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# How to Describe Students Whose First Language Isn't English. Speaking and Listening Skills as an example

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## **Background information**

This survey is a part of a project to determine what the language needs of students whose first language isn't English. We ask that students fill out this form to know what can be done better for the students and English department. The participants are undergraduate students from (American University in Iraq - Sulimani) - AUIS. The course is general English. The students are prepared for their faculties. The students are not good at English, they face problems in English such as communication problems, and they don't understand teacher's speech sometimes. The course book is English File Elementary, third edition (A1-A2 level) as combine material, Oxford Practice Grammar Basic is used. Duration of the course is 9 weeks; the survey is carried out in week 7.

## **Findings**

As shown in table 1, the first question is about their age, the second is about their gender and the third one is about their country of origin. They are personal information. The rest of the questions are multi-choice about evaluating English class.

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- **Table 1:** number of the students, their gender, age, country and questions and their values.

Participants	student1	student2	student3	student4	student5	student6	student7	student8	student9	Student 10
Age	19 or older	19 or older	19 or older	19 or older	19 or older	19 or older	19 or older	19 or older	19 or older	18
Gender	male	male	male	male	male	female	male	male	male	female
Country	Kurd	Kurd	Libya	Kurd	Kurd	England	Arab	Kurd	Kurd	Kurd
Material Quality	good	good	good	good	good	poor	average	average	good	good
Lecture Adequate	far too much	just right	don't know	just right	too little	just right	just right	just right	just right	too little
Discussion Adequate	far too little	far too little	too little	far too little	don't know	don't know	far too little	too little	don't know	too little
Objectives Conveyed	very poor	excellent	good	good	good	average	average	good	good	average
Objectives Met	poor	good	good	poor	good	good	very poor	poor	excellent	average
Improve Speaking	fair	fair	don't know	very poor	good	fair	fair	very poor	fair	fair
Improve Writing	good	good	poor	fair	good	good	good	fair	fair	fair
getting feedback	good	poor	don't know	good	good	good	good	good	good	poor
education satisfaction	fair	fair	fair	fair	fair	fair	very poor	very poor	poor	good
class length	far too long	far too long	just right	far too long	just right	far too long	just right	far too long	far too little	too long
workload	just right	too little	too little	too little	too little	just right	don't know	just right	just right	just right
interest level	high	average	average	average	average	low	average	low	average	average
assignments	always	most of the time	always	always	most of the time	most of the time	most of the time	always	most of the time	always

As shown in table 2, the total number of the students who answered the questionnaire is 10. 8(80%) out of 10 were male students, and 2(20%) were female students. The majority of the students were 19 or older in age,

9(90%) out of 10 were 19 or older, and one of them (10%) was 18 years old. 7(70%) out of 10 of the students were from Kurd and the rest were from England, Arab, and Libya.

- **Table 2:** the number of the participants, their gender, age, and country.

Total students	10		percentage
gender	male	8	80
	female	2	20
Age	19 or older	9	90
	18	1	10
Country	Kurd	7	70
	England	1	10
	Arab	1	10
	Libya	1	10

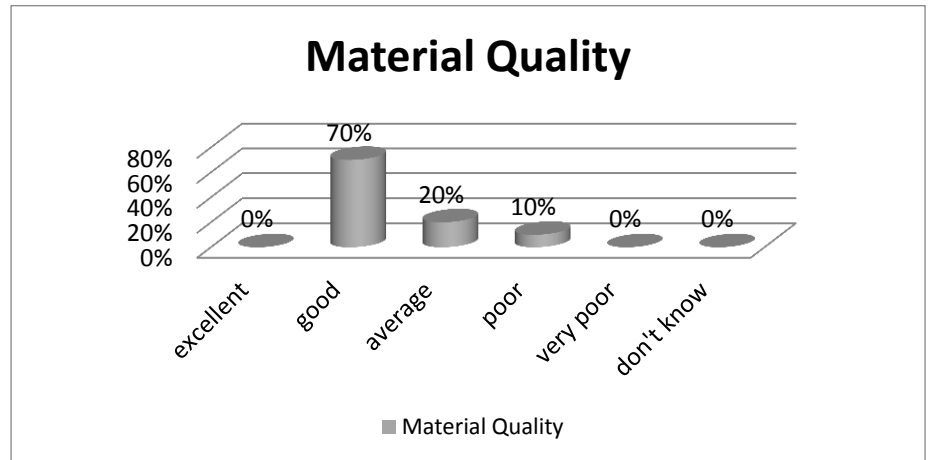
As it is shown in table one, each of the later questions has six values which the participants were requested to tick one of the six values. Concerning question 4, the question was: Please rate the quality of the learning material used in our English class. Students were given the choices of selecting Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, very poor and don't know.

