

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR AN AUTHENTIC ORAL TESTING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study examines current theory and practice regarding the assessment of foreign language oral performance, and discusses implications for curriculum designers and teachers in Ministry of Education in Iraq. In addition to suggesting that norm-referenced assessment be replaced with criteria-referenced, "authentic" assessment in these establishments, the first part of the paper also concludes that the current grading of students in Iraqi schools according to prescribed textbooks "English for Iraq" and "Iraq Opportunities" for language assessment, being intrinsically demotivating for students and teachers. It is therefore argued that English Language programs should act on recent research findings and Ministry of Education policy statements by promoting positive affect (attitude, beliefs, confidence, motivation, etc.) in non-threatening learning environments, using criterion-referenced, and authentic assessment. On the other hand the second part of this paper recognizes two modes of authentic assessment (self- and peer-assessment) as reliable and valid methods of evaluation, particularly suitable for assessment of oral skills at universities level. It is hoped that these reflective models will encourage students to become involved in their learning, and promote positive attitude change in the fostering of life-long learning skills and socially responsible citizens. It is suggested, therefore, that when employed in a student-centered, holistic setting, self- and peer-assessment are practical and effective evaluation tools for tertiary language education.

**KEYWORDS:** Testing, Norm/Criterion Reference, Authentic