

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
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COMPARING THE DIFFERENCES IN IMPLEMENTING
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN EFL CLASSROOMS IN
SELECTED GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

BY

AWEKE GASHAW BEZABIH

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned graduate student, declare that this is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to compare the differences in implementing continuous assessment in selected government and private primary schools in EFL classrooms. The participants of the study were 35 EFL teachers and four principals from four selected primary schools: two government and two private schools. Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The data that were gathered through closed-ended questions were analyzed quantitatively while open-ended questions, interviews and document analysis were analyzed qualitatively.

The study revealed that EFL teachers of both government and private schools get benefits from the implementation of continuous assessment in EFL classes. It also showed that private primary schools (PPS's) implement continuous assessment in a better manner than that of government primary schools (GPS's). Teachers of these schools did not use as many continuous assessment devices as private primary school teachers. Besides, the study indicated that the implementation of continuous assessment in EFL classes has helped EFL teachers identify slow and fast learners. However, appropriate remedial works and additional stimulation activities had not been given for slow learners. Even though teachers of both types of schools used record books, it was similar with that of traditional/conventional assessment record books. But it was clear that private primary schools (PPS's) used better record books than (government primary schools) GPS's. Private primary schools applied different continuous assessment devices which help students improve their language competence. The study also pointed out that EFL teacher faced challenges that prevented them from implementing continuous assessment effectively. The challenges they faced varied from school to school. The measures/solutions that were taken by EFL teachers to overcome the challenges were not satisfactory unless some sort of series assistance was given from stake holders. Based on the findings recommendations was forwarded.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English language has been given great space in our country for several decades because of its importance. Even though it is true in our educational system, the English language competence of students is unsatisfactory for their grade level (Teshome, 2001). However, the competence of the students varies from government schools to private schools. It is obviously known from my long language teaching experience that private primary school students have better language competence than government primary school students.

Verities of factors can be raised for the poor performance of students in the English language. Teachers methodology of teaching, quality of teacher training, quality of curricular materials, the evaluation methods/processes, lack of continuous development (on job training) and attitudes of both teachers and students are some of the factors that affect the performance of students (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Cross, 1995).

As it is mentioned above, the evaluation system that teachers use to assess their students' language performance is one of the determining factors for the success of the teaching learning process. Puhl (1997) asserts this point by saying:

“... Testing greatly influence instruction; and narrow testing has meant narrow instruction, teaching done ‘to the test’. In order to transform the whole educational process, the change to assessment is being made hand- in- hand with the change to the instruction system.

Many scholars point out that the conventional/ traditional assessment, i.e. giving test or exams at the end of a unit, a term or a course does not present the overall English competence of students as it focuses on specific parts of the unit or course. It uses a limited assessment device, usually tests, and is a one-shot that gives only one chance for students to show their language abilities (Plessis et al, 2003; Nijabali, 1999; Taiwo, 1998). To improve the situation, educational measurement experts and educational policy designers have come up with another type of assessment called continuous assessment.

Continuous assessment is a way of assessing the overall aspects of students' learning. Unlike the conventional assessment type, this one focuses on several part of the course. It is done on an on going basis; employs various kinds of assessment devices such as projects, self- assessment, observation, and provide students with many opportunities to show what they know and can do.

Continuous assessment helps teachers collect information about the progress of students continuously. This assists teachers to make sound decisions about their students and to adjust their teaching styles based on their decisions in order to make learners succeed in their learning. Plessis et al (2003:8) advocates this point by saying:

“Continuous assessment is a way to ensure that all learners have opportunities to succeed in school. In most classrooms, the range varies, from slow to average to fast learners. By using continuous assessment, the teacher can adapt his or her instruction to the need of the learners so all of them will have the chance to learn and succeed.

According to Pasigna (2002), the prime objective of continuous assessment is to improve students' learning and guide teachers' instruction. In order to improve students' learning, teachers should find out the weaknesses and strengths of students and give remedial and enrichment activities. Nitko (2005:14) also asserts that it is important for teachers to understand that assessment information can be used to improve learning and guide teaching. It is not enough to administer assessments to students and mark papers. Teachers must use the assessment results for guiding learning and teaching. An important principle for assessment in the classroom is that each assessment taken must have an associated instructional action. Nitko (2005)

In the same way, Wallace and Larsen (1978:5) say that the results from the educational assessment process typically provide the teacher with information about implementing an instructional program.

Many countries throughout the world have adapted this assessment type to their educational system. Similarly, Ethiopia has included continuous assessment in its educational system at a policy level; and years passed since it has been implemented in primary, secondary, and higher institutions (Educational Training Policy, 1994).

According to Educational Training Policy (1994 as cited in Sileshi, 2007), seventy-five percent (75%) of the final assessment of learners should be generated from continuous assessment, and the twenty-five percent (25%) should be obtained from end of term final examination.

The paradigm shift from the conventional assessment to continuous assessment urge teachers to have a well-developed knowledge and skills in this assessment type so as to implement it effectively. As many scholars states if continuous assessment is not well planned, organized and monitored carefully, and used for its prime goal, it may bring problems on the teaching learning process. In stead of improving the process, it may hinder it (Nitko, 2004; Ellington, 1997).

Hence, schools are expected to plan carefully and implement continuous assessment primarily for its formative role. However, as different scholars have indicated many educational institutions use continuous assessment as part of the summative assessment. Wallace and Larsen (1978:9) and Wallace and Kauffman (1978) approve this observation and state that in many schools, educational assessment has become an end in itself rather than a means of planning instructional program.

Nitko (2005:12) also asserts the above point by saying that educational institutions have far focused their efforts primarily on the summative aspects of continuous assessment. They have generally ignored using the formative aspects of assessment.

According to Nitko (2005), by giving attention only to summative aspects of continuous assessment, educational institutions cannot improve teachers' instruction and students' learning. The failure to use continuous assessment for its prime objectives in educational institutions may bring two negative impacts on the part of student teachers. Firstly, they miss the benefits that they can get from continuous assessment. Secondly, they may understand the basic purpose of continuous assessment in its incomplete form.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The ministry of education of Ethiopia has included continuous assessment to be carried out in all levels of educational institutions, from primary to tertiary levels. It is being implemented with the intention of improving learning and guiding teaching in particular and raising the standard of education in general. In addition to this, it is assumed that continuous assessment creates opportunities for classroom teachers to assess their students' language skills in a formative and relaxed manner. However, the implementation of continuous assessment is seen differently by government and private primary schools. From my long language teaching experiences, their students' language performances make it visible for the differences appeared. As mentioned earlier, the performance of private school students, particularly in oral skills, is almost equivalent with the level they are in unlike government school students. It is believed to be true that their teaching learning processes differ from one another. This problem, therefore, should be addressed for the better learning outcome of the students particularly for government school students. It is thus crucial to compare the differences in EFL learners' continuous assessment in selected private and government primary schools.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to compare the differences in implementing continuous assessment in selected government and private primary schools.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- 1) To determine the status of EFL continuous assessment in selected government and private primary schools.
- 2) To identify the challenges EFL teachers face in implementing continuous assessment in EFL classrooms.
- 3) To point out the extent to which EFL teachers try to overcome the challenges they face.

In this study an attempt was made to compare the differences in the implementation of CA in government and private primary schools. Specifically the study attempted to answer the following questions.

1. What does implementation of CA look like in government and private primary schools?
2. What major challenges do EFL teachers face in using CA in EFL classrooms?
3. To what extent do the EFL teachers try to overcome the challenges they face in using continuous assessment?

1.4 Significance of the Study

It is believed that the practices of implementing continuous assessment in government and private primary schools are different. Therefore, it is very much significant to compare the differences of the schools' implementation of continuous assessment in EFL classes. More specifically, the findings of this research shall have the following benefits:

- Since the major participants of the study were EFL teachers and school principals of government and private primary schools, the research shall benefit to examine their conceptions and practices of continuous assessment.
- It shall benefit the administrative bodies of the schools to examine the major impediments of implementing continuous assessment at primary levels and re-plan for the effectiveness of continuous assessment.
- It helps EFL teachers of government primary schools to identify the better continuous assessment devices that improve the skills of the language learners.
- It also provides valuable information for other similar schools to compare assessment challenges, solutions and practices in both government and private primary schools.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study was delimited to deal with comparisons between government and private schools in implementing continuous assessment in EFL classes at primary level focusing on selected two government, Hamle 19/1967 and Kelem Amba, primary schools and two private schools namely Ethio-parent's and Amigonian primary schools. It was thought that studying all aspects of continuous assessment in EFL classes could not be manageable within a short period of time. As

a result, the study was confined to compare the differences in implementing continuous assessment in selected government and private primary schools in general and the challenges EFL teachers face when they use continuous assessment in EFL classes specifically. Moreover, the study tried to put the extent to which teachers overcome the challenges they face in order to implement continuous assessment in a formative manner effectively.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

It is essential to site that the sample size of the study was limited to 35 teachers and four school principals from four government and private primary schools. This limited sample size showed its weakness that this research had. However, it would have been better if more size had been taken from different primary schools where continuous assessment is implemented in EFL classrooms.

1.7 Abbreviations of Terms

CA = continuous assessment

EFL = English as a foreign language

GPS = government primary school

PPS = private primary school

1.8 Acronyms

Assessment: is a way of observing and collecting information and making decisions based on the information (plessis et al, 2003).

Continuous assessment: refers to making observations and collecting information periodically to find out what a student knows, understand and can do (plessis et al, 2003).

Conventional assessment: is a method of assessing students' second/foreign language progress using written examinations such as multiple –choice items, binary-choice item, true-false, cloze-tests and essays (Puhl, 1997).

1.9 Organization of the Study

The research paper is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction and presents background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives, significance, scope and limitation of the study and abbreviations of terms. It also contains acronyms. The second chapter discusses important areas of review of related literature. The third chapter is about the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter is all about data analysis, interpretations and discussions of findings. The last chapter deals with conclusions and recommendations. Finally, lists of bibliography and appendices are included.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Assessment Defined

Lambert and Lines (2002:2) indicate that assessment is “the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about pupil’s responses to additional tasks.” They mention that assessment takes place in formal context on informal setting. The assessment includes responses to different kinds of students’ activities. In related to this, Brown (2004) states that assessment as “an on going process that encompasses a much wider domain.” For Brown, teachers consciously or unconsciously assess their students in the classroom using different assessment mechanisms. In the same way Mc Tighe and Ferrara (1994) cited in puhl (1997:3) define assessment as “the process of gathering and interpreting information about learners from various sources to help EFL teachers understand the students and describe them.” Shaaban (2001:170) indicates that there is a close relationship between assessment and instruction in all academic settings. Assessment is important to help teachers make decisions about students’ abilities in different situations.

Norris (2000:19) defines language assessment as “the process of using language tasks to accomplish particular job in language classrooms.” Information is gathered in a systematic way by using language assessment instrument such as oral interview, and depending on the gathered information teachers make interpretation. He indicates that language assessment is much more than giving a language test. It incorporates the whole process of test use. The main purpose of language assessment is to gather information that helps teachers make decisions and to take actions in language teaching and learning process. Supporting this, Njabili (1995) cited in Dereje (2010:26) states that assessment is “the process of collecting, synthesizing and interpreting information to aid classroom decision making.” Thus, assessment encompasses all methods and procedures which are used by teachers to gather information about what is going on in the classroom and the effect it has on students’ learning.

2.2 The Why of Continuous Assessment

Assessment should mainly be used to improve the teaching learning process even though it is important to judge the achievement of students at the end of a semester as conventional assessment focuses (Plessis et al 2003; Passigna, 2002; Ellington and Earl, 1997). Hence, they advocated a paradigm shift from conventional assessment to continuous assessment. The central characteristic of this shift is the moving of assessment from a judgmental role to a developmental role. This move reflects evolving ideas on the nature of assessment and its purpose (Puhl, 1997:3).

Many reasons are provided for using continuous assessment in schools and colleges by different scholars. Continuous assessment is a way of collecting information about students to find out the strengths and weaknesses of them and provide essential remediation in order to maximize their learning. Bock, Elago and Kunyanda (2003:9-10) pointed out the following reasons as to why continuous assessment is carried out in language classrooms.

It helps:

- diagnose learners strength and needs so that appropriate teaching is provided.
- provide feedback to teachers about how well they are teaching so that they can make needed change and continue doing things that are effective.
- inform and guide instruction. For example, to help a teacher decide if remedial teaching is needed by some learners or if the whole class needs more teaching on a topic.
- inform learners how well they are learning so they continue to do good work and so that they know when they need to improve.
- make clear to learners what they are expected to learn.
- motivate and focus learners attention and effort to help them learn better.
- evaluate and grade learner achievement.
- provide a record of progress for schools, parents and learners.
- predict a learners' readiness for future learning.
- provide a basis for instructional placement. For example, in groups during lessons, for remedial work, and for promotion).
- insure and improve the effectiveness of school.

Generally, it is possible to get regular information about teaching, learning and the achievement of objectives and competencies by assessing students continuously. In addition to this, teaching and learning is not a process that can be completed in a short period of time, so it requires on-going assessment.

2.3 Types of Assessment

There are different types of assessment which are identified by different scholars. Some of these types are indicated under this part.

2.3.1 Formative assessment: it is “evaluating students in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process” (Brown 2004:6). Accordingly, formative assessment helps student understand how they learn best and plan work with appropriate pace, access challenges. Besides, formative assessment provides the basis for effective feedback and feed forward for students to help them realize their unfulfilled potential, and provides experience and activities that enable students to involve them in assessment and monitoring their own achievements (Sadler 1989 in Lambert and Lines 2000; Yorke 2003).

