help manage and simplify information processing (Albarracín et al., 2005).

To sum up, there are many reasons why people may hold particular evaluative tendencies, or attitudes, about whether an object is favourable or not. However, attitudes are psychological rather than coincidences induced by environmental events and situations (Katz, 1960).

2.8.1. Components of attitudes

In order to understand attitudes and be able to investigate them in this study, an understanding of their components had to be established. An attitude derives an evaluative summary of information from affect, cognition, and behaviour (Hewstone et al., 2012). These 3 phenomena are fundamental to the formation and transformation of attitudes, and conversely, attitudes influence affect, cognition, and behaviours (Albarracín et al., 2005).

2.8.1.1 Affect

Affect is defined as the favourable or unfavourable feelings one has towards an entity, which are described as consisting of particular emotional states, general evaluative approval and disapproval, or the assignment of positive or negative characteristics (Katz & Stotland, 1959; Albarracín et al., 2005). Social psychology identifies three prominent manners that influence attitude (Albarracín et al., 2005). These are:

1. *Evaluative conditioning – also referred to as operant conditioning (Albarracín et al., 2005).* Evaluative conditioning alters "the liking for a stimulus by repeatedly pairing it with another more polarised positive or negative stimulus." (Hewstone et al., 2012, p. 178). That is, attitudinal responses paired with positive stimuli have higher chances of recurring than those paired with negative stimuli (Albarracín, et al., 2005).

2. *Classical conditioning*. The affect linked with an object becomes connected with some attitude object after frequent pairings of that attitude object with other obviously positive or negative objects (Hogg & Cooper, 2003).
3. *Mere exposure*. Numerous studies have found that affective reactions precede conscious reasoning in the formation of attitudes (Monahan et al., 2000). Frequent exposure to an object makes it more likeable as a result (Hewstone et al., 2012). Moreover, recent research reported that frequent exposure can generate positive responses that can be transferred to new objects akin to older ones (Hewstone et al., 2012).

2.8.1.2. Cognition

Cognition is "the beliefs, thoughts, and attributes we associate with a particular object." (Hewstone et al., 2012, p. 178). It is often reported that a person's attitude may be largely formed on the basis of the positive and negative sides of the attitude entity (Albarracín et al., 2005).

2.8.1.3. Behaviour

Finally, behaviour "refers to behaviours we have performed (or might perform in the future) with respect to an attitude object" (Hewstone et al., 2012, p. 178). Behaviour influences attitudes in numerous ways. Therefore, several theories explain how manner behaviours can infer attitudes. Those are:

1. The self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), which assumes that when individuals are unsure of their attitude (due to the attitude's weakness or ambiguity) towards an object, they use their previous behaviour towards the object as a source to deduce their attitudes (Hogg &

Cooper, 2003), such as "when an intrinsically rewarding behaviour comes to be associated with external rewards" (Hogg & Cooper, 2003, p. 108).

2. As for strongly held attitudes, behaviours can affect them as well. People can alter their presumably strongly held attitudes to be consistent with their previous behaviours (Festinger, 1954). Such counter-attitudinal behaviour results in cognitive dissonance (Hewstone et al., 2012).
3. Cognitive dissonance refers to "a discomfort caused by holding conflicting elements of knowledge" (Perlovsky, 2013, p. 1). This conflict between the individual's attitude and behaviour prompts them to decrease the dissonance. To achieve that, one alters their attitude to match their behaviour or actions towards the object (Hewstone et al., 2012).
4. Behaviours can impact attitudes directly. Performing a behaviour that reflects evaluative qualities or meanings affects the favourability of an attitude (Hewstone et al., 2012). That is, reenacting a positive or negative action, such as nodding or shaking the head, is more likely to infer a favourable or unfavourable attitude, agreement or disagreement, for instance (see Brinol & Petty's (2003) experiments on the effect of overt head movement on attitude change).

2.8.2. Influence of Attitude on Behaviour

Throughout the literature related to attitudes and behaviour, the question of whether attitudes influence and can be predictors of behaviour is still under investigation (Albarracín et al., 2005). However, what research was able to conclude was that attitudes and overt behaviour are not directly connected on a one-to-one basis (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014). That is, the consistency, or lack of consistency, between having an attitude and taking action is conditioned. Attitude

consistency with overt behaviour occurs during attitude formation (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014). According to Hogg and Vaughan (2014, p. 168), formed attitudes correspond strongly with future behaviours when the attitudes are accessible (easy to recall) and stable over time, when individuals have had direct experience with the attitude object, and when individuals frequently report their attitudes.

2.8.3. Attitude Accessibility

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1998), accessible attitudes are ones that are quicker to convey because they are easier to recall from memory. Due to their accessibility, they can strongly affect behaviour, have greater correspondence between attitude and behaviour, and are more stable (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014).

2.8.4. Attitude, Strength, and Direct Experience

Strong attitudes are far more accessible or memorable than weaker attitudes (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014). Due to the accessibility of strong attitudes, they can be automatically activated. Automatic activation phenomena refer to the "presentation of an attitude object that has been shown to automatically activate from memory the evaluation that an individual associates with the object" (Fazio, 2001, p. 115). Such attitudes impact behaviour more greatly and thus have stronger attitude-behaviour consistency.

Additionally, attitudes are more accessible and have a stronger impact on behaviour if they are formed through direct experience with an object.

2.8.5. Moderator Variables

Even though attitude, in general, can be an indicator of behaviour predictability, moderator variables can be even stronger predictors. A moderator variable is "a variable that qualifies an otherwise simple hypothesis with a view to improving its predictive power (e.g., A causes B, but only when C (the moderator) is present)." (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014, p. 134). For instance, a favourable attitude causes a behaviour, but only when a certain moderator (e.g., social norms) occurs. Literature in social psychology has two main distinctions of variables that can be moderators of attitude-behaviour correspondence: situational and individual differences variables.

2.8.5.1. Situational Variables

Context, or situation, can be a moderator of attitude-behaviour correspondence. That is, the individual's attitudes and the behaviour they display can be inconsistent due to the context or situation in which they are (Calder & Ross, 1973). Weak attitudes are more affected by context, whereas stronger attitudes are less affected. This tends to be the case where social norms—"public, external pressures representing the cumulative expectations of others" (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014, p. 135)—that are contextually identifiable strongly impact individuals' underlying attitudes.

2.8.5.2. Individual Differences

Individual differences include personality differences that impact social behaviour. Vaughan (1977) argued that individuals exhibiting consistent personality scale responses were more likely to exhibit consistency in their behaviour than individuals who provided variable (or mid-range scorers) responses. Thus indicating that personality or individual differences are reliable moderators. Hogg & Vaughan (2014) identified behavioural habits, moods, cognitive biases, and

self-identity as variables of individual differences that are likely to predict attitude-behaviour consistency or inconsistency.

Even though research has mixed reviews of how *habits* can predict the degree of correspondence between attitude and behaviour (see Verplanken & Aarts's (1999) review of 'habit' and Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen's (1992) theory of planned behaviour), 'habits' can be indicators of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Ajzen & Fishbein (2000) suggested that formed attitudes and intentions are likely to be automatically activated, thus unconsciously guiding behaviour.

Another variable that can be regarded as both a situational and a personality moderator is *mood*. In the context of persuasion, mood is referred to as 'affect' (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014). The need for affect for message persuasion refers to "the general motivation of people to approach or avoid situations and activities that are emotion-inducing for themselves and others." (Haddock et al., 2008, p. 2). Affect-based attitudes encompass the notion that feelings can influence judgment and behaviour; thus, affective individuals require affective information to form their attitudes (Haddock et al., 2008, p. 2).

Whereas some people's attitudes are based on how they feel towards a particular object, others base their attitudes on their beliefs or cognition (Hewstone et al., 2012). That is, in order for a message to be persuasive, its content has to match the individual's need for either affect or cognition. Thus, *cognitive biases* can also serve as moderators of attitude-behaviour correlation (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014). The need for cognition arises when the individual tends to participate in demanding cognitive activities (Haddock et al., 2008). Cognitive-based attitudes require

factual information and belief-oriented messages to influence judgment and behaviour; thus, cognitive individuals require cognitive information to form their attitudes (Haddock et al., 2008).

Finally, *self-identity*, or how individuals identify themselves based on their role in society (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014), can also be an indicator of the correlation between people's attitudes and their actions.

2.8.6. Measuring attitudes

Because attitudes are not easily observed, social psychologists had to develop different ways to measure them. Hewstone et al. (2012) categorise attitudes into explicit and implicit on the basis of how they are measured.

Explicit measures necessitate respondents consciously reflecting on their attitudes towards the object, as "people are simply asked to agree or disagree with various statements about their beliefs." (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014, p. 178). Thus, explicit measures of attitude often make use of attitude scales where self-report questionnaires are utilised, such as the Likert scale, the semantic differences scale, the acquiescent response set, unidimensionality, and the Guttman scale, to elicit individuals' opinions and feelings towards an entity (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014).

Implicit measures of attitude do not require participants to consciously reflect on their opinions or feelings or verbally report them. Rather, they rely on methods assessing natural evaluative correlations in an object indirectly, such as evaluative priming and association tests (Hewstone et al., 2012).

2.9. Conclusion

PA is an alternative assessment that, when applied correctly, results in many benefits. PA was found to make learning more successful, develop soft skills, and promote learner autonomy. However, such a type of assessment comes with limitations, including being unreliable and invalid at times, issues related to intrapersonal relations, and consuming a considerable amount of time. The researcher thinks that these limitations are preventable if the teachers intending to use PA pay attention and are aware of them. In order for PA to successfully impact oral presentation skills, students have to have positive attitudes towards it. Numerous studies revealed that students held favourable attitudes towards PA when used to evaluate oral presentation skills, as they expressed attitudes such as liking giving and receiving PA, enjoying participating in discussions about peers' performances, working hard when PA is involved, and so on. Finally, in order to investigate students' attitudes, a deep understanding of the components of attitudes and how they correlate with each other was established in this chapter. To conclude, the researcher believes that PA is a highly effective assessment that requires time and patience in order to bear fruit. The fact that it requires such time and effort to apply is what makes it successful, as it slowly yet fully immerses students from beginning to end, changing their position from bystanders of their education to active members who are aware of what they need in order to improve. However, unless students have favourable attitudes towards PA and all its processes, this impact will not occur.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the research methodology applied in this study. It explains the research design, data collection and analysis instruments, and procedures used. It also provides information about the participants and the sampling methods adopted. Finally, this chapter describes how ethical issues are considered.

3.1 Research Design

Procedural plans and processes that the researcher employs for conducting research are known as research designs, and they range from general assumptions to specific approaches and strategies for collecting and analysing data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Such plans are used "to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately, and economically." (Kumar, 2011). To explore the attitudes of PTQI students towards PA of oral presentation skills, a mixed-methods research design was used. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 14) defined mixed methods research as a "research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process." They added that a mixed-methods design is characterised by the utilisation of

a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry in a study or several successive studies (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

Quantitative methods of inquiry serve as tools for verifying objective theory by inspecting the relationship between variables (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Using quantitative instruments, the variables are measured; thus, numerical data is analysed statistically (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Qualitative methods, on the other hand, serve as tools for comprehending, exploring, describing, discovering, and elaborating "feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences" of individuals or groups of people (Kumar, 2011, p. 103). Data collection instruments are emergent and are normally carried out in the participant's natural setting. Furthermore, data analysis instruments are inductively deduced from themes, from which the researcher then makes interpretations (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

The research design of this study was selected for a number of reasons. First, it provides a rounded or triangulated method of inquiry in such a way that qualitative or quantitative data collection and analysis compensate for the shortcomings of its counterpart (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This also entails gaining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative instruments and tools are gained. The second and most important reason for considering this form of research is that 'attitude' tends to be a "latent and unobservable" psychological disposition (Simonson & Maushak, 1996), making it intricate to research. Thus, the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods will allow for a more expanded and in-depth investigation that would not be possible using one method of inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Finally, because there is little information about the research topic, the mixed-methods research design, which is exploratory in essence (Kumar, 2011), was selected. In general, exploratory research is recommended to examine situations, groups, processes, or activities about which very little information is

available but the researcher believes they contain valuable constituents to be revealed (Stebbins, 2001; Kumar, 2011).

