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Factors Affecting Oral Fluency of EFL Students A Case study of second year EFL LMD Students the University Centre of Barika

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Dedication

To my daughter Nilay without whom
this thesis would have been finished in half the time.

Acknowledgment

All praise goes to Allah only for His generous blessings, without which I would never get here.

My utmost gratitude goes to my better half, friends, love, partner and wife who believed in me and pushed me through and through toward my successes. Thank You.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that may lead to speaking difficulties among EFL learners. It also aims at evaluating the quality of the current practices of learning, teaching oral skill of English at Barika University center. In order to detect the points of strength and weakness in oral classrooms, a descriptive analysis was made based on quantitative method. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire that was given to 46 students and another questionnaire was given to 8 oral class teachers. Results were studied in a quantitative manner. Frequencies and percentages were manually figured out. Results showed the majority of students did not make enough effort to reach high level of competency in speaking, also results revealed that students face the following speaking difficulties when they try to speak: fear of mistakes, lack of accuracy, the disability to think of anything to say, speak very little, unjustified use of mother tongue and students' shyness. In addition, the majority of teachers did not use a common standard method for evaluation. Although teachers claimed using Communicative Approach and Task-based learning, there is medium success in developing students' fluency and accuracy. Teachers also claimed that such lack of success is due to unmotivated students, lack of time, and lack of using technology, in addition to students' insufficient efforts to prepare for oral classes. The study recommends that interconnected efforts by students, teachers, and the English Departments altogether should be increased to enhance students' oral proficiency.

المخلص

إن الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التعرف والتحقق من العوامل التي تؤثر على المهارات الشفوية للطلبة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية, كما تهدف أيضا إلى تقييم طرق تدريس مهارات المحادثة الحالية في المركز الجامعي العقيد سي الحواس بركة بولاية باتنة. ومن أجل تحديد نقاط القوة ونقاط الضعف في أقسام تدريس مهارات الكلام للغة الانجليزية, قمنا بإجراء تحليل وصفي لبحث أنجز بطريقة كمية, وبعد أن تم جمع المعلومات عن طريق إستبيانات تم تصميمها خصيصا للطلبة وأساتذة تعليم مهارات المحادثة, تم حساب الأنماط المتكررة و النسب المؤوية بطريقة يدوية. لقد أظهرت النتائج أن أغلب الطلبة والطالبات لم يبذلوا المجهود الكافي للوصول إلى مرحلة إتقان مهارات المحادثة بسلاسة, كما بينت النتائج من جهة, أن الطلبة والطالبات يعانون من خوف الوقوع في الخطأ مما يسبب الخجل وإحتمال عدم وصول الرسالة بشكل صحيح. ومن جهة أخرى صرح معظم الأساتذة أن عدم ممارسة الطلبة للغة خارج أوقات الدراسة وخارج الجامعة يعد عائقا كبيرا على غرار عدم تحمس الطلبة بشكل الكافي أثناء الحصص, بالإضافة إلى عدد ساعات التدريس المحدودة وبالتالي ممارسة اللغة بشكل أقل بالنسبة للطلبة. وفي الاخير نقترح بعد هذه الدراسة أن يكون هناك تعاون وتنسيق حقيقي على أعلى المستويات بين كلية اللغات و الأساتذة و الطلبة على حد السواء لتحسين ظروف تعلم اللغة بشكل عام و التمكن من مهارات المحادثة بسلاسة ودقة بشكل خاص.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ESL: English Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

GT: Grammar Translation

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MT: Mother Tongue

LMD: Licence-Master-Doctorat

RQ: Research Question

RH: Research Hypothesis

WPM: words per minute

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1.General Introduction

Speaking is a fundamental skill to human communication, it comes second after listening and before reading and writing in the natural sequence of language skills. Achieving proficiency in oral communication skills gives confidence to EFL learners and show their excellency. Despite the huge importance of the communicative skills, many teachers of English still spend the majority of class time on reading and writing practices, almost ignoring speaking and listening skills (Lawtie, 2004; Al Perez astrue, R. P., & Perez-Llantada, C. , 2010). However, Ur (1996) considered speaking as the most important skill among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language. This indicates that using a language is more important than just knowing about it. Because “there is no point in knowing a lot about language if you can’t use it” (Scrivener,2011, p.212).

In the past decade, oral communication instruction was neglected because of the misconception that oral communication competence develops naturally over time, and EFL was taught through Grammar Translation where attention was focused on memorizing grammar rules and lists of vocabulary to perform correct writing and reading (Chaney, A.L., and Burk, T.L.,1998). Such method of instruction proved not to be helpful for achieving oral fluency, because grammar structures and vocabulary were not effectively employed in a natural flow of speech where "there is little or no opportunity for the learner to use the language in a natural communicative situation" (Ringbom, 1987, p. 27). Also, Yule (2006) indicates that the process of second language exposure is accomplished in a conscious, instructed and controlled manner. In this context, learners are exposed to a limited amount of the language which is fixed by classroom hours and lesson preparation.

When one learns another language, it is required to achieve a high level of competence in all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). However, the situation in Algeria EFL classrooms does not meet these standards. Therefore, this research investigates the current practices and methods used in the oral skill teaching courses at the Algerian universities: the case of Barika University Center.

2. Statement of the problem

The speaking skill is getting a little attention at Barika University, and what makes it worse, English is rarely practiced outside classrooms. Also, there is only one or two oral sessions per week, with extensive emphasis on linguistic input rather than communicative output. All those

factors have created a situation, where English major students lack the acceptable level of language proficiency to speak fluently in any sociocultural context.

3. Related literature review

Until the nineties of the past century in Algeria, it was enough for the EFL learners to only understand and write English for the sake of having a good job since English was basically learned for the purpose of teaching new students only. In other words, EFL students were not necessarily required to be fluent or proficient in speaking because of the lack of the need to communicate with native speakers. However, during the last two decades, things have changed gradually with the technological revolution and the increasing importance of English as a world language. Now, we are at the beginning of the Third Millennium, living in the age of the internet, multimedia, satellites, and specialized TV channels, which pushed communication among different nations to grow easier and faster, and that made the world a small village, what gave English language higher importance and raised the demand for English proficiency since English is widely adopted in non-English countries as the language of science and business (Al-Sibai,2004).

The use of English as foreign language (EFL) in oral communication, is without a doubt, one of the most highly complex activities necessary to be considered when teaching the English language, moreover the focus on teaching speaking can and will improve the oral production of the language, therefore, teaching activities in the classroom should aim at maximizing individual language use Haozhang (1997). English speaking classrooms in many countries has a lot of problems which reduces the chance of promoting speaking accuracy and fluency, some of those problems are: the limited amount of time, crowded classrooms, lacking the opportunity to practice outside the class and the absence of multimedia systems in classrooms, etc. Consequently, many researchers (Boonkit, 2010; Chelle de Porto, 1997; Dinçer, 2011; Dinçer, Yeşilyurt, & Göksu, 2010) conducted their research to help make language classrooms real speaking classes, not listening ones.

Teaching speaking methodology went through important changes, from traditional teacher-centered methods to more student-centered ones. In this concept, there are two different teaching approaches of oral skills which are related to teaching methods. The old one is the accuracy-oriented approach which don't accept or tolerate grammatical errors and they cannot be neglected, because they can result in fossilization. Instant error-correction is strictly needed to avoid fossilization. This approach focuses on repetition of newly introduced forms and grammatical structures of speech (Willerman, 2011). The other one is the fluency-oriented

approach which believes that grammatical or pronunciation errors are insignificant, especially in the early stages of learning the language. Correction can create difficulties for the learners' development of speech skills. This approach origin is the Natural approach and regards errors as tolerable and they are signs of natural language development.

All approaches are not adequate separately in education and combining approaches is more efficient than being strictly bound to one approach. Which leads to the necessity of combining these two approaches in English speaking classes and using them separately or together according to: students' needs, English levels, activity types, lessons' purpose, etc. Finally, it should not be forgotten that accuracy and fluency are not contradictory, because they affect each other. Accuracy brings fluency and fluency brings further accuracy (Willerman, 2011).

4. Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the factors affecting oral fluency of Barika EFL students from their own perspectives?

RQ2: What are the factors affecting oral fluency of Barika EFL students from their teacher's perspectives?

RQ3: What are the problems faced by teachers in the oral classes?

5. Research Hypothesis:

Based on the above research questions, we would like to propose the following research hypotheses:

RH1: It is hypothesized that students do not make enough efforts to develop speaking skills because of lack of confidence and anxiety of making mistakes, also traditional methods emphasize extensive linguistic input rather than communicative output which results in what is known as 'mute English learners', who can only read and write but are unable to speak.

6. AIMS OF THE STUDY:

General Aim:

To describe the current oral classrooms in terms of the teaching methods.

Specific Aims:

To investigate the problems faced by the oral course teachers and students in teaching/learning oral skills.

7. Significance of The Study

Reaching oral proficiency has always been an aspiration for the majority of EFL learners in different EFL contexts, yet many teachers considered oral fluency as a minor issue in language learning (Kayi, 2006). Therefore, the amount of speaking practice inside the classroom is insufficient, compared to the amount of listening; that is, the teacher is the major speaker while students feel at ease to be receptive to language. Consequently, it becomes very difficult for the learners to make any progress and master the oral skill.

In addition, the EFL learners at Barika University, when given the chance to speak, do not have equal chances for interaction because of the class is usually crowded and time is limited. On the other hand, students do not work on themselves outside the classroom in terms of listening, practice, and preparation, which negatively affects their participation during classes.

The necessity to explore this problem from all sides requires a research to be conducted, in order to make things clear, this study aims at an in-depth investigation of the status of the oral skill at Barika university center, covering two major processes: learning and teaching.

This study is expected to be of great value and contribution to the field of applied linguistics in Algeria and the region around, by attempting to help better understand the problem, find solutions, and suggest recommendations for developing the oral skill of speech.

8 Research Methodology

This study produced one type of data which is quantitative. The descriptive statistics of percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires, therefore, this study should be able to address the following two main questions:

1. What are the main speaking difficulties encountered EFL students?
2. What are the factors that contribute to the existence of these speaking difficulties?

The items of the questionnaires were mostly taken from former studies (Moriam, 2005; Ozsevik, 2010; Ramirez, 2010; Razmjoo & Ardekani, 2011; & UW Office of Educational Assessment (OEA), 2006) besides some adaptations to meet the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Participants:

Second years' students of English at Barika university and their oral expression Teachers.

Research instruments:

A questionnaire is used as instruments for gathering data. The items of the questionnaires were mostly taken from former studies (Moriam, 2005; Ozsevik, 2010; Ramirez, 2010; Razmjoo &

Ardekani, 2011; & UW Office of Educational Assessment (OEA), 2006) besides some adaptations to meet the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

9.Limitations of The Study

This research study raised a number of issues and questions that may provide a basis for future research. This is partly due to some limitations identified in this study and partly because of issues and concerns that rose in the analysis and could not be pursued as part of this inquiry. Thus, a brief reference to the limitations will be presented. Firstly, this is a short term study conducted over a space of one semester. As it was not a longitudinal study and did not allow the researcher to deal with more factors, any conclusions established do not provide a full picture of the factors affecting the oral skill. Secondly, since the study was conducted on one group of students from the Department of Foreign Languages, Section of English at Barika University center, the findings of the study may not be generalized to represent all the Algerian universities or elsewhere. Nonetheless, they can be regarded as an illuminative one, applicable to other similar contexts.

Chapter One: Speaking Skills

Introduction

Language is a means of thinking and exchange of culture between nations. It is also a means of communication among people. As a result, many countries emphasize teaching languages other than the native language to its citizens. One of the four language skills is speaking, through which people communicate efficiently, in order to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions, intentions, hopes and viewpoints. Furthermore, in almost any situation, speaking is the most frequently used language skill. As (Rivers, 1981) studied language use outside the classroom context and found that speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing combined.