The results were positive. The value good obtained the most votes from the students, 7(70%) out 10(100%) of the students chose the value Good and stressed that the material quality used in English class was good and 2(20%) of them valued the option average. Only one (10%) of them valued the options poor stressed that it was poor.

- **Table 3:** Material Quality

Values	votes	percentage
Far too much	1	10%
Too much	0	0%

Just right	6	60%
Too little	2	20%
Far too little	0	0%
Don't know	1	10%

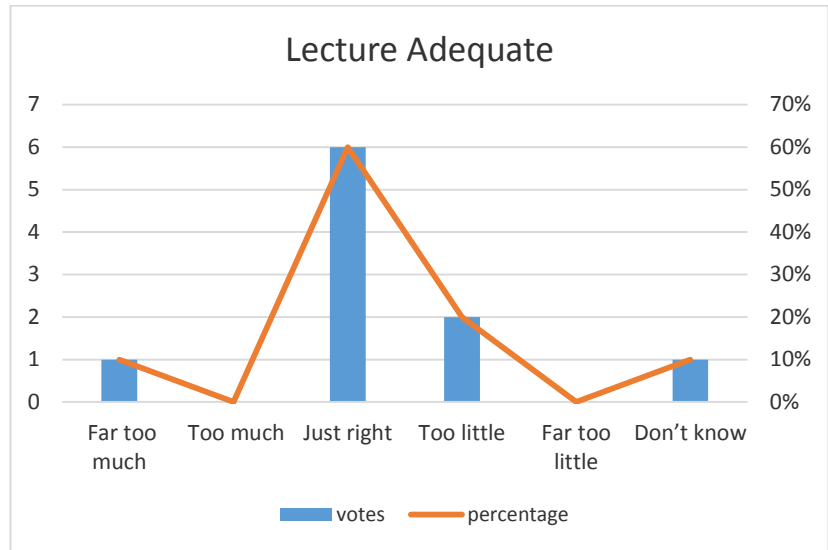


**Question5** which was about Lecture Adequate, the participants were asked to express their opinion about the amount of lecture time in the English class. And the values were *Far too much*, *too much*, *just right*, *too little*, *far too little* and *don't know*. The results were satisfactory, as can be seen in table 4. 6(60%) of the participants chose the value *just right*. One (10%) of them chose the value *far too much*. The value *too little* was ticked by two students (20%). And one of the students (10%) chose the value *don't know*. It shows that the amount is fine according to the participants.

- **Table 4:** Lecture Adequate

Values	votes	percentage
Far too much	1	10%
Too much	0	0%
Just right	6	60%
Too little	2	20%
Far too little	0	0%

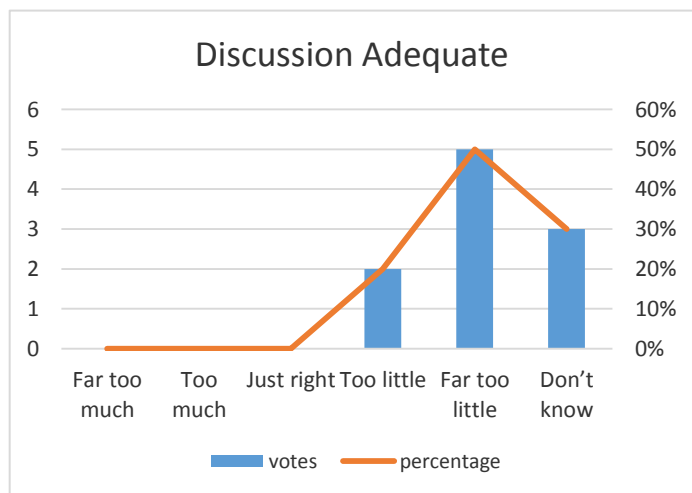
Don't know	1	10%
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The 6 question was Discussion Adequate, the students were requested to express their opinion about the amount of discussion time in the English class. And the values were *Far too much*, *too much*, *just right*, *too little*, *far too little* and *don't know*. As it is shown in table 5, the results are rather negative. 5(50%) of the participants stressed that the amount of discussion time was far too little, and 2(20%) stressed it was little. Three of them (30%) chose the value don't know. As a result, the amount of discussion time is not satisfied by the participants.