3.2. Sampling Methods

Choosing a small number of individuals (a sample) from a larger population (the sampling population) to assess and predict how generalisable a certain unrevealed information, situation, or outcome is concerning the larger population is referred to as the process of sampling (Kumar, 2011). Selecting the right method of sampling suitable for the research method and instruments contributes to the quality of the research (Cohen et al., 2007). Due to the researcher's limited access to the sampling population, non-probability sampling methods (non-probability sampling is when a certain group is targeted rather than a random sample from the sample population) were selected.

Two sampling methods were used in this research: convenience sampling and volunteer sampling. Convenience or opportunity sampling was used to select participants or students for the survey. As the name suggests, convenience is when, in the case of this research, "those who happen to be available and accessible at the time" are selected (Cohen et al., 2007, P. 113). That is, the researcher was the teacher, and the participants were her students. Given the statistical nature of the survey, the sample size is suitable as it exceeded 30, which is the minimum number of participants for quantitative instruments (Cohen et al., 2007). As for the semi-structured interview participants, volunteer sampling was used. According to Cohen et al. (2007), such a method is suitable when finding participants is challenging and this is the only way to access them. Hence, because it was difficult to meet students outside of class time for the interview,

following the survey, students were asked whether they would like to participate willingly in the interviews.

3.3. Participants in the Study

The participants were 37 adult students taking a three-month general English course in the PTQI. These students all had a pre-intermediate level of English efficiency on either the placement test some of them had to take or based on passing the previous level. They were divided into three classes, each containing between 12 and 14 students. Most of them were employees, engineers, and doctors working for petroleum companies. They were of mixed genders, males and females.

In the survey, all 37 students participated. In the semi-structured interview, however, eleven students volunteered and were asked to provide their contact information. From the eleven students, the researcher was able to contact seven of them. Two of them participated in the piloting of the semi-structured interview, while the other five participated in the actual one.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this study to answer the research questions (see 1.4). A survey was conducted to obtain the quantitative data, while semi-structured interviews were employed to get the qualitative data.

3.4.1. Survey

The survey was selected as a means of extracting quantitative data. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) defined a survey as a list of questions that "provides a quantitative or numeric description of trend, attitudes, or opinion of a population by studying a sample of that population," and based on the results, assumptions and generalisations about the population are made (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018, P. 146). According to Cohen et al. (2007), surveys can be exploratory in situations where connections and patterns are explored.

The survey was found suitable for several reasons. One reason is its feasibility, flexibility, and inclusion of "measures" of many variables in one place (Spector, 2013). In addition to that, it provided an objective scope of students' attitudes using a limited sample of the population. It also used key variables and manipulations to determine frequencies (Cohen et al., 2007). Even though the survey was selected for its many benefits, one major disadvantage that should be noted is how its level of in-depth detail or interpretive capacity of data is constrained as it is lost to broad generalisations that lack context (Cohen et al., 2007); hence, a semi-structured interview was used to compensate for that. Surveys can be conducted in the form of a questionnaire or an interview (Spector, 2013). This survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire.

Attitudes are not inherently quantitative. Thus, for such a concept, numeric values or measures had to be created to measure it (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). According to VanderStoep & Johnston (2009, p. 59), "the measure must be truthful—it must accurately reflect the construct." The measures assigned for this study reflected positive and negative attitudes that students had towards PA.

The survey was administered in written format using paper and a pen. It consisted of a short introduction and the survey items, or questions. In the introduction, the participants were greeted

and introduced to the researcher, the research topic, the terms of the participants' confidentiality, and the survey instructions. As for the survey items, the survey consisted of 14 items. Closed questions, or close-ended questions, which are questions with a number of assigned answers from which respondents select the most suitable answer for them (Kumar, 2011), were employed. Two subscales were assigned to measure both positive and negative attitudes towards PA. Items 1 to 11 covered positive attitudes, whereas items 12 to 14 covered negative attitudes. The survey items were either adapted from pre-existing surveys about a similar topic, or they were constructed based on positive and negative points of different areas of PA that were found in the literature (e.g., the assessment, the feedback, students as assessors and as assessees, and time allocated). The sources from which the survey questions were developed are:

- Question 1 (Fazel, 2015; Peng, 2009; Wen & Tsai, 2006; Cheng & Warren, 2005)
- Question 2 (Yin et al., 2022; Fazel, 2015; Peng, 2009; Wen & Tsai, 2006; Cheng & Warren, 2005)
- Questions 3 and 4 (Reinholz, 2015; Fathi et al., 2019)
- Question 5 (Cheng & Warren, 2005)
- Question 6 and 7 (Manalu, 2016)
- Question 8 (Mutwarasibo, 2016)
- Question 9 (Manalu, 2016)
- Question 10 (Manalu, 2016; Wen & Tsai, 2006)
- Question 11 (Fazel, 2015)
- Question 13 (Wen & Tsai, 2006)
- Questions 12 (Cheng and Warren, 2005)
- Question 14 (Mutwarasibo, 2016)

After the researcher developed the questions, they were reviewed by the supervisor.

To respond to the survey items, a Likert scale was employed. A Likert scale, also known as an ordered or scalar response category, is a measuring tool in which arranged responses are provided for each survey item in a particular order so that participants "select a response that conveys some order of magnitude among the possible choices." (Cowles & Nelson, 2019). Using a five-point scale, ordinal variables—data items that show differences in ranking or degrees between response alternatives (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009)—were measured, and quantitative data was collected. The response alternatives ranged from ‘strongly disagree’, then ‘disagree’, ‘neutral’, ‘agree,’ and ‘strongly agree’ to measure the intensity of the participants’ attitudes towards each item in correlation with the other participants’ responses (see Appendix A). The ‘neutral’ option was added to avoid leading the participant into choosing either only a positive or a negative attitude when they might not have either attitude.

3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interview

Qualitative interviews are deliberate exchanges between the interviewer and the participant that have predetermined methods of inquiry and reciprocity, among other characteristics (Bhattacharya, 2017). They can be carried out face-to-face, by phone (Kumar, 2011), or by similar methods of audio or audio-visual forms of communication. Also, they can be conducted individually or within focus groups (Brinkmann, 2013).

There are many types of qualitative interviews, varying in flexibility between semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Brinkmann, 2013; Bhattacharya, 2017). Semi-structured interviews tend to be more planned than unstructured ones. Semi-structured interviews were utilised in this research to both triangulate the results of the survey and answer the second research question

(see 1.4). Such interviews are guided conversations that "involve the researcher preparing questions in advance with possible probes identified. The researcher usually sticks to the prepared protocol while making room for unexpected directions in the interview if they occur and are relevant to the study." (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Semi-structured interviews were selected for several reasons: they enabled the researcher to collect data about students' attitudes and issues they experienced in a more in-depth way; the questions were easily explained, thus leaving little room for misunderstandings; and most importantly, even though participants were allowed to express their opinions more freely, the structured aspect of this particular type of qualitative interviews allowed for comparisons to be made between participants' responses since the same theme and/or questions were used (Brinkmann, 2013; Kumar, 2011).

Even though interviews in general have several benefits, they also have some disadvantages that the researcher had to be aware of. These include: data collection and analysis can be time-consuming; interviews require a certain level of skill that the researcher has to have in order to extract useful data; and finally, they tend to be subjective due to the researcher's bias given that the questions are formed by the interviewer and interpreted by her as well (Kumar, 2011).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with each participant. Three main questions were asked, and based on the participants' answers, further questions were asked to gain an in-depth view of their attitudes towards PA, the problems they faced during PA, and what they wanted to change about it (see Appendix B).

3.4.3. Piloting the Instruments

A pilot or pilot trial is "a miniature version of the main trial, which aims to test aspects of the study design and processes for the implementation of a larger main trial in the future" (Bugge et al., 2013, p. 2). Thus, pilots of the survey and the semi-structured interview were conducted to test the time and feasibility of the instruments and whether there were any ambiguities with the instructions or the questions.

As for the survey, four students volunteered for the piloting. Their comments can be summarised as follows:

1. One student couldn't understand some vocabulary (reliance, bias, improvement, and criteria); however, the others expressed no such issue with the words, and since the words were not technical, they were not changed. Furthermore, a translation of the questions was offered during the survey.
2. Three of the students thought that number 6 (I enjoy the experience of being assessed) meant "*teacher assessment*"; thus, it was changed into "*I enjoy the experience of my peers' assessment of my oral presentations.*"
3. One student commented that a question inquiring whether students read the feedback they received should be added; however, questions numbers 3 and 4 covered the topic of whether the assessment (hence feedback) was found useful or not.

Other than these comments, students did not express any issues with the instructions or the technical terms, such as 'peer assessment' and 'evaluation,' or the design itself. In addition to that, they did not seem to face difficulties or lack interest in answering. Finally, students were asked to write the start time and end time on the paper; hence, the time required to complete the survey was calculated to be between 7 and 10 minutes.

To pilot the semi-structured interview, two students volunteered to participate. At first, five questions were constructed for the interview:

1. How do you perceive peer assessment?
2. What have you learned from peer assessment of oral presentations?
3. What problems did you face during PA?
4. To what extent do you trust your peer's assessment?
5. What would you like to see changed about PA?

However, following the pilot, it was found that participants answered Q2 as part of Q1 and Q4 as part of Q3; therefore, they were removed from the list only to be asked as follow-ups in case interviewees did not talk enough about them. Thus, the semi-structured interview was condensed into three questions (see Appendix B). Other than that, participants did not express any issues with understanding the questions or any technical vocabulary. The time required to complete the interview was calculated to be 6–7 minutes.

3.4.4. Reliability and Validity

To ensure the efficiency of the research, a number of procedures were taken to both increase and measure the reliability and validity of the research instruments.

3.4.4.1. Validity

Validity refers to whether an instrument measures what it is meant to measure (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). According to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 134), rather than focusing on designing perfectly valid instruments, the researcher should focus on "minimiz[ing] invalidity and

maximiz[ing] validity" because complete validity is unachievable in both quantitative and qualitative research instruments. Thus, a number of procedures to increase the face, content, and concurrent validity of the research were followed.

Face validity is when there is a logical connection between each item on the research instrument and the objectives of the research. On the other hand, the degree to which the items or actions accurately reflect the topic getting measured is referred to as content validity (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). One way to enhance face and content validity is by seeking a specialist's or a group of specialists' insight on the research instrument (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). Thus, the survey as well as the research title and research questions were, first, reviewed by the supervisor. Then, they were sent to four members of staff of the Libyan Academy for feedback about whether the survey items are suitable for the research objectives (face validity) and to what extent the research title and research questions are represented through the survey items (content validity).

Three of these staff members replied. The feedback mainly stated that the survey items reflected the purpose of the study. One professor suggested writing the full form of the PTQI in the introduction of the survey; however, during the pilot, the volunteers were asked whether they knew the institute's name, and they responded with the PTQI. When asked whether they knew what the full form of the abbreviation was, students said they did not know. Another member of staff suggested adding questions about students' fear of public speaking; however, the focus of the study was on measuring attitudes towards PA rather than merely oral presentations.

Finally, concurrent validity, which is a form of criterion-related validity (criterion validity states that an instrument is valid if its results can be related to exterior criteria, e.g., another result of

the same instrument with a time interval between the two results, or another instrument) (Cohen et al., 2007), is concerned with the establishment of a strong correlation between data obtained from one instrument and data obtained from another one. To increase this form of validity, triangulation—"the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (Cohen et al., 2007, P. 141)—was utilised. The results from the survey were triangulated with semi-structured interview questions. That is, the results from the survey showed that the participants generally had positive attitudes towards PA of oral presentations, which they later expressed during the interview.

3.4.4.2. Reliability

The degree to which a measure produces consistent results when applied to various situations, populations, or instrument versions indicates the reliability of the measure (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009; Kumar, 2011). There are numerous ways to assess the reliability of a measure in a certain instrument. According to Kumar (2011), these can be categorised into internal and external procedures. External assessments of consistency mainly employ the results of two separate processes of data collection in which the same measuring instrument is used, either administered under similar circumstances over two different times (as in test-retest assessment) or administered to two similar populations (as in parallel forms) (Kumar, 2011). As for internal assessments of consistency, they are administered once, and they are based on the concept that regardless of the number of items used in a tool, they should all yield consistent results as they are inspecting the same phenomena (Cohen et al., 2007; Kumar, 2011).