2.3.2 Summative assessment: “determines end-of course achievement for assessing students’ grades or certifying mastery of objectives” (Miller and Linn 2005 in Dereje 2010:27). The aim of summative assessment is “to measure or summarize what a student has obtained and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction” (Brown 2004:6). In the same way Yorke (2003:2) indicates that summative assessment is used to determine the extent to which a student has achieved the outcomes specified in the curriculum design.

2.3.3 Placement assessment: “determines prerequisite skills, degree of mastery of course goals and/or best mode of learning” Miller and Linn (2005) in Dereje (2010:26). According to Liao (2006:2) the purpose of placement assessment is to place a student into an appropriate level of a language curriculum. Some proficiency tests and diagnostic tests can function as placement assessment.

2.3.4 Performance assessment: it is used to assess students’ engagement in tasks that requires students to be active participant such as manipulating materials, demonstrating skills, solving multistage problems or participating in a debate. (Ibid)

2.3.5 Diagnostic assessment: determines causes (intellectual, physical, emotional, environmental) of persistent learning difficulties. Liao (2006) stated that diagnostic assessment is used to diagnose a particular aspect of a language or curriculum. It can function to offer checklist of features of the teacher to use in pinpointing difficulties.

2.4 Differences between Formative Continuous Assessment and Summative Continuous Assessment

Other scholars grouped continuous assessment under formative assessment and summative assessment only. Nitko, (2004) in AED (2006) put their differences as follow:

Table 1: The differences between formative and summative assessment

Formative Continuous Assessment	Summative Continuous Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It occurs before and during instruction for the purpose of guiding learning and teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It occurs at the end of instruction for the purpose of evaluating students’ achievement of the curriculum objectives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is mostly informal assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is mostly formal assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment occurs frequently to guide teaching, give practice and provide feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment occurs periodically to determine, assign grades, certify attainment and in combination with other assessments to place students.

This implies that formative continuous assessment requires teachers to use the assessment results to improve students learning and guide teachers. This is to mean that formative continuous assessment is much more useful to students and teachers than summative continuous assessment.

Moreover, Eliss (2003) points out that continuous assessment is further divided into two: incidental and planned formative assessment.

These seem to be conceptually similar to the terms of formative and summative continuous assessment respectively.

Planned formative continuous assessment involves the classroom use of formal tests. Incidental formative continuous assessment, on the other hand, refers to the ad hoc assessment that teachers (and students) carry out as part of the process of performing a task that has been selected for instructional rather than assessment purposes (Eliss, 2003).

Moreover, Eliss (2003) confirms that incidental formative continuous assessment is more useful to both students and teachers than planned formative continuous assessment. Planned formative continuous assessment or summative continuous assessment is, however, found to be useful for minimizing the problems associated with accuracy and fairness of students' overall assessment which is pertinent in summative final examinations. Regarding the reasons for this, AED (2006) states the following points.

1. The time limits for examination are relatively short.
2. Only a small group of tasks can be administered during the time of an examination.
3. Students may know much more than can be asked on a "one shot" examination.
4. Students' illness and family problems can interfere with their ability to express what they know on the date of examination is administered.
5. Achievement can be demonstrated in several ways, not just in the way assessed in examination.
6. Some type of learning can be assessed best through longer term project, paper or out of school assignments (2006:3).

The assumption is that summative or planned continuous assessment, as it gathers information at regular intervals in a very continuous way, is likely to address the issues mentioned above. This is to say that grades obtained from a number of summative continuous assessment are more likely to be accurate and fair than an end of course final examination. In addition to this, Brown and Youle (1983) also confirm that examinations seem to be unfair. They state like this:

There is a tendency to treat assessment as one-term or once a year activity. This means that it is a particularly inappropriate method of assessing a student's language skills. It should be both more informative for the teacher and fairer to the student to have some continuous record of the students' language performance on different occasions and for different purposes (1993:104).

It seems thus evident that summative language assessment does not depict the overall abilities of learners. One of the reasons for this could be the lack of opportunity for terminal language examinations to include a variety of language assessment tasks, continuous assessment.

2.5 Effective Classroom Assessment

According to Lambert and Lines (2000:108) good assessment provides benefit for both teachers and students. It helps teachers plan future work. It also gives benefits to students by informing them standards they have reached and showing them what they need to do to improve their language skills. In addition, good assessment diagnoses the strength and weakness of students and it is constructively critical. Based on this, they indicate that in order to help students improve through effective feedback and feed forward, it is better if classroom assessment reach its formative potential. **(Ibid)**

Supporting what have been said above, Brown (1998) and Cohen (1994) cited in Norris (2000:19-21) mentions that in language classroom, effective assessment are used to:

Diagnose areas of learner need or sources of learning difficulties, reflect on the effectiveness of materials and activities, encourage students' improvement in the learning process, track learner development in the school language, and provide students with feedback about their language learning progress for further classroom based application of language assessment.

Since the benefits that continuous assessment provides for students and teachers are the same with what have been indicated above, continuous assessment in foreign language classes is very essential to help students learn the English language effectively.

2.6 An Essential Component of Continuous Assessment for Language Skills: Feedback

Feedback is regarded as the principal components of formative continuous assessment. For Eliss (2003) feedback is “a major goal of formative assessment.” Similarly, Shepard (2000) confirms that “providing feedback to the learners about performance will lead to self correction and

improvement.” This is to say that the teachers’ comments on students’ language performance not only indicate the strengths and weaknesses of students’ main language skills but they may also assist students in monitoring their own progress and identifying specific sub-skills to develop further.

They may highlight for teacher priorities in terms of future teaching, or recycling of points already covered.

Furthermore, Hedge (2000) points out that the feedback from classroom based continuous assessment has an impact role to play.

In addition to this, she goes on to note that some forms of assessments are explicitly intended to provide feedback to learners. A student knowing that performance has been good in a previous assessment can be a very positive motivator for further study. Specific feedback on strengths and weaknesses can aid study and help direct effort. The most useful (to learners) forms of feedback comprise descriptive comments arising from diagnostic analysis of performance.

It is important for teachers to obtain feedback from assessment as it is for students.

Brown and Youle (1994) also believe that feedback has a motivating effect on students’ classroom performance. They go on to say “receiving feedback can be an excellent motivator, especially when valid criticism is supported by appropriate praise and commentary.” This is to mean that students will be motivated if they are given fair and constructive feedback. This implies that while giving feedback to students’ language performance, teachers should begin with the positive sides of performance and proceed to the things that they feel the students need to improve.

Moreover, according to AED (2006), the most effective teachers do not routinely correct students’ errors directly. It goes to add.

In stead they ignore errors when they are in consequential to the solution process and forestall errors that the student has made previously by offering hints or leading questions. Only when the forestalling tactic fails to expert tutors intervene with a direct question intended to force the student to self-correct or they may engage in debugging, using a series of increasingly direct question to guide the student through the solution process (2006:10).

As stated above, this seems to be a balancing act that new teachers will learn to perform well. This is to say that teachers need to directly correct the students' error only when the indirect method of giving correction fails to achieve the desired process.

In general, Race, Brown and Smith (2005) in Baye (1998) summarize the basic features and functions of feedback in continuous assessment like this:

1. **Timely:** students should receive feedback on the performance based on the principle of providing opportunity for students to make improvement before proceeding to the next performance.
2. **Personal and individual:** feedback in continuous assessment should indicate each student's strength and weakness.
3. **Articulate:** feedback given to students should be simple and easy for them to understand.
4. **Empowering:** feedback should help students make progress.
5. **Manageable:** teachers need to make the necessary preparation before the delivery of feedback to students so that they can manage it easily.
6. **Developmental:** feedback should be detailed and informative so that both students and teachers can use it as an input for further decisions.

2.7 The Measurement of Performance in Continuous Assessment

According to AED (2006), continuous assessment requires the use of criterion referenced grading scale for assessing students' performance. As evident in this document, AED 2006, the underlying philosophy for criterion referenced and norm- referenced grading mode can be summarized like the following.

Table 2: The criterion-referenced and norm-referenced grading mode

Criterion-referenced grading model	Norm-referenced grading mode
- Focused on standard, learning objectives, and quality performance.	- High achievement means learning more than one's peers.
- High achievement means meeting the standards, achieving the learning objectives.	- Evaluation should make one competitive.
- Self-esteem comes from internal motivation that results from meeting the goals and standards.	- Self-esteem is achieved by being better than one's peers.

As can be seen above, the underlying principles for criterion-referenced model seem to be convincing. This is in fact, conceptually identical to the rating scales used for assessing language proficiency in most standardized examinations. Many language specialists, however, recommend rating scales to be used for measuring teacher-made informal classroom tests, too. Heaton (1990), for example, advises teachers to produce their own rating scales for assessing students' performance. Eliss (2003), unlike Heaton, however, argues that the use of standardize rating scales for assessing classroom based assessment fills the gaps created by teachers' deficiency in producing valid and reliable rating scales. However, for informal formative continuous assessment, Heaton, 1990 suggests that teachers should make notes about individual students' performance by using either a small card or note pad, Doff (1988), on the other hand, suggests the use of simple marking grids for measuring students' language performance. In general, it should be noted that teacher should share the assessment criteria with their students.

2.8 Assessment on the Views and Practices of Teachers

Views and practices of teachers are among the factors that affect the assessment of students accurately and fairly Pierce (2002). Most teachers state that they are not comfortable with the assessment type proposed by educational institutions. Teachers preferred to use the same type of assessment techniques they experienced when they were students (Pierce, 2002). (Genosee and Upshure ,1996 cited in Sileshi, 2007) explain that lack of time and facilities, teachers' knowledge and commitment, number of students and attitudes of teachers to assessment are constraints of assessing students.

Teachers do not have adequate understanding of continuous assessment (Black and William 1998). This constitutes a lot to their weak practices of continuous assessment. Nitko (2005) also indicates that teachers have incomplete understanding of continuous assessment and this has a negative impact on their implementation. Hence, it is necessary for teachers to revise their perception and practices of continuous assessment (MOE, Youth, and Culture Kingston, Jamaica, 2004).

The studies by Crooks (1998) and Black (1993) as cited in Black and William (1998:65) has pointed out the following problems that led teachers' practices to be weak in putting continuous assessment in to practice.

- The assessment practices usually encourage superficial and rote learning that concentrates on recall of isolated details, usually items of knowledge which pupils soon forget.
- Teachers do not usually review the assignment questions they use and do not discuss them with colleagues that lead teachers to have little or no reflection on what is being assessed.
- The emphasis of assessment is on grading function rather than the learning function of assessment.
- There is a tendency to use a normative rather than criterion based approach that emphasize competition between students rather than the personal progress of each. The evidence in such type of practices is that the feedback is to teach the weaker students visualize their own weakness that de-motivate and lose confidence in their own capacity to learn.

In order to implement continuous assessment effectively, teachers must have a full understanding of it. Nitko (2005:21) states this as follow:

...before institute instructors can teach teachers candidates the preceding [formative and summative] skills, it is necessary to have learned them. If the instructors do not have the knowledge and skills to apply formative continuous assessment and summative continuous assessment, then some in-service training will need to be delivered for those instructors at teacher training institutes.

Generally, it is essential and necessary to develop teachers' awareness of continuous assessment constantly through continuous training, workshop, seminars or any other program for the successful implementation of CA (Paigna, 2002; Pierce, 2002).

2.9 Assessment on the Views of Students

Students' views of assessment may have a great impact on achieving the goals of continuous assessment. Knowing the views of the students may provide valuable information to alleviate the problems that occur in the process of assessment (Crossman, 2004; Sambell and Johnson, 1998).

As some scholars indicated, most EFL students have preferred CA to conventional assessment. Reflection on learning assessment over a long period of time, ample feedback, cooperative

learning opportunities, greater sense of language progress and achievement are some of the tactics that make students have positive perceptions or views about continuous assessment (Apple and Shimo, 2004; Puhl, 1997).

However, the perception of EFL students on assessment may be affected by various factors. Firstly, students' perceptions of assessment can be influenced by their previous assessment experiences. If students had a painful past experiences, they would develop a kind of assessment avoidance behavior or the development of defense mechanisms attributing failure to assessment irrelevance (Crossman, 2004).

Secondly, the relevance of assessment to the real life experience may have an impact on students' views of assessment. According to Crossman (2004), when assessments are connected with the outside world of work, they may create a positive influence on students' learning. However, if there is no relationship between assessment and the actual activities of the outside world of work, students may develop a negative attitude towards assessment. Hence, EFL teachers should relate assessments with the situation of the real world and also explain the relevance of assessment to their students.

Crossman (2004) again explains that assessment anxiety can also affect the assessment views of students. Many students feel uneasiness when they think of or face many kind of assessment in their course. However, some assessment devices, such as examinations, oral presentations cause higher level of anxiety than other assessment devices. Many students indicated that they preferred exam-free courses particularly in situations when examinations are graded for certification.

In order to make students have more positive attitude towards continuous assessment, teachers should use continuous assessment for improving their instruction and students' learning. They should also encourage and involve students in the various aspects of assessment (NIED of Namibia, 1999 cited in Sileshi, 2007).

2.10 Advantages and Disadvantages of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment has its own advantages and disadvantages for teachers and students. This section discusses these things in the following manner.

2.10.1 Advantages of Continuous Assessment for EFL Teachers

The role of EFL teachers is to make sure that learners in EFL classroom have opportunities to succeed in their learning. They may do this by using different kinds of teaching techniques. But, this is not enough by itself. Learners should also be assessed continuously so that the progress of the learners is known. Plessis et al (2003:14) lists the following benefits of continuous assessment for teachers.