- **Table 5:** Discussion Adequate

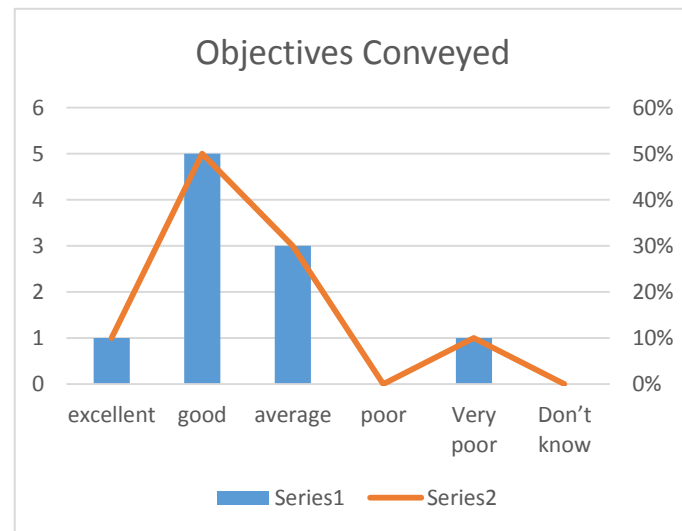
Values	votes	percentage
Far too much	0	0%
Too much	0	0%
Just right	0	0%
Too little	2	20%
Far too little	5	50%
Don't know	3	30%



The seventh item questions were Objectives Conveyed. The students were asked to show their experience about the class of having clear objectives. The values were the followings: Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Very Poor and Don't know. The results which are shown in table 6 are very positive. 5(50%) out of 10 students chose value good stressed that English class at American University in Sulimani – Iraq (AUIS) was good in having clear objectives. 3(30%) out of ten of them chose Average. In addition, one (10%) of them chose value Excellent and stressed that it had clear objectives. Only one of the students (10%) chose the value Very poor.

- **Table 6:** Objectives Conveyed

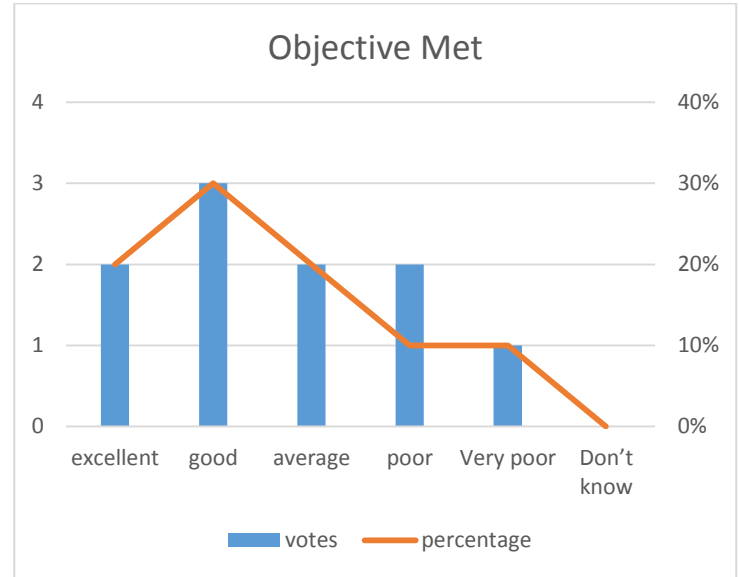
Values	votes	percentage
excellent	1	10%
good	5	50%
average	3	30%
poor	0	0%
Very poor	1	10%
Don't know	0	0%



The seventh question was Objectives Met. The request was: Please rate this class on meeting its objectives. As it can be seen in table 7, the results are highly positive. 3(30%) out of 10 of the students chose the value good, 2(20%) chose the value excellent and 2(20%) of them chose the value average, thus the majority of them stressed that English class at the university met its objectives. Only 2(20%) of them chose the value poor and one (10%) chose the value very poor. Therefore, only 30% of them believed it didn't meet its objectives.

