

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SECONDARY SCHOOLS TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE TEACHING OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS AS PRESENTED IN THE CRESCENT ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN AL-HOUTA AND TOBAN DISTRICTS, LAHEJ GOVERNORATE**Sabreen Hussein Saif Humran^{1,*}**¹ Dept. of English, Saber Faculty of Science and Education, University of Lahej, Yemen* Corresponding author: Sabreen Hussein Saif Humran; E-mail: sabyhussein836@gmail.com

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Abstract

Listening and speaking skills play a vital role in English language learning and are essential for students' academic and professional success. However, many students in public secondary schools in Al-Houta and Toban districts, Lahej Governorate, experience difficulties in understanding spoken English and expressing their ideas effectively in oral communication. Therefore, there was a need to explore teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching of listening and speaking skills in Yemeni public secondary schools in these districts. A descriptive survey design was employed using a semi-structured questionnaire administered to 30 English language teachers selected through convenience sampling from public secondary schools in the study area during the 2023-2024 school year. The findings revealed that teachers generally held positive beliefs toward the importance of listening and speaking skills and recognized their role in language learning. However, despite this awareness, they did not perceive the oral communication activities included in the Crescent secondary school series as entirely sufficient for developing students' oral communication. Moreover, the majority of teachers reported neglecting related activities in their classroom practices. The findings also identified several factors affecting the development of students' oral communication skills, including language-related challenges, besides environmental and psychological factors. The study recommended giving greater attention to oral communication skills, providing teachers with training programs on teaching such skills, incorporating oral communication skills into classroom assessment, and creating supportive classroom environment that encourage students' participation in oral practice.

Keywords: The Nature of Beliefs; The role of listening and speaking skills; The Crescent English Curriculum.**Introduction**

Oral communication skills, particularly listening and speaking are fundamental skills that contribute promoting learners in oral communication. Mart (2020, p. 1) stated that these two skills are essential components of oral communication and effective integration between them can lead to significant improvements in oral proficiency. Consequently, individuals with strong oral communication proficiency are increasingly valued worldwide due to of their ability to communicate effectively in academic and professional settings (Rahman, 2010, p. 2). Despite this importance of oral communication skills, many foreign language learners experience difficulties in developing their oral communication abilities. Given the crucial role of classroom practices in developing these skills, teachers considered key contributors to the teaching and learning process (Kaur, 2019, p. 41). Their beliefs about language teaching and learning can strongly influence their instructional decisions and classroom practices. Accordingly, there is a need to explore teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching of listening and speaking skills in Yemeni public secondary schools in Al-Houta and Toban districts, Lahej Governorate.

Statement of the Problem

Listening and speaking skills are essential for effective English language learning. However many students from the public secondary schools in Al-Houta and Toban districts, Lahej Governorate, show weakness in oral communication skills, which negatively affect their ability to communicate in English. This issue has also been observed by instructors at the Faculty of Education-Saber, particularly among first-year students who most of them come from these public secondary schools. Furthermore, the problem has been addressed in previous masters' theses conducted at the same faculty, such as Qaid (2008), whose study focused on listening skill, and Shihab (2007), whose study addressed speaking skill.

Oral communication skills, particularly listening and speaking, are essential for effective communication and successful English language learning. However, many students in public secondary schools in Lahej Governorate, specifically in Al-Houta and Toban districts, show weakness in these skills, which negatively affect their ability to communicate in English. This problem continues to be evident among first-year students at the Faculty of Education Saber, most of whom graduated from public secondary schools, as instructors continue to observe difficulties in their listening and speaking abilities. The problem has been also highlighted in previous studies conducted at the same Faculty, such as Qaid (2008), whose study focused on listening skill, and Shihab (2007), whose study addressed speaking skill. Although these studies addressed students' difficulties in oral communication skills, limited attention has been given to investigating English language teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching of listening and speaking skills in Yemeni Public secondary schools in Al-Houta and Toban districts of Lahej Governorate. Since "Beliefs form part of the process of understanding how teachers shape their work" (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017, p. 78), this study seeks to explore teachers' beliefs about the teaching of listening and speaking skills and to investigate the reasons behind students' weakness in these skills.

Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to achieve the following aims:

- 1- To explore the teachers' beliefs about the teaching of listening and speaking skills.
- 2- To investigate the reasons behind the students' weakness in English oral communication skills in the secondary schools.

Questions of the Study

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the teachers' beliefs about the teaching of listening and speaking skills?
- 2- What are the reasons that are responsible for the students' weakness in English oral communication skills in the secondary schools?

Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to English language teachers working in public secondary schools in two districts of Lahej governorate, i.e. Al-Hotah and Toban during the 2023-2024 school year.

The main limitation of this study was the inability to reach all English language teachers in the selected districts. Consequently the study was conducted with a sample of teachers, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Literature Review

The Nature of Beliefs:

In the recent years, the study of teachers' beliefs has become a more popular and interested field for many educational researchers. Teachers' beliefs have a major role in teaching and learning since they can basically guide teachers' decisions and behaviors (Erkmen, 2012, p. 141). Pajares (1992) mentioned various terms illustrating the term "beliefs" under alternative names: "attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, pre conceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental process, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding and social strategy" (p. 309).

Due to the strong connection between teachers' beliefs and their practices in the classroom, realizing the nature of these beliefs is needed, as parts of these beliefs appear to be more influential on actions. Many studies have shed light on the effectiveness and strong relation between beliefs and practice. Zheng (2009, p. 73) confirmed that teachers' beliefs play a crucial role in examining how teachers think and make appropriate decisions. These beliefs also influence teachers' practices and contribute to changes in the process of learning how to become an effective teacher.

In fact, teachers' beliefs are not fixed; rather, they continue to evolve as individuals acquire new knowledge and experience. According to Nurusus et al. (2015, p. 23), teachers' beliefs are gradually shaped through accumulated knowledge and experiences over time. As teachers gain more experience, they encounter different situations that influence their perceptions and contribute to the development of their beliefs.

Therefore, teachers' beliefs contribute to developing the teaching and learning process through recognizing teachers' teaching styles and strategies that can overcome obstacles and learners' difficulties in the English language learning. They are also attached to the classroom principles that help teachers to be prepared for the syllabus they will teach through realizing the relationship between their beliefs and classroom principles. Consequently, those teachers' beliefs are extremely important since they are closely associated with the English language development (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017, p. 78).

The role of listening and speaking skills

Listening and speaking skills are considered the most important communication skills, as individuals spend approximately 75% of communication time on listening and speaking, with 45% devoted to listening and 30% to speaking. This highlighting a greater proportion of communication time than reading (16%) and writing (9%), highlighting their significance in everyday oral communication (Gutierrez-Ang, 2009, p. 19). In fact, the listening skill is related to the speaking skill, both of which are considered complementary skills. Thus, the learners' success in developing the speaking skill depends largely on the attainment of skillfulness in the listening skill (Rost, 2011, p. 1).

In this respect, the oral communication skills, listening and speaking, compose the spine of language through teaching it. Syomwene (2013, p. 167) stated that these two connected skills provide essence through mixing them and form the basis of teaching English. Additionally, these two associated skills effectively assist learners to acquire the other two skills easily. Therefore, oral communication skills are the basic and integral skills for acquiring the other skills, reading and writing; what the learners read and write is based on what they can understand and speak.

The Crescent Curriculum

The English language subject generally and in Yemeni public schools particularly is considered as a fundamental syllabus, since it is hoped that will assist students to communicate using this language. Bataineh et al. (2007, p. 4) stated that Yemeni English language teachers considered the *English Crescent Course For Yemen* (ECCFY) useful and effective for both teachers and students, as it equips them with the language skills

and expressions required for daily communication. The course provided valuable learning content, including a wide range of vocabulary items, language functions and expressions. However, they attributed the weakness in implementing the course effectively to teachers' limited knowledge of communicative language teaching (CLT) and their inadequate training in applying effective communicative teaching strategies. Thus, effective English teaching requires teachers, who have sufficient knowledge and ability to teach the subject and are expected to develop students' abilities in the four language skills within different language contexts in order to build their communicative ability (Peacock, 2018, p. 8).

Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design. (a quantitative descriptive survey design) A teacher questionnaire was used as the main instrument for collecting the required data. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures, including frequencies and percentages. The sample of the study consisted of 30 English language teachers from public secondary schools in Al-Hotah and Toban districts, Lahej Governorate.

The Questionnaire

One of the instruments used to gather information from the participants of this study was a questionnaire, which is a common tool for many studies that assists in grasping the participants' perception through various questions. "The questionnaire has become one of the most popular research instruments applied in the social sciences. Questionnaires are certainly the most often employed data collection devices in statistical work" (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 1).

Validity of the Questionnaire

Establishing validity is an essential step before administering research instruments. Therefore, the researcher conducted a validity procedure for the questionnaire because of its significant role in assessing the effectiveness of the research instrument.

More specifically, the researcher utilized face and content validity procedures for the questionnaire. As Cohen et al. (2005, p. 109) indicated that content validity is one of the important types of validity that should provide clear evidence that all relevant items intended to be measured are adequately represented. Simply, content validity deals with how well a measurement covers the phenomenon that researchers are studying entirely. It shows whether the items used by researchers are truly representative of the topic they studied, whereas face validity refers to how clear, familiar, and appropriate the research instrument appears to the participants and other people who evaluate it. Face validity and content validity share a common focus on the relevance of the instrument to the phenomenon being measured (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 107).

This means that the questionnaire should be submitted to some experts in Applied Linguistics in order to revise it. Consequently, the researcher gave a draft of the teachers' questionnaire to four specialists to evaluate its face and content validity. After examining the questionnaire, they suggested some changes to several items. In accordance with these suggestions, the researcher modified the items. After completing the final draft, the questionnaire was considered valid and was submitted to the respondents.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

The reliability procedure is no less important than validity in research measurement. Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 128) referred to reliability as the ability of an instrument to provide consistent results over time when measuring the same phenomenon. In other words, it is a procedure that shows how stable an instruments is when it is repeated under the same circumstances (Bell, 2010, p. 119).

In this regard, test-retest reliability procedure was utilized, the researcher submitted the questionnaire for the first time to five English language teachers who teach Crescent English curriculum in public secondary

schools and then submitted it again to the same individuals at a different time. After the responses from the two administrations were analyzed using SPSS program, the correlation between the first and the second administrations of the questionnaire was 0.86, indicating a strong level of test-retest reliability.

Data Analysis of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was structured into two parts, each containing several items designed to gather specific information related to the research topic. During the analysis, each item is systematically numbered for clarity and reference, followed by a table presenting the content and a summary of the teachers' responses

It should be noted that some questionnaire items allowed respondents to select more than one option. Therefore, for these items, the total number of responses and the corresponding percentage were calculated based on the number of responses rather than the total number of the respondents.

Part One

Table 1: The teachers' gender

Item 1: Gender		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Male	2	7%
b. Female	28	93%
Total	30	100%

As shown from the table, the number of the female teachers who responded to the questionnaire was higher than the number of the male ones. Specifically, 93% of the respondents were female.

Table 2: Teachers' academic qualification

Item 2: Academic qualification		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Secondary school certificate	0	0%
b. Diploma	0	0%
c. B.A.	30	100%
d. M.A.	0	0%
Total	30	100%

As seen from Table 2, all the respondents hold B.A. degrees, indicating a similar level of academic qualification. However, having the same degree does not necessarily mean that all teachers have equivalent knowledge of teaching principles or classroom practice as it can be seen in the next results.

Table 3: The experience in teaching

Item 3: Teachers' experience in teaching		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Less than 5 years	4	13%
b. From 5 to 10 years	7	23%
c. From 11 to 20	11	37%
d. More than 20 years	8	27%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 3, there is a wide difference in the teaching experience range among the respondents. A total of 13% of the teachers had less than 5 years of experience, while 23% fall within 5 to 10 years. However, the largest portion of the respondents had 11 to 20 years of experience, representing 37%, followed by those with more than 20 years, who accounted for 27% of the respondents. The results reflect that the majority of the respondents are experienced teachers with over a decade of teaching. "Years of teaching experience can have an influence on a teacher's beliefs" (Nurusus et al., 2015, p.30).