Due to feasibility issues, an external reliability assessment was not employed due to the limited time allocated (the researcher was not allowed to conduct the study within class time, and

volunteers only agreed to 15 minutes to carry out the pilot) and the limited number of volunteers for the pilot study. Internal assessment, however, was possible. In the pilot survey, Cronbach's alpha test was used to assess the reliability of the survey items. Cronbach's alpha is an inter-reliability assessment tool that "provides a coefficient of inter-item correlations, that is, the correlation of each item with the sum of all the other relevant items." (Cohen et al., 2007, P. 148) to carry out the pilot. Such a tool is often used for self-report items and is helpful for multi-item scales (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009; Cohen et al., 2007). Using Microsoft Excel, the coefficient alpha was calculated $\alpha = .99$, meaning the survey items showed high internal reliability. This is due to the fact that higher correlations between the test items are indicated by values that are nearer to 1.0 (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). This meant that due to the high alpha of the instrument, students who scored high on one question in the survey most likely scored high on other questions in the survey, and vice versa, those who scored low on one question most likely scored low on other questions.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In social research, the researcher must keep their participants and their information safe, ease the participants into trusting the researcher, improve the integrity of the research, protect it from being used wrongfully and harmfully influencing the image of their institution, and handle unexpected issues that may arise (Isreal & Hay, 2006). This represents the core of the ethical considerations that any researcher should be aware of. A lack of such considerations leads to increased insensitivity, which ultimately leads to the decline of support for social science research (Gibbs, 2001).

For this study, several procedures were taken to promote the ethicality of the research, maintain participants' safety, and gain their trust. First of all, a formal request was submitted to and approved by the PTQI administration. Secondly, participants were asked for their consent to partake in both the survey and the semi-structured interview, and they were assured that their decline would not affect them in any way. Thirdly, participants' anonymity was guaranteed, as they were informed in the introduction of the survey and before recording the interview that both their names and their information would be confidential. Also, and to further enhance their anonymity, students were instructed not to disclose any of their personal information on the survey paper or during the recording, and pseudonyms were used, such as student A, B, C, and D, to refer to the participants in the results and discussion chapters.

As for the integrity of the research, the researcher did not forge any of the data collected and analysed. The researcher also properly referenced any information used in the research using the APA standard format (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

This part explains the process that preceded data collection and the procedure for administering data collection instruments. First, students received training and carried out multiple peer-assessed presentations throughout the semester. The survey was distributed at the end of the course. After analysing the data from the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted.

3.6.1. Implementing Peer Assessment

During the first stage and throughout the semester, students received both training and several opportunities to be involved in the assessment of their peers' presentations. This was to help them gain sufficient experience by familiarising them with the rubric criteria of the assessment to enhance the reliability and validity of the assessment (Topping, 2017).

The semester was for three months (12 weeks). Students attended four classes per day for five days a week. The peer-assessed oral presentations were a requirement of the three sessions per week of speaking classes that the course included. Each speaking class was an hour long. Due to the fact that neither a midterm nor a final was a requirement in speaking classes, all the PAs conducted were formative, so the goal of the assessments was to provide feedback and direction for further oral presentation development.

3.6.1.1. Typology of Peer Assessment

Using Topping's (2018) typology, the following table summarises the different characteristics of the PA used for this research:

Variable	Variation
Type of assessment	Formative
Grading and feedback	Qualitative feedback and quantitative grading
Method of communicating the assessment	Anonymous via assessment sheet and non-anonymous conducted face-to-face

Participation	Assessors: in pairs or groups; assessees: individually or in pairs
Target area	Oral presentations
Number of products	Each presentation is assessed separately.
Rubric criteria	A rubric of criteria was used.
Student involvement	At first, students were not involved in setting rubric criteria, but later they were.
Scaffolding	Training and scaffolding were provided.
Level	Pre-intermediate
Objectives	1. To improve oral presentation skills; 2. to improve communication skills among students; 3. to empower students and promote learner autonomy; and 4. to encourage self-regulation.
Time	Class time over the course

Place	In class and in the lab room
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Table 2.1. Typology of PA

3.6.1.2. Cycle of Assessment

For the implementation of the assessment, Peng's (2009) cycle of assessment (see 2.4.4) was adapted. The cycle of assessment consisted of three stages: pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation.

Pre-implementation stage

In this stage, students received training on both assessment and oral presentation components. In the first weeks, they were gradually introduced to and had many opportunities to practise the different components of oral presentations (i.e., eye contact, introducing the topic, and grabbing attention). These components would then become the criteria for the PA. In other words, the assessment criteria were gradually introduced to the students.

To scaffold the process of giving feedback for the assessment, students were instructed to use the 'Sandwich Feedback' (see Appendix C; see 2.6.3). The feedback concentrated on the specific presentation aspects that were taught that week. By the end of the pre-implementation sessions, students were given Brown's (2018) rubric criteria for oral presentation, which consisted of a list of the criteria that they had been studying (see Appendix D). At this stage, students were not required to negotiate or select which of the criteria they wished to focus on, thus making the assessment a level 1 of learner involvement (see 2.4.3). Students watched and assessed two presentations in a video, one good and one bad, then compared and discussed their assessments

with the teacher's. This is to reduce the anxiety of using a new rubric and increase the reliability and validity of the assessment (Topping, 2017).

Implementation Stage

By week 7 of the course, students were ready to carry out oral presentations that were assessed by peers rather than the teacher alone. For the first presentation, students used the rubric criteria that were set by the teacher in groups, and the assessment was anonymous. Following the assessment, a discussion was carried out where the students negotiated which rubric criteria they wanted to be assessed with, thus achieving level 2 of learner involvement (see 2.4.3), which contributed to the validity and reliability of the evaluation. For the final assessment, students used the modified rubric criteria (see Appendix E).

Post Implementation

The post-implementation stage consisted of the survey and semi-structured interview, where data was collected to investigate students' attitudes and the challenges they faced.

3.6.2. Survey

At the end of the course, the survey designed to collect quantitative data was distributed. It was administered on paper to all students. The quantitative data helped gain general insight into students' attitudes towards PA of oral presentations. The administration of the survey was carried out between the 7th and the 11th of August, 2022.

3.6.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

During this stage, the interview questions were either developed using the data from the survey or constructed. The semi-structured interview questions aimed to both serve as a method to triangulate the survey results and to gain insight into the challenges that students faced during peer-assessed oral presentations. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, where three main questions were asked of the interviewees (see Appendix B); however, due to the flexibility of this type of interview, further questions emerged during the interview. The responses were recorded and later typed into a script. The interviews were carried out between October 10 and October 31, 2022.

3.7. Data Analysis Procedure

Because a mixed-methods approach was executed, both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Quantitative data from the survey was analysed using the frequency distribution method, in which a frequency chart was used to represent the data. "Frequency" refers to "a numerical summary of the number of cases and their relative frequencies." (Hanneman, Kposowa, & Riddle, 2012, p. 28). In other words, the frequency of the extent to which participants agreed or disagreed with the survey items was summarised numerically in the chart. 'Microsoft Excel,' a statistical software programme developed by Microsoft that uses spreadsheets to manage and analyse data, was used to present the data. This software was selected due to its feasibility as well as the researcher's lack of training in data management, which often increases the risk of data collection and recording errors (Elliott et al., 2006).

As for the qualitative data taken from the semi-structured interview, it was interpreted by means of the content analysis technique, which is "a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases."

(Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The reason for employing this method is to find and quantify themes that could solidify and expand upon students' attitudes expressed in the survey as well as common themes of the challenges that students experienced.

3.8. Conclusion

To summarise, a mixed-methods approach was used to investigate students' attitudes towards PA of oral presentation skills. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative tools were used to extract data. A survey was first given to 37 participants to collect quantitative data, whereas semi-structured interviews were conducted with five volunteer participants. Then, the quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel, while the qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. In the end, ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure the integrity of the research.

Chapter 4

Results

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the survey data and the content analysis of the data gathered from the semi-structured interview. Given that these two instruments were used to extract quantitative and qualitative information to answer the first research question (see 1.4). As for the second research question (see 1.4), the data elicited from the semi-structured interviews was analysed and is presented separately.

4.1. Survey Data Analysis

This section provides the results used to answer the first research question (see 1.4). In general, the data revealed that students expressed more positive attitudes towards this form of assessment than negative ones. However, this did not mean that students did not face any issues, as data from the semi-structured interview uncovered a number of PA aspects that students reported struggling with. As for the quantitative data of the survey, as mentioned in chapter 3 (see 3.7), frequency distribution was used to analyse and present students' responses using Microsoft Excel, and the recurrence of students' responses was demonstrated in a frequency chart to help make the results interpretable. Students' responses to the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' scales were grouped and presented as one, 'agree', because they both express approval of the statement, and the same was done to the 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' scales, as they were grouped and

presented as 'disagree,' since the two variations express disapproval. As for 'neutral', it remained the same. Regarding the qualitative data, it was used to provide further details of students' attitudes and experiences to support the findings from the survey.

4.1.1 Positive Attitudes

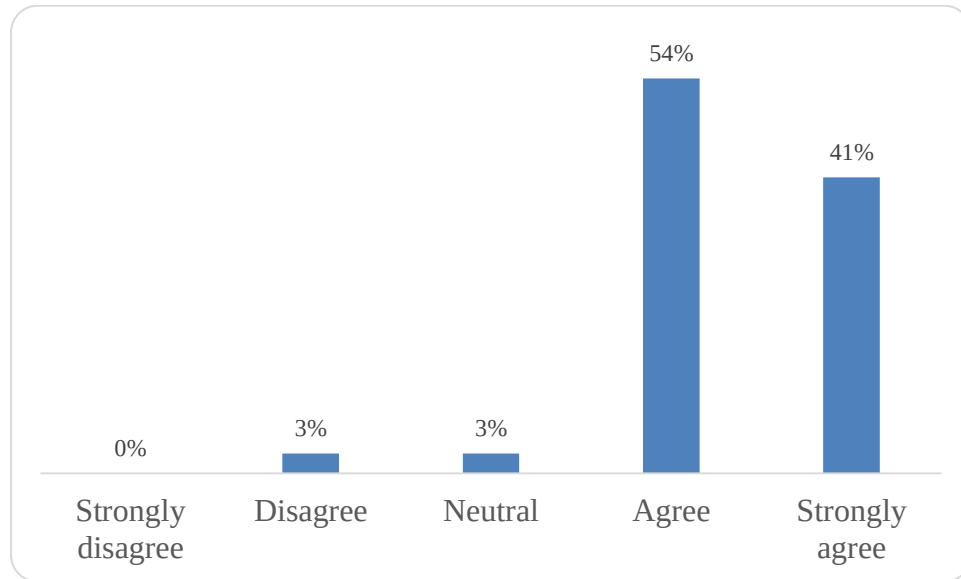


Figure 4.1: Peer assessment develops my oral presentation skills.

The first figure shows that the majority of the students, 95%, agreed that PA helped them improve their presentation skills, whereas only 3% disagreed and merely 3% had a neutral view. This indicates that students believed PA impacted their abilities positively.

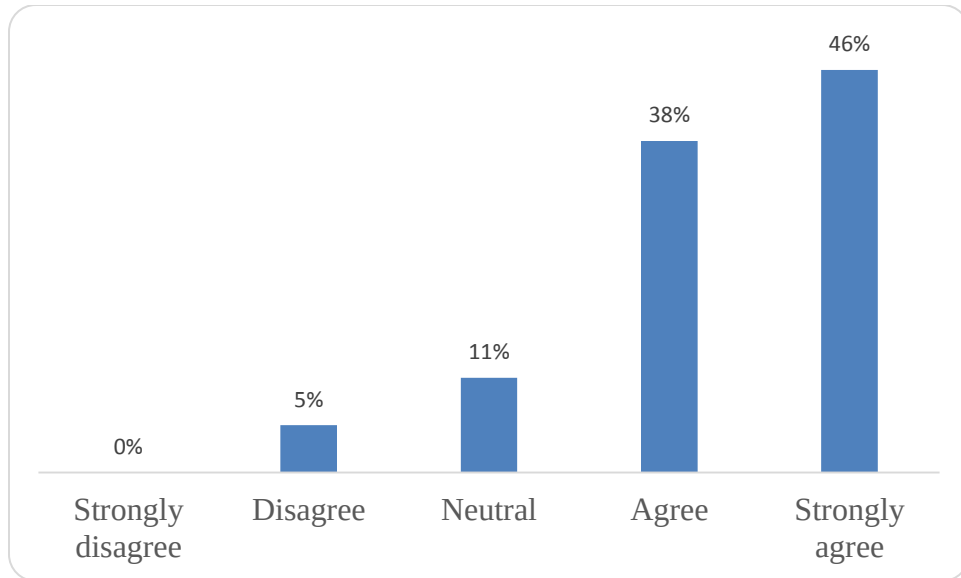


Figure 4.2: Peer assessment helps me understand presentation assessment criteria.