- **Table 7:** Objective Met

Values	votes	percentage
excellent	2	20%
good	3	30%
average	2	20%
poor	2	10%
Very poor	1	10%
Don't know	0	0%

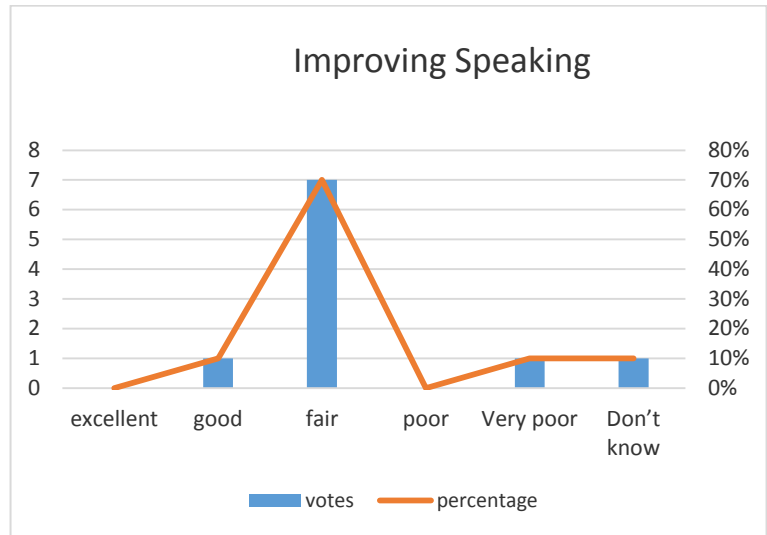


Improve Speaking is the eighth question of the questionnaire and the request was: Please rate our educational facility on enhancing our ability to speak publicly. Looking at the results that are shown in table 8, the findings show that English school at the university has improved their ability to speak publicly. But the results still not very satisfactory, 7(70%) chose the value fair and only one (10%) chose the value good. The values very poor and don't know each of them was chosen by a student.

- **Table 8:** Improve Speaking

Values	votes	percentage
excellent	0	0%
good	1	10%
Fair	7	70%
Poor	0	0%
Very poor	1	10%

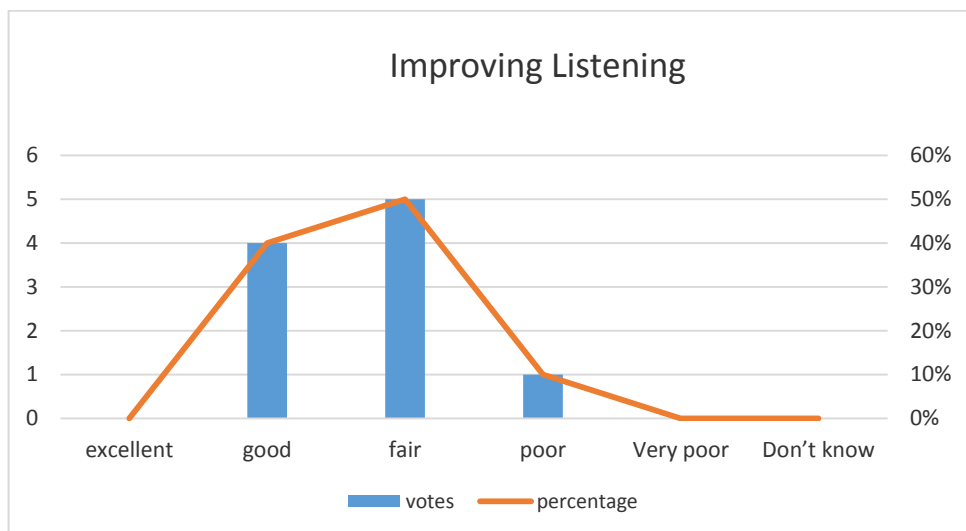
Don't know	1	10%
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Improving speaking was a ninth question in the list which the participants were ordered to rate English educational facility on enhancing their ability to write effectively. The results we can notice in table 9 show that students' ability on writing effectively has improved. The value good was chosen by 4(40%) of the students and the value fair by 5(50%) of the students. Thus, the results are highly positive. Only one student (10%) chose the value poor.

- **Table 9:** Improving Listening

Values	votes	percentage
excellent	0	0%
good	4	40%
Fair	5	50%
Poor	1	10%
Very poor	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%



Getting feedback was one of the items in the list and the students were required to show their satisfaction with the feedback they got during English class at English educational facility according to the six values (Excellent, Good, fair, Poor, very poor and Don't know). The results which are shown in table 10 tell us that the feedback that the students get during English class is good according to their choices of the values. 7 (70%) of them chose the value good and stressed that the feedback they got during the course was right. The value poor was chosen by two (20%) and the value doesn't know by one of the participants.