1. Definition of Speaking Skill

Despite the various definitions of the word “speaking” suggested by scholars in language learning, yet they all promote the same meaning. According to Oxford dictionary, speaking is the action of conveying information or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in spoken language. From the definition, it is concluded that speaking is a message sent from a speaker to a listener. Sending message in speaking uses verbal language. Because of that, communication in speaking way should be accurate. The accuracy will decide the success of communication. Also, (Brown, 1994), Burns & (Joyce, 1997) defined speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions or patterns that tend to recur in certain discourse situations (e.g., declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Speaking requires from learners not only to know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (*linguistic competence*), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (*sociolinguistic competence*). Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996). A good speaker combines all of those skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act.

1.1 The Importance of Speaking Skill

After all, the most effective way to communicate is through speech, which means that speaking is the most important way of communication. (Nunan, 1999) argues that success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language. Therefore, speaking is probably a priority for most learners of English (Florez, 1999). Although fear of public speaking can be a big problem, yet, (Hamilton, 2008) indicates that not all people with public speaking anxiety are necessarily unable to achieve work goals, though this can be problematic when it prevents an individual from pursuing a goal they might have. After all speaking skills are important for career success, but certainly not limited to one's professional goals. Speaking skills can enhance one's personal life and thereby bring the welfare that we should all seek (Gillis, 2013)

1.2 Linguistic and Non-Linguistic Elements of Speaking.

According to (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006), speaking English as a foreign language cannot be based on only learning grammar and lexis, non-native speakers must know how to use language appropriately in context, which is called pragmatics. Speech also should sound accurate in terms of pronunciation to convey the desired message without being misunderstood. In speaking, the meaning or message of a statement can be conveyed through several elements. Some of these elements are nonlinguistic, such as the context of previous common knowledge of both the speaker and hearer, and body language of the speaker etc (Wilson, 2004). On the other hand, there are the linguistic factors like the lexis or vocabulary of a statement, there is also the grammatical factors; for example, word order, word endings etc. Finally, there is the prosody of an utterance, such as emphasis which also plays a role in communication (Kreidler, 1997).

(Nunan, 1999) summarized several aspects that should be learned/taught in any oral course. First, students need to learn how to produce speech sounds, patterns and stress for words and sentences along with intonation and rhythm. In addition, they have to learn how to choose the appropriate words (meanings) according to the right context. Coherence and cohesion of thoughts must be taken into account, concentrating on the objectives of speaking is also required to have logic in communication. Finally, students should learn how to speak fluently with few or no pauses or hesitation. In order to achieve fluency.

2. Fluency

Fluency in a language means speaking easily, reasonably quickly and without having to stop and pause very often. Becoming fluent in a language can take many years (British Council, fluency, 2013, para. 1). Fluent speakers communicate and get their message across smoothly, even though they may make mistakes.

Fluency is defined as being able to speak or write easily in a given language. And according to the Oxford English Dictionary it comes from the Latin word “fluentem” meaning “to flow.” Fluency is the first feature by which foreign language learners are evaluated in an oral interaction. The definition of the term fluency can be very complex, (Lennon, 1990), has defined fluency in its broad meaning, that is the ability to express oneself intelligibly reasonably, accurately and without too much hesitation, otherwise the communication will break down because listeners will lose their interest. According to (Byrne, 1986), fluency can be broken down into quantifiable factors such as: words per minute; repetitions; self-corrections, filled pauses, (Ellis, 2003) suggests that fluency is the extent to which the language produced in performing a task without pausing, hesitation, or reformulation. On the other hand, (Thornbury, 2005) claims that speed and pause are both important factors in fluency, because speakers need to take breath. In addition to that, native speakers also pause from time to time to make the listener understand what they said. However, if foreign language learners face difficulties to keep the same rate when speaking, he suggests what is called “production strategies”, which is the ability to fill the pauses. The most common pause fillers are “uh” and “um”, vague expressions such as “to sum up” and “I mean”. To achieve fluency, the teachers then should train learners to use their personal language freely to express their own ideas (Hughes 2002, p.113).

(Tricia, 2000, p.54) adds that the term fluency relates to the production and it is normally reserved for speech. It is the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness, or undue hesitation. (Hughes, 2002) supports also that fluency and coherence refers to the ability to speak in a normal level of continuity, rate and effort in addition to link the ideas together in a coherent way.

2.1 Psychological Factors of Fluent Speaking.

(Noonan, 2005) distinguished between the successful EFL speakers of English and the non-successful ones. Successful speakers are usually able to converse clearly, because they know how and when to speak, pause, narrate, and describe what they mean with varying length of connected speech, and they understand almost all of the details they hear, regardless of the

topic they discuss. Unsuccessful speakers, on the other hand, are simply unable to speak and communicate their ideas effectively, and they are usually misunderstood. In this regard, Noonan identified some factors which may lead to success or unsuccess in EFL speaking. First of all, the degree of general motivation the learner has for example, success in the oral skill is well linked with motivation. Secondly, the type of motivation the learner has whether intrinsic/integrative (i.e., learners being interested in the language, culture, and people of the L2) or instrumental (i.e., using language as a means to seek professional promotion). Integrative motivation is superior to instrumental motivation in creating fluent speakers, while having both types is the best.

(Noonan, 2005) added that the complexity of language (i.e., Krashen's comprehensible input), the length of time of exposure, and the amount of interaction and participation all affect a student's success in speaking. The psychological factor or affective filter also determines fluency in speaking such as anxiety and lack of confidence. If the affective filter is high (e.g., high anxiety and low self-esteem), the speaker may feel reluctant or hesitant to speak, which negatively affect fluency. Lastly, internalizing the grammatical structures indirectly through exposure to language is much better for speaking than the explicit learning and memorization of rules.

2.1.1 psychological reasons for speaking problems

Speaking is a human skill that needs to be trained. (Brigance, 1961) argued that only few people get born with good speaking voices and abilities. On the other hand, many speakers may face internal problems which may create difficulties to their oral fluency. For one thing, some people have poor voices resulted from organic problems, so they need speech correction or therapy from experts. Another cause of weak speaking is resulted from personality problems, such as lack of confidence and self-esteem. Therefore, language speakers should pay attention to how speech sounds should be pronounced in order to produce more effective speech, or at least get understood.

So as to produce comprehensible speech, (Brigance, 1961) asserted that the speaker should have good articulation of sounds, which differs from pronunciation. "Articulation is uttering clear, distinct syllables. To do this you must, first, shape the speech sounds with the speech organs, next, combine the separate sounds to make up intelligible speech if the sounds are slurred, muffled, or projected weakly, the listener is kept under tension. (Brigance, 1961) also added that to be a good language speaker, one needs to have his\her voice flexible in rate, emphasis, pitch, and inflection.

The psychological part is also a key factor in learning and teaching the oral skill. In other words, the teacher as well as the student has to know how to play their roles systematically but not randomly. As for the teacher, s/he should know how to encourage their students to speak out their mind without inhibition and support them to overcome their errors and mistakes, taking into consideration that making mistakes is part of the learning process. With respect to this very point, Oxford (1999), as reported in (Hue, 2010), spotted light on some situations where learners feel uneasy when they speak. For instance, when a student gets a negative feedback on the spot, the least that could be said is that they feel disappointed and their motive to express themselves decreases. Learners also grow nervous when they get called on suddenly and randomly without a chance to get prepared. In addition, when a quiet or absent-minded student is targeted, s/he feels embarrassed and may stop speaking at all. If the same thing occurs constantly in the classroom, the general atmosphere, then, would be discouraging, demotivating, and even threatening to create interactive communication.

2.1.2 Pedagogical Reasons for Lacking Oral Fluency

In a study conducted by Chen and (Goh, 2011) in Singapore, 331 Chinese oral EFL teachers expressed that they have several difficulties in teaching the oral skill. One problem is related to physical shortcomings, such as the lack of teaching resources and equipment, and the inappropriate class shapes, sizes, and distribution of students. Another problem is related to teachers' views and evaluation of their own proficiency level; that is, they confessed their frustration of their low performance and lack of management in their oral classes. They also expressed their need to learn and receive professional training in designing creative tasks, activities, and techniques in order to increase their student's motivation and involvement in the oral class.

An external reason that prevents students from communicating in class is culture; in some cultures, it is unacceptable to speak out loud and express oneself before the teacher, so some students feel shy to speak, which create problems to their oral fluency (Lawtie, 2004). In order to break this cultural barrier, Lawtie suggested to distinguish the oral class from other classes by arranging it in a way that serves interaction (i.e., decorating desks for pair/group works, or in a U-shape, not in lines). In addition, the instructor should lessen his/her part in discussion to make the class more learner-centered not only in certain activities, but follow this strategy during the class to be the norm. Instead of being a dictator, the teacher can play other positive roles to manage the class and keep it under control (e.g., assessor, counsellor, monitor, facilitator, language resource, planner, informer, manager etc.) (Spratt, Pulverness, &

Williams, 2005). What encourages students more to speak confidently in class, according to Lawtie, is giving positive feedback and allocating part of the grades for assessing the speaking skill whether in class discussions or in exams.

3.Accuracy

In second and foreign language teaching, accuracy refers to the “ability to produce grammatically correct sentences” (Richards, Schmidt, Kendricks & Kim, 1992, p. 204). However, (Harmer, 2001) pointed that accuracy involves the correct use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, which are considered by (Thornbury, 2000, p. 3) as three criteria that most teachers have reliance on concerning the assessment of “learner’s command of the linguistic systems.” Therefore, to be accurate in oral production, to be understood and to gain interest of their interlocutors; learners should pay attention to correctness and completeness of the language form. They should know and master the use of vocabulary which mean that learners should study words and know their meanings, and use, also they should be able to distinguish between words classes as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc. including knowing how elements of a sentence work together such as morphemes, phonemes, words, phrases, clauses etc. (Florez, 1999).

3.1 The Role of Vocabulary and Grammar in Accuracy

Accuracy refers to how correct learners use of the language system is, including their use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. It is often compared to fluency when we talk about a learner's level of speaking or writing.

Before exploring the role of vocabulary or lexis in speaking, we need to define the term “vocabulary” which means all words of a language, including phrases, chunks, expressions etc. Speaking depends to a large extent on the repertoire of vocabulary one stores during the process of language learning. Since speaking is one of the daily human behaviors, speakers need to use the right words for the right context/ situation in order to get their points across appropriately without being misunderstood. There are several situations (e.g., formal greetings, public speeches, group discussions, one-on-one conversations etc.) where the methodology of employing vocabulary in speaking should be adapted in accordance to the degree of formality of the context and the type of the target audience, taking into consideration the denotations (i.e., the surface/direct meaning of a word) and connotations (i.e., the implied/indirect meaning of a word), using certain pieces of vocabulary.

(Liu & Jackson, 2008) as cited in (Gan, 2012) argued that shortage of a speaker's vocabulary whether in quantity, in quality, or in propriety is considered a major defect in his spoken language. Gan cited one of his study subjects, named Jane, saying in an interview with her: "I think there is a gap between my vocabulary range when I write and speak...I have enough time to figure out the most appropriate words and phrases. But when it comes to speaking, some words and phrases may never come to my mind, so my expression may not deliver my intended meaning precisely." Another participant called Elizabeth said: "In some social situations that involve use of high colloquial language, I face a shortage of vocabulary and I cannot express accurately what I want to say." Based on this, Gan concluded that shortage of vocabulary definitely leads to lack of accuracy in speaking. Gan asserted that there should be a special focus on vocabulary inside of the class, and that students need to extensively work on their lexis out of class time.

3.2. The role of pronunciation in accuracy

Pronunciation is a key element in speaking and communication (Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991; Pennington, 1996, as cited in Seferoglu, 2005). Pronunciation means according to Haycraft "the main features that make up speech." (1971, p. 1) Once we say pronunciation we mean the accent of a spoken language or variety where there are other elements than pronunciation, such as vocabulary, grammar, and idioms (Honey, 1989). When we learn to speak a second or foreign language, it is not enough to attain grammar and vocabulary; that is, what is the use of learning a piece of language without knowing how to pronounce it? Wrong pronunciation can prevent the accuracy of speech.