Part Two: Teachers' Opinions

Table 4: Teachers' opinions about the effectiveness of oral communication skills

Item 1: To what extent are oral communication skills more effective in learning the English language than the other skills?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. To a large extent	16	53%
b. To some extent	12	40%
c. To a little extent	2	7%
d. Not at all	0	0%
Total	30	100%

As seen from Table 4, more than half of the teachers believed that oral communication skills are essential components for improving students' language to a large extent. Specifically, 53% of the respondents strongly agreed on the significant role of oral communication skills in enhancing English compared to other skills. Additionally, 40% of them acknowledged the importance of these skills to some extent. Only two, 7% teachers, considered the importance to be limited, and notably, none of the respondents selected *not at all*. This suggests that oral communication skills are generally viewed as crucial by most respondents, even though the degree of importance varies among them. This is further reflected in the fact that not a single respondent selected *not at all*, indicating a strong agreement among the respondents regarding the effective role of oral communication skills on learning English compared to other language skills.

Table 5: The basic type of communication

Item 2: Which of the following types of communication do you think is the basic one contributing to learning the other type?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Oral communication	20	67%
b. Written communication	10	33%
c. None	0	0%
Total	30	100%

From Table 5, the data revealed a clear distinction in teachers' perceptions regarding the foundational role of communication types in language learning. While 33% of the respondents considered written communication to be the foundational type contributing to learning of another type, the majority of the respondents, approximately 67% viewed oral communication skills as the initial and natural mode of communication that forms the basis for language acquisition compared to written communication. Overall, the results above reflect a strong belief in the priority of oral communication skills as a foundation that supports the mastery of other language skills.

Table 6: Practicing listening activities in the classroom

Item 3: How often do you encourage the students to practice listening activities included in the Crescent series in the classroom?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Always	6	20%
b. Sometimes	22	73%
c. Rarely	2	7%
d. Never	0	0%
Total	30	100%

As shown in Table 6, the findings indicated that 73% of the respondents incorporate listening activities during classroom instruction occasionally, while 20% of them do so consistently. Only two respondents, 7%, indicated that they rarely engage students the listening activities in the classroom. However, none of them denied incorporating such activities when they encountered them in the textbook. The results emphasize that

the majority of the respondents promote listening practice in the classroom to some extent. Thus, the encouragement of the students in doing the listening activities does not always happen, and this refers that some listening activities may be skipped by the teachers of English.

Table 7: Practicing speaking activities in the classroom

Item 4: How often do you encourage the students to practice speaking activities included in the Crescent series in the classroom?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Always	13	43%
b. Sometimes	17	57%
c. Rarely	0	0%
d. Never	0	0%
Total	30	100%

As noted in Table 7, the results demonstrated that the respondents implement the speaking activities included in the Crescent curriculum series in the classroom whenever they encounter them, but with different frequencies. Over half of the respondents, approximately 57%, indicated that they sometimes engage their students to practice speaking through the speaking activities provided in the curriculum of English. In contrast, 43% of the respondents stated that they support using these activities consistently. Importantly, none of the respondents selected either *rarely* or *never*, which clearly suggests a shared belief in the significance of speaking skill as an essential component of English language instruction. However, it can be inferred from the results that the majority of the teachers avoid encouraging their students in some speaking activities included in the curriculum of English and this has a negative effect on the development of their speaking skill.

Table 8: Adequacy of oral communication skills in the Crescent series

Item 5: To what extent are the oral communication skills represented enough in the Crescent series?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. To a large extent	3	10%
b. To some extent	24	80%
c. To a little extent	3	10%
d. Not at all	0	0%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 8, the results showed that the majority, 80% of the respondents, believed that oral communication skills are represented to some extent in the curriculum, while an equal share, 10% of respondents, believed that these skills are represented either to a *large extent* or to a *little extent*. Although the percentages are equal, the two options reflect contrasting evaluations of the extent to which these skills are represented. Notably, none of the respondents indicated that these skills are completely absent from the curriculum. These results reflect a strong presence of oral communication skills in the Crescent series; however, they also indicate a number of respondents perceive this presence as insufficient, suggesting that these skills may not be emphasized to the extent expected by all teachers.