- **Table 10:** Getting feedback

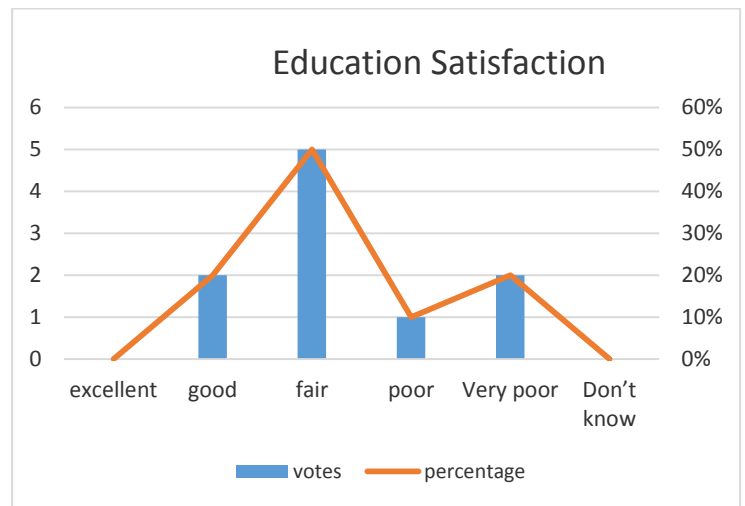
Values	votes	percentage
excellent	0	0%
good	7	70%
Fair	0	50%
Poor	0	10%
Very poor	2	20%
Don't know	1	10%



Education Satisfaction was one of the items in the list and the participants were asked to express their satisfaction with the quality of education at English educational facility. The findings which are shown in table 11 tell us that the students are generally satisfactory with the quality of education at English educational facility. 5(50) out of 10 of them chose the value fair and 2(20%) of them chose the value good. As a result, 70% of them were satisfactory with it. The value very poor was chosen by two (20%) and the value poor by one (10%) of the participants. Thus only 30% of them weren't satisfactory with it.

**Table 11:** Education Satisfaction

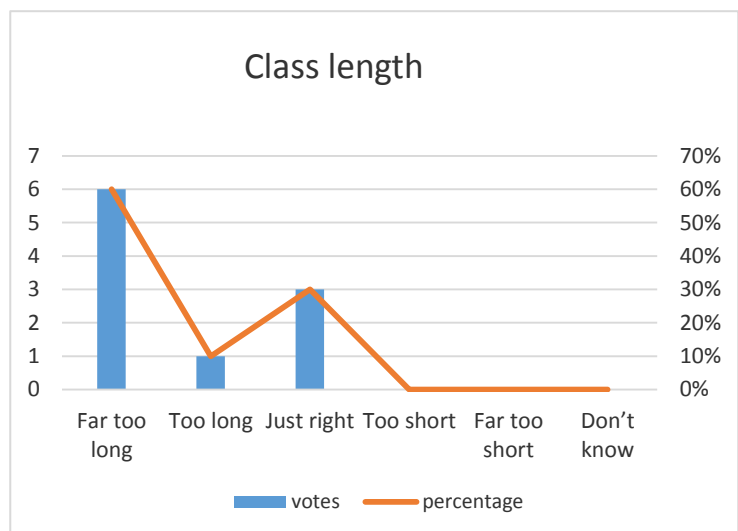
Values	votes	percentage
excellent	0	0%
good	2	20%
fair	5	50%
poor	1	10%
Very poor	2	20%
Don't know	0	0%



In the list of the questions, Class Length was another question. The participants were required to judge class session according to the six given values (Far too long, Too long, Just right, Too short, Far too short and don't know). Table 12 tells us that the results find out that the average class session is long. 6(60%) out of ten of the students chose the value Far too long and one of them (10%) chose the value Too long. Thus, 70% of the participants reported that in term of time, the class session was long. 3(30%) of them chose the value Just right and stressed that class session was just right.