Continuous assessment may tell a teacher:

- Why learners are struggling with a topic or skills?
- What aspect of a topic?
- Which learners are grasping the topic and skills?, and
- Whether the teaching was effective at helping learners learn.

As indicated above, continuous assessment provides EFL teachers the chance to differentiate which learners are processing well and which learners are lagging behind. This in turn helps the teacher to make decisions on the kind of assistance they should give to the learners who are not processing well.

CA also informs EFL teachers which parts of the course are difficult for the learners. This enables the teacher to know what kind of remedial works they should give.

Moreover, continuous assessment may tell EFL teachers if their teaching has brought the expected changes on the knowledge and skills of the learners or not. This may make the teachers to be confident on what they are teaching.

2.10.2 Advantages of Continuous Assessment for EFL Learners

As indicated above, the basic aim of continuous assessment is to find out the problems of the learners and help them succeed in their learning. CA can promote this in many ways. When learners are assessed continuously, they get feedback from their teachers frequently. This helps the learners identify their problems and re-correct themselves or get correction from their teachers (Plessis et al, 2003; Pasiona, 2002; Pasiona, 2000).

CA can help learners get remediation. Plesis et al (2003:13) defines remediation as: "... a way of helping those learners who are learning the knowledge and skills more slowly than others in a class." After identifying the difficulties of learners by assessing continuously, EFL teachers can help the learners by preparing appropriate remedial works. Remediation can provide learners different ways of learning knowledge and skills. Passigna (2000:5) summarizes the reasons of giving remedial instruction in the following way. We provide remedial instruction because:

- We want every pupil in our class to succeed.
- We believe that every individual can be helped to succeed
- It is our responsibility to provide every child the opportunity to succeed in school.

CA can also help learners get enrichment activities. These activities may further develop the knowledge and skills that learners have got in their classroom learning.

To sum up, continuous assessment helps students follow up their progress, develop discipline in studying, get insight, be motivated and have realistic expectations (Passigna, 2002).

2.10.3 Disadvantage of Continuous Assessment for Language Learning

Although CA is a preferred way of assessing learners for some scholars, it is not without some disadvantages. These drawbacks are stated in some details below.

Learners who are assessed continuously may feel that they are always under surveillance/investigation for every mistake they make (Nitko, 2005; Plessis et al, 2003). This may have a negative impact on the learners' performance. Continuous assessment may also bring a profound negative effect if it is not well planned and properly practiced. To make it clear Ellington and Earl (1997) states that:

Unless continuous assessment is carefully planned and co-ordinate, there is a very real danger that students may be grossly over-assessed, particularly at certain times of the year. When several lecturers are asking for simultaneously for assessment to be handed in, continuous assessment can, if not properly managed, adversely affect the relationship between students and their tutors, with the latter being regarded with suspicious and (in some extreme cases) enmity and occasionally even introducing malpractice, as in imposing penalties for seeking help.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of continuous assessment, it is essential and to minimize the drawback. As Ellington and Earl (1997) point out EFL teachers need to have a well developed

knowledge and skills, and be creative in their implementation of continuous assessment. Teachers should also have a well organized plan of assessment to maximize the success of continuous assessment. “All the problem areas listed above can be overcome by carefully planning and good practice” (Ellington and Earl, 1997).

2.11. Devices of Continuous Assessment

For better language learning outcome, continuous assessment plays great role. This assessment has its own devices so as to improve learning and help teachers to collect appropriate information about the knowledge and skills of students (Nitko, 2005, et al., 2003). A single assessment device may allow EFL teachers to better assess a certain learning objective than another assessment device. For example, projects may be a better device to assess students’ speaking ability than multiple-choice tests. Moreover, students may show their ability of English language in one device better than in another (NIED, 1999; Puhl, 1997). Some of the devices of CA are discussed in detail below.

2.11.1 Self- assessment

Only little result is achieved in language teaching learning process without the active involvement of students. Learners are to be allowed to participate in the various aspects of classroom assessment. As Ellington and Earl (1997: online) “Students participation becomes a key component of successful assessment strategies at every step: clarifying the target and purpose of assessment, discussing the assessment methods, deliberating about standards for quality work, reflecting on the work.” Since learners are in charge of their learning, they should also be concerned about assessment. As Lissitz and Schafer (2002) state assessment is not a teacher centered activity that is done for EFL teachers’ needs. It is rather a learner-centered activity that typically aims at improving learners learning. EFL teachers should be aware of this and they should involve learners in assessment activities. When learners are given a chance to assess themselves, they develop a sense of confidence and responsibility for their own learning.

Self-assessment is a way that learners use to evaluate their performance. EFL learners can assess their learning if they are given proper condition (Puhl, 1997). Students should be provided with essential criteria and formats to carry out effective self-assessment. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John’s (2003:33) explains: “To help students, think about what they are doing and

what they need to do. They should be taught to ask the following questions during a self-evaluation exercise: what have I done well? What have I done not well? What do I need to do?"

Different assessment methods can be provided by EFL teachers, such as checklist, evaluation sheets and tutorial meetings to promote the assessment effectively. Lambert and Lines (2000:149) elaborate this by saying:

It [self-assessment] needs practice and it can lead to a deepening understanding of an individual's own strengths and how to counter weakness. Difficult to standardize and verify, through one of the benefits is to deepen a shared understanding of access criteria.

Participating students in assessing themselves helps EFL teachers share their responsibilities for students. It also enables students to know their position in relation to the objectives of language learning (Institute for Interactive Media and Learning, 2007; Plessis et al, 2003).

Even though self-assessment is that much essential, it has some problems. If it is not well planned and properly implemented, it may provide false data to teachers. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2002:33) states "There is a threat to validity where students are not honest about efforts and achievements"

EFL teachers should properly design and implement self-assessment so as to achieve the benefits it brings to the students language proficiency. They should orient students with the purpose, importance, criteria and formats of self-assessment (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000; Puhl, 1997). For students to develop the ability of assessing themselves, self-assessment should be incorporated in the various daily activities of the classroom. Black and William (1998:55) also assert this point "... self-assessment by the students is not an interesting option or luxury; it has to be seen as essential."

2.11.2 Peer-assessment

The other approach to obtain information about EFL students' learning is to use peer-assessment. It is an assessment type that allows students to assess their classmate's work. Puhl (1997:7) defines peer-assessment as: "... a response in some form to others work. It can be given by a group or an individual, and it can take any of a variety of coding systems: the spoken word, the written word, checklists, questionnaires, non-verbal symbols, numbers along a scale, colors, etc."

Peer- assessment gives chance for students to examine the works of other students and give constructive comments. The feedback that learners give about the works of their colleagues may provide useful information for both teachers and students (Plessis et al, 2003).

Peer-assessment can promote the building of learners’ ability of making independent judgments of their own and others’ work. Weaver and Cotrell (1986) state that peer-assessment can encourage a greater sense of involvement and responsibility, promote excellence, direct attention to skills and learning and provide increased feedback.

According to Brown (1996: online), peer-assessment has its own advantages and disadvantages and these are listed in the following table.

Table 3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Peer-assessment

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Peer-assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helps learners become more autonomous, responsible and involved. ▪ Encourages students to critically analyze work done by others rather than simply seeing a mark. ▪ Helps clarify assessment criteria. ▪ Gives students a wider range of feedback. ▪ More closely parallels possible career situations. where judgment is made by a group ▪ Reduces the marking load on the lecturer. 	<p>Students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack the ability to evaluate each other. ▪ Not take it seriously, allowing friendship, entertainment value, etc to influence their marking. ▪ Not like peer marking because of the possibility of being discriminated against, being misunderstood, etc. ▪ Misinform each other without teacher’s intervention.

Teachers of EFL should strive as hard as they could to maximize the strengths and minimize the drawbacks of peer-assessment. They can do this by clearly explaining the purposes, uses, principles and criteria of peer-assessment (Puhl, 1997).

2.11.3 Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio is an on-going assessment that is composed of purposeful collections that examines achievement, effort, improvement and processes, such as selecting, comparing, sharing, self-evaluation, and goal setting (Tierney, Carter and Desai as cited in Sileshi, 2007:22).

Portfolio is a meaningful collection of students' work that demonstrates the knowledge and skills students acquired in EFL classroom. Burke (1999:6) defines portfolio as "... a collection of students' work gathered for a particular purpose that exhibits to the students and others and it shows the students' efforts, progress or achievement in one or more areas." Portfolio is not a mere collection of learners' work; rather it is a purposeful activity that includes different contents. According to Gottlieb (1995), as cited in Puhl (1997:8), there are six portfolio prototypes. He lists these in ascending order of complexity based on purpose: collecting, reflecting, assessing, documenting, thinking and evaluating.

In the collecting stage learners store their works based on criteria pre-specified by the school, EFL department, or teachers or learners. The second stage is reflecting. In this stage, students reflect their views why they choose some of their works in the collecting stage. Burke (1999:70) states the importance of reflection in portfolio as:

A portfolio without reflections is a note book of stuff. The power of the portfolio is derived from the description, reactions, processing patterns and meta-cognitive reflections that help students achieve their goals.

Students should think about their thinking by reflecting how they succeed and why they fail in their learning. When students are aware of their language learning processes, they likely establish goals for their learning and they may also more involved in the processes (Burke, 1999). But it should be known that learners cannot develop the skill of reflecting at once. Hence, EFL teachers should encourage and assist learners with different ways to reflect on their learning effectively (Burke, Fogarty and Belgrad, 1999; Puhl, 1997).

Learners can assess the works they have collected by using different criteria. This may be done by self-assessment or peer-assessment, Puhl (1997:8) advocates this point by saying: “Certainly portfolio embrace peer-and self-assessment, and they may become a workhorse of continuous assessment.” Learners’ portfolio can be documented and used for further learning. Teachers can also use these for summative assessment.

Portfolio has its own strengths and weaknesses like other continuous assessment devices. Tierney, Cater and Desai (1999:59) express that portfolios help students:

- make collection of meaningful work;
- reflect on their strength and needs;
- set personal goals;
- set their progress over time;
- think about ideas presented in their work;
- look at a variety of work;
- see effort put forth;
- have a clear understanding of their versatility as a reader and a writer;
- feel ownership for their work;
- feel that their work has personal reference.

Ellington and Earl (1997: online) list the following weaknesses of portfolio in spite of the various advantages of it has.

- Portfolios take a lot of looking at! It can take a very long time to assess a set of student portfolios and do full justice to the work and effort that has gone into them.
- Portfolios are much harder to mark objectively than most other outcomes of students work. Because of the highly individual nature of portfolios, it is extremely decide on a set of assessment criteria which will be equally valid across a diverse set of portfolio.
- The ownership or provenance of the evidence presented in portfolios can sometimes be in doubt, particularly if the portfolio was compiled out with the setting in which it is being assessed.

Since portfolio is a valid continuous assessment tool, EFL teachers should utilize it systematically. They should plan and manage it properly and also pair it with other continuous assessment devices to minimize its drawbacks. As to this, Dickins (2000) states:

Making the best use of portfolios, it requires careful management on the part of the teacher. Students, too, need to be introduced to this mode of assessment and sensitized to the way in which portfolios can be used as the basis for dialogue with the teacher, identifying developments in their own work and monitoring their own progress.

2.11.4 Projects

Project work involves giving the students a project to complete in a specified amount of time. Project provides students a great chance to use and practice what they have learned in real life situation (NIED of Namibia, 1999) as cited in Sileshi (2007). It may encourage students to bring real problem into language classrooms. Project can involve various kind of activity. Trigwell (1992) states some of the activities students do in the project work as follows:

In [project work] students have to use their initiative to identify problems they wish to solve or questions they wish to explore, decide on the information, materials, equipment which they need and how they can obtain them, use this information to plan the work, attempt to solve the problem or answer the question and present their result coherently.

EFL teachers should plan and explain to their students how they are going to assess the activities they have given in a project work. If the teachers decide to assess the product of the project, they should consider as it is important to give feedback to every stage of the project process. Such kind of project should help the learning process. If EFL teachers do not give feedback on the activities of the project process, students may focus on the end product of the project by neglecting its process (Elton, 1987).

Project can be done individually or in group. Group projects may be easy to organize but it may not be simple to monitor and assess the participation of each student in the project (Baye, 2006; Brown, Bull and Pendlebury, 1997; James, 1994). Hence, EFL teachers should consider what the roles of each student in a group, how marks are given to a group and its members, how activities are done, etc. when they plan project work. Students should also be aware of these facts so that they try hard to achieve what is expected of them.

Project work can have various benefits for EFL students. According to A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000), students develop the skill of dealing with their own problems as they are encouraged to do project based on problems of their own. This kind of opportunity may allow students to show their hidden talents which may not be seen written or oral test. Group project give chances for students to share experiences with their colleagues. They also provide opportunity for students to get exposure to several language items and language functions. This in turn may help students develop fluency in the target language (Nation, 1993).

Project work can cause potential problems if they are not properly handled even though they provide students various advantages. Mostly projects are done in a home environment. If parents or other persons do the whole project work, the students may learn little from the project work (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's 2000). Project may also be time consuming when they are done and marked.

EFL teachers should work a lot to minimize the problems and enhance the benefits of project assessment. The guidelines presented by A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000:30-31) For assigning and grading, projects may help alleviate the problems of project assessment and ensure students fully understand the project and have some basic methodology formulated. The teacher should be satisfied when students know how to complete a project before they begin work on it.