Table 9: Avoiding practice listening skill activities

Item 6: How often do you avoid teaching the listening activities included in the Crescent series?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Always	5	17%
b. Sometimes	19	63%
c. Rarely	6	20%
d. Never	0	0%
Total	30	100%

As observed from Table 9, none of the respondents reported complete avoidance of teaching listening activities. However, the majority of them, 63%, stated that they sometimes avoid teaching listening activities, while 20% indicated that they rarely avoid practicing this skill. In addition, a notable percentage, 17%, reported that they always avoid teaching listening activities. These results suggest that, although teachers recognize the value of listening skill, various challenges, such as time limitation, lack of training or resources may lead them to reduce or occasionally omit listening activities in the classroom. What is particularly noteworthy is the consistency between these responses and those reported in Table 6. The results of this item support those of Item 2; the teachers sometimes do not encourage the students to practice some listening activities, as they skip them in their teaching of English.

Table 10: Avoiding practice speaking skill activities

Item 7: How often do you avoid teaching the speaking activities included in the Crescent series?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Always	4	13.3 %
b. Sometimes	13	43.4%
c. Rarely	9	30%
d. Never	4	13.3%
Total	30	100%

Table 10 clarified that the highest percentage, 43.4% of the respondents, sometimes avoided teaching the speaking activities, while 30% stated that they rarely avoid such activities. For the options *Always* and *Never*, they got 13.3 % for each. The combined percentage of those who always or sometimes avoided teaching speaking activities amounted to 56.7%, suggesting that more than half of the respondents may encounter difficulty or hesitation in fully integrating these activities in their instruction. On the other hand, 43.3% of the respondents reported that they rarely or never avoid these activities, which reflects a strong effort to incorporate speaking practice in their classrooms. In comparison with Table 7, which explored how often teachers encouraged students to practice speaking activities, a noticeable consistency emerges. The majority of the teachers do not always encourage the students to practice the speaking activities because not all the speaking activities are taught by the teachers.

Table 11: The difficulties that teachers face in teaching oral communication skills

Item 8: As a teacher of English, what are the difficulties you face when teaching oral communication activities?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Students' low comprehension level	27	90%
b. Students' low level in listening skill	19	63%
c. Students' low level in speaking skill	24	80%
d. Students' low motivation towards learning the oral communication skills	10	33%
e. The time of the period is short, so there is no time to teach and do the listening and speaking activities	19	63%
f. Lack of the teaching aids like the audio-materials	9	30%
g. Bad teaching and learning environment	4	13%
h. Large numbers of students in the classroom	23	77%
i. Others. Please, specify	1	3%
j. Nothing	0	0%

According to Table 11, the responses of teachers revealed that they faced a wide range of challenges when implementing oral communication activities in the classroom. The most commonly reported difficulty was the students' low comprehension level, selected by 90% of the teachers. This indicates that the majority of teachers struggled with teaching listening and speaking activities, as the students' limited understanding of the teachers' explanation consequently obstructed English learning in the classroom. A significant number of the

respondents, 80%, also referred to the students' low speaking proficiency, suggesting limited productive language skill. This weakness in speaking may be linked to the comprehension challenge mentioned earlier; when the students are unable to fully understand the teachers' instruction, they are less likely to participate actively in oral communication activities. In addition, 77% of teachers reported that the large number of the students in the classroom was another prominent challenge, making it difficult to manage oral activities and provide individual attention to the students. Furthermore, 63% indicated that the students' poor listening skill and the short duration of class periods were serious challenges, which were no less important than the previously mentioned difficulties. While less than half, 33% of the teachers, noted the low students' motivation towards learning oral communication skills as a challenge, 30% considered the lack of teaching aids as an issue affecting negatively the effective teaching of oral communication skills. Bad teaching and learning environment option was selected as a challenge by 13% of teachers. Notable, one teacher, 3% provided an additional challenge in the open-ended option offered by the questionnaire, specifying the unavailability of school textbooks as another challenge. Adding to this, none of the respondents selected the option indicating the absence of difficulties in teaching oral communication skills, which further supports the fact that all teachers faced at least one challenge in teaching these skills. These results reflect that challenges in teaching oral communication skills are widespread among teachers and significantly affect classroom practice, even though the nature of these challenges varies from one teacher to another.