- **Table 12:** Class length

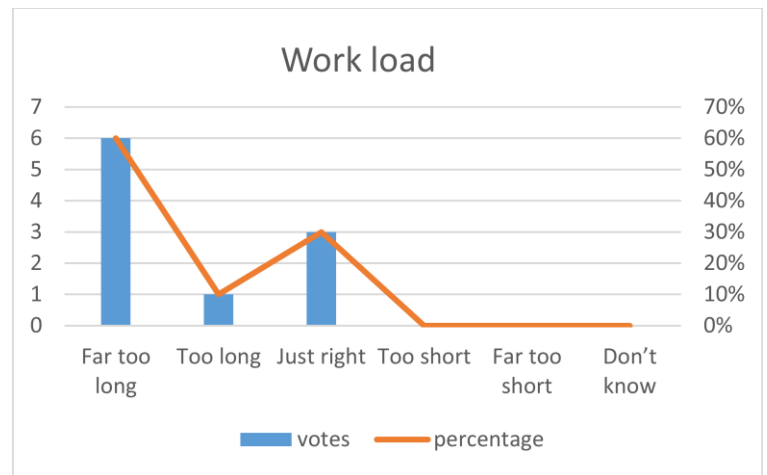
Values	votes	percentage
Far too long	6	60%
Too long	1	10%
Just right	3	30%
Too short	0	0%
Far too short	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%



The workload was another one. The participants were asked to show their opinion about the amount of outside work required for the English class. In table 13, the findings show that amount of outside work required for the English class was just right. 5(50%) out of 10 of the students chose the value just right. It tells us that half of them expressed that it was just right. 4(40%) of them chose the value too little and one chose the value don't know.

- **Table 13: Workload**

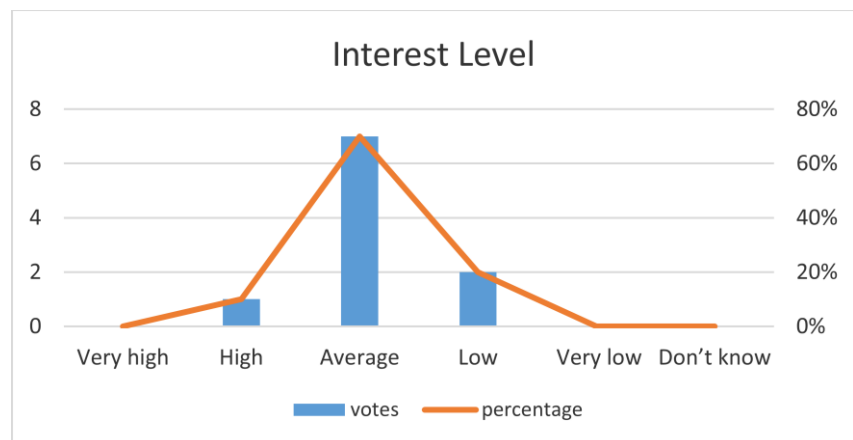
Values	votes	percentage
Far too much	0	0%
Too much	0	0%
Just right	5	50%
Too little	4	40%
Far too little	0	0%
Don't know	1	10%



Interest Level was another one of the items in the questionnaire. The participants were required to show their level of interest in the topic of this class according to the six given value items which they are: Very high, High, Average, Low, very low and Don't know. The findings we see in table 14 show that their level of interest in the topic was satisfactory. The value Average was chosen by 7(70%) of the students, that means the majority street that their level of interest in the topic of the class was typical. In addition, one of them (10%) chose the value high. Only 2 students (20%) chose the value low.

- **Table 14: Interest Level**

Values	votes	percentage
Very high	0	0%
High	1	10%
Average	7	70%



Low	2	20%
Very low	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%

The last item in the list was Assignments. The participants were asked to express their experience about do the assignments support the overall objectives of this class? The students were required to express their opinion according to the six given values (Always, Most of the time, Sometimes, Rarely, Never and Don't know). As we can see in table 15, the results concerning the Assignments support the overall objectives of English class is highly positive. The value Always was chosen by 5 (50%) and the value Most of the time also was chosen by 5 (50%) of the participants. The rest of the value items weren't ticked by any student. That means all of them stressed that they indeed supported the overall objectives of this class.

- **Goals: My main goals to carry out the survey are:**

1. To determine students' needs in learning English language and achieve objectives which the learners are expected to be able to do.
2. To identify the materials that the learning process in teaching English requires to be improved, and to determine their satisfaction with the materials and the instructions.
3. To know how far learning English have made them be able to use it outside the school and to develop the skills which the students judged negatively. This study set out with the aim of assessing the importance of the materials that used in the course.

- **Speaking and Listening**

Make sure you give the students all the tools and language they need to be able to complete the task. If the language is pitched too high, they may revert to their L1, likewise, if the task is too easy, they may get bored and revert to their L1. Also, be aware of the fact that some students especially beginners, will often use their L1 as an emotional support at first, translating everything word for word to check they have understood the task before attempting to speak. In the case of these students simply be patient as most likely once their confidence grows in using English their dependence on using their L1 will begin to disappear.