When EFL teachers assess the project work of students, they should consider the two aspects of the project: the process and the product. In the process assessment, EFL teachers can focus on student's willingness to be involved in the assigning task; taking additional tasks voluntarily; readiness of students to be commented; knowing the purpose of the project; giving encouragement to others; consideration of the needs of others; and the demonstration of the project process. These points can help the teachers assess the affective and the cognitive domains. On the other hand, the teachers can give attention in the attainment of the goals of the project when they assess the product of the project. Marks should be given in relation to the outcomes of the project (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's 2000).

In general, projects are widely accepted as a means of assessment in higher education. If project assessment is wanted to bring effective result, EFL teachers should take their time and plan, organize and grade projects properly (Baye, 2006).

2.11.5 Observation

Observation is the process of watching what students can say and do; and record what one had seen (Brooks, 2002; Maxwell, 2001). According to Crown (2007), in order to get information by observing students, EFL teachers should have observation skills: looking- what they are looking for; listening- focusing on the interaction of a student with others; recording- writing down important features of student's responses, behavioral, learning and development immediately after observation; thinking- thinking about what is observed and then assessing and planning; and questioning- asking in order to refine ideas about what is observed.

Observation is a day to day activity that EFL teachers do in language classrooms. It is part and parts of the teaching learning process. To reveal this, the Queensland School Curriculum Council Position and Guidelines on Assessment, as cited in Maxwell (2001) states as follow:

Observation involves teachers in observing students as they participate in the planned activities. Teachers' observation occurs continually as a natural part of the learning and teaching process and can be used to gather a broad range of information about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes.

Observation can help EFL teachers to know each student as an individual, because it provides information about students that cannot be obtained from other assessment techniques (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's 2000). For example, the process a student use when he expresses his ideas and views to his colleagues may provide the teacher valuable evidence about the performance of the student. The data collected by observation can be used to improve the teaching learning process as well as to judge the achievement of the students (Maxwell, 2001).

Even though observation has various uses as a means of assessment, some scholars argue that observation may not be a reliable way of collecting information about students. They say that the natural setting may not allow students to demonstrate what they know; EFL teachers may not observe the performance of students properly; teachers' judgments may not be reliable as all the students may not respond to a task equally; and teachers' judgments may be affected by several biases, such as gender, race, etc. (Maxwell, 2001).

Therefore, EFL teachers should work hard to minimize the above mentioned drawbacks. Teachers' observation is a useful means of assessment if it is well planned and implemented. Maxwell (2001:2) confirms this by saying:

Handled carefully, teacher observation can provide important evidence for assessment judgments. In some cases, they provide the only way of obtaining evidence about particular learning outcomes, especially those involving practical techniques, performance activities, 'real life' project and group work.

To enhance the reliability of observation as a means of assessment, EFL teachers should record what they have observed in language classrooms immediately after observation using different recording devices. According to A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000), there are three recording devices: checklist, anecdotal records and rating scales.

Checklists are lists of specific criteria that teachers can prepare using curriculum outcomes. Qualitative information is not included in checklists as it is difficult to value them objectively. Checklists show the presence or absence of particular language behaviors. They give immediate descriptive data and rapid feedback (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, 2000).

Anecdotal records allow for recording of in-depth observation and information. The anecdotal record must be based upon what actually was observed since it is a description of some specific episode (Maxwell, 2001).

It is not always convenient to make detailed anecdotal records during observation. Therefore, when the observation reveals important data about the student's development, the teacher can make notes of circumstances, dates and names. After the observation has been conducted, these notes can be used to write the actual anecdotal record. Interpretations should be kept separate from observation in the event the teachers would like a second opinion.

Rating scales are similar to checklists, but they also include a measure of performance quality. As an assessment instrument, a rating scale is useful in determining a student's strengths and needs and in planning a suitable program (Spandel and Stiggins, 1990).

2.11.6 Quizzes and Tests

In large language classrooms, quizzes and tests are widely used continuous assessment devices. These two terms differ in their purpose and dimension rather than in their item content. Tests are

pre-announced and they cover a particular unit of instruction. Unlike tests, quizzes may not be announced beforehand and they can be both in written and oral medium (Valette, 1977).

Well designed and administered tests or quizzes can have positive impact on the performance and achievement of students. These devices can improve the teaching learning process; develop students' confidence, and show students' strengths and weaknesses (Norirs, 2000; Taiwo, 1998).

According to Hedge (2000), good tests are tests that provide:

...the opportunity for learners to show how much they know about language structure and vocabulary, as well as how they are able to use these formal linguistic features to convey meanings in classroom language activities through listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Conventional assessments that are used for summative purposes contain useful information for teachers and students, but these assessments are usually too infrequent and come too late for action. Tests that are given before the end of a unit can provide both teacher and student with useful information on which to act while there is still opportunity to revisit areas where students were not able to perform well. Hence, tests and quizzes in continuous assessment can be used for reshaping the teaching learning process as well as for judging student's performance (Plessis et al, 2003; Struyven, Dochy and Janssens, 2002).

2.11.7 Learning Logs and Journals

The other type of continuous assessment device that can be employed by EFL teachers particularly in higher institutions is learning logs and journals. According to Burke (1999), logs can be made of short, objective entries of questions about the lecture or readings, lists of outside readings, homework assignments, and anything that can be recorded. Log entries are mostly brief, factual and impersonal. On the other hand, the content of reflective journals are responses of pieces of literature, description of events, reactions to events, reflection on personal experiences and feelings, and connection of lesson learned with life outside the classroom. Journal entries are often long, subjective, opinion-based and personal.

Brownlie et al (1998), as cited in Burke (1999), lists the following purposes of using learning logs and journals:

- To record key ideas from a lecture, movie, presentation, field trip, or reading assignments.
- To make predictions about what will happen next in a story, movie, experiment, the weather, or in school, national or world events.
- To record questions.
- To summarize the main ideas of a book, movie, lecture, or reading.
- To reflect on the information presented.
- To connect the ideas presented to other subject areas or to the student's personal life.
- To monitor change in an experiment or event over time.
- To respond to questions posed by the teacher or other students.
- To brainstorm ideas about potential projects, papers or presentations.
- To help identify problems.
- To record problem solving techniques.
- To keep track of the number of problems solved, book read, or homework assignments completed.

Learning logs and journals can be used to assess the different aspects of English language, particularly reading and writing skills. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, (2000:24) identifies the following benefits of learning journals:

Learning journals are quite acceptable as source of data concerning achievement. They are also, practical, since they are not time-consuming and they provide for increased achievement and provide for increased achievement and practice in such Language Arts areas as writing. Learning journals encourage reflective thought and meta-cognition as students are required to think about their learning.

Since these assessment devices are not a complete way of collecting information about students, it is important and necessary to use them systematically. EFL teachers should use these assessment devices with other ones in order to increase their reliability.

2.11.8 Interviews/ conferences

Teacher-student interviews or conference can be used to assess the progress and achievement of students. According to A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, (2000), these assessment devices give a good opportunity for EFL teachers to know the full picture of students' growth

and development. During an interview, EFL teachers get a chance to ask students various questions. This helps them explore several aspects of students' progress.

EFL teachers should fulfill certain conditions in order to implement teacher-student interviews or conference. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, (2000) states:

Where the teacher structures the interview to answer particular questions, these questions should be written down before the conference. The interview environment should be relaxed and non-threatening. The teacher should ensure the student is at ease. The students should be encouraged to do most of the talking or ask questions.

Even though teacher-student interviews or conferences are practical and direct way of gathering information about students, it is essential to make them reliable. EFL teachers should use these assessment tools with other assessment tools to increase their reliability (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, 2000).

2.12 Local Research Review

Some researchers have been conducted on the area of continuous assessment in EFL classes. For example, Nibret (2005) conducted a research on the evaluation of EFL teachers' implementation of continuous assessment. The research was conducted in the high schools in Amhara regional states. The objective of the study was to evaluate high school EFL teachers' implementation of continuous assessment. The methodology used in this study was survey method. Questionnaire and document analysis were instruments used to collect data. The result of this study showed that EFL teachers have not made continuous assessment as part of the instruction and they do not use different alternative tools of assessment.

Silesh (2007) conducted a study on the perception and implementation of continuous assessment of EFL teachers. This research was conducted in Debu Ethiopia Teachers' Education College. The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions and implementations of continuous assessment. The participants were 11 EFL teachers and 127 third year EFL students. Questionnaire and interview were used to gather data. The finding of the study revealed that EFL teachers of Debu Ethiopia Teachers' Education College had inadequate knowledge about the principles and purposes of continuous assessment. It is also indicated that the teachers used the

assessment primarily to judge the English language achievement of students and the teachers did not allow students to actively participate in the different aspects of the assessment process.

The other researcher who conducted a study on continuous assessment was Zergahun (2007). He carried out on the implementation of continuous assessment by EFL instructors. His research was done on Teachers' Education College of Hossana. The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of continuous assessment used by English instructors. Descriptive survey method was used for this study. Questionnaire, interview and document analysis were used as instruments to collect data. The result of the study indicated that EFL teachers do not implement continuous assessment at it should be although they are aware of the central place of assessment in the instructional process. In addition, it was found out that the teachers merely look up scores from randomly provided achievement.

The above local researches focused on perceptions and implementations of continuous assessment in EFL classes in Teachers' Education Colleges and high schools. There is no conducted research on this regard at primary/ grass root level and the differences in the implementation of continuous assessment in private and government schools. Thus, the purpose of this research is to compare the differences in implementing continuous assessment in selected government and private primary schools.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter presents the research methods employed in the study so as to compare the status, the challenges and their solutions in using continuous assessment in EFL classrooms at government and private primary schools. Thus, the chapter discusses subjects of the study, instruments used for the study, and procedure of data analysis. Closed-questionnaire, interview and data analysis are briefed under the instruments of the study.

3.1 Subjects of the Study

As the primary concern of this study is to compare the differences in implementing continuous assessment in selected government and private primary schools in EFL classes, the subjects include EFL teachers, EFL department heads and school principals. The subjects tried to give essential information for the development of the study.

There were 35 EFL teachers including two EFL department heads and four principals in a total of 39 subjects from four schools. Two of the schools were government primary schools and the other two were private primary schools. The two government primary schools were Hamle 19/1967 primary school and Kelem Amba primary school. The other two private primary schools were Ethio-parents' primary school and Amigonian primary school. All of the schools are found in Addis Ababa, Gulelle sub-city.

Sixteen teachers were selected from government primary schools. Seven and nine teachers were chosen from Hamle primary school and Kelem Amba primary school respectively. Out of nineteen teachers of private primary schools, twelve teachers were selected from Ethio-parents' primary school and the rest seven teachers were chosen from Amigonian primary school. These teachers were selected because they had more experience in continuous assessment than the rest of the schools around. One department head from two schools were selected to be interviewed. One of the two was from Hamle 19/1967 and the other was from Ethio-parent's. Moreover, the school principals of all of the four primary schools were chosen to give appropriate information about continuous assessment document through questionnaire.

3.2 Instruments Used for the Study

The choice of data collection methods is determined by the needs of a given research project and in particular by the research questions which are derived from the objectives of the study. Therefore, an attempt was made to include both data collection approaches which are called quantitative and qualitative methods.

However, the researcher came across with a pilot test on those selected schools. This test was a mini version of the full-scale study. It was used to develop and assess the adequacy of the research instruments used in this particular study. It also helped the conductor of the study collect preliminary data for better administration of the actual data instruments.

Based on this, four teachers were selected from each school and two principals from two schools (Amigonian primary school and Kelem Amba primary school). The pilot test brought about valuable comments shown as follow.

- Question number 4 required some sort of modification. In stead of saying 1,2,3 ..., which indicates infinite numbers, it must have been 1,2,3, ...9. Because the teachers were asked to prioritize the given nine reasons why they apply continuous assessment in EFL classrooms up to 9 only.
- Question number 18 and 20 did not have a binary “Yes” or “No” alternatives.
- Numbers were not stated on the level of scales for the answerers to describe difficulties of challenges of CA.
- On the questionnaire that was responded by school principals, there was a correction that was brought from typing error on the direction of the questions. It was written “EFL teachers instead of school principals.”

All the comments given above helped the researcher to make necessary modification for the actual administration of the data instruments. The instruments used in the study are briefed under.

3.2.1 Closed Questionnaire

This method was used to obtain information about the general views, practices and challenges of teachers regarding the current practice of implementing continuous assessment, and function of feedback along with continuous assessment devices for improving performance in EFL classes. To achieve this, a twenty-three item survey was developed by the researcher. Most of them were designed by a 1-5 likert scale, where 1 indicates strongly disagree, 2 indicates disagree, 3 stands for uncertain, 4 indicates agree and 5 is for strongly agree. There were also questions that were answered by 'Yes' or 'No'. Still other types of questions were prepared to identify how often teachers practice continuous assessment on different issues in EFL classes. These were answered by saying 'Always', 'Often', 'Sometimes', 'Rarely' and 'Never'. Moreover, other questionnaire was developed by using binary Yes/No checklist to get information about the mark books of continuous assessment from each schools because it was the most important evidence to compare the differences in implementing continuous assessment in EFL classes.

3.2.2 Interview

It was considered that interviews seek to understand the issues as seen by the respondents when deciding up on the technique (patton 1990). This is to say that the purpose of open-ended interview approach is to capture the points of view of other person.

The approach seeks to avoid predetermining persons' views through prior selection of questionnaire categories. Having this in mind, an attempt was made to obtain information, particularly about the practices, challenges and its solutions when teachers use continuous assessment in EFL classes through interview. To make this real, the researcher selected two department heads of English language from two schools through a purposive sampling technique: one from Hamle 19/1997 primary school and the other from Ethio-parents' primary school. Five questions were prepared based on the research questions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

3.2.3 Document Analysis

The document that EFL teachers used to record the students assessment activities were seen through document analysis. A checklist was prepared to be replied by the school principals of both types by saying either “Yes” or “No”. It was very important checklist that enabled the researcher to compare the documents of the schools concerned. This also helped to compare and cross check whether the data those were obtained from questionnaire and interview matched with the actual practice of recording of students’ activities of EFL teachers of the two types of schools.