As for figure 4.2, 84% agreed that PA was helpful in making the criteria of oral presentations interpretable, 11% felt neutral towards that, and a mere 5% disagreed. This means that students thought that this form of assessment made the elements of the presentation criteria clear.

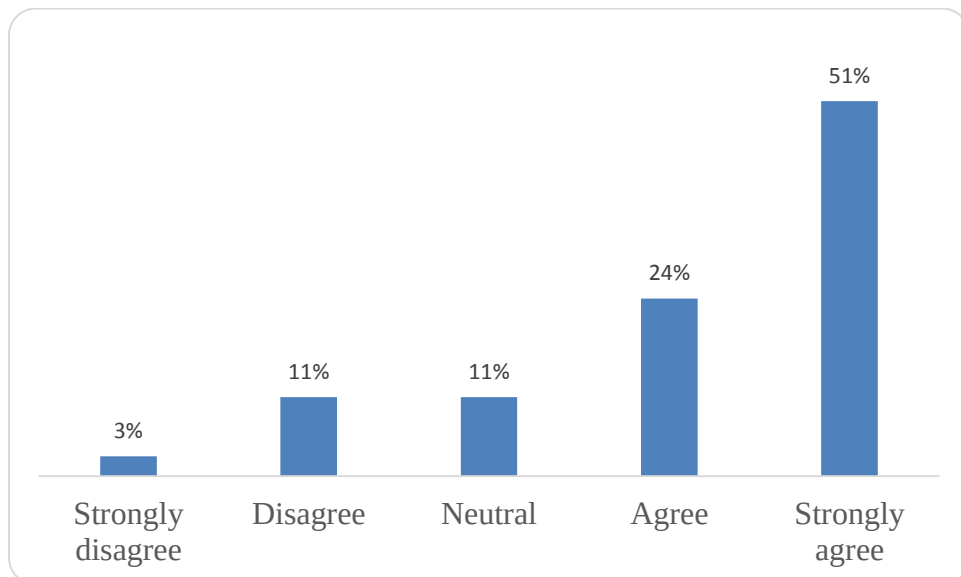


Figure 4.3: Assessment from peers helps me identify my presentation weaknesses.

While a large number of participants, 75%, agreed that PA helped them learn about their weaknesses in their presentation skills (Figure 4.3), 13% believed that PA did not effectively help them see their weaknesses. 11% of them neither agreed nor disagreed. Thus, students believed that the feedback they received from their classmates' assessments helped point out the deficiencies in their performances.

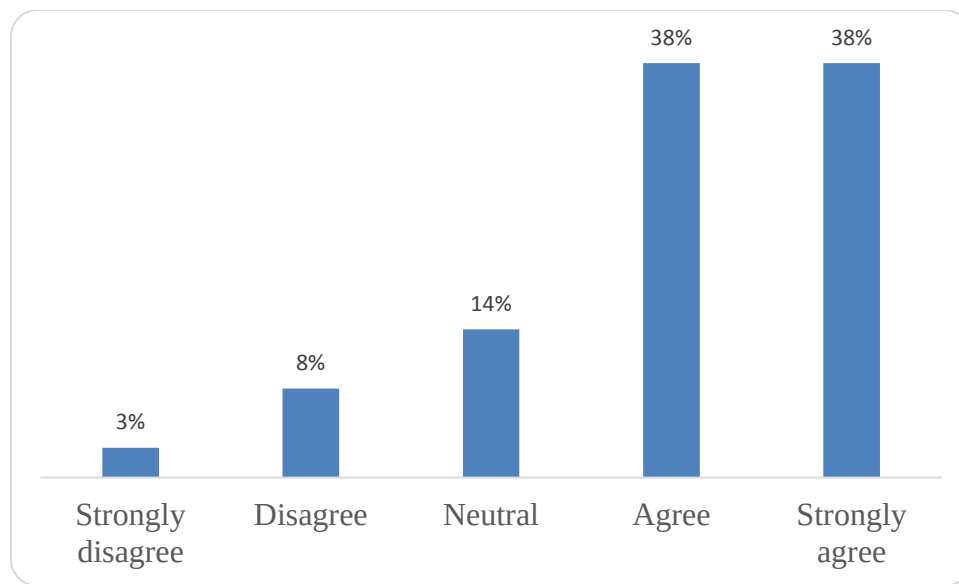


Figure 4.4: Assessment from peers helps me identify my presentation strengths.

Figure 4.4 illustrates how 76% of students agreed that PA enabled them to see strengths in their presentation skills. However, 14% felt neutral about this statement, whereas 11% disagreed. This indicates that students regarded PA as a helpful tool to recognise the merits of their performances.

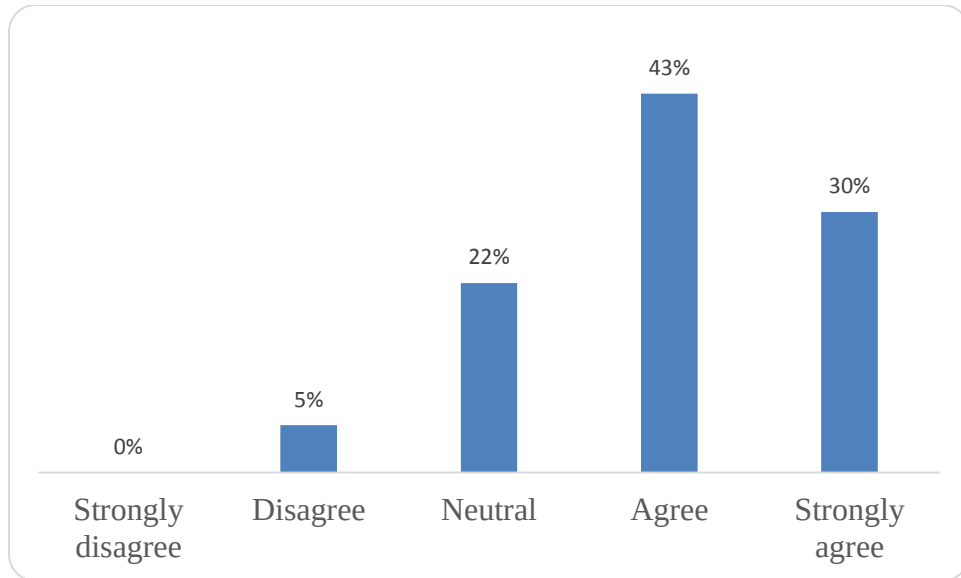


Figure 4.5: I am comfortable providing assessments to my peers.

In the case of whether students felt comfortable assessing their peers, it is clear in figure 4.5 that the majority of students, up to 73%, agreed. 22%, however, felt neutral towards this statement, whereas only 5% disagreed. This indicates that students did not feel nervous or uncomfortable assessing their peers.

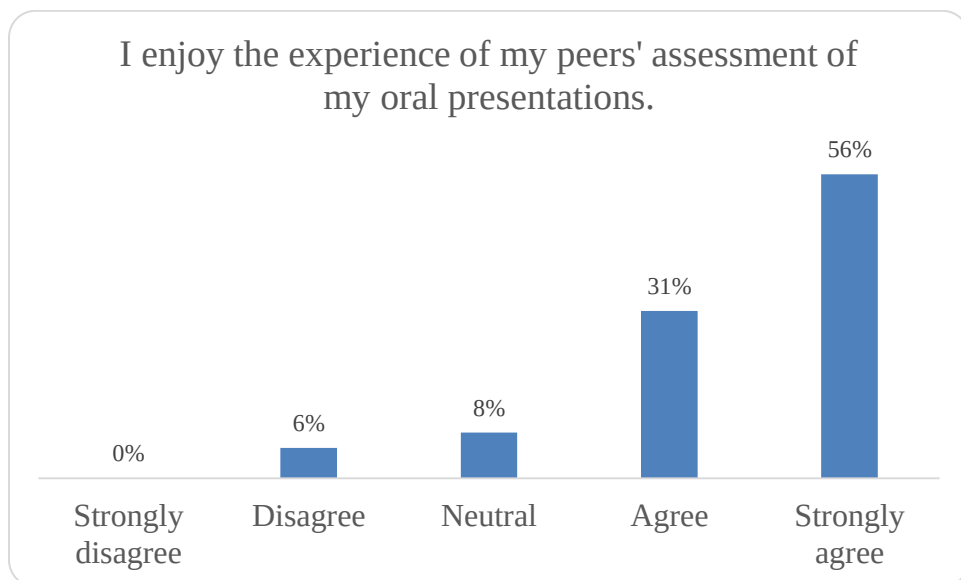


Figure 4.6: I enjoy the experience of my peers' assessment of my oral presentations.

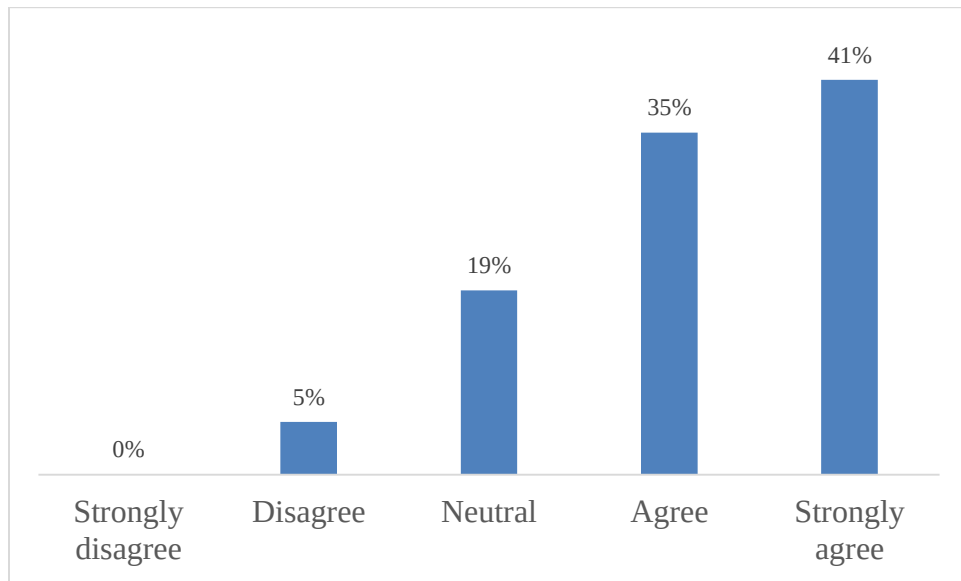


Figure 4.7: I enjoy the experience of assessing oral presentations.

In figures 4.6 and 4.7, 87% of students enjoyed receiving assessments from their peers, and 76% enjoyed the process of assessing their peers. 8% and 19%, respectively, neither agreed nor disagreed, and finally, a mere 6% in the former and 5% in the latter did not agree. This indicates that students held favourable feelings towards both assessing and being assessed.