## Tools:

The tools that offered in this course are designed with regarding to the plans and learning styles, in the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson the visual pictures are giving help to the learners to go in depth for classification, regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tools, the listening or dialogues are used as materials in order to make learners more active in their accent and fluently learning method. Some task will be used as communicative output, which here the students purpose is to complete a task, for instance; asking information, a travel plan, viewing a video to complete the learner task, and learners may use the language that the teacher has presented, but learners similarly may draw on any other vocabulary concept, grammar, and communication approaches that they already familiar. Besides, in communicative output activities, the criterion of accomplishment is whether the student gets the message through which make learners being online in lessons.

## - Modules

The modules will be used here to give students maximum flexibility in order to choose lesson subjects. Based on from questionnaire analysis, I have chosen these module units over the learner's needs:

### - First unit: Lesson1-

- Listen and talk – warm up -

- **Topic:** Playing game

- Ask students to play the game, give instruction, give clues, give a gift, and correct students. (**Teacher role**).

- Listen and understand instruction, Listen and speak about clues, try to guess the answer, Raise hand, speak and give an answer and receive a gift. (**Student role**).

- **Classroom tools:** (Audiovisual, textbook, and handouts).

### - Second unit: Lesson2-

- Brainstorming the item.

- **Topic:** Describe places.

- The teacher will divide students into groups then ask them to brainstorm with the items. (**Teacher role**).

- Students more active in class with guessing words (**Student role**).

- **Classroom tools:** Board to write and guess.

## - **Third unit: Lesson- 3**

**Topic:** introduce your family members.

- Listen and talk!
- The teacher offers a conversation record to focus learner pronunciation and vocabulary concept (**Teacher role**).
- Students will be listening to talk - respond (**Student role**).
- **Classroom tools:** Audio records.

As I have discussed above, the objective of the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson is to motivate learner in order to listen and talk through using visual audio tools in order to make the classroom lesson understandable for all the learners. The objective of the 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson is to give autonomy to the learners to make something based on their experience and knowledge through using their imagination to particular objects and to learners more energetic in the lessons by brainstorming items. Lastly, the 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson learners will be more accurate in their accent of talking by listening to audio records with different types of conversations with native English language speakers.

## **Strategies:**

The learner-learner classroom offers multiple openings for the learner in order to talk ideas in different small groups. Similarly, it can motivate learners to study with each other such as a classroom to participate to understandable answer to an open-ended issue and motivates in-depth discussions between learner-learner and also learner-teacher. As a result, the evaluation of the learners will be formative which it is very helpful to elicit how a teacher method works with learners and, also important to assess learners in the same normal way, for the purpose of control the learners errors as well as reducing nervousness with providing better chance for learners to participate:

## **Lesson formats:**

**1<sup>st</sup> module: Topic:** Who can guess!?

**Theme:** Asian singer (Van Cao).

Who can guess the name of that person first will be the winner?

**Function:** learner's discussion, encouraging for listening and speaking, talking about something specific about the singer.

**Structured Sets:** That person is a man, He was born in 1923, he was born in Nam Dinh and he is a Vietnamese musician. Answering learner's questions.

**2<sup>nd</sup> module: Topic:** Describe places!?

**Theme:** Brainstorming the items, Students discussion, and what this mean?

**Function:** talk and explain what is this?

Tree (wood, leaves, sparrow, orange, land).

**Structured Sets:** arrange and rearrange word – group work – ask your classmate.

**3<sup>rd</sup> module: Topic:** introduce your family members!?

**Theme:** listen and speak (Evan and Lavan) where is the remote control!?

**Function:** Asking for and give information about it. Correct answers and problem suggestions.

**Structured Sets:** In order to accurate and right word accents and fewer errors.

For each unit lessons will be limited by the objective of the unit lesson itself, and about the technique that used in the unit lesson. Similarly, lesson units will have a high level of working and motivating to the aims and to lead learners in order to find out the goal themselves.

**Lesson sample unit:**

**Unit levels:**

Who can guess!? Who is (Van Cao)? (17 minutes).

- **The teacher** will play a soundtrack relating to the subject to encourage learners to talk in English.
- **Learners** will reflect their opinions to the subject according to the audio and their background experience.
- Who can guess the name of that person first will be the winner?