3.3 Procedure of Data Collection

As it is mentioned above, data for the research were collected through questionnaire, interview and document analysis. To administer the questionnaire to the teachers, a short explanation was given on the purpose and how it is filled. The questionnaires were collected three days after they were administered. In the interviews, the consent of the interviewees was asked before it was conducted. Two days were given for the interviewees to think over the issues and come up with ideas of their own with this regard. The raw data obtained from interviews were in the form of recording. They were transcribed and the transcripts were read and re-read in order to have full understanding of the issue under discussion. This was accompanied by listening to the recording. Copies of mark books/mark lists of continuous assessment from each school were collected for comparing the differences.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

All the data collected were organized and enlarged in a way to answer the statement of the problem. As stated above, the study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data gathering tools. Consequently, percentages were calculated to analyze the raw data yielded by the closed questionnaires. Since the objective was to compare the differences in the implementation of continuous assessment in selected government and private primary schools in EFL classes, percentage is preferred. It was used to show what percent of the respondents used particular continuous assessment devices and the like. Data gathered qualitatively were analyzed through explanation about the issue under discussion. The data obtained through the three instruments were triangulated depending on their similarities. Therefore, in order to attain the purpose of the study, the analysis, interpretations and discussions of the data obtained through questionnaire, interview and document analysis from EFL teachers and school principals are presented in this chapter.

4.1 Implementation of Continuous Assessment (CA)

Under this section the analysis, interpretations and discussions of eight questions and one interview question which are categorized in four tables are presented. This results and discussions given under this part are about EFL teachers of both government and private primary schools responses on whether they use continuous assessment, reasons of using continuous assessment and how often they use continuous assessment devices.

Table 1: EFL teachers' responses about whether they use continuous assessment

No	Statement	Frequency		percentage	
		GPS	PPS	GPS	PPS
1	Do you use continuous assessment in EFL classes?				
	A. Yes	16	19	100%	100%
	B. No	–	–	–	–
	Total	16	19	100%	100%

As can be seen in the above table, for question number 1 which asks the EFL teachers whether they use continuous assessment or not. All of the respondents (100%) from both types of schools replied that they use continuous assessment in EFL classes.

In the interview, the EFL teachers were also asked the benefits students and EFL teachers are getting from implementation of continuous assessment. Both of the interviewees believed that the implementation of continuous assessment in EFL classes was helping both students and teachers. The teachers mentioned that continuous assessment helps them follow their students' performance and the effectiveness of teaching learning process. And they also said that it is used to see their progress. They also pointed out that continuous assessment assists them to identify the weaknesses and strengths of students and depending on that it helps both teachers and students improve their method of teaching. In other words it helps them identify the slow, the average and the fast learners. Moreover, the interviewee of government school claimed that continuous assessment benefits particularly teachers to future instructions so as to improve students learning.

The responses obtained from the EFL teachers of both government and private schools showed to the above questions and interview that the implementation of continuous assessment in EFL classes had provided some benefits for both EFL teachers and students.

Continuous assessment promotes frequent interactions between pupils and teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of the learners and helps adapt the instruction to the needs of all the learners. So all of them will have the chance to learn and succeed (Alausa, 1997; Plesis et al, 200

Table 2: EFL teachers' responses considering training they obtained on CA

No	Statements	GPS		PPS	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
2	Have you taken any training on the implementation of continuous assessment?				
	A. Yes	14	87.5	18	94.7
	B. No	2	12.5	1	5.3
	Total	16	100	19	100
3	If your answer to the above question is "yes", has the training helped you in implementation CA effectively?				
	A. Yes	14	87.5	17	89.5
	B. No	2	12.5	2	10.5
	Total	16	100	19	100

For items 2 and 3 in the above table, 87.5% of GPS's (government primary schools) EFL teachers mentioned that they had taken training on the implementation on continuous assessment and the training has helped them implement continuous assessment in a better way. In the same way, almost all PPS's (private primary schools) respondents (94.7%) replied that they had taken training on the implementation of continuous assessment for the better achievement of students' ability of language skills. This shows that if more trainings and workshops on the same issue are given on how to implement continuous assessment in EFL classes, a better result can be achieved. Nitko, 2005 states that continuous assessment should be used in every stage of the teaching learning process as it is an integral component of the instructional system.

Table 3: EFL teachers' responses on reasons of using CA

No	Statements	School	Fr. & %	Rank									total
				1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	
1	To shape and improve students' learning	GPS	Fr.	2	2	1	2	6	—	2	1	—	16
			%	12.5	12.5	6.25	12.5	37.5	—	12.5	6.25	—	100
		PPS	Fr.	5	4	2	1	3	1	1	—	2	19
			%	26.3	20.1	10.5	5.3	15.8	5.3	5.3	—	10.5	100
2	To assign grades to students	GPS	Fr.	—	5	3	—	3	3	—	1	1	16
			%	—	31.3	18.7	—	18.7	18.7	—	6.3	6.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	3	3	2	—	1	1	3	2	4	19
			%	15.8	15.8	10.5	—	5.3	5.3	15.8	10.5	20.1	100
3	To improve teaching	GPS	Fr.	3	1	2	2	4	1	1	2	—	16
			%	18.7	6.3	12.5	12.5	25	6.3	6.3	12.5	—	100
		PPS	Fr.	1	4	3	—	2	1	1	4	3	19
			%	5.3	20.1	15.8	—	10.5	5.3	5.3	20.1	15.8	100
4	To plan instruction	GPS	Fr.	2	2	1	2	—	2	6	—	1	16
			%	12.5	12.5	6.3	12.5	—	12.5	37.3	—	6.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	—	2	—	1	3	4	—	2	7	19
			%	—	10.5	—	5.3	15.8	20.1	—	10.5	36.8	100
5	To provide feedback to students	GPS	Fr.	2	1	3	—	1	4	2	1	2	16
			%	12.5	6.3	18.7	—	6.3	25	12.5	6.3	12.5	100
		PPS	Fr.	2	1	2	3	4	3	4	—	—	19
			%	10.5	5.3	10.5	15.8	20.1	15.8	20.1	—	—	100
6	To help students monitor their own learning	GPS	Fr.	1	1	1	3	1	—	3	4	2	16
			%	6.3	6.3	6.3	18.7	6.3	—	18.7	25	12.5	100
		PPS	Fr.	4	—	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	19
			%	20.1	—	10.5	15.8	10.5	15.8	10.5	10.5	5.3	100
7	To find out what students know and can do	GPS	Fr.	3	1	1	2	2	2	—	—	5	16
			%	18.7	6.3	6.3	12.5	12.5	12.5	—	—	31.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	1	2	1	5	2	3	1	4	—	19
			%	5.3	10.5	5.3	26.3	10.5	15.8	5.3	20.1	—	100
8	To provide all students with opportunities to show what they know	GPS	Fr.	1	2	1	1	1	3	—	2	5	16
			%	6.3	12.5	6.3	6.3	6.3	18.7	—	12.5	31.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	1	1	3	5	2	1	3	2	1	19
			%	5.3	5.3	15.8	26.3	10.5	5.3	15.8	10.5	5.3	100
9	To determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide	GPS	Fr.	—	2	2	3	—	—	1	7	1	16
			%	—	12.5	12.5	18.7	—	—	6.3	43.7	6.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	2	2	4	1	—	3	4	2	1	19
			%	10.5	10.5	20.1	5.3	—	15.8	20.1	10.5	5.3	100

As can be shown from the above table, 18.75% of GPS respondents indicated that their primary reason of using continuous assessment is to improve teaching and to find out what students know and can do. 12.5% of these teachers responded that their first reason of using continuous assessment is to plan instruction and to provide feedback to students while 6.25% of the respondents replied that their first reason of using continuous assessment is to help students monitor their own learning/achievement and to provide all students with opportunities to show what they know. No one was given the first rank as a reason to use continuous assessment to determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide and to assign grades to students from GPS teachers. 26.3% of PPS respondents, on the other hand, indicated that their primary reason to use continuous assessment in their EFL classes is to shape and improve students' learning. 20.1% of the teachers from the same school replied that helping students monitor their own learning/achievement is primary reason to use continuous assessment. No respondent of PPS claimed that planning instruction is their primary reason of using continuous assessment in EFL classes.

Among the lists given in the table, 12.5% of GPS teachers respondents gave the second rank as a reason of using continuous assessment to determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide, to provide all students with opportunities to show what they know, to plan instruction and to shape and improve students' learning while 31.25% and 6.25% of the respondents gave the second rank as a reason, to assign grades to students and to improve teaching respectively. 20.1% of PPS respondents gave the second rank as a reason to shape and improve students' learning and to improve teaching. Of these PPS respondents 10.5% of them gave the second rank as a reason of using continuous assessment in EFL classes to plan instruction, to find out what students know and can do and to determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide.

Assigning grades, providing feedback to students, improving teaching and determining what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide were given the third rank as a reason to use continuous assessment in EFL classes by 18.75%, 18.75%, 12.5% and 12.5 % of the respondents respectively (the total of 62.5%). 6.25% of the EFL teachers gave the third rank to shape and improve students' learning, to plan instruction, to help students monitor their own learning/achievement, to find out what students know and can do and to provide all students with

opportunities to show what they know. When it is seen the respondents of PPS, 20.1% of them gave the third rank as a reason of using continuous assessment to determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide. 10.5% of the teachers from the same school gave the same rank as a reason to assign grades, to shape and improve students' learning, to provide feedback to students and to help students monitor their own learning.

Finding out what students know and can do and providing all students with opportunities to show what they know were given the last rank by 62.5% of the respondents of GPS as a reason of using continuous assessment in EFL classes. Three reasons were given the last rank as a reason for the same issue: to provide feedback to the students, to help students monitor their own learning/achievement and to determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide. PPS respondents, on the other hand, gave the last rank to plan instruction and to assign grades which accounts 36.8% and 20.1% respectively. Three reasons were also given the last rank by PPS teachers. These were helping students monitor their own learning/achievement, determining what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide and providing all students with opportunities to show what they know.

To sum up, respondents from the EFL teachers of both GPS and PPS for item number 4 showed that the reason why the EFL teachers use continuous assessment varies from teacher to teacher. As it has been pointed out by scholars such as Plesis et al (2003), there are many reasons for using continuous assessment in the classroom.

Table 4: EFL teachers' responses on how often they use CA devices

No	Assessment devices	School type	Fr. & %	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	total
1	Portfolio	GPS	Fr.	1	2	2	6	5	16
			%	6.3	12.5	12.5	37.5	31.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	1	3	7	5	3	19
			%	5.3	15.8	36.8	26.3	15.8	100
2	Journals	GPS	Fr.	_	1	2	4	9	16
			%	_	6.3	12.5	25	56.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	_	2	5	5	7	19
			%	_	10.5	31.3	31.3	36.8	100
3	Conference interview and	GPS	Fr.	_	_	6	4	6	16
			%	_	_	37.5	25	37.5	100
		PPS	Fr.	1	_	10	6	2	19
			%	5.3	_	52.6	31.6	10.5	100
4	Observation	GPS	Fr.	1	5	5	2	3	16
			%	6.3	31.3	31.3	12.5	18.7	
		PPS	Fr.	11	4	2	2	_	19
			%	57.9	20.1	10.5	10.5	_	100
5	Self-assessment	GPS	Fr.	4	5	2	2	3	16
			%	25	31.3	12.5	12.5	18.7	
		PPS	Fr.	6	7	5	1	_	19
			%	31.6	36.8	26.3	5.3	_	100
6	Peer and group assessment	GPS	Fr.	5	5	3	2	1	16
			%	31.3	31.3	18.7	12.5	6.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	6	8	5	_	_	19
			%	31.6	42.1	26.3	_	_	100
7	Role-play	GPS	Fr.	1	5	7	2	1	16
			%	6.3	31.3	43.8	12.5	6.3	100
		PPS	Fr.	5	9	4	1	_	19
			%	26.3	47.4	20.1	5.3	_	100
8	Presentation	GPS	Fr.	3	2	5	3	3	16
			%	18.7	12.5	31.3	18.7	18.7	
		PPS	Fr.	7	10	2	_	_	19
			%	36.8	52.6	10.5	_	_	100
9	Test and quizzes	GPS	Fr.	12	3	1	_	_	16
			%	75	18.7	6.3	_	_	100
		PPS	Fr.	10	9	_	_	_	19
			%	52.6	47.4	_	_	_	100
10	Assignment	GPS	Fr.	8	7	1	_	_	16
			%	50	43.7	6.3	_	_	100
		PPS	Fr.	5	9	5	_	_	19
			%	26.3	47.4	26.3	_	_	100

As table 4 reads, 37.5% of GPS respondents indicated that they rarely use portfolio as a continuous assessment device. 31.25% of the respondents replied that they never use CA device while 21.5% responded that they use this assessment tool sometimes and oftentimes. Only 6.25% said that they always use portfolio as assessment device. Whereas 26.3% of PPS teachers claimed that they use portfolio rarely as a continuous assessment (CA) device. 36.8% answered that they apply this assessment device sometimes. 15.8% of the respondents said that they never use portfolio as an assessment tool. But 5.3% of them said that they always use it. Concerning the frequency the GPS teachers used journals, 56.25% of them replied that they never use it. The rest of the respondents, 12.5% and 6.25% indicated that they use journals as a CA device “rarely” and “Often” respectively. Regarding this assessment device, 36.8% of PPS respondents reported that they never apply it. 26.3% of the teachers of the same school pointed out that they use journals sometimes and rarely with equal percentage. This implies that teachers of neither government nor private schools used journals in a significant manner. But it is applied better in PPS’s than GPS’s.