In fact, the majority of ESL/EFL speakers suffer, at their home countries, from difficulties in learning the correct pronunciation of English (e.g., Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA)). This fact is supported by the views of many linguists who refer such difficulties in pronunciation to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) which claims that learning a foreign accent becomes difficult after the stage of adolescence and almost impossible after the age of puberty (Lenneberg, 1967 as cited in Hurford, 1991). It is true that the younger the learner is, the better the learning process becomes. Honey claims that "although we do not choose the accent which we grow up speaking, we can alter it to a considerable extent... everybody's accent changes, at least slightly, in the course of a lifetime." (1989, p. 57) This can also be applied to learning the L2/FL accent by using efficient methodology of teaching.

4. Obstacles that Face Students when Speaking

When communicating and speaking in front of others, speakers face some difficulties that may make them avoid talking with others; such as redundancy, colloquial language, intonation and stress, rate and delivery, and anxiety. These are developed in the following points.

4.1 Intonation and Stress

Correct intonation and stress are the keys to speaking English fluently with good pronunciation. Intonation and stress refer to the music of English language. Words that are stressed are key to understanding and using the correct intonation brings out the meaning. Every language has its own intonation system. Previous Researches tells us that the difficulties in learning L2 intonation patterns are often due to the non-equivalence of the intonation structure of the learners' L1 and L2 structure (Cruz-Ferreira, 1983). Poor pronunciation can make a foreign language learner very difficult to understand. Language teachers have lately become more aware of this and have shifted their focus to pronunciation teaching. It is therefore crucial for language teachers to be aware of current research findings in the area of foreign language learning.

4.2 Rate and Delivery

One more characteristic of fluency that faces foreign language speakers is rate and delivery. According to (Brown, 2000, p. 271) one of the teachers' tasks in teaching spoken English is to help learners achieve an acceptable speed along with other attributes of fluency. Studies show speech rate alters depending on the speaker's culture, geographical location, subject matter, gender, emotional state, fluency, profession or audience. However, despite these variables, there are widely accepted guidelines. These are:

Slow speech is usually regarded as less than 110 wpm, or words per minute.

Conversational speech generally falls between 120 wpm at the slow end, to 160 - 200 wpm in the fast range.

People who read books for radio or podcasts are often asked to speak at 150-160 wpm.

Auctioneers or commentators who practice speed speech are usually in the 250 to 400 wpm range.

4.3 Limited Practice Time

Teachers may not provide as much opportunity as possible to their students to speak, which means less practice time. In addition to teachers speaking most of the time, learners will not be able to use and practice authentic materials, there are several other studies presented by (Wood, 2002) which suggests that language learners use less formulaic language than native speakers due to limited exposure to authentic input.

5. Problems Faced by Teachers in Teaching Speaking

It is commonly recognized fact that achieving proficiency in foreign language speaking in classroom conditions is not an easy task. Even advanced learners often finish a language course with the conviction that they are not sufficiently prepared for speaking beyond the classroom. This difficulty results basically from the character and inadequate frequency of speaking opportunities in the classroom in comparison to the abundance of natural varieties and genres of oral communication. In fact, selecting the most appropriate types of spoken discourse for classroom practice in a particular language course is a very hard decision which, unfortunately, hardly ever reflects the natural occurrence and distribution of communicative situations.

In teaching speaking, teachers usually face some challenges in their class. Native language and age of students represent a big problem to teachers in dealing with a new sound system, at a late age. For example, some students have low ability to learn English phonemes, some students have high ability in English, and some of the students are older than the teachers. Also, teachers may face problems of their student in which some of the students were shy and afraid to speak English with very limited time of practice. Another problem is the low amount of exposure to language. There is also the problem of unmotivated students with no desire to improve their English speaking.

5.1 Native language

The native language is the most influential factor affecting a learner's speaking. (Brown, 2000:284) states, "If you are familiar with the sound system of learner's native language, you will be better able to diagnose student difficulties. Many L1-L2 carryovers can be overcome through a focused awareness and effort on the learner's part. This means that mother language of students will be a problem in teaching speaking if the teacher cannot understand the fact and decided a way to solve the condition moreover if the linguistic aspects of the native language students have is really different with target language. In the condition, linguistically, the

difference of L1 and L2 is the fundamental factor that determines the success of a speaking class.

5.2 Age

Generally speaking, children under the age of puberty stand an excellent chance of “sounding like a native” if they have continued exposure in authentic contexts. Beyond the age of puberty, while adults will almost surely maintain a “foreign accent”, there is no particular advantage attributed to age. A fifty year old can be as successful as an eighteen year old if all other factors are equal. Although, Brown, (2000:284) argues that remind the students are older, that “the younger, the better” is a myth. It is because, in fact, every step of age has its own characteristic that sometimes has a potency to be a problem in teaching speaking.

Adults have a wider range of life experiences to draw on, both as an individual and as learners than younger students do. Adult comes with a lot of previous learning experiences which may hamper their progress, (Harmer, 2007:15). Brown, (2000:90) also says that adults usually have acquired a self-confidence not found in children. Unfortunately, adults have weakness that often brings a modicum of general self-confidence (global self-esteem) into the classroom.

By the explanation above it can be concluded that teaching language is really related with the age of students that affect the characteristics of the students itself. In every age, there is some uniqueness which can support the teaching processes on the other hand the uniqueness can be hard obstacle in the teaching. It can be anticipated by making an observation about the age of students and find the formula in teaching each age.

5.3 Exposure

It is difficult to define exposure. One can actually live in a foreign country for some time but not take advantage of being “with the natives.” Research seems to support the notion that the quality and intensity of exposure are more important than mere length of time. (Brown, 2000:285) says that if class time spent focusing on speaking demands the full attention and interest of the students, then they stand a good chance of reaching their goals.

The statement shows that in terms of exposure the discussion will be very fuzzy. Some students may be more interested in quality and intensity of exposure the teacher gives in speaking class. Some of the students may have contradictory condition; they prefer to get long time of exposure in reaching the speaking class goal. The relativity is an obstacle in teaching

speaking so the teacher should know the condition of his or her students in order to be able to give suitable exposure.

6. Speaking Practices and Assessment in the EFL Classroom

The assessment of spoken language has gone from the testing of grammar and pronunciation to a more comprehensive assessment of oral language. Thus, oral assessment should reflect not only instructional objectives and practices but also the real-life situations in which the student will have to perform. With this in mind, understanding of oral assessment in order to establish similar oral evaluation criteria for teachers, students, and the institution.

6.1. Classroom activities.

Lawtie (2004) remarked that oral class instructors should take care of two things when designing and implementing oral activities and tasks. First, instructors need to make sure that the in-class activities are attractive and interesting for students. Secondly, instructors need to choose activities which are appropriate for students' level. Bainbridge and O'Shea (2010), as ESL/EFL experts, suggested a set of practices brought together in a holistic, problem-solving approach to successfully teach oral communication class to their Emirati students. For example, forming the class into two circles round the room: inner and outer for conversations and ask/answer dialogues. Another technique used is the rotational group-work in which the teacher divides the class into groups of four to five members and assigns one of them as "Mr./Ms. floater X" who after group-discussion moves to other groups to negotiate the ideas already discussed in his/her group. A third way to communicate in the oral class is through pair-work in a „controlled conversation“. And a fourth and last oral activity is the memory game in which learners sit in a circle, and each learner repeats his/her neighbor's sentence and add one more to it.

6.2 Role-plays and simulations

Other activities recommended by Kayi (2006) were role-plays and simulations (i.e., "A simulation is a situation in which a person is placed into a scenario and is directly responsible for the changes that occur as a result of their decisions" (Madsa, 2012, p. 3). Other activities were information gap (i.e., sharing information with partners who do not have it, and vice versa), brainstorming (i.e., generating ideas freely and quickly within a limited time without being criticized), storytelling (i.e., telling stories before class fosters creativity and imagination, and boosts self-esteem), and story completion (i.e., the class sit in a circle, and a student begins narrating a story and leave the rest for his/her peers to continue). In addition, interviewing

people according to certain rubric set by the teacher is a good way to promote the oral skill and get socialized. Reporting (i.e., reading a newspaper, magazine or article before coming to class and then reporting the gist to friends and peers), playing cards (i.e., exchanging cards that contains topics and titles among groups and forming questions for discussion about them), picture narrating, picture describing, and finding the difference between couples of pictures to discuss similarities/differences among them are also of the activities that can be applied to enhance the skill of speaking.

Conclusion

Based on this chapter, it can be seen that there are two conclusions. The first conclusion is concerning speaking English difficulties encountered by students. It was found that there are many difficulties regarding learning speaking English (both related to linguistic and psychological factors). Among those difficulties, accuracy, pronunciation, intonation and stress, limited practice time, rate and delivery, and nervousness.

The second conclusion is concerning problems faced by teachers to overcome teaching speaking English difficulties. Native language and age of students represent a big problem for teachers in dealing with a new sound system, at a late age. For example, some students have low ability to learn English phonemes, some students have high ability in English, and some of the students are older than the teachers. Also, teachers may face problems of their students in which some of the students were shy and afraid to speak English with very limited time of practice, along with the problem of low exposure amount to language.

Chapter two: Factors Affecting Students' English Speaking Skills

Introduction

Through the process of acquiring English, there are many important factors affect the oral production. These factors include anxiety, feeling, mood, manner, attitude, etc. Krashen (1982) argues that the factors may act like an affective filter or a psychological obstacle that prevents language learners from absorbing available comprehensible input completely. For Krashen, those factors function as a filter that reduces the amount of language input the learner is able to understand.

1. Factors Affecting Learners' Speaking Abilities

EFL students face a number of challenges that block them from reaching fluency. Many researchers pointed out a number of factors that could affect learners speaking abilities. These factors include:

1.2 Mother Tongue

Harmer (1991) suggests some reasons why students use mother- tongue in class. First, at the point when students are asked about a subject they are not linguistically capable of discussing in the target language. Another reason is that the use of native language is an expected thing to do. In addition, some students may use the first language to explain something to others if there is no support from instructors. Finally, at the point when teachers every now and then use the students' first language, students will consequently feel right to use it. Other learners tend to do literal mother tongue translations when speaking in English. According to Nunan (1999), making translations into mother- tongue as a way of conveying the meaning of new items should be avoided at all costs.

1.3 Lack of self confidence

It is the most common problem encountered by learners in the language learning process. Speaking activities require a learner to have all eyes on him. This exposure to an audience can often give learners stage fright due to lack of confidence. In relation to a study done in Hanoi University, Vietnam, students did not speak fluently due to lack of confidence. Baker & Westrup (2003) observe that shyness is very likely to occur when students speak English because most students do not prepare what to say and also underestimate speaking as a skill. Instead, a majority of the students only picture what to say in mind but remain silent.

1.4 Students' expected feedback

Feedback is any reaction from an instructor in regard to a student's performance or behavior Turner et al (2006). It can be verbal, composed or gestural. The purpose of feedback in the learning procedure is to enhance a students' performance certainly not put a damper on it. A definitive objective of feedback is to provide students with an "I can do this" state of mind as affirmed by Kluger & DeNisi (1996). In any case, when feedback is consolidated with a correctional review, the feedback and instruction become intertwined until "the process itself takes on the forms of new instruction, rather than informing the student solely about correctness." Thompson & Richardson (2001: P.41). At the point when the input is predominantly negative, contemplates have demonstrated that it can debilitate understudy exertion and accomplishment Hattie & Timperley (2007).

2. Motivation

Motivation is a key in second language learning and acquisition process. Reece & Walker (1997) emphasize that a less able student who is highly motivated can achieve greater success than the more intelligent student who is not well motivated. Cheery (2014) defines motivation as "the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Motivation is what causes us to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge." Littlewood (1981) makes it clear that the development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have the motivation and opportunity to express their own particular personality the general population around them.

2.1 Confidence

Confidence "certainty" is a mental and social wonder in which an individual assesses his/her capability and own self as per some qualities, which may bring about various enthusiastic states, and which turns out to be formatively steady, however, is still open to variety contingent upon individual circumstances Nofsinger (2001). Brown (1994) defines confidence as the expression of "an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy." In the context of language learning, low confidence can have genuine results. Students may avoid taking the necessary risks to acquire communicative competence in the target language; they may feel profoundly frail and even drop out of the class. Thinking about these impacts, in the language classroom, it is essential to be worried about learners' self-esteem. However, this implies more than doing occasional activities to make students reflect on their worthiness and competence.

correlation. Self-esteem, therefore, appears to be one of the indicators of successful second language learning. However, confidence is not an isolated variable. It is interwoven with several other personality variables.