Table 12: Students' difficulties in oral communication.

Item 9: In which area of oral communication do your students encounter difficulties?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Pronunciation	30	100%
b. Vocabulary	23	77%
c. Accuracy and fluency	14	47%
d. Others. Please, specify	6	20%

In Table 12, the responses indicated that the students encounter difficulties in various areas related to oral communication. All teachers, 100%, considered pronunciation as the most critical barrier. Such difficulties with pronunciation consistently hinder the students' ability to speak clearly and be understood in English. A significant percentage, 77% of the teachers, chose vocabulary as another common area of difficulty. This indicates that the majority of students have scanty repertoire of vocabulary and struggle to recall the appropriate words they have during oral interaction. This reduces the effectiveness of their communication. For accuracy and fluency, nearly half of the teachers, 47%, identified them as problematic aspects of oral communication. Such difficulties may cause hesitation in speech and grammatical errors that negatively affect clarity and fluency. Additionally, 20% of the respondents highlighted further challenges through the open-ended option. These included both linguistic and psychological problems, such as difficulties in reading, writing, verb usage, constructing different kinds of sentences and students' fear and shyness. These problems obstruct the students' oral performance and limit their ability to communicate effectively.

Table 13: Barriers created by teachers which obstruct oral communication development

Item 10: What are the barriers created by the teachers and obstruct the development of the English oral communication skills in the classroom?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Teachers' style in teaching	22	73%
b. Teachers do not practice oral communication	20	67%
c. Teachers do not prepare and present their lessons well	11	37%
d. Teachers' poor language usage (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar)	16	53%
e. Others. Please specify	0	0%
f. Nothing	0	0%

The results of this item revealed that the teachers themselves contribute to creating several barriers that hinder the development of the students' English oral communication in the classroom. According to the

responses in Table 14, 73% of the teachers admitted that their own teaching style is a major obstacle. This suggests that ineffective or traditional teaching methodologies reduce opportunities for meaningful oral interaction. Building on this, the 67% of teachers reported a lack of practical oral activities, which may reflect limitation in their teaching style. This absence of practice may arise from teachers' limited language competence, poor fluency or confidence in using English, insufficient preparing or the perception that students are not sufficiently capable or motivated to engage in oral interaction. All of these factors, in turn, lead the teachers to avoid implementing oral communication and consequently affects the development of the students' speaking and listening abilities. Moreover, 37% of the teachers pointed to inadequate lesson preparation as a significant barrier, and a larger percentage, 53%, highlighted poor language use by the teachers themselves, such as inaccurate pronunciation, limited vocabulary and grammatical errors as a serious issue that affects the clarity of instruction and reduces the quality of language the students receive. These teacher-related problems work collectively to obstruct the students' development of effective oral communication, and reflect the importance of addressing the teacher's competence and instructional strategies to enhance the students' oral language development as mentioned by many studies in chapter two.

Table 14: Assessment tools used to support students' oral communication.

Item 11: How do you assess your students' English oral communication skills?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Observing their participation in discussion	27	90%
b. Using informal questioning during lessons	18	60%
c. Using tests	16	53%
d. Using formal oral exams	4	13%
e. Nothing	0	0%

As seen from Table 14, the responses to this item showed that the teachers use various techniques to assess the students' oral communication skills. Most teachers, 90%, reported assessing students by observing their participation in discussions. This method allows them to evaluate how effectively the students engage in speaking and listening activities during the lesson. In addition, 60% of teachers tended to use informal questioning during lessons. This type of assessment helps the teachers check the students' understanding and speaking skills in spontaneous way. Moreover, 53% of teachers relied on tests as a part of their assessment. However, only 13% of them used formal oral exams, indicating that this type of assessment is the least favored. Importantly, none of the teachers selected the *Nothing* option, which suggests that all teachers recognize the essential role of assessment in developing oral communication skills. This highlights that the variety of assessment techniques reported by teachers reflects the diverse perspectives they hold, even if some types of these techniques are not fully implemented in practice.