The third item in the above table asks how often the EFL teachers use conference and interview as a CA device. For this item, 37.5% of GPS respondents claimed that they never use conference and interview as a tool of CA. The rest of the respondents 25% and 37.5% used this device “rarely” and “sometimes” respectively. PPS teachers on this regard said that they use this assessment tool sometimes and rarely, 52.6% and 31.6% respectively. 10.5% of them said that they never use it. This also indicated that this assessment device was better used in PPS than in GPS’s to some extent.

31.25% of GPS teachers replied that they use observation sometimes as a CA device. Again the same percent of these respondents said that they used observation oftentimes. 12.5% of those teachers indicated that they rarely use observation as an assessment tool while 18.75% of the GPS teachers said that they never use observation as a CA device. PPS teachers had different views from GPS teachers on this item. 57.9% of these teachers responded that they always use observation as a device in EFL classes. 20.1% of these respondents pointed out that they often use observation as a tool. Only 10.5% of them said that they never use it as a device in their classes. This also shows that PPS’s apply this assessment tool better than GPS’s.

Almost equal numbers of respondents from government and private schools (31.25% and 36.8%) indicated that they use self-assessment as a CA device in EFL classes. 31.6% of PPS respondents replied that they always apply self-assessment in their classes while 12.5% of GPS teachers said that they sometimes and rarely use it as a device.

Considering peer and group assessment, equal percentage of the respondents (31.25%) of GPS teachers mentioned that they apply “always” and “often” as a device in EFL classes. 18.75% of them said that they sometimes use them in their classes. Whereas PPS respondents indicated that they use peer and group assessment “always”, “often” and “sometimes” 36.6%, 42.1% and 26.3% respectively. This indicates that PPS teachers use this assessment device in a better manner when it is compared with GPS teachers.

For the item which asks how often they applied role-play as a CA device, 43.75% of the respondents of GPS’s replied that they use it sometimes. 31.25% indicated that they often use it. The rest of the respondents 6.25% and 12.5% said always and rarely respectively. 47.4% and 26.3% of the teachers of PPS replied “often” and “always” on the same regard.

31.25% of the respondents from GPS indicated that they sometimes use presentation as a continuous assessment tool while 18.75% showed that they always use it in EFL classes. 18.755% mentioned that they never use it as a CA device. On this regard PPS respondents showed that they have a better habit of using it as tool. 52.6%, 36.8% and 10.5% of the respondents pointed out that they apply presentation as one of the dominant CA devices “often”, “always” and “sometimes”. All of the respondents of PPS’s used presentation in one way or another better than GPS counterparts when it is compared.

For the next item which asks how often the English teachers put into operation tests and quizzes as a continuous assessment device, 75% of the respondents from GPS replied that they always employ it as a tool in EFL classes. The rest of the respondents from these schools said that they operate it, 18.75% and 6.25% said “often” and “sometimes” respectively. Respondents of PPS reported that they use this device as the most important assessment device in their classes. 52.6% and 47.4% of the respondents replied that they apply this “always” and “oftentimes” respectively. This indicates that this assessment device is the commonly used tool of both types of schools.

Finally, 50% of the answerers of GPS indicated that they always utilize assignment as a means of CA device in EFL classes. The rest of the respondents 43.75% and 6.25% replied “often” and “sometimes” respectively. Assignment is also used as a device in PPS’s. 47.4% of the respondents from these schools showed that they often employ assignment as a CA device in EFL classes while the remaining repliers 26.3% said “always” and again the same percentage of the respondents claimed that they sometimes direct it as a tool.

To sum up, the EFL teachers for the aforementioned item seem to indicate that they do not frequently used a variety of continuous assessment device in EFL classes. This contradicts with what is expected to be done when CA is implemented in the classes. That is, putting into practice different approaches and evaluation tools in the process of assessing the learners is essential for the purpose of grading and improving learning and performance of the students (Ajuonmna 2007; Alausa 2003; Owolabi 2008).

However, private primary schools (PPS’s) realized variety of CA devices when it is compared with that of government primary schools (GPS’s) in EFL classes. This enable the students improve their learning. Nitko (2005:14-15) explains how the various CA devices can be used for different instructional purposes. Pre-test and group discussion can be used to plan instruction, observation and oral questioning to monitor learning or give feedback that improves learning, project/assignment and independent investigations to see if pupils can apply that they have learned and end-of- unit tests to assign grades.

It seems that government primary schools used CA devices particularly to make judgment on language achievement of the students when it is compared with private primary schools. In other words, teachers of GPS’s used CA devices mainly for summative rather than formative purposes. This means that they focused on the product than the process.

4.2 Provision of Criteria and Instructions when Continuous Assessment Devices are used

Under this section, one table which contains three questions about the EFL teachers’ practice of giving criteria and instructions when they use CA devices is discussed.

Table 5: EFL teachers' responses considering their usage of criteria and instructions when they apply CA

No	statements	schools			
		GPS		PPS	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
6	When you assess students using assessment device, do you have criteria which grade you choose the device? A. Yes B. No Total	14 2 16	87.5 12.5 100	17 2 19	89.5 10.5 100
7	If your answer to the above question is “yes”, do you share the criteria with the students? A. Yes B. No Total	14 2 16	87.5 12.5 100	16 3 19	84.2 15.8 100
8	When do you use these devices, do you give clear instructions to students on how they perform the tasks using the devices? A. Yes B. No Total	15 1 16	93.7 6.3 100	19 – 19	100 – 100

For item number 6 in the table above, 87.5% of GPS respondents pointed out that they have criteria which guide them to choose appropriate CA devices they use and 12.5% of the respondents replied that they do not have criteria. Among 19 respondents of PPS 89.5% reported

that they have criteria which guide them to choose right device while 10.5% said that they do not.

87.5% of GPS respondents indicated that they share the criteria with the students while 12.5% do not share with their students. On the same issue 84.2% of PPS respondents replied that they share the criteria. Only 15.8% of them did not share it with their students.

With regard to giving instruction 93.5% of GPS respondents gave clear instructions to students on how they perform the tasks using the devices. But only 6.25% of them said that they do not give it to students. On PPS, all of the respondents gave instructions to their students on how to perform the tasks using the devices. These also seem to go with the idea of different scholars such as Lambert and Lines (2000) that indicate continuous assessment should be criteria referenced and there should be shared understanding of the criteria between teachers and students.

4.3 Feedback Provision during Continuous Assessment

In order to identify the kind of feedback EFL teachers provide to students when they implement CA and how often they provide the feedback, the analysis, interpretation and discussions of four questions (question number 12 has six sub-items) and one interview question are presented in this section.

Table 6: EFL teachers' responses about feedback provision

No	Statement	Schools			
		GPS		PPS	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
9	When you use continuous assessment, do you provide feedback? A. Yes B. No Total	16 – 16	100 – 100	19 – 19	100 – 100
10	If your answer to the above question is “yes”, do you provide feedback on time? A. Yes B. No Total	15 1 16	93.75 6.25 100	18 1 19	94.7 5.3 100
11	How do you provide feedback? A. To individual students depending on their performance. B. To the whole class by generalizing the feedback. C. To both individual and the whole class. Total	1 7 8 16	6.25 43.75 50 100	2 8 9 19	10.5 42.1 47.4 100

All teachers' respondents, (100%) of both GPS and PPS indicated that they provide feedback to students when they use CA while 93.7% and 94.7% with almost equal number of the respondents from each school replied that they provide the feedback on time and a small number of respondents 6.25% and 5.3% from both types of schools replied that they do not provide the

feedback on time. For item number 11 in the above table which asks how the EFL teachers provide feedback to individual students and the whole class, 43.75% of GPS respondents said that they provide feedback to the whole class generalizing the feedback. Only a small number of them (6.25%) responded that they give feedback to individual students depending on their performance. With this regard, 47.4% of PPS repliers said that they give feedback to both individual and the whole class.

Depending on the responses obtained from the EFL teachers of both type of schools (GPS's and PPS's) in items 9 to 11, it is possible to conclude that although all EFL teachers express that they provided feedback to students, the kind of feedback the EFL teachers provided to the students is mostly general feedback to the whole class and very few of the teachers provided specific feedback to individual students. However, as it has been indicated by Lambert and Lines (2000) to maximize effectiveness, feedback given to students during assessment should be conducted at the level of individual learners and also the feedback should be more than correction of errors. Thus, based on the idea given by the scholars, the practices of EFL teachers of both GPS and PPS seem to be in the wrong direction.

Table 7: EFL teachers' responses on how often they provide different feedback

No	Types of feedback	School type	Fr. & %	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	total
12.1	Pointing the error and asking the students to self-correct	GPS	Fr.	9	3	3	–	1	
			%	56.25	18.75	18.75	–	6.25	100
		PPS	Fr.	6	10	2	–	1	19
			%	31.6	52.6	10.5	–	5.3	100
12.2	Commenting an error and explaining why it occurred	GPS	Fr.	8	6	2	–	–	16
			%	50	37.5	12.5	–	–	100
		PPS	Fr.	12	4	3	–	–	19
			%	63.2	20.1	15.8	–	–	100
12.3	Asking another student to correct the error.	GPS	Fr.	7	6	1	2	–	16
			%	43.75	37.5	6.25	12.5	–	100
		PPS	Fr.	10	5	2	2	–	19
			%	52.6	26.3	10.5	10.5	–	100
12.4	Writing the students' error on the board to give others the chance to correct	GPS	Fr.	5	9	1	2	–	16
			%	31.25	56.26	6.25	12.5	–	
		PPS	Fr.	9	6	4	–	–	19
			%	47.4	31.6	20.1	–	–	100
12.5	Giving criticism for the students wrong answers	GPS	Fr.	1	3	–	–	12	16
			%	6.25	18.75	–	–	75	
		PPS	Fr.	3	1	2	5	7	19
			%	15.8	5.3	10.5	26.3	36.8	100
12.6	Giving appreciation for the students' performance	GPS	Fr.	10	3	2	1	–	16
			%	62.5	18.75	12.5	6.25	–	100
		PPS	Fr.	13	5	1	–	–	19
			%	68.4	26.3	5.3	–	–	100

In the above table, six items are given to identify how often EFL teachers provide different kinds of feedback in both types of schools to students when they use continuous assessment. 56.25% of the respondents from GPS indicated that they always provided feedback by pointing out the errors and asking the students to self correct while 52.6% of PPS respondents assured that they often provide feedback by pointing the error and asking the students to self correct.

Again 18.75% from GPS and 10.5% from PPS respondents replied that they sometimes provide feedback by pointing the error and asking the students to self correct. Very small number from both types of schools (6.25% to GPS and 5.3% to PPS) replied that they never provide feedback by pointing the error and asking the students to self correct. 31.6% of PPS respondents

mentioned that they always give feedback by pointing the errors and asking the students to self correct.

For the second item in the above table which asks how often the EFL teachers provide feedback by commenting on an error and explaining why it occurred. 50%, 37.5% and 12.5% of GPS respondents replied “always”, “often” and “sometimes” respectively. On the other hand, 63.2%, 20.1% and 15.8% of PPS teachers pointed out “always”, “often” and “sometimes” one after another. This indicates that both of the types of schools provided feedback almost in the same way on this regard.

43.75% from GPS and 52.6% from PPS respondents showed that they always provided feedback by asking another student to correct the error. 37.5% and 26.3% of the respondents reported that they often provided feedback by asking another student to correct the error of GPS and PPS respectively. 12.5% of GPS teachers replied that they never provide feedback in the same way. 10.5% of PPS respondents claimed that they never provide feedback by asking other students to correct the error.

Above half of the respondents (56.25%) of GPS reported that they often provide feedback by writing the students’ error on the board to give others the chance to correct. 31.25% of them said that they always provided feedback in the same manner. Only 6.25% of the answerers of GPS mentioned that they sometimes provide feedback by writing the students’ error on the board to give others the chance to correct. On the other hand, 47.4% of PPS respondents mentioned that they always provide feedback in the same way while 31.6% and 20.1% replied “often” and “sometimes” respectively. 5.3% of the same school respondents replied that there is no feedback given by writing the students error on the board to give others the chance to correct.

75% of the respondents from GPS said “never” for the item which asks how often they provided feedback by giving criticism for students’ wrong answers. 26.3% of PPS respondents said the same on this regard. 18.75% of GPS respondents showed that they often provide feedback by giving criticism for the students’ wrong answers. 15.8% of PPS teachers responded that they provide feedback in the same way.

For the same item above, 10.5% of PPS respondents replied that they sometimes provide feedback by giving criticism for the students’ wrong answers. As it has also been indicated by

scholars such as Plesis et al (2003) since negative feedback can affect students' learning negatively, it is expressed to be avoided. In this case most of the EFL teachers seem to agree with this scholars' idea.

For the sixth item in the above table which asks how often the EFL teachers appreciate students for their good performance, 68.4% of PPS respondents replied always while the rest 26.3% and 5.3% replied "often" and "sometimes" respectively. With regard to GPS respondents, 62.5% said that they always provide feedback by giving appreciation for the students' performance while the remaining 18.75%, 12.5% and 6.25% mentioned "often", "sometimes" and "rarely" respectively. This shows that EFL teachers often appreciate students for their good performance. Since appreciation is a positive feedback, it can be used to encourage students (Plesis et al 2003). However, if it is not given with specific feedback which indicates how to improve, it can lack its effectiveness (Lambert and Lines 2000).