2.2 Shyness

Bowen (2005) argue that some shy learners are caused by their nature that they are very quiet. In this case, the students are not very confident and tend to be shy because most of them find it very intimidating when speaking English in front of their friends and teacher. In addition, Saurik (2011) identifies that most of English students feel shy when they speak the language because they think they will make mistakes when they talk. They are also afraid of being laughed at by their peers. This fact is also found in the data of this study that students' shyness is their perception on their own ability. In this sense, they are afraid of being laughed at by their friends due to their low ability in speaking English.

2.3 Low Participation

Aftat (2008) argues that the fear of mistakes is linked to the issue of correction and negative evaluation. In addition, this is also much influenced by the students' fear of being laughed at by other students or being criticized by the teacher. As a result, students commonly stop participating in the speaking activity Hieu (2011).

While increasing participation is a conspicuous objective in courses that incorporate regular discussions and small-group work, it is also vital in an address course. In short, if just a few students take an interest by volunteering answers, making inquiries, or adding to dialogs, class sessions get to be to some degree a lost chance to survey and promote learning, Duncan, & McKeachie (2005). You can enhance student participation in your course by enhance the environment and planning each class session. Moreover, the way in which you interact, both verbally and non-verbally, communicates to students your attitude about participation (Harmer, 1991). Ideally, the objective of expanding participation is not to have every student participate take an interest similarly or at the same rate. Rather, it is to create an environment in which all members have the chance to learn and in which the class investigates issues and thoughts top to bottom, from a variety of viewpoints. Some students will raise their voices more than others; this variation is a result of contrasts in learning inclinations and in addition contrasts in identities (Davis, 1993).

3. Anxiety

According to (Ur, 1996), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking including inhibition, students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy. While investigating Turkish EFL learners' correspondence hindrances in English language classrooms, (Ur, 1996) finds out that anxiety and unwillingness during the English speaking process are viewed, as two of the greatest impediments for EFL learners. Anxiety and unwillingness are brought on by the apprehension of being contrarily assessed when committing errors, especially before their companions. Numerous researchers found that anxiety is not easy to define and has two main types.

3.1 Foreign Language Anxiety

Language anxiety is the feeling of unease, worry and nervousness experienced in learning or using a second language. The feelings may stem from any second language context whether it is associated with the productive skills of speaking and writing or the receptive skills of reading and listening.

Foreign language anxiety is a form of what psychologists describe as a specific anxiety reaction. Some individuals are more predisposed to anxiety than others and may feel anxious in a wide variety of situations. Foreign language anxiety, however, is situation-specific and so it can also affect individuals who are not characteristically anxious in other situations.

3.2 Components of Language Anxiety

Although all aspects of using and learning a foreign language can cause anxiety, both listening and speaking are regularly cited as the most anxiety provoking of foreign language activities. Foreign language anxiety is usually studied and seen in a language classroom situation. It has been argued that language learning is a "profoundly unsettling psychological proposition" as it jeopardizes an individual's self-understanding and perspective. Three theories of anxiety have been developed from internal appraisal, then more situational in learning language and contextual situation self-efficacy and appraisal anxiety state, trait, situational anxiety situational anxiety in a classroom situation Potential negative events that people cannot see or handle their ability often leads to anxiety. Also, if individuals are highly anxious, that kind of habitual reactions may cause those who have experienced many threatening situations in the past to be more likely perceive future situations as threatening. As well, if their anxiety are traits rather than states, self-efficacy must result from past successes, vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

Self-efficacy is one's own confidence that he or she would be able to handle to achieve intended goals. State, trait, situational anxiety refers to those who have gotten traumatized a lot in the past being more likely to perceive the future situations as treating too. Also, specifically in an ESL classroom, students learning a foreign language out of their country are very vulnerable to high levels of anxiety about language learning, which leads them to being less likely to get encouraged by others because of lacking vicarious experience and social persuasions.

There can be various physical causes of anxiety, such as hormone levels, but the underlying causes of excessive anxiety while learning are fear and a lack of confidence. Lack of confidence itself can come from various causes. One reason can be the teaching approach used. Furthermore, foreign language anxiety roots in three psychological challenges: performance difficulty threat identity conflict. Those psychological states thus have task-performance and identity dimensions. People tend to act or speak in a way that would be judged appropriate to the other people native to the foreign culture, but the behavior that individuals are producing grapples with ingrained values and behaviors. Emotions by the psychological challenges has something to do with attempting to switch codes in an interactive encounter.

3.3 Less Proficient English

Students have a problem in recognizing teacher's talk when presenting the lesson in the classroom and as a consequence, they could not answer the questions that the teacher asks to them. Embarrassment is the cause that prevents students from asking for repetition, even if they want to do so. Consequently, they keep quiet, as well, they avoid eye contact with the teacher just to hide the fact that they do not understand.

3.3.1 Students Fear of Mistakes

Most of the time, students feel afraid to make mistakes in front of their classmates in order to prevent their negative evaluation. They try to avoid being in such a situation through keeping silent. Moreover, they suppose that they can be good speakers of the English language by applying it outside the classroom. Students cannot keep themselves away from making mistakes in English classrooms. Nonetheless, preventing several of the topics to be spoken in class is a result of students' fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by their peers.

3.3.2 Large Class Size

Students who feel anxious while speaking in front of the whole class, their level of anxiety will be increased in large class size. Students will attempt to stay away from speaking on the majority of chances because the feeling of embarrassment in front of a large number of classmates and the teacher is intolerable. Large class size generates obstacles for students who feel anxious. Yet, this is a dilemma that cannot be simply fixed in the university at the present time. Reducing the amount of students' anxiety by trying to create further enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere is the best way, for example, that in a classroom with 40 learners when the teacher needs to set up speaking activities, this requires being too noisy. Consequently, this noise may interrupt others learning next to them. He added another problem of large classes "is that teachers may not be able to monitor all the students in student-centered interactions.

3.3.3 Unwillingness to Take Risks

Students' breakdowns can be avoided, as well; they could perform greatly if they are willing to take risks in speaking. Risk-taking is considered as unreasonable. The students' capability to cope with the problems which face them when they want to speak could disappear with their unwillingness to take risks. Thus, they have a great fear of the activities that necessitate spontaneous answers. They reflect that they will make fools of themselves by risk-taking. Likewise, Barkley (2010, p.122, 123) says: It is also important to help students feel comfortable in speaking up and saying what they truly think, believe, and feel. This is challenging because many students are afraid to take this risk, fearing that their comments might be viewed as wrong or stupid. If English is not their primary language, students may fear that they will use the language incorrectly, say the wrong word, or speak with an accent.

5. Relationship between Anxiety and Learners' Academic Achievement

Foreign language learners' anxiety plays an important affective role in second language learning which, unfortunately, leads to a negative impact on their academic achievement. According to Dörnyei (2005, p198) "Anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process." Elkhafaifi, 2005 (as cited in Wei & Yodkamlue, 2012, p.76) states that reducing students' anxiety and providing a less stressful classroom environment might enable teachers to help students improve both their English proficiency and course grades. Moreover, Wei and Yodkamlue (2012) say that FL classroom anxiety is widely considered as a factor to be reduced because of its debilitating nature that enervates one's participation in classroom activities. According to Sato (2003, p. 8), it is broadly known that

anxiety harmfully affects second language achievement. In other words, he claimed that there is a negative relationship between anxiety and L2 achievement. Moreover, he stated an example of Clément, et al (1994) which identifies three different types of second language-related learner anxiety; classroom anxiety, test anxiety, and use anxiety. Thus, Dörnyei (2005, p.6) concludes that the outcomes of their study about language anxiety propose that students whom have the feeling of anxiety, their levels of verbal production will go down.

5.1 Improving Students' Performance by Reducing Anxiety

Anxiety, associated with feelings of fear, stress, uncertainty, uneasiness, and worry about coming things or situations, has a negative effect on foreign language learners' performance. Hence, there are numerous researchers who have agreed on the idea that anxiety should be reduced to improve students' performance and that anxiety has a negative effect on their performance. As Dörnyei argues that there is no doubt that anxiety affects second language performance. And as he stated, that group work allows students to take the initiative in controlling their communicative activities, thus, reducing anxiety, facilitating responsibility, creating community, and smoothing the progress of fluency as a result. We deduce that researchers argued that teachers should reduce the level of their students' anxiety in order to improve their speaking performance. As well, we conclude that when the teacher lets students know what they will produce in the next session, uses appropriate error correction, and cooperative learning (group work) creates a relaxed and a non-aggressive atmosphere that leads to anxiety reduction as well as the encouragement of students' speaking in class.

6. Cross-cultural code-switching

The effects of these negative emotions may also lead to cross-cultural code-switching, in which bilingual people alter a language to their other language through their interactions with other bilinguals. Unlike linguistic code-switching, cross-cultural code-switching is the socio-linguistic phenomenon of changing culturally-ingrained behaviors in a foreign situation. Although cross-cultural code-switching possibly results from both positive and negative emotions, negative emotions are more common and more likely to affect the way a bilingual person speaks. Negative emotions include embarrassment, performance anxiety, guilt, distress and anxiety. "Molinsky identifies three psychological states that appraise under the influence of emotions while code-switching. These are: "experienced performance difficulty, face threat and identity conflict—all of which mediate the relationship between personal and contextual variables and the negative and positive emotions an individual experience while code-

switching". There are three types of cross-cultural code-switching: situational code-switching, conversational code-switching, and borrowing. This code-switching could be considered as an unconscious behavior because of its negative and usually threatening situations. In that sense, although code-switching results from foreign language anxiety, it is more often caused by external circumstances than by internal mental change.

Conclusion

EFL learners and teachers should be aware of language negative factors that affect the learning process especially in the speaking skill. They should also realize that language learning is a potentially stressful process for some learners. Mother tongue, pronunciation, lack of confidence, motivation, low participation, nervousness and anxiety, are clearly an issue in language learning and has a bad effect on speaking English to some students. Finally, it is important that teachers avoid sensitive classroom interactions and provide help to maximize learning a second language.

CHAPTER 3 FIELD WORK

Introduction

In this chapter we aim at investigating factors affecting EFL students Speaking Skills at the Department of English at the University of Barika. Since the teachers and the learners are the main variables of this study; their views and opinions are very important to test our hypothesis, and the most appropriate tool to answer our research questions. For that we have conducted a questionnaire for the second year students and their oral expression teachers.

1. The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

1.1 Sample Description

In order to get answers for our questionnaire we dealt with (46) students, these students were randomly chosen among the total number of second year students population of (356) at Barika University Center. The selection of the sample was based on their level, because students should have had a reasonable experience with their oral expression teachers.

1.2 Students Questionnaire Description

To evaluate the status of the English oral skills at the Barika university, a quantitative data collection method was administered, it was mainly done through surveying "46" second year LMD students and "08" of their course teachers, using two questionnaires. Students' questionnaire consisted of 12 questions. The aim of them was to investigate students' perceptions, practices, and attitudes towards learning the oral skill.

1.3 Analysis of the Results

Item 1: Gender

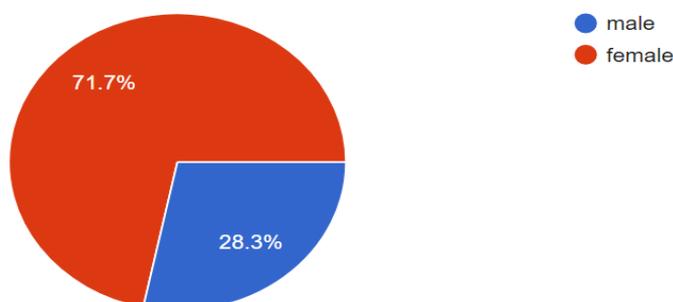


Figure 1: Students' Gender Distribution

No.	Gender	<i>students</i>	%
1.	Female	33	71.7%
2.	Male	13	28.3%
3.	Total	46	100%

Table 1: Students' Gender Distribution

From the Table 1 above it is obvious that female students are the majority with a percentage of (71.1%) far from male students with a percentage of (28.3%). meaning women tend to be more interested in English as a foreign language.