However, what is noticed from the results is that the overwhelming majority of the teachers do not pay any attention to the oral communication skills in the exams. This refers that such skills are not given any marks in the exams, so the students' efforts in learning the language focus mainly on written communication skills to pass the exams. This badly affects their mastery over the oral skills and delivers the idea that these skills are less important.

Table 15: The role of English oral skills in enhancing students' future employability

Item 12: To what extent do the English oral communication skills assist the students to get jobs in the future?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. To a large extent	22	73%
b. To some extent	6	20%
c. To a little extent	2	7%
d. Not at all	0	0%
Total	30	100%

According to Table 15, the majority of teachers, 73%, stated that English oral communication skills assist students in obtaining future employment opportunities to a large extent. This indicates strong agreement among the teachers regarding the significant role of oral communication in enhancing students' employability. Additionally, 20% of teachers pointed out that oral communication contribute to this area to some extent, which further reinforces its considerable importance. Interestingly, only two teachers, 7% indicated that these skills contribute to a little extent and none of the respondents selected the *Not at all* option. This overall agreement supports the idea that fostering oral communication skills in the classroom can contribute preparing students for future careers, real-world communication and participation in the global job market. This idea is also supported by

-If 'Yes', please describe the training you have received.

Table 16: Teachers' training in English oral communication skills

Item 13: Have you ever received any training in the teaching oral communication skills of English?		
Alternatives	No. of participants	Percentage
a. Yes	8	27%
b. No	22	73%
Total	30	100%

From the teachers' responses in the Table 16, the large majority, 73%, reported that they did not receive any training in teaching English oral communication skills. In contrast, only 27% indicated that they received such training. This significant gap suggests that many teachers may enter the classroom without adequate preparation, particularly in relation to the instruction of the oral communication skills. This lack of training may affect the effectiveness of their teaching practices, especially in promoting the students' listening and speaking proficiency.

These results emphasized the potential need for professional development programs that focus on enhancing the teachers' skills in teaching oral communication. Among the eight teachers who reported receiving training, the areas of focus varied. Five teachers indicated that their training focused on developing language skills and teaching methods. Their responses referred generally to the development of skills and methods of teaching without specifying particular areas of focus. While the remaining teachers reported more specific areas of training. One teacher stated that training focused on developing speaking skill and teaching methods. Another teacher reported attending workshop on effective speaking techniques and interactive activities to promote students' engagement and oral proficiency, as well as training on the use of technology tools in language teaching. The third teacher indicated that the training focused on developing the four language skills. Overall, the responses indicate that only a small number of the teachers reported receiving training related to teaching methods and language skills. However, the fact that 22 teachers reported not receiving any training highlights a lack of professional development opportunities in this area and suggests the need for more training programs to support teachers in teaching English oral communication skills.

Analysis and Discussion

The findings revealed that most teachers regarded oral communication skills as essential for English language learning and students' future careers. However, despite these positive beliefs, listening and speaking activities included in the Crescent English curriculum were not consistently implemented, and students were not always encouraged to participate in them. Although the curriculum contains a considerable number of oral communication activities, many teachers did not consider them fully sufficient. Teachers also reported several challenges, including students' low levels of comprehension, listening and speaking proficiency, overcrowded classrooms, and limited instructional time. Pronunciation and limited vocabulary were identified as the main difficulties faced by students. In addition, teachers acknowledged that their teaching styles, limited oral communication practices, and weaknesses in language use hindered the development of students' oral

communication skills. The findings further indicated that oral communication skills received little attention in examinations, leading students to focus mainly on written skills. Moreover, the use of varied oral communication activities was undervalued by many teachers, and the majority had not received training related to the teaching of oral communication skills.