In order to support the above question, two EFL department heads from government primary school and private primary school were also interviewed on how they provide feedback to students. One of the interviewee from government primary school stated that most of the time they gave general feedback to the whole class due to large number of students in the class and time constraints. They were unable to give specific feedback to individual students. However, he said that they rarely provide feedback individually in different ways depending on the kind of topics or skills they are assessing. He also said that they provide feedback by asking another student to correct the error. The other interviewee from private primary school suggested that they provide feedback by making students give it for the whole class. He also adds another way of providing feedback by telling the students what they have done and what they should improve on different assessment activities.

In general, the results discussed above in the questionnaire and interview seems to show that most of the time the EFL teachers of either government or private school provided general feedback. Even though this kind of feedback can be important sometimes as it has been indicated by scholars in order to make the provision of feedback effective in CA, giving specific feedback at individual level is advisable (Lambert and Lines 2000; Plesis et al 2003 and Yorke 2003). This can show that the kind of feedback suggested by scholars and the EFL teachers of both primary schools are not in the right truck.

4.4 Provision of Remediation and Enrichment Activities

This part contains the analysis, interpretations and discussions of six questions which focus on the provision of remediation and stimulation activities by EFL teachers of both types of schools during the implementation of CA.

Table 8: *EFL teachers’ responses on provision of remediation and additional stimulation activities*

No	Statements	Schools			
		GPS		PPS	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
13	Does continuous assessment help you identify fast and slow learners? A. Yes B. No Total	14 2 16	87.5 12.5 100	19 - 19	100 - 100
14	If your answer to the above question is “yes”, do you provide feedback? A. Yes B. No Total	13 3 16	81.25 18.75 100	18 1 19	94.7 5.3 100
15	If your answer to the above question is “yes”, how do you provide the remediation? A. Re-teaching the difficult topics before testing. B. Giving independent practice before testing. C. Advising the students to do better the next time. Total	12 3 1 16	75 18.75 6.25 100	13 4 2 19	68.4 20.1 10.5 100
16	Before providing remediation, do you try to find out why students are not learning? A. Yes B. No Total	3 13 16	18.75 81.25 100	16 3 19	84.2 15.8 100
17	Do you facilitate situations for students to provide remediation to each other? A. Yes B. No Total	3 13 16	18.75 81.25 100	18 1 19	94.7 5.3 100
18	Do you provide enrichment activities (stimulation) for learners? A. Yes B. No Total	2 14 16	12.5 87.5 100	17 2 19	89.5 10.5 100

For item number 13 in table 8, 87.5% of GPS respondents indicated that CA help them identify fast and slow learners. All of the respondents of PPS replied that CA helped them identify fast and slow learners. Out of 14 respondents who replied “yes” to item number 13, 81.25% of them said that they provided remediation (additional help) to slow learners. Again out of 19 respondents of PPS 94.7 % of them provided remediation to their students. For item 15, 75% of GPS respondents mentioned that they provide remediation by re-teaching the difficult topics before testing while 68.4% of PPS teachers provided it in the same way. There is a similarity in the provision of remediation for both types of schools here. 20.1% of the respondents of PPS said that they also provide it by giving independent practice before testing while 18.75% of GPS teachers replied that they provide remediation by giving independent practice before testing.

For item 16 which asks whether the EFL teachers try to find out why students are not learning before providing remediation. 16 teachers which mean 84.2% of PPS reported that they try to find out why students are not learning while small number of teachers from GPS which accounts 18.75% only tried to find out why students are not learning. There is a huge gap between them on this regard when it is compared simply.

In item number 17, 94.7% of PPS respondents reported that they facilitated situations for students to provide additional help to each other while 5.3% of them did not do that. 81.25% of GPS teachers, on the other hand, replied that they do not facilitate situations for the students to provide additional help. But this response contradicts with their answers they gave earlier in item 14. In item 14 GPS respondents said that they provide remediation in considerable amount. So how could it be possible if situations were not facilitated?

Most of the respondents of PPS (89.5%) reported that they provide enrichment activities (stimulations) for learners. Whereas GPS respondents claimed that only 12.5% replied that they provide enrichment activities to their students in EFL classes. There is a big difference between the schools with this regard. Stimulation brings students to a good position if it is properly provided and GPS teachers should do something important on this issue.

Depending on the responses of the EFL teachers to items 15 to 18, it is possible to say that CA help the EFL teachers identify fast and slow learners as stated by Plesis et al (2003).

4.5 Scoring and Recording

Three questions were given to the EFL teachers in order to identify the ways the EFL teachers score and record continuous assessment. In addition, the EFL teachers' CA record books were also analyzed. This part is about the analysis, interpretations and discussions of these questions and document analysis.

Table 9: EFL teachers' responses considering scoring and recording CA tasks

No	Statements	Schools			
		GPS		PPS	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
19	When you score the assessment work of students, do you depend on what? A. The competence of students. B. Pre-set criteria. C. Both the competence and pre-set criteria Total	11 2 3 16	68.75 12.5 18.75 100	– 1 18 19	– 5.3 94.7 100
20	Do you have a record book for students' assessment activities? A. Yes B. No Total	16 – 16	100 – 100	19 – 100	100 – 100
21	If your answer to the above question is "yes", how do you record students' results? A. By writing the marks only. B. By writing the marks with additional comments or suggestions. Total	16 – 16	100 – 100	12 7 19	63.2 36.8 100

For the question which asks what the EFL teachers depending on when they score the assessment works of students, 68.75% of GPS respondents indicated that they depend on the competence of the students whereas 94.7% of PPS respondents showed that they depend on the competence and pre-set criteria. For item 20, all respondents in both GPS and PPS claimed that they have a record book for students' assessment activities. Out of the respondents who indicated that they have assessment record books of GPS, all of them said that they record students' assessment activities/results by writing the marks only. In the same way 62.2% of PPS respondents replied that they record it in the same manner. Only 36.8% of PPS teachers said that they have it by writing the marks with additional comments or suggestions. But there is no comment or suggestion on the mark book they were using. Even though these teachers said this, the record books do not contain additional comments/suggestion (we can see this from the appendices).

In order to supplement the responses obtained from the above questions, the assessment record books of the EFL teachers from the selected government and private schools were analyzed depending on the prepared checklist. The results of the document analysis also showed that all the EFL teachers had assessment record books and recorded the students' results of assessment works. GPS's recorded only the results of the students. The assessment devices were not mentioned totally. However, PPS teachers indicated some of the kinds of assessment devices used in the assessment record books. Very few of the assessment record books of PPS's showed what work has been completed successfully and less successfully by the students. None of the assessment record books of GPS's and PPS's indicate the content coverage and the context of skills work. Additionally, none of the EFL teachers' assessment record books provided subject specific analysis of the next steps for individual students feeding forward to the next topic based up on the particular chosen assessment focus. In other way, all the assessment record books, particularly GPS's, could provide the basis for a detailed summative report to be completed for the students and other concerned bodies.

Depending on the responses obtained from the EFL teachers to questions 19-21 and the document analysis carried out, it is possible to sum up that the ways the EFL teachers recorded the continuous assessment results of the students had more or less similar with the way traditional assessment is recorded. As a result, there is a difference between what is suggested in the literature by scholars such as Lambert and Lines (2003) and what the EFL teachers did.

4.6 Challenges Faced during the Implementation of CA and Its Solutions

In order to identify the challenges EFL teachers face when they implement CA and how they overcame the challenges, two questions (questions number 22 and 23 which contains seven sub-items) and two interview questions were given to the teachers. In this part the analysis, interpretations and discussions of these questions are presented.

Table 10: *EFL teachers' responses on whether they face challenges or not in implementing CA*

No	Statement	Schools			
		GPS		PPS	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
22	Do you face challenges when you implement CA?				
	A. Yes	16	100	19	100
	B. No	–	–	–	–
	Total	16	100	100	100

For item number 22, all of the respondents of both types of schools (100%) replied that they face challenges when they implemented CA in EFL classes. As it is stated in literature by scholars such as Alausa 1999; Quansah 2005; Yorke 2003, it is common to face challenges during the implementation of CA.

Table 11: EFL teachers' responses on level of difficulties of challenges in carrying out CA

No	Description of challenges	School type	Fr. & %	Level of difficulties of challenges					total
				1	2	3	4	5	
23.1	Large students' population in a class.	GPS	Fr.	1	2	–	2	11	16
			%	6.25	12.5	–	12.5	68.75	100
		PPS	Fr.	7	5	3	4	–	19
			%	36.8	26.3	15.8	20.1	–	100
23.2	Lack of time to assess students continuously.	GPS	Fr.	4	6	3	2	1	16
			%	25	37.5	18.75	12.5	6.25	100
		PPS	Fr.	3	1	11	2	2	19
			%	15.8	5.3	57.9	10.5	10.5	100
23.3	The demand on other activities.	GPS	Fr.	2	3	6	2	3	16
			%	12.5	18.75	37.5	12.5	18.75	100
		PPS	Fr.	2	6	8	2	1	19
			%	10.5	31.6	42.1	10.5	5.3	100
23.4	Lack of time from students to devote to assessment tasks.	GPS	Fr.	1	3	7	3	2	16
			%	6.25	18.75	43.75	18.75	12.5	100
		PPS	Fr.	–	9	3	6	1	19
			%	–	47.4	15.8	31.6	5.3	100
23.5	Emphasis on summative (final exam) because of an increasing concern with the attainment of standards	GPS	Fr.	3	4	8	1	–	16
			%	18.75	25	50	6.25	–	100
		PPS	Fr.	4	6	4	4	1	19
			%	20.1	31.6	20.1	20.1	5.3	100
23.6	Lack of supportive resources for the implementation of CA. e.g. stationery.	GPS	Fr.	4	3	2	2	5	16
			%	25	18.75	12.5	12.5	31.25	100
		PPS	Fr.	6	1	5	4	3	19
			%	31.6	5.3	26.3	20.1	15.8	100
23.7	Lack of administrative support to conduct CA.	GPS	Fr.	3	7	3	1	2	16
			%	18.75	43.75	18.75	6.25	12.5	100
		PPS	Fr.	8	–	7	2	2	19
			%	42.1	–	36.8	10.5	10.5	100

As it can be seen in the above table, out of the 16 EFL teachers' respondents of GPS's who said they face challenges when they use continuous assessment in EFL classes. 68.75% of them indicated that large students' population in class is very critical challenge. The rest of the respondents, a total of 31.25%, replied that large students' population in class is critical and moderate challenge. For this item, the reverse is true in the case of PPS's. The schools' respondents replied that large students' population is not a challenge or is a slight challenge (63.2%). The rest 36.8% indicated that it is moderate and critical challenge. This shows that there is large number of students in GPS's than PPS's that makes difficult to carry out CA in EFL classes. For the second item in the above table, 37.5% of GPS's respondents said that lack of time to assess students continuously is a slight challenge and a quarter of them (25%) pointed out that it is not a challenge. 57.9% of PPS respondents claimed that lack of time to assess students continuously is a moderate challenge while 15.8% showed that it is not a challenge. The rest mentioned that it is either critical or very critical challenge. To the next item, 37.5% of GPS respondents reported that the demands on other activities is a moderate challenge while 15.8% of them said that it is not a challenge. However, 42.1% of PPS teachers indicated that the demand on other activities is a moderate challenge while 10.5% of them said that it is not a challenge. For this item, both of the schools are facing almost similar challenges.

For the forth item in the above table, 43.75% of GPS teachers reported that lack of time from students to devote to assessment tasks is a moderate challenge. But 18.75% of these respondents indicated that it is a critical challenge. Only 6.25% of them said that it is not a challenge. As it is shown from PPS teachers' responses, lack of time from students to devote to assessment tasks is a slight challenge (47.4%) and only 5.3% of them mentioned that it is a critical challenge. This shows that in one or another way GPS student are busy doing other things rather than CA tasks given to them though there is a slight challenge in PPS's. Half of the respondents of GPS, 50%, replied that emphasis on summative assessment because of an increasing concern with the attainment of standards is a moderate challenge while a quarter of them said that it is a slight challenge. To PPS respondents 31.6% of them showed that emphasis on summative assessment is also a slight challenge while 20.1% of them mentioned that it is not a challenge. Still 20.1% of these respondents said that it is both critical and very critical challenge. This indicates that teachers of both types of schools have various stands on this item.

A quarter of the respondents of GPS (25%) replied that lack of supportive resources for the implementation of CA is not a challenge. 31.25% of them said that it is a very critical challenge. This contradicts from one school to another. Some said that it is not a challenge and the other said that it is not. For this item 31.6% of PPS teachers indicated that lack of supportive resource for the implementation of CA is not a challenge. Only 15.8% of them replied that it is a very critical challenge. It is responded as moderate challenge by 26.3% to the same schools.

43.75% of GPS respondents mentioned that lack of administrative support to implement CA in EFL classes is a slight challenge. 18.75 percent of these respondents said that it is not a challenge. Almost equal percent of PPS teachers (41.1%) said that lack of administrative support to implement CA is a moderate challenge. It can be deduced from the above data that almost there is no administrative support for the implementation of CA in both GPS's and PPS's.

To sum up, EFL teachers of both GPS's and PPS's faced moderate challenge when they implement CA in EFL classes. Large students' population in class (only for GPS's), lack of time to assess students continuously and emphasis on summative assessment because of an increasing concern with the attainment of standards are among the challenges EFL teachers faced in EFL classes.