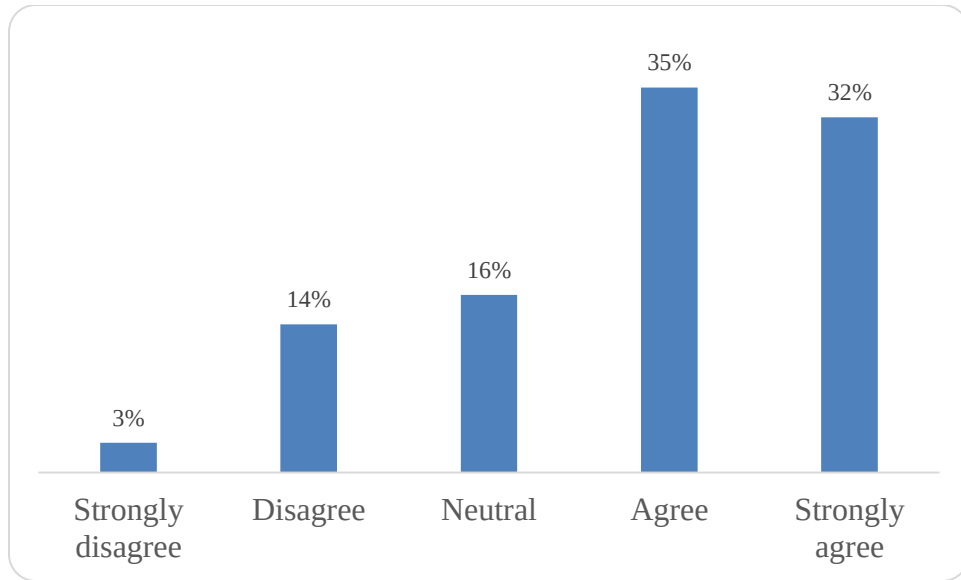


Figure 4.8: I am fair when I assess my peers' presentations.

As for figure 4.8, more than half of the students, 67%, agreed they were fair in assessing their peers' performances, whereas 16% were neutral, and merely 17% admitted not being fair in their assessments. This means that the majority of participants believed that their judgements of their classmates' performances were fair.

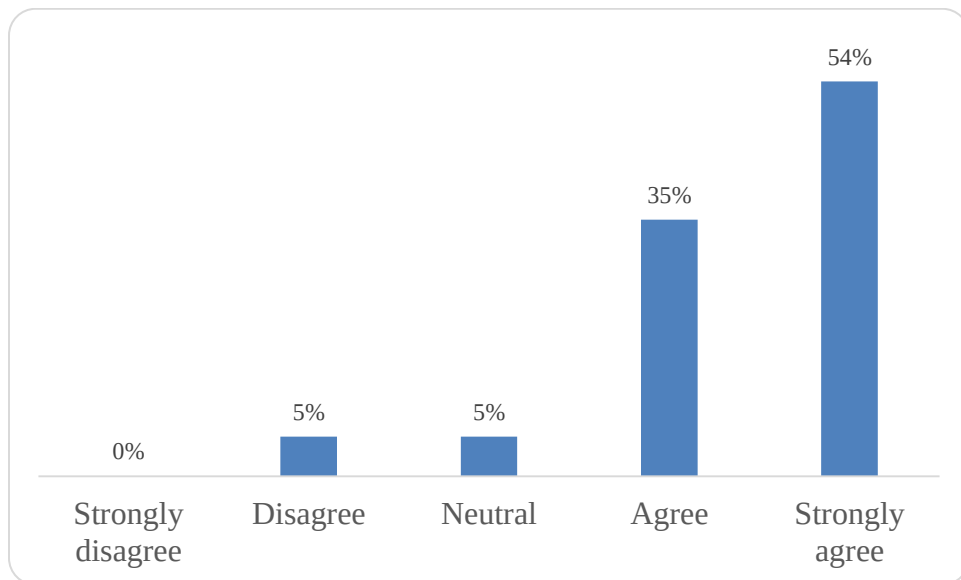


Figure 4.9: I work harder when peer assessment is involved in evaluating oral presentations.

Figure 4.9 indicates that 89% of the students agreed that they worked harder when their presentations were assessed by peers. A mere 5%, on the other hand, neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 5% disagreed. This shows that, according to the students, PA impacted their behaviour, making them work harder when their performances were evaluated by classmates.

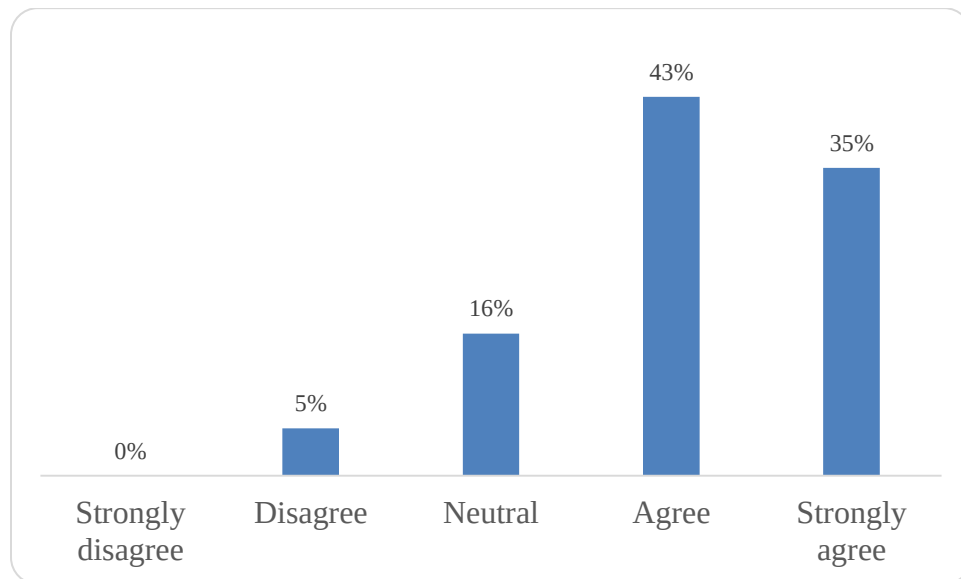


Figure 4.10: I enjoy participating in discussions about assessing my peers' oral presentation performances.

In figure 4.10, the majority of students, 78%, admitted they enjoyed taking part in negotiations regarding the assessment of other peers' presentations. Only 5% did not think the discussions were enjoyable, whereas 16% felt neutral. This indicates that students held favourable attitudes

towards discussions and negotiations made for the sake of providing assessments of their peers' performances.

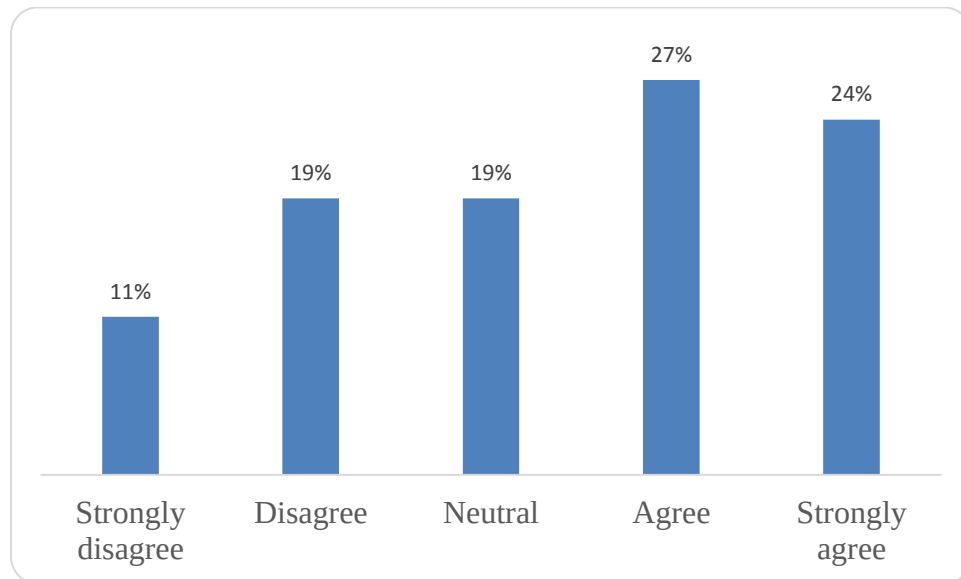


Figure 4.11: I recommend teachers' reliance on peer assessment in evaluating students' oral presentations in the future.

As for Figure 4.11, 51% of students agreed that teachers should rely on this form of assessment, whereas up to 30% thought otherwise. Only 19% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. This means that slightly over half of the students believed this was a reliable method of assessment.

4.1.2. Negative Attitudes

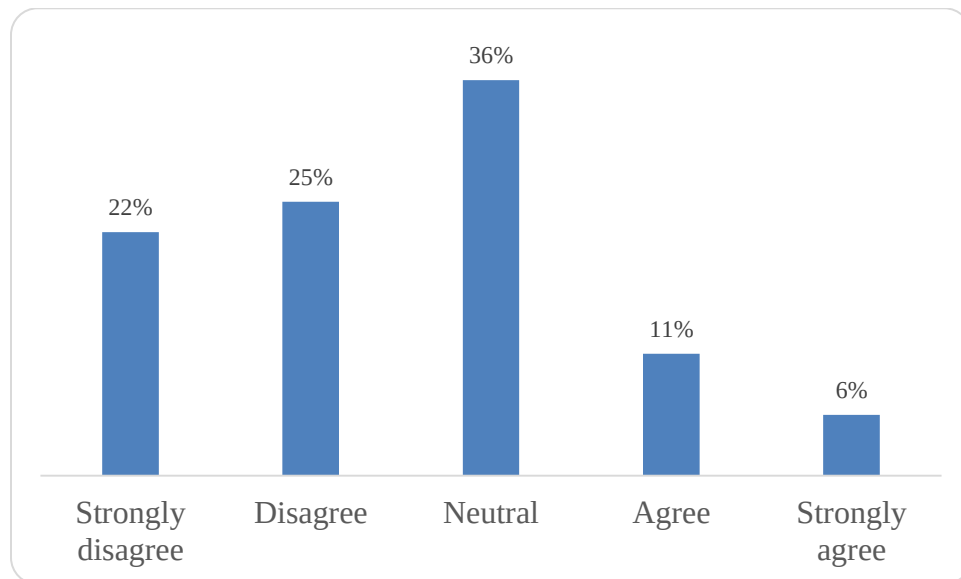


Figure 4.12: I am not confident about being able to assess my peers' presentations.

Figure 12 illustrates how 47% of students disagreed with the statement, and 36% neither agreed nor disagreed. However, only 17% agreed. This means that more than half of the students were unconfident in their abilities to assess or were unsure, whereas most claimed they were.

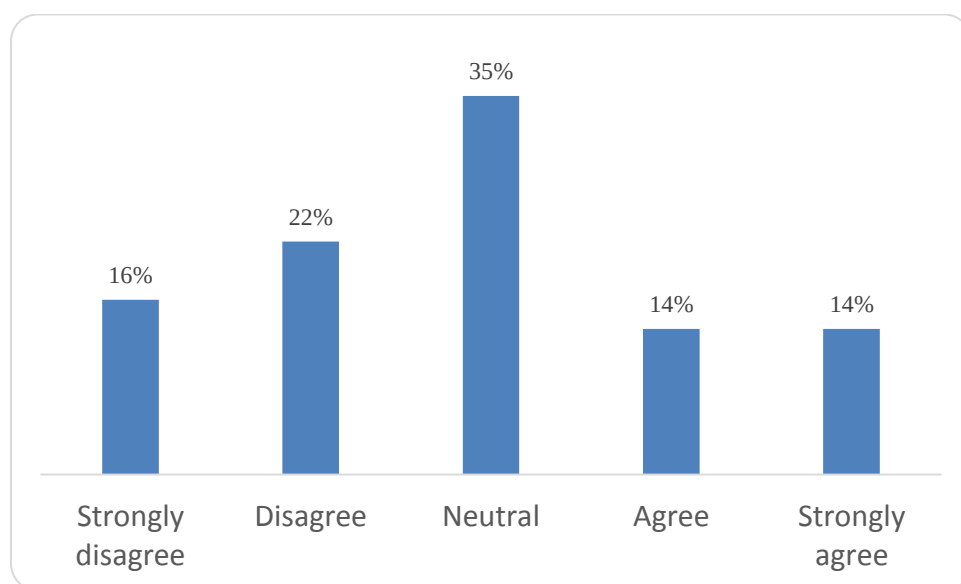


Figure 4.13: Peer assessment requires longer time to be applied.

In figure 4.13, 38% did not think that PA took a long time, whereas 28% thought it did. Up to 35%, however, were not certain. This indicates that many students believed PA was not time-consuming.