We can give students Clues:

- 1) That person is a man.
- 2) He was born in 1923.
- 3) He was born in Nam Dinh
- 4) He is a Vietnamese musician.
- 5) He is known as a very talented musician and highly appreciated by Vietnamese people.

I will let you listen to some songs and your mission is to guess the name of the songs? You can base on the first question on page 128. (14 minutes).

- 1) Suoi Mo
- 2) Ha Noi Mua Thu
- 3) Tien Quan Ca
- 4) Truong Ca Song Lo
- 5) Lang Toi
- 6) Tinh Ca

- **The teacher** will speak about this (Asian singer - (Van Cao)) to talk in the classroom with learners.
- **Learners** will be motivated to talk and gives their views on each level of lesson unit.

Which of these songs were composed by Van Cao? (14 minutes)

Before listening, I will introduce to you some new vocabulary

- **The teacher** will talk learners' answers and motivate their self-confidence in speaking.
- **Learners** are more motivated and sharing their responses with the teacher.

## Activities and questions:

### 1st lesson unit:

The teacher will be talking about the particular subject with learners?

Do you think Van Cao is very friendly?

What is your favorite song?

What do you think about Enrique Iglesias?

### 2nd lesson unit:

Learners will be asked to brainstorming activity with the arguments and words that were given by their teacher.

Wood, moon, earth, summer, house. Try to think of (sun) Moon, light, energy, etc....

## **3rd lesson unit:**

Learners will listen to the song and try to write its lyrics, words and then read aloud.

For instance: (Calvin Harris)

Why wait to say

At least I did it my way

Lie awake, two faced

But in my heart, I understand

I made my move

And it was all about you

Now I feel so far removed

You were the one thing in my way

## **Assessment tools:**

- **Unit objectives:**

A- To make Learners self-confidence and improve their attention in the English language in public speaking.

- **Will be asked:**

What is your idea about this singer? (Van Cao)

How do feel when you listen to him?

B- To improve learner's proficiency to successfully deliver the English language in public speaking.

- **Will be asked:**

What do you think about Van?

Why do you think he is the best singer?

C- To improve learners being more active in the classroom.

- **Will be asked:**

Who respond this question, will get a mark!

What is this and what purpose we use this? (Projector)

D- In order to offer an accurate pronunciation of the learners.

- **Will be asked:**

Listen and answer!?

E- Listen to Ali and Hanna dialogue and respond these questions?

Do they play football?

Do they watch a movie?

F- Opportunity to speak the English language:

For each group, we can ask one question.

Objectives questions will depend on the objective itself, for instance, if it's really effective for learners to be in charge with the classroom lesson then it may have effect with more time, but if it doesn't then it will be ignored. As a result, this kind of assessment will be used in this program in order to assess learners directly after each lesson separately in order to keep the motivation and students' activity and support them being regular in their lesson classrooms. Similarly, with giving positive response and feedback to the learners, they also will be more encouraged in the lesson class and their participation will be better.

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## Appendix

**Student Questionnaire**

**Dear Student,**

This survey is a part of a project to determine what the language needs of students whose first language isn't English with the aim of helping the English Department serve its students better. Please reply to all items sincerely. Information collected through this questionnaire will only be used for research purposes. The results will not be publicized and will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your participation and contribution.

**Shivan Kh. Dizayee**

PhDs Candidate

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\*\*\*\*\*

**Section A: Background information**

**Mark appropriate option with (X) and complete the blanks.**

**Age:**

- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19 or older

**Gender:**  Male                       Female

**Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B: Further statements and questions.**

Number	Statements	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
1.	The quality of the learning materials used in our English class was ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	This class on having clear objectives was ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.	This class on meeting its objectives was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
4.	Our educational facility on enhancing our ability to speak publicly was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5.	Our educational facility on enhancing our ability to listen effectively was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6.	The feedback we received during our English class at our educational facility was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
7.	The quality of education at our educational facility was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

<b>Number</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Far too much</b>	<b>Too much</b>	<b>Just right</b>	<b>Too little</b>	<b>Far too little</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
8.	Thinking about the average class session, the amount of lecture time was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
9.	Thinking about the average class session, the amount of discussion time was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
10.	In terms of time, the average class session was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
11.	The amount of outside work required for this class was ...	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

12. Please rate your level of interest in the topics of this class.

- ( ) Very high
- ( ) High
- ( ) Average
- ( ) Low
- ( ) Very low
- ( ) Don't know

*☺☺☺ Thank you for participating and co-operating in this survey ☺☺☺*