Item 2: Age

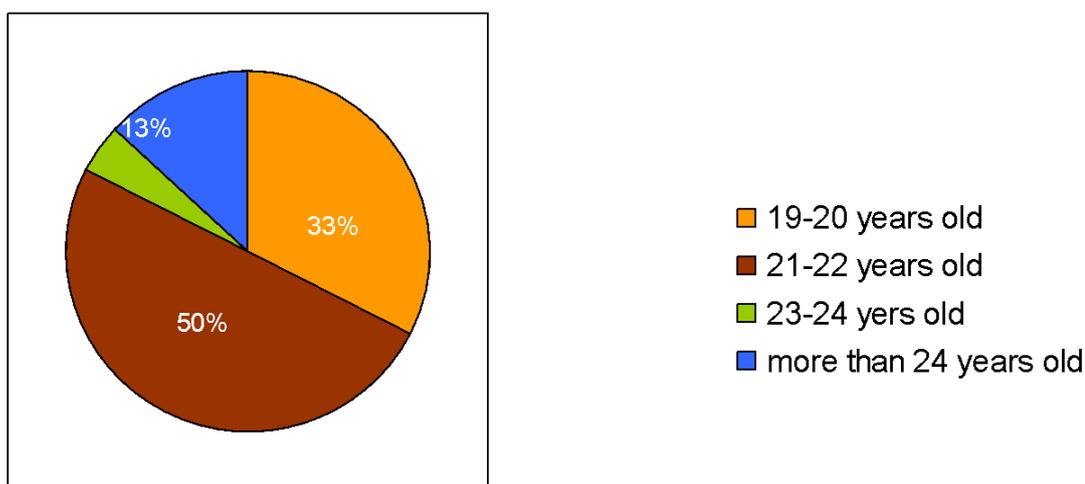


Figure 2: Students' Age Distribution

No.	Age	<i>students</i> 46	% 100
1.	19-20 years old	15	33%
2.	21-22 years old	23	50%
3.	23-24 years old	2	4%
4.	Over 24 years old	6	13%

Table 2: Students' Age Distribution

From the Table 2 above, students aged from 19 to 20 years old are (33%), and from 21 to 22 years old are the majority with (50%) of students, from 23 to 24 years we have only (4%) and more than 24 years there is (13%) of the total percentage.

Item 03: On an average day of study, how much time do you spend listening to spoken English?

1. On an average day of study, how much time do you spend listening to spoken English? 📄
46 responses



Figure 3: The time spent on listening to spoken English by students.

No.	The time spent	<i>students</i>	<i>%</i>
		46	100
1.	Less than 1 hour	11	23.9%
2.	1_2 hours	18	39.%
3/	More than 2 hours.	12	26.1%
4.	majority of my free time	5	10.9%

Table 3: The time spent on listening to spoken English by students.

From the table above we noticed that shortage of extensive listening might be one of the reasons causing low level of fluency.

Item 04: How well do you understand most of the English you listen to while learning English?

- a. I understand all of it easily.
- b. I understand the main message but don't understand some parts.
- c. I understand some of it with great difficulty.
- d. I don't understand what is said except for a few words.

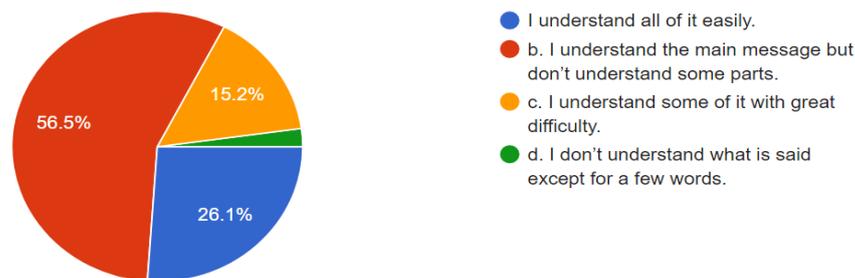


Figure 4: Levels of understood English while learning

No.	Levels of understanding English	students	%
		46	100
1.	I understand all of it easily.	12	26.1%
2.	I understand the main message	26	56.5%
3/	I understand some of it	7	15.2%
4.	I don't understand what is said	1	2.2%

Table 4: Levels of understood English while learning

As was explained to students, the spoken English was meant to be classroom English. Out of the 46 students, 56.5% of the students said they understood the main message except for some parts, 26.1% of them said they understood all of the spoken English easily, whereas only 15.2% of them said they understood some parts with great difficulty.

Item 05: In an average week of study, how much time do you spend speaking to native speakers of English?

46 responses

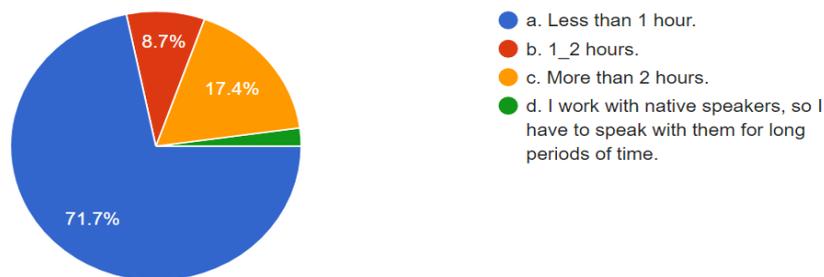


Figure 5: Weekly average of speaking English

No.	Averages	<i>students</i>	<i>%</i>
		46	100
1.	Less than 1 hour	33	71.7%
2.	1_2 hours	4	8.7%
3/	More than 2 hours	8	17.4%
4.	I talk to native all the time	1	2.2%

Table 5: Weekly average of speaking English

71.1% of the students said that they spoke with native speakers of English for less than two hours per week. 17.4% of them said they spoke for more than two hours per week, whereas no students said they had to speak to them for long periods of time. Somehow it was expected that the majority of the EFL students rarely interact with native speakers, consequently students have rare chance to hear the language live from its speakers, which at the end affects the quality of the language they would learn.

Item 06: What kind of activities/ tasks are usually carried out in your oral class?

- a. role play. b. Watching and discussing videos. c. Listening activities.
- d. Open discussions. e. Oral presentations. f. Tasks and games. g. Other.

46 responses

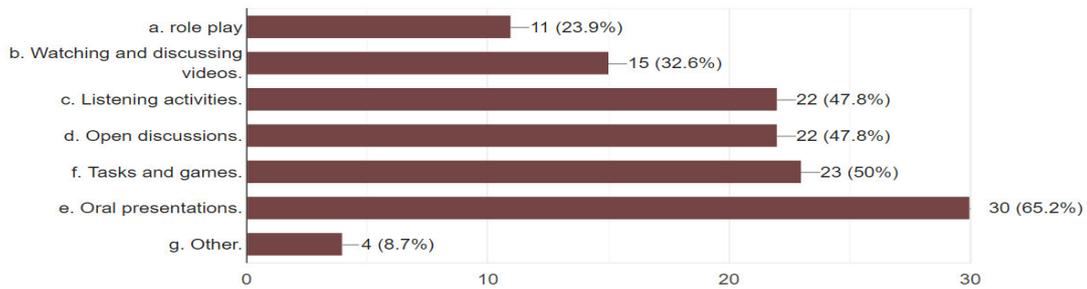


Figure 6: Tasks usually carried out in oral class

No.	Tasks	<i>students</i>	<i>%</i>
		46	100
1.	Role play	11	23.9%
2.	Watching and discussing videos	15	32.6%
3	Listening activities	22	47.8%
4.	Open discussions	22	47.8%
5	Tasks and games	23	50%
6	Oral presentation	30	65.2%
7	Other	4	8.7%

Table 6: Tasks usually carried out in oral class

Oral presentation was chosen 65.2% of times, which makes it the most frequent activity in the classroom, which shows teachers awareness of the significance of talking in the target language to better master it, while role play was the least to be carried out in oral classes at 23.9 % of the time.

Item 07: Choose from the following characteristics of ‘the traditional methods’ the ones that exist in your oral class. (You can choose more than one option.)

46 responses

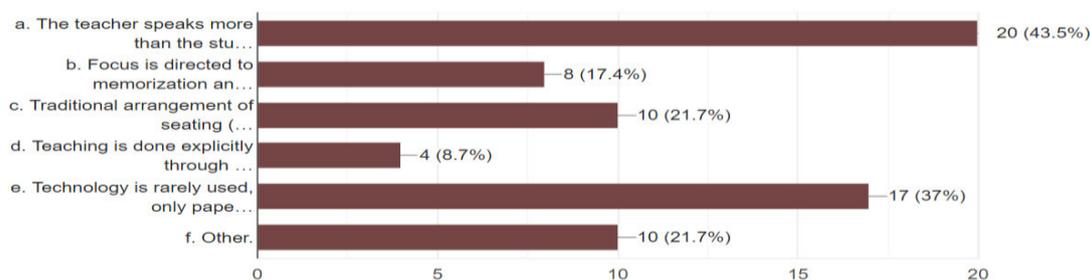


Figure 7: Traditional methods that exist in oral class

No.	Item	students	%
		46	100
1.	The teacher speaks more than the students	20	43.5%
2.	Focus is directed to memorization	8	17.4%
3	Traditional arrangement of seating	10	21.7%
4.	focus is on structure and form.	4	8.7%
5	Technology is rarely used, only paper and pen.	17	37%
6	Other.	10	21.7%

Table 7: Traditional methods that exist in oral class

According to the table 7, the item “The teacher speaks more than the student’s teacher centered.” was selected as the most prominent feature of traditional education with 43.5% of choices. This means teachers need to give more opportunities for the students to speak and practice, as well as increase the variety of oral communication activities, in order for students to engage in during the class period.

Item 08: Choose from the following characteristics of the modern methods the ones that exist

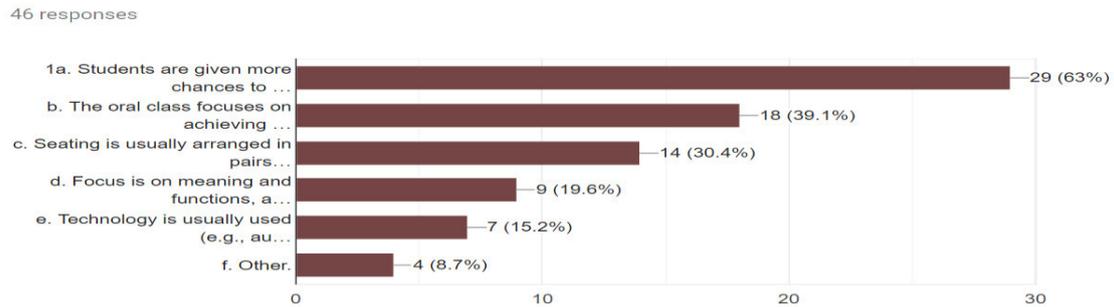


Figure 8: Students and Teachers' Amount of Talking

46 responses

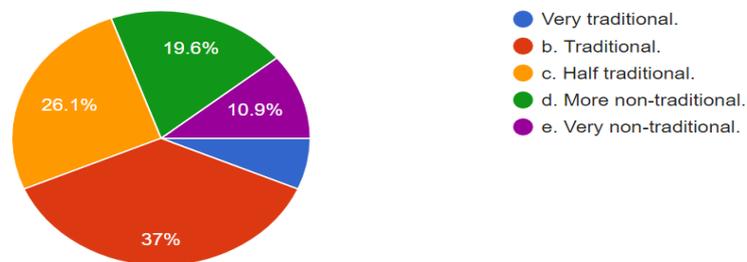


Figure 8.1: Traditional/non-traditional

No.	Item	<i>students</i> 46	100%
1.	Students are given more chances to speak	29	63%
2.	focuses on achieving communicative interaction among students.	18	39.1%
3	Seating is usually arranged in pairs and groups	14	30.4%
4.	Focus is on meaning and functions	9	19.6%
5	Technology is usually used	7	15.2%
6	Other.	4	8.7%

Table 8: Students and Teachers' Amount of Talking

The results obtained denote that (63%) of participants states that the learners do most of the talking in Oral Expression session. when (39%) say that the focus is on achieving communicative interaction among students. We obviously can notice that the methods of teaching are changed; all teachers now focus on students to talk more and exchange his thoughts with each other.