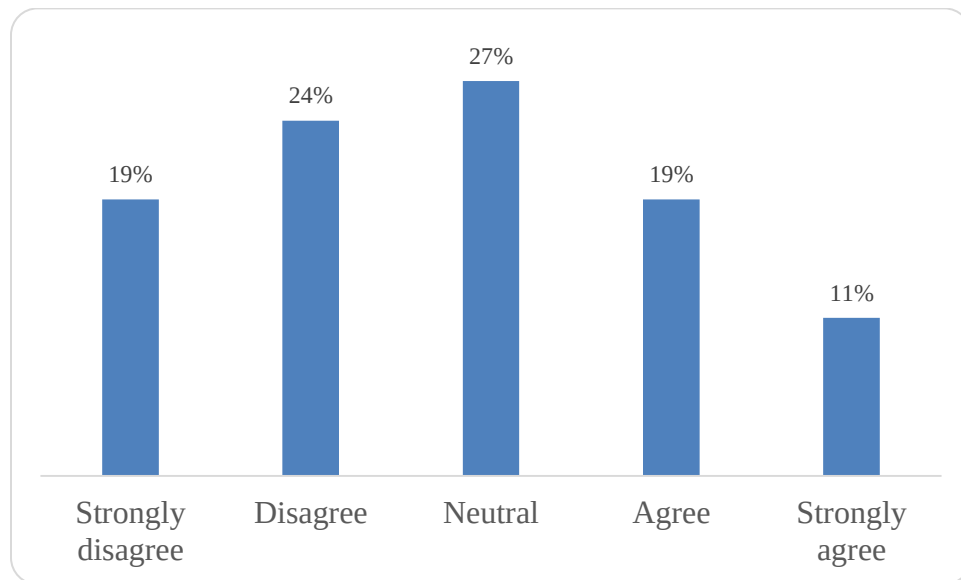


Figure 4.14: Students may tend to be biased when providing their assessment.

As for figure 4.14, Although 43% disagreed with students being biased when giving their assessments, 30% thought students were biased. 27%, however, felt neutral. This shows that more students trusted their peers' judgment and thought they were fair in providing assessments than those who thought they weren't fair.

4.2. Interview Data Analysis

Volunteer students in the semi-structured interview were asked what they thought about PA of oral presentations. Their answers demonstrated positive attitudes, as all participants said they

found PA useful and helpful when it came to enhancing their presentation skills. For instance, student B said, *"When I saw the points from my peers' assessments, I concentrated on the advantages and disadvantages... To encourage me to know my mistakes and to develop... and what I'm telling you is to develop my, for example, grammar, speaking, listening, or anything else."* Student A said, *"I think it is a very good idea for the students because it helps them so much, Wallahi, because it gives the students feedback from or to each other. For me, it is very useful."* Student C believed that *"because of my colleagues' remarks, I can see my weaknesses."* and student D stated, *"I think it helped me a lot to know my... maybe... to know my mistakes and to improve my language, of course."* In general, their answers varied between helping them see their mistakes, receiving encouragement, giving others advice, enjoying the process of assessment, and finding it comfortable.

During the interview, some participants either provided information or were asked to provide information about the strengths and weaknesses that feedback from their classmates helped them see. Regarding the weaknesses, student B stated that the assessment helped him understand the significance of eye contact and body language, as he said, *"I think it is eye contact. Eye contact is an important thing. Before, I did not concentrate on it. And body language."* In addition to those, providing evidence to support his points in the body of the presentation was another negative feedback that his peers gave, as he said, *"When I present the subject, the topic, I bring something from the real world, for example, a story or short story. Like evidence."* One comment Student A reported receiving was about his speed of speech, as he said, *"I was very quick when I spoke; one of them wrote to me, 'You speak very fast. I cannot understand your point. I cannot get your point.' So the next time I presented, I took care of that point."* Other negative comments he remembered receiving were regarding his grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, which he

stated he had learned. Student D recalled getting a negative comment about how nervous she seemed in addition to receiving comments about improving her eye contact and grammar. Student E said that other than students pointing out that he had a problem with eye contact, their feedback also highlighted that he should provide an outline for his presentation and *"give a good explanation for each outline,"* meaning provide explanations for each point rather than briefly mentioning them in the body of the presentation. As for the strengths, when asked to give an example of something that he learned about his skills through PA, student C said, *"I thought I was not that good at pronunciation, but even this semester and the previous one, alhamdulillah, I got very positive opinions about pronunciation that said, 'You are doing well.'"* That is, he used to think that his pronunciation was not good, but due to receiving high marks and positive comments on it, his perspective about it changed. As for Student D, she stated, *"It helped me to see my strengths, especially on accent."* Finally, student E recalled receiving a positive comment about covering the topic of his presentation fully.

A couple of participants talked about how comfortable they felt providing assessments. Student C commented that PA enabled him to provide assessments or feedback in an easy and accurate way. Student B raved about how the anonymity of the assessment helped him reduce the uneasiness that he felt the first time he had to undergo this form of assessment, saying, *"I think it is not a problem if we do not write the name on the top of the paper of the peer assessment and we give it to the teacher, and the teacher submits it to the presenter."*

A number of students' comments were correlated to whether they enjoyed giving and receiving evaluations from and from their classmates. Student D, for instance, expressed that she enjoyed giving assessments, but she also expressed that it could be due to the fact that she worked as a teacher. Student B said that *"Peer assessment, I think, is a good way to evaluate the student,*

whether by their classmate or by myself." As for receiving assessments, all students interviewed expressed being pleased with the experience of getting comments because they found them useful. For example, student A said, *"I think it is a very good idea for the students because it helps them so much."* He went on to explain that he felt this way because he thought it was useful when students gave feedback to each other as well as listened to each other's feedback.

Some answers were linked to how fair and confident students were in providing assessments. As a follow-up question to what participants thought about PA, some students were asked whether they thought they were fair and honest. Student A expressed that he was honest 80% of the time because, beside the fact that he wanted to give honest feedback, he also wanted to encourage his classmates. Student E, on the other hand, said that she hoped she was fair. As for students' confidence in their ability to assess, some students were asked to what extent they felt confident in their assessment as a follow-up to the first interview question (see Appendix B). Student E rated himself very highly, saying that he was 75% confident in his judgement, although not entirely because he believed he was inexperienced. Student C expressed a similar thought when he said *"We are not that experienced in English teaching and learning"*. Student D, however, was the most confident, as she rated her confidence in her assessment at 100%.

When asked a subsequent question about the extent to which students trusted their peers' assessments, some students' answers were correlated with student biases. Student D stated that it depended on the person providing the assessment, saying, *"I saw a lot of people who were honest in their assessment."* However, she also claimed that other students gave her unfair assessments at times as a form of payback for negative assessments and feedback she gave them previously. Thus, she did not trust their assessments. Also, student A stated that other students awarded

positive feedback for the sake of encouragement only; thus, they were not always providing honest reviews.

4.3. Challenges Faced during Peer Assessment

In the semi-structured interview, participants were asked about the challenges they struggled with during peer assessment and what they would like to see changed about it. The students expressed a number of challenges. The following presents those issues:

4.3.1 Problems with Giving Assessment and Feedback

Even though students expressed different issues, these issues had a common ground; they were all related to the process of providing assessment and feedback. At the beginning of the semester and during the first time PA was incorporated, student B said that he felt shy about criticising his peers because he feared that the presenter may disapprove of the negative criticism, saying, *"The presenter will... I do not know... He might say, "Why did you write this to me?"* insinuating that the presenter may question his judgment. It was, however, the fact that the assessments were made anonymously and were collected and handed over by the teacher that made him feel less anxious.

Student A explained how he did not provide completely honest reviews and evaluations of his classmates' performances because he did not want to discourage or upset them, saying, *"I want to encourage him just for this point or something like that."* This meant that he tended to exaggerate some marks or feedback to please his peers.

Another issue with providing feedback, which was briefly mentioned by student B, was expressed more strongly by student D. That issue was students reacting negatively to her

assessment and comments, and more specifically, low marks on certain criteria or comments that pointed out weaknesses. She reported even facing repercussions for providing those negative assessments, saying, *"Especially when I gave them, like, sometimes bad evaluations. They did the same to me. Sometimes there are no mistakes with my pronunciation or grammar. But they gave me bad evaluations because I gave them bad evaluations before."* This means she believed that due to the conflict caused by the negative assessment, some classmates awarded her unfairly low marks and poor feedback.

4.3.2. Problems Receiving Assessment and Feedback

One problem that was mentioned by student B was that he believed that some classmates did not look at or read the assessment thoroughly, or, as he said, *"he should check the assessments one by one. I mean, not just to have a look only and then throw it out or something. He should work on those points."* He thought that students should read the evaluations and the comments written in each criteria one by one. When asked what he would like to see changed about PA, he suggested that either the teacher should make the students review the assessments or a discussion should be held regarding the feedback and assessments provided in the following class.

Another challenge regarding receiving PA was pointed out by student E. He recalled that while receiving the same assessment on the eye contact criterion, all comments on other criteria were vastly different and mostly did not agree, or as he puts it, *"They agree on just eye contact, but on the other points, they do not agree,"* meaning that whenever he got a positive assessment, a mark, or feedback on one point, another assessor gave him a negative assessment on the same point, which would be confusing.

The final issue that can be correlated with receiving assessments is distrust in other students' assessments for a number of reasons. Student B reported that even though he trusted most of his peers' judgment, some students, "one or two", did not pay attention to his presentation, so he did not have complete faith in all the comments and assessments he received. Therefore, being aware of his strengths and weaknesses and identifying the average of the multiple marks and the comments he got, he was able to understand which points he needed to improve: *"I got the conclusion, or I worked out the average. I know my level, so I knew which points would help me improve and worked on them."* Student A believed that even though the majority of the feedback might have been honest, some of it was merely compliments to help encourage him; as he said, *"They just wanted to encourage me to do better. And they did not want to make me feel embarrassed,"* insinuating that some students rewarded exaggerated marks or positive reviews and were subjective in their judgments. Finally, student C and student E both made a similar comment regarding trusting their peers' judgments, stating that they did not take into consideration some students' evaluations because they believed students in general lacked experience and were not experts, or as student E puts it, *"Maybe 75%. I cannot trust 100% because we are not very experienced. They are just learning."*

4.3.3. Problems Regarding Learner Involvement

Students C and D both complained about the layout and the assigned grading system of the assessment criteria. Student C commented that he felt like some assessment criteria were very similar and could be summarised into one point, saying, *"Problems like in the beginning, there are two points. One, talking about introduction. Second, I think it is about how they cover or explain the idea. I think the second and third ones are almost the same."* (see Appendix D). In addition to that, when they were asked about what they would like to see changed about the

assessment, student C expressed that more marks should be awarded for each criterion, or as he said, *"When we evaluate, we need a wide area or wide range. But from one to three, or zero to three. I think it is very close, very small."* Student D, on the other hand, did not like to award marks at all, as she believed *"you cannot judge a person by numbers"* and rather wanted more comments or a list of detailed criteria that she could tick. *"I like it to be more specific comments about the presentations, especially about the body language. Because I think, from what I see, not all the students, but 90% of them, have problems or issues with body language because they are nervous and stressed because of the situation that they are in and with the grammar mistakes. Sometimes you need to be specific on some points,"* she said. Student E, however, said that at the beginning of the course he thought that there were too many criteria; however, when they were reduced as a result of a class discussion regarding modifying the assessment (see Appendix D), he was fine with the criteria.

4.4 Summary of the Findings

The data presented in this chapter was analysed to explore the attitudes of PTQI students towards PA of oral presentation skills as well as identify the challenges that they faced undergoing this form of assessment. In general, the results indicated that students had far more favourable attitudes than unfavourable ones.

The majority of students agreed with survey items about positive attitudes, such as finding PA helpful in understanding assessment criteria and identifying their strengths and weaknesses, as well as finding aspects of this method enjoyable and even feeling comfortable, working hard, and being fair in assessing each other. As for the survey items aimed at investigating negative attitudes, such as finding PA time-consuming and believing students were biased in their

assessment, even though some participants' responses varied between agreeing, disagreeing, and being neutral, more students disagreed with the statements than those who agreed. In the semi-structured interview, volunteer participants' responses solidified having positive attitudes, yet this did not mean that students did not face any issues carrying out PA.