In item 24 in the EFL teachers' questionnaire asks the EFL teachers' to mention if there are other challenges they face rather than what were mentioned in the above table. For this question, teachers from GPS's raised a number of issues taken as a challenge to the implementation of CA in EFL classes. Others reported that wide performance gap among the students made very difficult to carry out CA smoothly. Still others indicated that teachers' lack of interest to their profession contribute its part for unsuccessful implementation of CA. The responses of these respondents can show that there are EFL teachers who are trying to implement CA without interest and this can influence its effectiveness in one or another way. Many other respondents mentioned students' absence from class due to various reasons as one of the challenges to the implementation of CA in EFL classes. On the part of PPS's, a time constraint was raised as one of the challenges they were faced with. The other challenge stated by the other teachers was high work load. Teachers in PPS's had this problem because the schools loaded the teachers with a number of periods. Students' lack of attention to their class and unable to submit their CA tasks on time were also raised as challenges to the implementation of CA in EFL classes. The rest of

the teachers showed that teachers' lack of understanding in using CA was additional challenge even though they took trainings on the issue. We can conclude from these ideas that teachers in both types of schools have problems for proper usage of CA in EFL classes due to various factors.

In order to substantiate the responses obtained through questionnaire, the EFL department heads were also interviewed to explain the challenges they faced when they implement CA in EFL classes. Both of the interviewees stated that large number of students to GPS's and high work load to PPS's were the major challenges to the implementation of CA rather than what were mentioned earlier by teacher respondents. In other words, the ideas of the department heads interviewed were almost the same as the teachers who responded in the questionnaire.

In general, the responses obtained from the EFL teachers and department heads in questionnaire and interviews can indicate that though the level of difficulties vary, the FEL teachers face different challenges. As it can be discussed in the literature, different scholars such as Aлаuse (2005); Isaac (1996); Quansah (2005) Yorke (2003) indicate that when CA is implemented, there can be a number of challenges which can influence its effectiveness.

Different responses were given by the EFL teachers for the open-ended questions given on the questionnaire which asks them in what way they tried to overcome the challenges. Some of the GPS teachers mentioned that additional series trainings should be given to the teachers to solve the problems with regard to lack of understanding of CA among EFL teachers. For the understanding of gaps of students, teachers suggested that they should give remediation or tutor to slow learners. They also pointed out that teachers' interest can be improved by creating attractive atmosphere in the school environment and giving attractive salary. Absence of students from class can also be avoided by discussing the issue with parents and school principals. PPS teachers also raised many suggestions to the solution to the challenges. The interviewee from PPS said that school principals should be reasonable to the distribution of class loads to teachers. In the same manner some teachers raised that teachers' understanding can be tackled through continuous trainings. The other teachers mentioned that continuous assessment tasks should be submitted on time by advising and discussing the matter with students themselves and their parents. The other interviewee said that students can pay great attention to EFL classes if teachers, parents and students discuss on the issue together. This can reveal that in order to

overcome the challenges and implement CA in a better manner, more things are expected from EFL teachers and other stake holders.

EFL teachers of GPS's stated that for effective implementation of CA, the number of students in a class needs to be minimized as much as possible and teachers are also expected to use different assessment techniques and they must be resourceful in providing different activities. This seems ideal because in the question on the questionnaire GPS teachers mentioned that they do not use different CA devices unlike their PPS counterparts.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the conclusion drawn from the findings of the study. It also presents possible recommendations forwarded by the researchers based on the findings.

5.1 conclusions

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, data were gathered from EFL teachers, department heads and school principals using three research instruments. These were questionnaire, interview and document analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered through these instruments were analyzed. Based on the findings obtained through these instruments, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Both the government and private primary school teachers believed that they are getting benefits from the implementation of CA in EFL classrooms.

Concerning the use of varieties of CA devices, the EFL teachers of government primary schools focused on a very limited number of CA devices specifically tests and assignments. Whereas, private primary school teachers used extra continuous assessment devices such as quizzes, presentations, role-play and peer and group assessment in addition to tests and assignments. As a result students of government primary schools were not getting the maximum level of benefits from CA. Therefore, private primary school students had the opportunity to improve their language skills. In addition, private primary school teachers gave clear instructions to students on how they perform different activities using CA devices better than GPS teachers.

Considering feedback provision, the overall results of the study showed that there is a problem of providing appropriate feedback for students during CA implementation especially on the part of government primary schools. As different scholars such as Lambert and Lines (2000); Plesis et al (2003) suggest, the EFL teachers need to provide feedback at individual basis; however, most government school teachers give general feedback to the whole class.

The study reveals that the implementation of CA in EFL classrooms has helped the EFL teachers in identifying slow and fast learners in both government and private primary schools. However,

appropriate remedial works and additional stimulation activities had not been given to slow learners by government primary school than private primary schools in EFL classes.

With regard to scoring and recording of CA results on the assessment record book, teachers of both types of primary schools used CA record books. But they all used it traditionally. This means that they do not include comments or suggestions in the assessment record books. Moreover, most of the continuous assessment record books did not indicate the content coverage and the context of skills. None of these record books provided subject specific analysis of the next step based on the particular chosen assessment focus.

It was identified in this study that EFL teachers of government primary schools face challenges that hinder implementing CA effectively. It was revealed that the challenges are basically critical challenges because of lack of proper attention of students for their classes. Parents of these students did not follow up their children's work at all. Private primary school teachers also faced moderate challenges on time constraints because of the class load they had been given. The lack of devotion of students on the tasks of CA is the other challenge that PPS teachers were faced with.

The study also revealed that satisfactory measures was not taken to overcome the challenges even though some teachers tried to change the situation by taking some actions such as giving advice to students along with their parents and creating awareness about the purpose of CA.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on what has been stated so far, in order to implement continuous assessment in EFL classrooms effectively and make both teachers and students get greatest level of benefits from its implementation, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. It is believed that the appropriate implementation of continuous assessment in EFL classes facilitate the teaching learning processes. In order to do so, teachers of both government and private primary schools need to get necessary awareness raising training and workshops on the importance of CA and on how to implement it appropriately.

2. Government primary school teachers should understand and consider CA devices as the most important tools for CA in EFL classrooms. For this to be real, education bureaus or offices should awaken teachers through trainings.
3. In order to overcome the challenges of lack of administrative support to implement CA, the concerned bodies including educational offices should give emphasis on this regard.
4. In order to tackle the negligence and carelessness of PPS students, teachers, administrative officials and parents should discuss about the matter and try to exert the maximum level of their effort to solve this problem.
5. The teachers' record books of both government and private schools need to be changed to suit what is expected to be recorded during continuous assessment. As it has been stated by Lambert and Lines (2000:165), the assessment record book needs to include comments/suggestions, assessment devices used, etc.
6. The provision of feedback to both government and private primary schools needs to be changed. In order to help students get appropriate benefit from the implementation of CA in EFL classrooms, as Lambert and Lines (2000); Plesis et al (2003) suggest, EFL teachers should provide specific feedback to individual students.
7. EFL teachers of both government and private primary schools need to provide additional help (remediation) to slow learners. Different concerned bodies like teachers, school principals and educational offices need to facilitate situations to the teachers on how it is given appropriately.

Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Study

A questionnaire to be filled by EFL teachers

The major purpose of this research is to gather information about the differences in the implementation of continuous assess and its challenges in private and government primary schools and suggest better way of conducting continuous assessment based on findings. So, you are kindly requested to respond all statements or questions based on the instruction given. Your information is used only for research purpose and is, therefore, kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Part 1: General Information

- Sex ____
- Level of Education: MA ____ Degree ____ Diploma ____ Certificate ____
- Total number of Years in Teaching English ____

Pare 2: General Direction

For the following questions please indicate your responses by putting a tick on the space provided for those questions which ask additional explanation, write answers briefly.

1. Do you use continuous assessment in your EFL class? Yes ____ No ____
2. Have you taken any training on the implementation of continuous assessment? Yes
____ No ____
3. If your answer for the above question is “Yes”, has the training helped you in implementing continuous assessment effectively? Yes ____ No ____

4. Why do you use the information you get from continuous assessment? Indicate your response by ranking the following reasons from the most important to the least. (Use 1, 2, 3...9 in the space provided).

_____ A. To shape and improve students' learning.

_____ B. To assign grades to students.

_____ C . To improve teaching.

_____ D. To plan instruction.

_____ E. To provide the basis for effective feedback to students.

_____ F. To help students monitor their own learning /achievement/.

_____ G. To find out what students know and can do.

_____ H. To provide all students with opportunities to show what they know.

_____ I. To determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide.

5. How often do you use the following assessment devices in your EFL classes? Indicate the frequency by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate column according to the following scales:

5 = Always 4 = Often 3 = Sometimes 2 = Rarely 1 = Never

No	Assessment devices	frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
5.1	Portfolio					
5.2	Journals					
5.3	Conference and interview					
5.4	Observation					
5.5	Self-assessment					
5.6	Peer and group assessment					
5.7	Role-play					
5.8	Presentation					
5.9	Test and quizzes					
5.10	assignment					

6. When you assess students using these devices, do you have criteria which guide you choose the device? Yes ___ No ___
7. If your answer for the above question is “Yes”, do you share the criteria with the students? Yes ___ No ___
8. When you use these devices, do you give clear instructions to students on how they perform the tasks using the devices? Yes ___ No ___
9. When you use continuous assessment, do you provide feedback? Yes ___ No ___
10. If your answer for the above question is “Yes” do you provide the feedback on time?
Yes ___ No ___

11. How do you provide feedback?

- A. To individual students depending on their performance.
- B. To the whole class generalizing the feedback.
- C. To both individual students and the whole class.

12. If the answer for the above question is “Yes”, how often do you use the following?

Indicate the frequency by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate column according to the following scale:

5 = Always 4 = Often 3 = Sometimes 2 = Rarely 1 = Never

No	Types of feedback	frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
12.1	Pointing the error and asking the students to self correct.					
12.2	Commenting on an error and explaining why it occurred.					
12.3	Asking another student to correct the error					
12.4	Writing the student’s error on the board to give others the chance to correct					
12.5	Giving criticism for the student’s wrong answer.					
12.6	Giving appreciation for the students’ performance					

13. Does continuous assessment help you identify fast and slow learners? Yes ___

No ___

14. If your answer for the above question is “Yes”, do you provide remediation (additional help) to students who fall behind? Yes ___ No ___

15. If your answer for the above question is “Yes”, how do you provide the remediation?

- A. Re-teaching the difficult topics before testing.
- B. Giving independent practice before testing.
- C. Advising the students to do better the next time.
- D. If there are other provision of remediation, please specify

16. Before providing remediation, do you try to find out why students are not learning?

Yes ___ No ___

17. Do you facilitate situations for students to provide additional help (remediation) to each other? Yes ___ No ___

18. Do you provide enrichment activities (additional stimulation activities) for learners?

Yes ___ No ___

19. When you score the assessment work of students, you depend on what?

A. The competence of other students

B. Pre-set criteria.

C. Both the competence of other students and pre-set criteria.

20. Do you have a record book for students' assessment activities? Yes ___ No ___

21. If your answer for the above question is "Yes", how do you record students' result?

A. By writing the marks only.

B. Writing the marks with additional comments or suggestions

22. Do you face challenges when you implement continuous assessment? Yes ___ No ___

23. If your answer for the above question is “Yes” what are the challenges that you face? In the following table there are things that can be considered as challenges that hinder the implementation of continuous assessment effectively. Make a tick (✓) in the given columns to indicate the importance of each challenge using the following scale:

1 = Not a challenge

4= critical challenge

2 = Slight challenge

5= very critical challenge

3 = Moderate challenge

No	Description of challenges	Difficulties of challenges				
		1	2	3	4	5
23.1	Large student population in a class.					
23.2	Lack of time to assess students continuously.					
23.3	The demands on other activities.					
23.4	Lack of time from students to devote to assessment tasks.					
23.5	Emphasis on summative assessment (final exams) because of an increasing concern with the attainment standards.					
23.6	Lack of supportive resources for the implementation of continuous assessment e.g. stationery					
23.7	Lack of administrative support to implement continuous assessment.					

24. If there are other challenges that you face which are not listed above, please specify here.

25. In what way have you tried to solve the challenges? State briefly

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A questionnaire to be filled by school principals

The major purpose of this research is to gather information about the differences in the implementation of continuous assess and its challenges in private and government primary schools and suggest better way of conducting continuous assessment based on findings. So, you are kindly requested to respond all questions by a tick mark (✓). Your information is used only for research purpose and is, therefore, kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

A checklist for document analysis filled by school directors' /principals/

	Questions	Yes	No
1	Does the EFL teacher have assessment record book?		
2	Does the EFL teacher record the assessment result?		
3	Does the EFL teacher include comment/suggestions in the assessment record book?		
4	Does the mark book indicate that the work has been set and marked by the teacher?		
5	Does the record book indicate the kind of assessment devices used?		
6	Does the mark book show what work has been completed successfully and less successfully?		
7	Does the mark book indicate the content coverage, the context of skills work etc?		
8	Does the record book provide the basis for a detailed summative report to be compiled for the students and other concerned bodies?		
9	Does the record book provide subject-specific analysis of next step for individual students feeding forward to the next topic based up on the particular chosen assessment focus?		

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Interview questions answered by EFL department heads

1. What major challenges do you often face when you assess your students continuously?
2. What do you think are the solutions to the problems you have mentioned above?
3. Which assessment methods do you think students enjoy most?
4. How do you provide feedback to you students' CA tasks?
5. What benefits are you getting from the implementation of continuous assessment?

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