Features of the Traditional/ Modern Methods which exist in the Oral Class

N	Traditional Characteristics	students	%	Modern Characteristics	students	%
1.	The class is rather teacher centered.	20	43.5%	Focus is on meaning and functions, and explanation is done indirectly through activities and tasks.	9	19.6%
2.	Other.	10	21.7%	The class is rather learner centered.	29	63%
3.	Technology is rarely used.	17	37%	Technology is usually used.	7	15.2%
4.	Traditional arrangement of seating	10	21.7%	Seating is usually prepared for tasks and activities.	14	30.4%
5.	Explicit explanation of the lesson, and focus is directed to structure and form.	8	17.4%	Other.	4	8.7%

Table 8.1: Traditional vs Modern Methods

The results in table 7 above have shown that the characteristics of traditional methods are less used in EFL oral class, compared to the characteristics of the modern methods. For instance, the choice “The class is more teacher centered”. was selected as the less frequent feature of traditional education with 43.5% of choices versus 63% of choices for the modern feature “The class is more learner-centered.” It should be pointed out that in spite of the fact that teachers here in Algeria still, somehow, play a traditional role in dictating students; yet, it seems that the role of students has started to take over the class. Teachers are asked to provide

greater number of opportunities for EFL learners to speak out as well as to increase the variety of oral communication activities.

Item 9: Saving face means not wanting to embarrass oneself in front of others. Based on this, which of the following statements best describes you?

46 responses

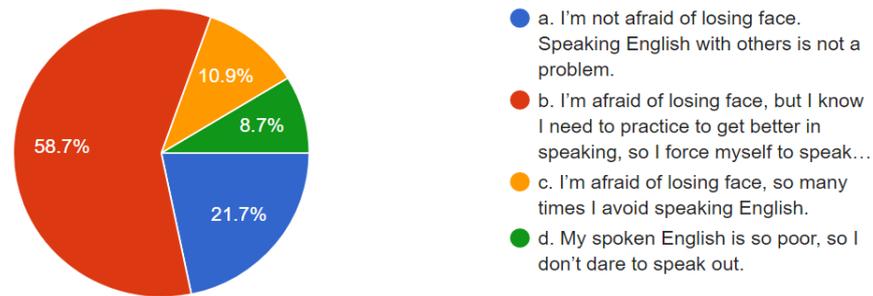


Figure 9: Fear of embarrassment

One of the obstacles students encounter in learning to speak a foreign language is the feeling of anxiety to speak out before others. Question (8) in students' questionnaire was: "Saving face means not wanting to embarrass oneself in front of others. Based on this, which of the following statements best describes you?" (See appendix A) The results came as the following:

No.	Statement	<i>students</i> 46	% 100
1.	I'm not afraid of losing face. Speaking English with others is not a problem.	10	21.7%
2.	I'm afraid of losing face, but I know I need to practice to get better at speaking, so I force myself to speak English with others.	27	58.7%
3	I'm afraid of losing face, so many times I avoid speaking English.	5	10.9%
4.	My spoken English is so poor, so I don't dare to speak out.	4	8.7%

Table 9: Fear of embarrassment

According to table 10, 21% of the students did not feel afraid to speak English in front of others, which is relatively low for students who are still in the process of learning. 58.7% of them, nonetheless, reported that they try to overcome this anxiety and speak. Only 10% of them felt reluctant to speak while 4% did not dare to speak out at all.

Item 10: What are the means of assessment used in your oral classroom? (You can choose more than one option.)

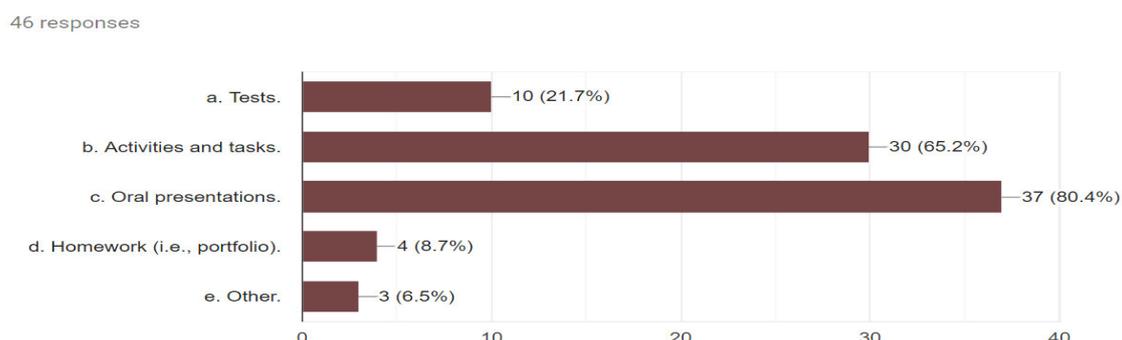


Figure 10: Means of assessment used in oral classroom

No.	Type of Testing	students 46	%
			100
1.	Tests.	10	21.7%
2.	Activities and tasks.	30	65.2%
3	Oral presentations.	37	80.4%
4.	Homework (i.e., portfolio).	4	8.7%
5	Other	3	6.5%

Table 10: Means of assessment used in oral classroom.

According to table 11, “oral presentations” came again in the first place with 80.4% of students’ choices as the most assessed works in the oral class. Oral presentations have traditionally been considered as a key part of the EFL oral class around the world. researchers think that delivering oral presentations gives experience in speaking in front of others and polishes the conscious and formal part of oral proficiency. However, oral presentations do not work much on the informal side of using language in the spontaneous daily conversations. Therefore, assessment here covers the formal side of the students.

Item 11: How does the grade influence your participation in an oral activity?



Figure 11: Students' Reaction to the Teachers' Correction

With respect to the influence of receiving grades for participating in the oral class, question (10) in students' questionnaire was: "How does the grade influence your participation in an oral activity?" (See appendix A). Four options were given, and the results were as follows:

No.	Item	Students 46	100%
1.	Grading the oral activity motivates me to take it more seriously and participate.	10	21.7%
2.	I like to participate in any oral activity/ discussion whether it is assessed or not.	20	43.5%
3.	I don't participate in the oral activity if there were no assessment.	11	23.9%
4.	I don't like to participate in any oral activity whether it is assessed or not.	5	10.9%

Table 11: Students' Reaction to the Teachers' Correction

Table 12. above shows that grading oral activities is not the reason of motivated (43.5%) students to participate. This means that less than half of the students had the motive to speak, without the needed stimulus to do so (instrumental motivation). This indicates that students in general were not motivated.

Item 12: If you don't know a word or phrase during speaking, what will you do? (You can choose more than option.)

46 responses

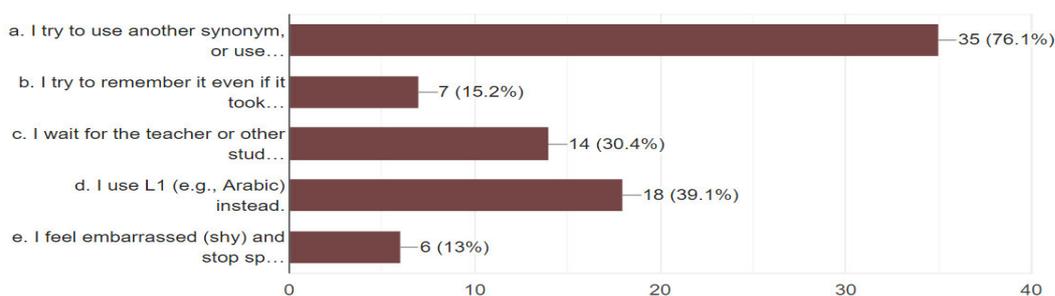


Figure 12: Techniques to Compensate for a Missing Word during Speaking

No.	Compensation for a Missing Words	students	%
		46	100
1.	I try to use another synonym, or use gestures (i.e., body language) to explain it.	35	76.1%
2.	I try to remember it even if it took me a while.	7	15.2%
3	I wait for the teacher or another student to remind me with the word or to give me another suggestion.	14	30.4%
4.	I use L1 (e.g., Arabic) instead.	18	39.1%
5	I feel embarrassed (shy) and stop speaking at all.	6	13%

Table 12: Techniques to Compensate for a Missing Word during Speaking

With reference to table 13. above, over 76% of the students said that they tried to use another synonym, or they use gestures/ body language to explain the missing word, and less than 31% of the students said that they either tried to remember the words they missed even if it took a while from them, or they waited for the teacher or another student to say the word or give another suggestion, or they used Arabic instead, whereas only 13% of the students felt embarrassed and stopped speaking at all.

Item 13: What do you do in order to have correct pronunciation? (You can choose more than one option.)

46 responses

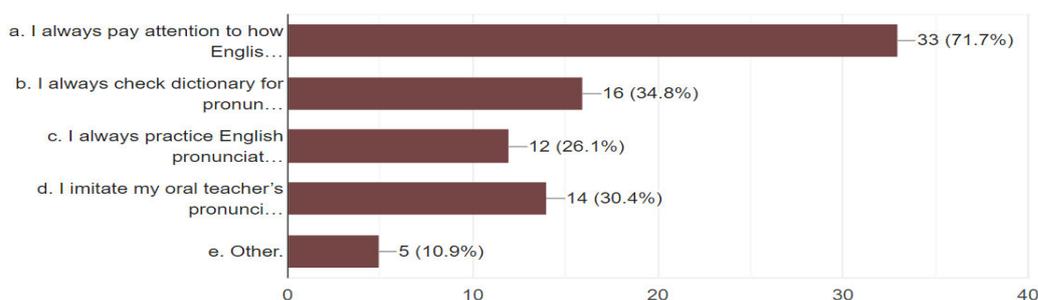


Figure 13: Techniques used to strengthen pronunciation

No.	techniques used to strengthen pronunciation	students	%
		46	100
1.	I always pay attention to how English speakers on T.V produce sounds and apply stress and intonation, and I try to imitate them.	33	71.1%
2.	I always check dictionary for pronunciation.	16	34.8%
3	I always practice English pronunciation in my free time.	12	26.1%
4.	I imitate my oral teacher's pronunciation.	14	30.4%
5	Other.	5	10.9%

Table 13: Techniques used to strengthen pronunciation

With reference to table 14 when students were asked about the techniques they used at home to strengthen their abilities in pronunciation, the majority of them (71.1%) indicated that they paid attention to how English speakers on TV produce sounds and apply stress and intonation, and they tried to imitate them. A good proportion of students (30.4%) said that they imitated their teachers' accents. 34.8% of the students expressed that they checked dictionary for pronunciation, whereas 10% of them said that they practiced English pronunciation in their free time. In light of the results, students are required to practice extensive listening to English videos and TV shows in order to observe how native-speakers pronounce words.

Item 14: Which of the following applies to you? (You can choose more than one option.)