Regarding the second research question, data from the semi-structured interview showed that students experienced a number of problems with this form of assessment. These can be summarised into having issues providing assessment as participants expressed either not being completely honest, being shy, or not being fully confident in their abilities; problems receiving assessment as students believed that not all of their classmates' assessments could be trusted; and problems related to involving students in decisions about the assessment as some students expressed having preferences regarding the grading system and which criteria to be included.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings described in chapter 4. A correlation is made between the research aims and questions, the findings, and previous literature, as well as an explanation of why some of them occurred. This chapter also presents the limitations of this study, a number of recommendations for further studies, and the conclusion.

5.1. Discussion

Peer assessment can enhance the success and quality of learning (Topping, 2009). It is the researcher's belief that in order for PA to be impactful, students need to view it positively (van Zundert et al., 2010). It is the attitudes that students hold towards the learning situation that influence their motivation to improve their language (Masgore & Gardner, 2003). The present study aimed to explore whether students held favourable or unfavourable attitudes towards different aspects of PA of oral presentation skills as well as investigate the issues students faced while undergoing this form of assessment. In other words, the findings answered the research questions:

- What attitudes do EFL PTQI students have towards PA of oral presentation skills?
- What challenges do they face during PA?

In the previous chapter, it was revealed that students generally expressed positive attitudes towards PA, though they also expressed some mixed results and reported facing challenges. The interpretation of these results can be categorised into students' attitudes towards PA of oral presentation skills, and challenges of PA.

5.1.1. Students' Attitudes towards PA of Oral Presentation Skills

Looking at the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants held favourable attitudes towards PA of oral presentations, which was in alignment with the findings of previous studies discussing this similar area (Chen and Warren, 2005; Wen and Tsai, 2006; Peng, 2009; Fazel, 2015; Mutwarasibo, 2016). This can be attributed to many factors, the most prominent of which is the training they received throughout the course as well as the previous experience some of the participants had, as receiving training and gaining experience positively impact students' attitudes towards PA (van Zundert et al., 2010; Cheng & Warren, 2005; Smith et al., 2002).

The discussion about students' attitudes was classified into positive and negative attitudes.

5.1.1.1. Positive Attitudes

Positive attitudes were divided by the researcher into three themes. Those themes were attitudes towards learning and achievement, attitudes towards providing assessment, and attitudes towards receiving assessment.

The results indicated that the majority of students held favourable attitudes towards the learning and achievement gained from PA. That is, students strongly believed that PA improved their presentation skills (see figure 4.1). Volunteer students in the semi-structured interview confirmed

this as they expressed noticing a betterment in their performances, which was attributed to their classmates' assessments. This result confirmed previous studies' results regarding PA and its impact on learning and achievement (Fazel, 2015; Peng, 2009; Wen & Tsai, 2006; Cheng & Warren, 2005) (see 2.3.1). Secondly, students believed that PA helped them understand the criteria required for assessing oral presentations (see figure 4.2). This belief was solidified by one participant in the interview stating that he did not previously think 'eye contact' and body language were significant criteria until his classmates pointed them out. This result was in alignment with previous studies' results regarding students understanding of teachers' requirements (Fazel, 2015; Peng, 2009; Wen & Tsai, 2006; Cheng & Warren, 2005). This result could also be an indication of students internalising those criteria, as revealed by the study findings of Yin et al. (2022) (see 2.3.1). Another positive attitude towards PA under the guise of learning was identifying the strengths and weaknesses of presentation performances (see figures 4.3 and 4.4). The results indicated that the majority of students think PA helped raise their awareness of their presentations' strong and weak points. In the semi-structured interview, participants provided in-depth information about which areas they receive compliments or criticism (i.e., pronunciation, body language, and adding an anecdote to support points in a presentation), further reinforcing this finding. What is more, some students even reported that, thanks to the comments they received, they were able to correct their mistakes and perform better. One student even explained that he tended to compare his classmates' assessments, work out the common areas between them, and, using his awareness of his level, he said he was able to build on his knowledge and make the most of the experience. This outcome correlated with the results of Reinholz (2015) and Fathi et al. (2019) regarding PA promoting learner autonomy (see 2.3.2 and 2.3.3). Finally, most students recommend teachers use PA to assess oral presentations

(see figure 4.11). This further reinforced the fact that students held favourable attitudes towards PA and expressed their desire to be involved in this form of assessment in the future. This result confirmed Fazel's (2015) study findings. However, about a third of the students did not recommend PA. This could be attributed to factors such as the lack of confidence, trust, and comfortability providing assessment, as well as many other challenges that were found in this study and will be discussed later in this part (see 5.1.2). To summarise, these findings indicated that students held PA favourably when it came to its impact on their learning on the basis that belief is one of the main components of attitudes (see 2.8.1.2).

Students held favourable attitudes towards the different aspects of providing assessments. To elaborate, students liked taking on the role of the assessor (see figure 4.7). One student in the interview even explicitly agreed to a follow-up question asking her whether she liked PA and stated that she enjoyed it. Another student thought it was a good idea to evaluate other students. These results correlated with Manalu's (2016) findings. Even though Manalu's (2016) research was about students' perceptions of PA, the research items investigated students' enjoyment of the PA process (see 2.3.2). Enjoyment is related to affect, which is a component of attitude (see 2.8.1.1) rather than perception. Another finding that is related to students' attitudes towards giving assessments is participating in discussions to assess classmates' presentations (see figure 4.10). Students mostly agreed that they enjoyed engaging in such discussions. Such favourable attitudes were found in earlier research (Manalu, 2016; Wen & Tsai, 2006). Having such a positive feeling towards taking part in negotiations of peers' performances can be an indicator of students' tendency to engage in such activity in the future (see 2.8.2), thus developing long-term transferable skills (see 2.3.2) in addition to their presentation skills. Furthermore, the majority of students felt comfortable providing judgments of their classmates' presentation performances

(see figure 4.5). This result was in accordance with Cheng & Warren's (2005) findings regarding students' comfort and confidence with PA. One participant in the semi-structured interview backed this result, describing the assessment as both easy and accurate. It was due to the anonymity of the assessment, another participant believed, that the discomfort and stress of assessing other classmates was reduced. The researcher believes that the training students received throughout the course and the anonymity of assessments scaffolded their ability to PA with ease. This scaffolding may have reduced the degree of mental effort experienced during PA (Konings et al., 2019) (see 2.4.2). Finally, students believed they were fair in assessing their classmates (see figure 4.8). This attitude was further expressed in the interviews, as some students stated that they were fair and honest. This finding aligned with Mutwarasibo's (2016) study findings (see 2.5.2). However, one student confessed to inflating his judgment sometimes for the purpose of encouraging his classmates. An explanation for this behaviour is known as friendship marking (Prins et al., 2005), yet the fact still remains that most students stated that the judgments they gave were not biased.

The final theme was students' positive attitudes towards receiving assessment, for which two survey items were grouped. The majority of students reported enjoying receiving assessments from their classmates (see figure 4.6). In the semi-structured interview, students marvelled over the concept of classmates giving and receiving assessments, while other students admired PA's usefulness. These outcomes agreed with Manalu's (2016) conclusions (see 2.3.2). Finally, most students agreed that they worked harder on their presentation performance whenever the presentations were peer assessed (see figure 4.9). This willingness to put in effort as a result of PA can be concurred with study results about students' motivation and willingness to learn as a

result of PA (Manalu, 2016). This finding can also be an indicator of how much students care about what their peers think of them.

5.1.1.2. Negative Attitudes

Three survey items were designed to measure students' unfavourable attitudes towards PA to prevent leading participants towards only corresponding to positive statements. The negative attitudes investigated confidence in providing assessments, time consumption, and student biases. In general, more students disagreed with those statements than those who agreed. However, a considerable increase in the number of students responding neutrally was noticeable. Such uncertainty in attitude can be explained using Wen and Tsai's (2006) explanation of the similar mixed results they got (See 2.5.3). As mentioned previously, this explanation is applicable to this study as a number of PTQI students may not have had enough or any experience using PA prior to the study given that new applicants to the course who had never studied in the PTQI before enrolled during the course in which the study was conducted.

One finding was that students felt confident in their ability to assess (see figure 4.12). This finding was further backed by the students' responses in the semi-structured interview, as two students explicitly stated that they felt very confident in their assessment. Such a finding corresponded with Cheng and Warren's (2005) findings regarding students' confidence in their assessments (see 2.5.2). Nevertheless, more than a third of the students were unsure as they responded with neutrality. This could be because the statements expressed a negative attitude. Another reason for this result could be that the answer to whether they felt confident is multi-layered rather than a simple agreement or disagreement. That is, Even though some students in the interview reported being confident in their ability to assess, they also said they were not

100% confident as they were neither experienced nor qualified. It should be noted that with a lack of experience, students tend to have low confidence in their ability to judge; however, according to Cheng and Warren (2005), that confidence increases with experience and training.

Survey item 4.13 was the item that received the most mixed results. Almost an equal number of students believed PA was time-consuming as those who believed it was not, although those disagreeing still take the lead. Such a finding confirmed Wen and Tsai's (2006) findings regarding PA's time consumption. This mixed result was attributed to the fact that training and unexpected problems made some presentations take longer to be assessed than others, and vice versa (see 2.5.3). This increase in negative (agreement with this statement was regarded as a negative response) and neutral responses was also attributed to the fact that this statement expressed a negative attitude (Wen and Tsai, 2006).

Regarding students' biases, more students did not think students as assessors were biased in their judgment of their presentations (see figure 4.14). However, almost a third of the students felt they received biased assessments. This attitude was further investigated in the semi-structured interview when students were asked about whether they trusted their peers' judgment. A couple of participants reported that even though they trusted their peers' judgment, it depended on the person assessing them. That is, they believed some students were biased and unfair while others were not. One student even said that some of her peers awarded her poor marks to get revenge because she did the same to them too. The other volunteer stated that some students tended to overmark to encourage their classmates. What is intriguing is that when compared with students' responses to them being fair assessors (see 5.1.1.1.), more students believed they were fair as assessors, but fewer students trusted their peers' assessments. This finding aligned with Mutwarasibo's (2016) study findings (see 2.5.2). In his study, Mutwarasibo

(2016, p. 44) rationalised this contradiction by saying, "one would say that students tended to be happy assessing but unhappy being assessed" . However, in this study, students' responses to previous survey items expressing positive attitudes towards receiving assessment proved otherwise.

5.1.2.Challenges Faced during Peer Assessment

Although students' responses to the survey and the first semi-structured interview question (see Appendix B) showed they mainly held positive attitudes towards PA, that did not mean they did not face any problems undergoing it. During the semi-structured interview, and more specifically when asked the second and third semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix B), volunteer students expressed facing a number of issues (see 4.3). Those issues were classified as problems providing assessment and feedback, problems receiving assessment and feedback, and problems related to learner involvement.

As for problems giving assessments, these problems were attributed to negative social and interpersonal relations (see 2.5.2). In the interview, students were asked about the challenges they faced during PA. Some students reported providing inflated results either to encourage their peers or out of fear of displeasing their peers and facing backlash. However, one of them added that, due to the anonymity of the assessment at times, he felt less anxious providing negative criticism. Another student, on the other hand, reported facing backlash due to providing negative comments to her peers. She claimed she received far more negative feedback and lower marks than she deserved by the same students whom she gave negative assessments to previously. This result confirmed challenges reported by previous studies (Ryan et al., 2007; Carvalho, 2012; Harris and Brown, 2013). Finally, one issue that was also investigated and discussed earlier (see

5.1.1.2) was that some students expressed not having complete confidence in their ability to assess. This finding aligned with Cheng and Warren's (2005) and Rotsaert et al.'s (2018) study findings regarding students' confidence in their own assessments.