Factors Behind Students Weakness in Listening and Speaking Skills

The findings suggest that students' weakness in oral communication skills resulted from several interconnected factors, including the neglect of listening and speaking activities, limited teacher encouragement, students' low language proficiency, and psychological and environmental factors such as fear, hesitation, shyness, lack of motivation, and overcrowded classrooms. In addition, the lack of assessment of oral communication skills in examinations, the reliance on traditional teaching methods, and the absence of adequate teacher training further hindered the development of students' listening and speaking abilities.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1-Greater attention should be given to teaching and practicing listening and speaking skills in the classroom.
- 2-Oral communication skills should be integrated into classroom assessment practices.
- 3-Specialized training programs should be provided on effective methods of teaching oral communication skills.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore secondary schools English language teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching of listening and speaking skills as presented in the Crescent English curriculum in Yemen and to identify the factors contributing to students' weakness in oral communication skills. The findings revealed that teachers generally recognized the importance of oral communication skills in English language learning, however, several challenges, including students' low proficiency, limited oral practice, assessment practices, and insufficient teacher training, may hinder the effective development of these skills. The study highlights the need for greater attention to oral communication skills within English language teaching and curriculum implementation.

This study aimed to explore secondary schools English language teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching of listening and speaking skills as presented in the Crescent English curriculum in Lahej Governorate, particularly, in Al-Houta and Toban districts and to identify the factors contributing to students' weakness in these skills. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers recognized the importance of oral communication skills in English language learning. However, despite their positive beliefs, many teachers tended to neglect encouragement and implementation of listening and speaking activities provided in the Crescent English curriculum. Several factors were found as contributing to students' weakness in oral communication skills, including students' low comprehension level, low listening and speaking ability, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient class time, students' limited pronunciation and vocabulary, teachers' teaching style, teachers' neglect of oral communication practice, the lack of attention to these skills in examinations, and limited teacher training programs on how to implement these skills. The study highlighted the need for greater attention to oral communication skills within English language teaching and curriculum implementation, besides incorporating such skills into assessment practices and providing teachers with more training programs on implementing oral communication skills effectively in order to tackle the problem addressed in this study.

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مقالة بحثية

معتقدات معلمي المرحلة الثانوية حول تدريس مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث كما وردتا في منهج كريستل للغة الإنجليزية في اليمن في مديرتي الحوطة وتبن بمحافظة لحج

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المُلخَص

تلعب مهارتا الاستماع والتحدث دورًا حيويًا في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، وتعدّان من المهارات الأساسية لتحقيق النجاح الأكاديمي والمهني للطلبة. ومع ذلك، يواجه العديد من طلبة المدارس الثانوية الحكومية في مديرتي الحوطة وتبن بمحافظة لحج صعوبات في فهم اللغة الإنجليزية المنطوقة والتعبير عن أفكارهم بفاعلية من خلال التواصل الشفهي. لذلك، برزت الحاجة إلى استكشاف معتقدات المعلمين حول تدريس مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث كما وردتا في منهج كريستل للغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية الحكومية اليمنية في هاتين المديرتين. وقد استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي المسحي من خلال استبانة شبيهة بمقننة تم تطبيقها على (30) معلمًا ومعلمة للغة الإنجليزية يعملون في المدارس الثانوية الحكومية في منطقة الدراسة خلال العام الدراسي 2023-2024. أظهرت النتائج أن المعلمين يمتلكون بشكل عام معتقدات إيجابية حول أهمية مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث ويدركون دورهما في تعلم اللغة. ومع ذلك، وعلى الرغم من هذا الوعي، لم ير المعلمون أن أنشطة التواصل الشفهي المتضمنة في منهج كريستل للغة الإنجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية كافية بشكل كامل لتنمية مهارات التواصل الشفهي لدى الطلبة. علاوة على ذلك، أفادت غالبية المعلمين بإهمال الأنشطة المرتبطة بهذه المهارات. كما كشفت النتائج عن عدد من العوامل المؤثرة في تنمية مهارات التواصل الشفهي لدى الطلبة، بما في ذلك التحديات المرتبطة باللغة، بالإضافة إلى العوامل البيئية والنفسية. وأوصت الدراسة بإيلاء مزيد من الاهتمام لمهارات التواصل الشفهي، وتزويد المعلمين ببرامج تدريبية حول تدريس هذه المهارات، وإدراج مهارات التواصل الشفهي ضمن التقويم الصفّي، وتهيئة بيئة صفية داعمة تشجع الطلبة على المشاركة في الممارسة الشفهيّة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طبيعة المعتقدات؛ دور مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث؛ منهج كريستل للغة الإنجليزية.

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