46 responses

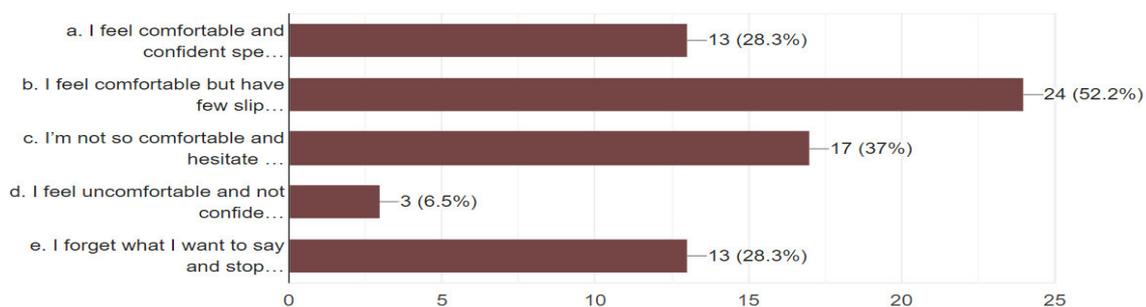


Figure 14: The Degree of Comfort Students Feel When They Speak English

No.	Degree of Comfort	students	%
		46	100
1.	I feel comfortable but have few slips of the tongue when I speak English.	13	28%
2.	I feel comfortable and confident speaking English.	24	52.2%
3	I'm not so comfortable as I hesitate sometimes and make some mistakes when I speak.	17	37%
4.	I feel uncomfortable and not confident as I make many hesitations, pauses, and errors in speaking, and I speak too slow.	3	6.5%
5	I usually forget what I want to say and stop speaking at all.	13	28.3%

Table 14: The Degree of Comfort Students Feel When They Speak English

According to table 14, the item “I feel comfortable and confident speaking English.” came in the first place as 52.2% (i.e., more than half of the students) chose it; whereas the item “I feel uncomfortable and not confident as I make many hesitations” was selected by the least number of students (i.e., only 6.5%). We did not expect exactly such results; we expected that the highest percentage would go for item (3) which says: “I am not so comfortable as I hesitate sometimes and make some mistakes when I speak.” followed by the other results in the same arrangement.

Item 15: Indicate with X the choice you think is correct for each of the following items:

No.	Item	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Total
1.	To what extent do you feel afraid of making mistakes when you speak?	8.7%	13%	47.8%	30.4%	0%	100%
		4	6	22	14	0	46 students
2.	When you learn a new vocabulary or expression (from some English TV show/ radio broadcast or any other source of learning), to what extent do you use it in speaking?	0%	21.7%	34.8%	23.9%	19.6%	100%
		0	10	16	11	9	46 students
3.	Do you use fillers (e.g., well, right, anyway, now let me see...etc.) to have time in conversation when you face difficulty in thinking of appropriate reply?	8.7%	19.6%	23.9%	37%	10.9%	100%
		4	9	11	17	5	46 students
4.	To what extent do you work on your pronunciation to improve your speaking skill?	6.5%	4.3%	37%	34.8%	17.4%	100%
		3	2	17	16	8	46 students
5.	To what extent do you pay attention to use correct grammar in speaking?	2.2%	10.9%	45.7%	32.6%	8.7%	100%
		1	5	21	15	4	46 students
6.	During the oral course discussions and activities, how often do you interact in English with other classmates?	2.2%	21.7%	30.4%	26.1%	19.6%	
		1	10	14	12	9	46 students
7.	To what extent do you speak English whenever you get the opportunity?	2.2%	21.7%	34.8%	21.7%	17.4%	100%
		1	10	16	10	8	46 students

8.	To what extent do topics discussed in your oral class meet your interests, needs and expectations?	2.2%	15.2%	43.5%	30.4%	8.7%	100%
		1	7	20	14	4	46 students
9.	To what extent do you consider yourself successful in choosing the right words for the right context while speaking?	0%	21.7%	39.1%	30.4%	8.7%	100%
		0	10	18	14	4	46 students

Table 15: Students Practices to Improve their Performance in Speaking

With reference to table 16. above, the item “To what extent do you pay attention to use correct grammar in speaking?” had the highest positive answers with an average of 29%. It seems that grammar is the easiest element to employ correctly in speaking since grammar is usually given special focus during school and university levels, so students do not have much difficulty, using it in speaking. Noonan (2005) indicated that successful learners of English spent more time listening to spoken English than studying grammar, and that grammar rules should be learned indirectly through listening to language and simultaneously through practicing grammatical structures in speaking.

As for pronunciation, students were asked “To what extent do you work on your pronunciation to improve your speaking skill?” Their positive answers had an average of 29.73%. researchers believe that learning the correct pronunciation do not exert much effort like that needed for learning, memorizing, and practicing vocabulary. Pronunciation merely needs paying attention (i.e., clear ear) to how native-speakers speak, and how English sounds are produced in connected speech.

In terms of vocabulary, students were asked three questions. The first one was: “When you learn a new word or expression, to what extent do you use it in speaking?” The positive answers had an average of 26.1%. Vocabulary items (i.e., including phrases, idioms, and chunks) seem to be difficult to be learned and get employed in speaking. Students seem to be more reluctant to practice vocabulary than grammar and pronunciation. This reluctance can be referred to the weak exposure to the language and simultaneously to the extra focus paid to grammar and writing whether in school or at the university.

Item 16: Types of Error Correction/ Feedback Students Receive in the Oral Class

46 responses

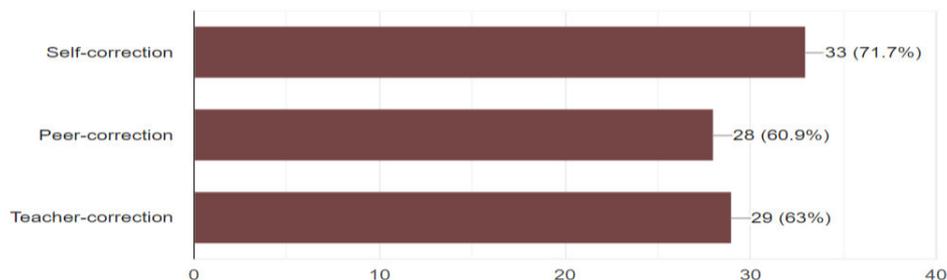


Figure 16: Types of Error Correction/ Feedback Students Receive in the Oral Class

No.	Type of Correction	students	percentage
1.	Self-correction	33	71.7%
2.	Teacher-correction	29	63%
3.	Peer-correction	28	60.9%

Table 16. Types of Error Correction/ Feedback Students Receive in the Oral Class

According to table 24. above, “self-correction” was the most occurring type in the class with an average of 71%. which gives a good indication that students have the ability to realize their mistakes and correct themselves on the spot. “Teacher-correction” came in second place with an average close to self-correction (63%). “Peer-correction”, also was the at (60.9%) of time. It may be interpreted that peer-correction is welcome, as it may not create discomfort among students.

Item 17: What grades do you usually have in grammar exams?

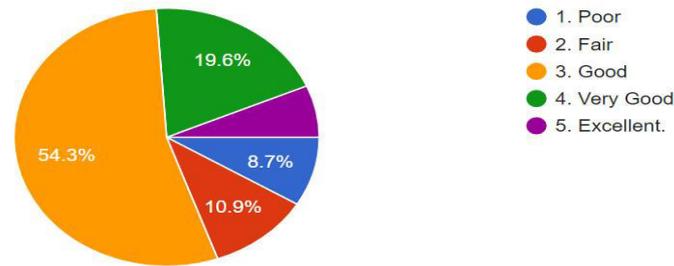


Figure 17: Students Grammar Grades

No.	Grades	<i>students</i>	<i>%</i>
		46	100
1.	Poor	4	8.7%
2.	Fair	5	10.9%
3	Good	25	54%
4.	Very good	9	19.6%
5	Excellent	3	6.5%

Table 17: Students Grammar Grades

According to table 18. above, more than half of the students (54%) reported that they had good marks in grammar classes. (19.6%) of them, on the other hand, indicated that they had a very good grades in grammar, whereas only (8.7%) of students admitted that they got poor grades in grammar. Good achievements in grammar classes are expected to correlate with student's abilities in language skills, including speaking. That is, students become acquainted with the language basics which enable them to orally employ grammatical structures. However, it is not always the case.

Noonan (2005) asserted that the explicit learning of grammar and memorization of rules did not help improve students' oral abilities. The indirect internalization of grammatical structures through listening and exposure to the language is much better in enhancing the oral fluency.

1.4 Discussion of the Results

From the analysis of the data in terms of the factors which cause low fluency among the students, the major reason is the lack of extensive listening to English. It was found out that nearly 63% of the students listen to English for less than two hours per day, which reduces the exposure to the target language. This means that the majority of students do not make enough efforts to improve their speaking skills, especially not using TV, recordings, and audio-visual multimedia. Students should increase the time of listening and watching English TV shows, YouTube videos, and rehearsal recordings.

Secondly, findings have shown that 82.6% of EFL majors do not have trouble in comprehending spoken language; that is, 56.4% of them understand the main message of what they hear except for some parts, while 26.1% of them understand almost all the English they hear easily. This means that students have less trouble in comprehension, but they face troubles in producing the language, which can be referred to the lack of exposure and practice to English. Therefore, the level of language should be deliberately selected by teachers according to student's level, but not to be complicated and highly technical.

A third reason for student's lack of oral fluency is their rare chances to speak with native speakers. That is, the majority of students in the study (79%) said that they interacted with native speakers for less than two hours per week, which is never sufficient for practicing the authentic language. Also there is the anxiety of embarrassment which is responsible for student's lack of fluency because 58.7% of the students indicated that they don't have the courage to speak. While only 21.7% of the students were not afraid of losing face when they spoke, they said they had anxiety, but they knew they need to practice to be better in speaking, so they forced themselves to speak.

Fourth, regarding fear of making mistakes, 60% of students said that they felt comfortable when they spoke but had slight to moderate slips of the tongue. 31% of them, on the other hand, reported that they were uncomfortable because they had moderate to severe problems in speaking (e.g., hesitations, long pauses, serious mistakes and errors, slow rate of speaking...etc.) Though student's attempts to speak out were not enough and needed to be increased, they confirmed that they had the initiative and guts to speak English whenever they got a good chance with an average of 39%. They also expressed that they actually interacted in English with their classmates and teacher during the oral class with an average of 35%, which was relatively good but needed to be increased.

Finally, student's motivation seems not be a negative factor for their lack of oral fluency; still, it remains important. That is, 80% of the students had the motive to speak out, but many

of them (30%) needed a stimulus to do so, such as receiving good grades, constant encouragement and praise by teachers

2. The Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1 The Sample Description

The questionnaire is administered to (8) teachers of Oral Expression session. The selection of such sample was based on the consideration that the teachers of Oral Expression will benefit and help us more than other teachers since they teach students how to develop their speaking skills and overcome the concept of anxiety which is our concerns.

2.2 Teacher's Questionnaire Description

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 14 questions which were divided into two main sections: section one "Personal Information" and section two includes both "Speaking Skills and assessment". The questions are all closed questions, requiring from the teachers to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices, or open questions where teachers are requested to give explanation or suggest other alternatives.

2.3 The Analysis of the Results

Section one: Personal Information

Item 01: Gender

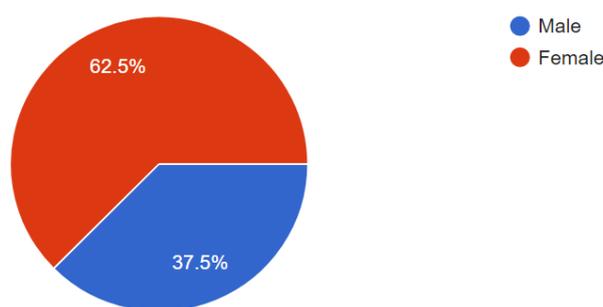


Figure 18: Teachers' Gender Distribution

No	Gender	teachers	%
1.	Female	5	62.5%
2.	Male	3	37.5%
3.	Total	8	100%

Table 18: Teachers' Gender Distribution

From the table 18, above as we notice, females outnumbered males with (62.5%) of the teacher’s total number, while males represent only (37.5%) of the teacher’s total number.