Secondly, volunteers in the interviews reported facing issues related to receiving assessments from their classmates. Some of these issues were related to negative social and intrapersonal relations as well (2.5.2). One of these issues was distrust in peers' assessments, as some students reported they believed their peers, as well as themselves, were not experienced enough; thus, they did not completely trust their peers, or at least some of their peers. One student said he saw that some of his peers were not paying attention to his presentation, so he did not consider their assessments. These findings correlated with Rotsaert et al.'s (2018) study findings about students' distrust in others' assessments. Another problem that was associated with receiving assessment was related to student biases, such as friendship biases and conflict arising between peers (Rotsaert et al., 2018). Some students felt that others awarded inflated assessments to encourage them, while one student, as mentioned previously, felt she received negative assessments as revenge from her classmates. This result was in alignment with previous studies related to student biases (Ryan et al., 2007; Carvalho, 2012; Harris and Brown, 2013; Rotsaert et al., 2018). Finally, one student reported not getting consistent assessments from his peers about certain presentation criteria, thus doubting the reliability of the assessments. This inconsistency was explained as students lacking experience and knowledge of the assessment criteria, as previous literature emphasised that with more experience, students' assessments become more reliable (Falchikov and Goldfinch, 2000; Panadero, Romero & Strijbos, 2013) (see 2.5.1).

As for the final set of challenges, when volunteers were asked about what they would like to see changed about PA, some of them reported preferences that were correlated to students' desire to

be more involved in decisions regarding their assessment. That is, some students commented on the grading system, saying they wanted a wider range of marks than the assigned 0–3 (see Appendix E). One of them preferred having more qualitative comments provided in the assessment sheet from which students could select the ones to assess their peers' presentation performances. To summarise, even though students were allowed to make modifications to the assessment criteria once during the course, it was established from these comments that students became more aware of the aims of oral presentations, wanted to gain more control over the criteria, and should be involved in decisions regarding the assessment more freely whenever peer-assessed presentations were conducted. Such findings correlated with Smith et al.'s (2002) study results (see 2.4.3).

5.2. Implications

Based on the present study's findings, students expressed favourable attitudes towards PA, regarding it as useful to the improvement of their oral presentation skills, in addition to feeling positive towards the process of PA. Henceforth, for the sake of promoting a student-centred learning environment, the PTQI management and its speaking teachers should seriously consider allowing students to take responsibility for their assessment by assigning PA as one of the alternative assessment methods used to evaluate oral presentations. It is also significant for teachers to be aware of the challenges that accompany such a form of assessment in order to tackle them early on and reap its benefits. In addition to that, the PTQI should consider providing training to their staff on how to carry out PA to equip them with the knowledge and experience required to conduct it successfully.

5.3. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following are some recommendations to be considered:

- An alternative study should look into teachers' attitudes towards PA of oral presentation skills, as only students' attitudes were explored in this study.
- Only the challenges encountered by students were inspected in this study; thus, it would be interesting if a future study investigated the reasons for such challenges.
- Students should receive training to scaffold PA, as this would improve their attitudes towards them as well as increase the reliability and validity of the assessment in addition to reducing negative social and intrapersonal relations (i.e., distrust in self or peers' assessments, conflict, and friendship bias).
- Assessment criteria and the way in which PA is conducted should be discussed and agreed upon with students prior to engaging in peer-assessed oral presentations to improve the quality of the assessment.
- Teachers should be aware of the challenges that PA entails to better tackle them early on.
- An alternative advanced study investigating the impact of PA on learning and improving oral presentation skills can be conducted.
- It is also possible to research the reliability and validity of PA of oral presentations in an alternative study.
- Negative social and intrapersonal relations can also be investigated in further research.

5.4. Limitations

There were a number of limitations in this study that should be emphasised. First of all, attitudes are subjective, and students may not express their real opinions or feelings towards PA either out

of the desire to please, intimidation, or for no reason at all (Sengupta, 1998). In addition to that, only two data collection instruments were employed (see 3.4). Because the PTQI instructed the researcher not to disrupt students during class and to conduct the research outside of course hours when consent was asked for, in addition to the limited time the researcher had, it was not possible to use other tools such as observation. Therefore, further research should use different tools to confirm the findings of this study. The final limitation was that the sample size consisted of 37 students. This number did not accurately represent all students in the PTQI or all EFL students in Libya; thus, the results cannot be generalised.

5.5. Conclusion

This study explored the attitudes students in the PTQI held towards PA of oral presentation skills as well as the challenges they experienced during the assessment. The major findings revealed that students had positive attitudes towards PA. These attitudes were classified into positive attitudes towards learning and achievement, positive attitudes towards providing assessment, and positive attitudes towards receiving assessment. Firstly, students thought PA assisted them in enhancing their oral presentation skills, learning about the criteria required, and learning about their own performance strengths and weaknesses. In addition to that, students thought PA should be used in future speaking classes to assess Presentations. Secondly, regarding providing assessment, students liked and felt comfortable taking on the role of the assessor, enjoyed engaging in discussions regarding their peers' performances, and believed they were fair judges of their classmates' performances. Finally, students liked being assessed by their peers and worked hard whenever PA was involved.

However, a small percentage of the participants expressed some negative attitudes towards their confidence in providing assessments, the students' biases, and the time required to carry out PA. Such negative attitudes occurred as a result of a lack of sufficient training and experience, in addition to the varying lengths of presentations and unexpected problems that occurred during PA.

As for the challenges of PA, the findings showed that students faced a number of problems that were clustered into three main issues. Students faced problems providing assessment to their peers as they felt that they were either shy, too inexperienced to assess, or feared facing repercussions when giving negative feedback. Another issue was that students had problems receiving assessments due to distrust in peers' assessments, believing students either awarded inflated results or, on the contrary, deflated results due to friendship bias and conflict, and finally questioning the consistency of students' assessments. Lastly, students had issues with the criteria and layout of the PA sheet, indicating a desire to be more involved in such decisions.

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Appendix A Survey

Dear participant,

My name is Ayaa Hashkel, and I am a master's student at the Libyan Academy. This questionnaire is designed to explore students' attitudes towards peer assessment of oral presentation skills in the PTQI. You are kindly invited to complete this survey. The following survey will take about 5-10 minutes to answer. Your responses will be confidential. This will not affect your grades in any way. Thank you for taking the time to assist me with this research.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement?

Tick (✓) the option that matches your opinion.

Note: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; N = Neutral; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

	Item	S D	D	N	A	S A
1	Peer assessment develops my oral presentation skills.					
2	Peer assessment helps me understand presentation assessment criteria.					
3	Assessment from peers helps me identify my presentation weaknesses.					
4	Assessment from peers helps me identify my presentation strengths.					
5	I am comfortable providing assessments to my peers.					
6	I enjoy the experience of my peers' assessments of my oral presentations.					
7	I enjoy the experience of assessing oral presentations.					
8	I am fair when I assess my peers' presentations.					
9	I work harder when peer assessment is involved in evaluating oral presentations.					
10	I enjoy participating in discussions about assessing my peers' oral presentation performances.					
11	I recommend teachers' reliance on peer assessment in evaluating students' oral presentations in the future.					
12	I am not confident about being able to assess my peers' presentations.					
13	Peer assessment requires a longer time to be applied.					

14	Students may tend to be biased when providing their assessment.					
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Appendix B

Interview Questions

Q1) What do you think about peer assessment?

Q2) What problems did you face with peer assessment?

Q3) What would you like to see changed about peer assessment?

Appendix C

The Sandwich Feedback

Name of presenter: _____

Formative Feedback from peers on 15 minutes presentation and 2 minutes
question and answer session on _____

What was good about the presentation? ex: I never knew that	What was bad about the presentation? ex: It was inaudible.	What was bad about the presentation? ex: he didn't rehearse.	What was good about the presentation? ex: I learned a new word

Appendix D

Brown's (2018) Presentation Assessment Criteria

Assessment of Oral Presentation

Assign a number to each box according to your assessment of the various aspects of the speaker's presentation.

3 Excellent 2 Good 1 Fair 0 poor

	Criteria	Mark
Content:	1. The purpose or objective of the presentation was accomplished.	
	2. The introduction was lively and got my attention.	
	3. The main idea or point was clearly stated.	
	4. The supporting points were: a) Clearly expressed. b) Supported well by facts or arguments.	
	5. The conclusion restated the main idea or purpose.	
Delivery	1. The speaker used gestures and body language well.	
	2. The speaker maintained eye contact with the audience.	
	3. The speaker's language was natural and fluent.	
	4. The speaker's volume of speech was appropriate.	
	5. The speaker's rate of speech was appropriate.	
	6. The speaker's pronunciation was appropriate.	
	7. the speaker's grammar was correct and didn't prevent understanding	
	8. the speaker used visual aids, handouts...etc effectively.	
	9. The speaker showed enthusiasm and interest.	

	10. [if appropriate] the speaker responded to audience questions well	
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Appendix E

Modified Rubric Criteria of Oral Presentations

Assessment of Oral Presentation

Assign a number to each box according to your assessment of the various aspects of the speaker's presentation.

3 Excellent 2 Good 1 Fair 0 poor

	Criteria	Mark
Content:	1. The purpose or objective of the presentation was accomplished.	
	2. The introduction was lively and got my attention.	
	3. The main idea or point was clearly stated.	
	4. The supporting points were: a) Clearly expressed. b) Supported well by facts or arguments.	
	5. The conclusion restated the main idea or purpose.	
Delivery	1. The speaker used gestures and body language well.	
	2. The speaker maintained eye contact with the audience.	
	3. The speaker's language was natural and fluent.	
	4. The speaker's volume of speech was appropriate.	
	5. The speaker's rate of speech was appropriate.	
	6. The speaker's pronunciation was appropriate.	
	7. the speaker's grammar was correct and didn't prevent understanding	

	8. the speaker used visual aids, handouts...etc effectively.	
	9. The speaker showed enthusiasm and interest.	
	10. [if appropriate] the speaker responded to audience questions well	

Appendix F

Interview Transcript

Student A

1. **I: So, what do you think about peer assessment?**

A: I think it's a very good idea for the students because it helps them so much, Wallahi, because it gives the students feedback from or to each other. For me, it's very useful. **I: Okay, what did you find useful about it?** **A:** The feedback. I might say something or any word of new vocabulary and the pronunciation is bad or something like that. When other people or other students wrote it to me, it gave me a good idea of what I said. And I can then fix my language, my pronunciation, or something like that. **I: Okay, cool. So what other things did you learn from peer assessment?** **A:** It makes me focus on my grammar when I speak. It helped me so much when I did the presentation last time, it helps me so much because they focused on my weak point in my language. The student's focus was on many points. I was weak in my last presentation. Like grammar, pronunciation, and new vocabulary.

2. **I: What problems did you face with peer assessment?**

A: Peer assessment...can I talk about my last presentation? **I:** Yeah, no problem; go for it. **A:** The one before that. **I:** it's okay. **A:** Yes, maybe our classmates just wanting to encourage us. They didn't give us, I think, 100% honest feedback. They just did it to encourage us. Maybe like a compliment. That's the only problem with peer assessment. **I:**

I get it. **A:** But, other than, that it was very good for me. Wallahi. **I:** very nice. Okay, cool. So you talked about the feedback of your peers. **Did you read it? How often do you read it?** **A:** I read it whenever I had a new presentation. **I:** Oh, all right. That's interesting. Got it. **A:** Not last time. The time before that. I was very quick when I spoke; one of them wrote to me, "You speak very fast. I can't understand your point. I can't get your point." So the next time I presented, I took care of that point. **I:** Got it. Okay. So **do you trust your peers' assessments? How much do you trust what they write to you or about your presentation?** **A:** My classmate, I think 80% because, like what I said before, they just wanted to encourage me to do better. And they didn't want to make me feel embarrass . **I:** Embarrassed **A:** Yes, something like that. But it's okay, and usually It's okay. **I:** Okay, one last thing about the feedback area. How honest were you when you gave your feedback? **A:** Like the others, I think 80%. **I:** 80%? Not always. **A:** Yes, because I wanted to encourage him too. Maybe if I wrote something bad or something not good at all, they would feel very sad, or I couldn't help them with this thing or this point that I wrote. I want to encourage them. **I:** I get it.

3. **I: What would you like to see changed about peer assessment?**

A: To be honest, nothing. Because it's very useful for me. Yeah. It helped me a lot—maybe more than four or five points in my presentations. So I think it's okay. **I:** It's okay for now. **A:** But one point, yes. I want to say to other classmates that when you give your peer assessment to another student, be honest to help him. **I:** All right. Okay. Cool. Thank you so much. Bye.