Item 02: Degree

8 responses

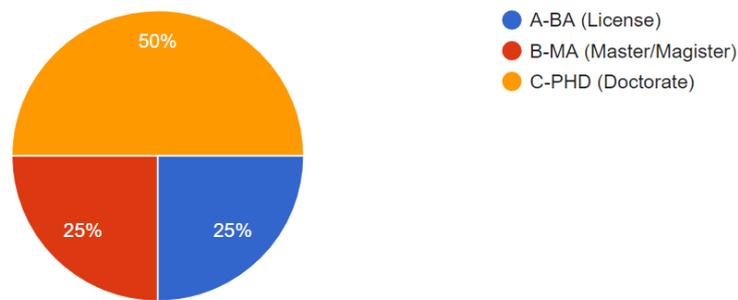


Figure 19: Teachers’ Degree (s) Held

No.	Degree (s) Held	teachers	%
1.	License	2	25%
2.	Master/magister	2	25%
3.	PHD	4	50%
4.	Total	8	100%

Table 19: Teachers’ Degree (s) Held

From the table 19 and the analysis of the results we found that (25%) of the teachers have MA (Master/Magister) degree same as BA (License) degree with (25%), while (50%) of the teachers have PHD (Doctorate) degree. This means that a PHD degree is really at a great importance in teaching classes in Higher Education settings.

Item 03: How many years have you been teaching oral expression?

0 responses

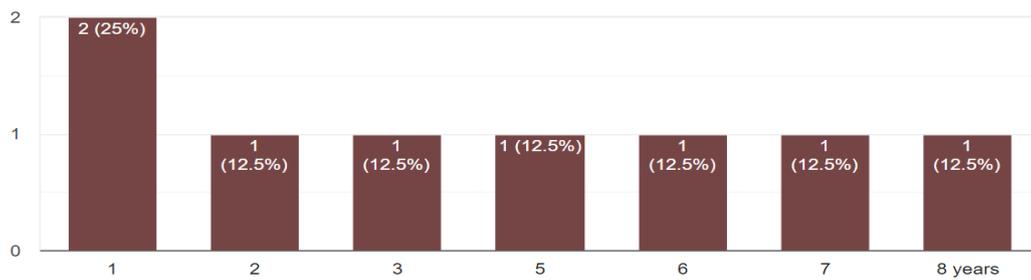


Figure 20: Teachers' Years of Experience in Teaching Oral Expression

In this item teachers were asked to state their years of expertise in teaching oral expression. (62.5%) of teachers stated that their teaching expertise is more than 2 years, while (25%) of teachers have taught oral skills for 1 year. Our sample of teachers is a mix of very old and new experienced teachers in teaching oral expression module.

Section two: Speaking Skills and assessment

Item 04: What are the main challenges you face in teaching speaking?

What are the main challenges you face in teaching speaking?

8 responses

students have low level of English
The students bad behaviour and cursing while trying to interact
lack of technology
finding interesting subjects for all students
bad behavior of students
unmotivated students
fear of making mistakes
low motivation of students

Figure 21: the main challenges you face in teaching speaking

The teachers' answers show that they face many problems in teaching speaking. Out of eight, two teachers claimed that the students behave badly, other two teachers complained about unmotivated students. Other teachers said that the variety of the students when teaching speaking is huge what makes it difficult for the teacher to meet every student's needs. Also fear of making mistakes and the lack of technology was among the obstacles that faced the teachers.

Item 05: What do you find most needed item for teaching speaking (Oral Expression)?

What do you find most needed item for teaching speaking (Oral Expression)?

8 responses

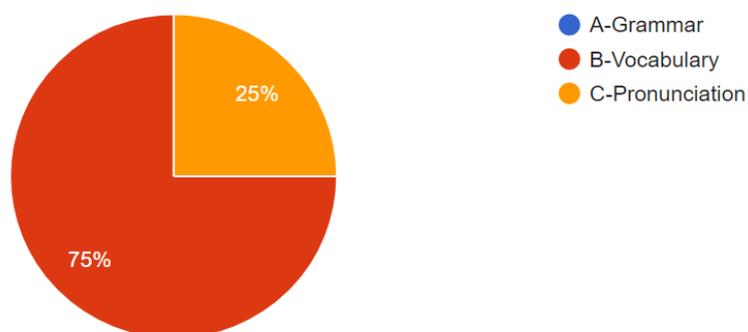


Figure 22: Teachers' Perception of the Most Needed Item for Teaching Speaking

No.	Teachers' Perception of the Most Needed Item for Teaching Speaking	teachers	%
1.	A-Grammar	0	0%
2.	B-Vocabulary	6	75%
3.	C-Pronunciation	2	25%
4.	Total	8	100%

Table 22: Teachers' Perception of the Most Needed Item for Teaching Speaking

According to this result, the majority of the teachers (75%) believe that their students need vocabulary in order to improve their spoken English. The other teachers (25%) believe that pronunciation is more needed in teaching oral skills. All the teachers agree that all the language areas need improvement, so vocabulary helps in mastering the language and using it correctly. Also, the more learners practice, the better pronunciation they will get.

Item 06: What kind of activities/ tasks do you usually carry out in the oral class? (You can choose more than one option.)

What kind of activities/ tasks do you usually carry out in the oral class?
(You can choose more than one option.)

8 responses

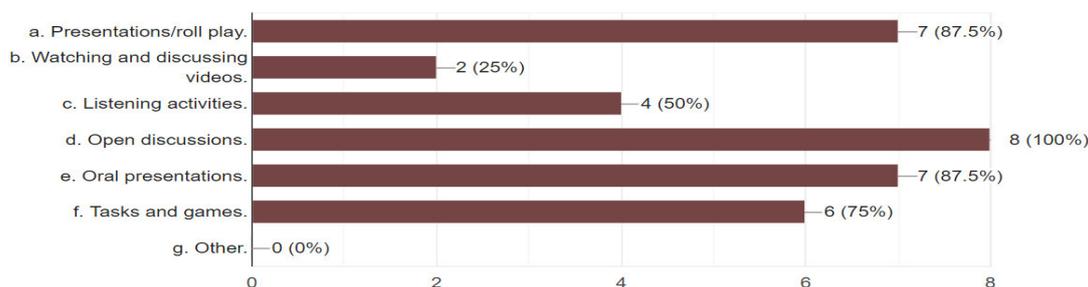


Figure 23: Teachers’ Perception of the Most Needed Item for Teaching Speaking

No.	Teachers’ Perception of the Most Needed Item for Teaching Speaking	8 Times	100%
1.	Presentations/roll play	7	87.5%
2.	Watching and discussing videos	2	25%
3.	Listening activities.	4	50%
4.	discussions.	8	100%
5.	resentations.	7	87.5%
6.	and games	6	75%
7.	Other	0	0%

Table 23: Teachers’ Perception of the Most Needed Item for Teaching Speaking

The table 23 above indicates that “Open discussions” were the most carried out activities in the oral class with 100% of the teacher's choices. “Oral presentations”, “Presentations/roll play” came next respectively (87.5% of choices). However, teachers indicated that “Watching and discussing videos” and “Listening activities.” were rarely carried out.

Item 07: What kind of topics do you usually discuss in the oral class? (You can choose more than one option.)

8 responses

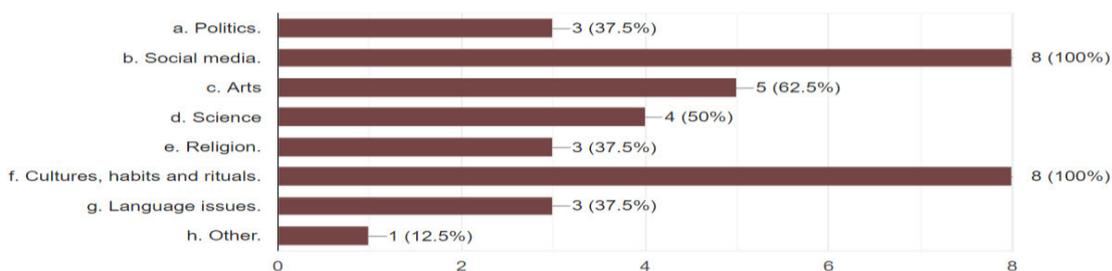


Figure 24: topics discussed in oral classes

No.	kind of topics do you usually discuss in the oral classes	8 Times	100%
1.	Politics.	7	87.5%
2.	Social media.	2	25%
3.	Arts	4	50%
4.	Science	8	100%
5.	Religion.	7	87.5%
6.	Cultures, habits and rituals.	6	75%
7.	Language issues.	0	0%

Table 24: topics discussed in the oral classes

According to table 24, “Science” came in the first place as the most topics discussed in the oral class, followed by “Religion and Politics”, then “Cultures, habits and rituals”; that is, more than half of the instructors out of eight chose them. On the other hand, “, arts, Social media and Language issues.” were the least chosen topics posed for discussion. It was expected that discussing topics with regard to the different cultures world-wide and the diversity of habits and rituals among nations would be taking large space in the oral class. That is, these issues evoke the curiosity of students to get to know about them, so teachers find them more interesting for discussion than other topics.

Item 08: What are the means of assessment you use in your oral class?

8 responses

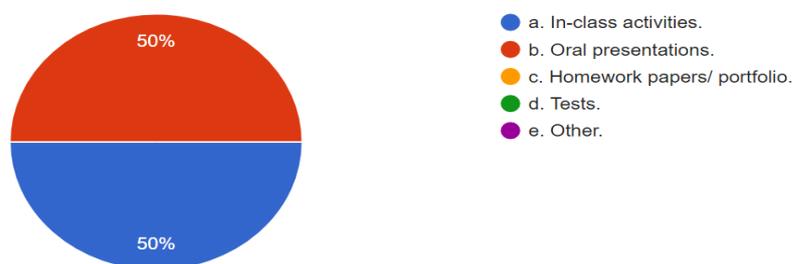


Figure 25: means of assessment used in your oral classes

No.	means of assessment	teachers	%
1.	In-class activities.	4	50%
2.	Oral presentations.	4	50%
3.	Homework papers/ portfolio.	0	0%
4.	Tests.	0	0%
5.	Other	0	0%

Table 25: means of assessment used in your oral classes

According to table 25., “oral presentations and In-class activities.” share the first place with 50% for each as teacher’s choices as the best means of assessment in the oral class. Oral presentations have traditionally been considered as a key part of the EFL oral class around the world. Researchers think that delivering oral presentations gives experience in speaking in front of others and polishes the conscious and formal part of oral proficiency (i.e., the presenter prepares his/herself beforehand and choose the words s/he will say). However, oral presentations do not work much on the informal side of using language in the spontaneous daily conversations. Therefore, In-class activities here cover the formal side of the students’ performance.

Item 09: What aspects of the oral class do you value the most and think should receive large percentage of assessment? (You can choose more than one option.)

8 responses

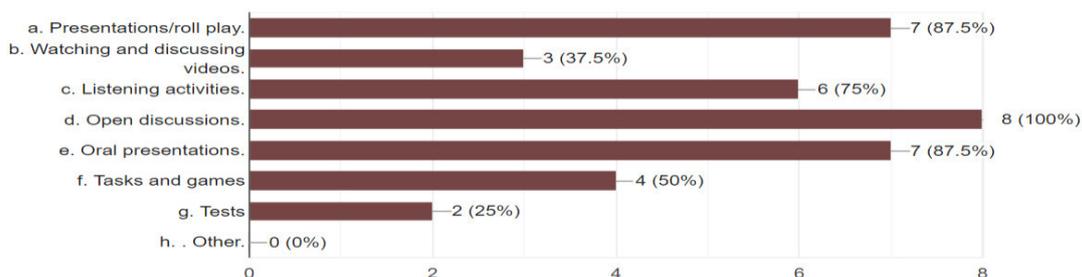


Figure 26: most valued activities

No.	most valued activities	8 times	100%
1.	Presentations/roll play.	7	50%
2.	Watching and discussing videos.	3	50%
3.	Listening activities.	6	75%
4.	Open discussions.	8	100%
5.	presentations.	7	87.5%
6.	and games	4	50%
7.	Tests	2	25%
8.	Other	0	0%

Table 26: most valued activities

According to table 26., almost the same ranking of results was given by teachers in both question (6) above and question (9) here but with a bit less percentages, which verifies their answers in both questions. That is, “Open discussions.”again, came at the top of the list as the most valued means of assessment with 100% of teachers’ choices, followed by “Oral presentations”. Teachers may see that presenting a topic or speech in front of others as a challenge and indication of their students’ language and personality abilities, which is partially true because presentations may not show exactly students’ true abilities (Chuang, 2011). “Open discussions”, on the other hand, are like an open space where students feel free to express themselves, which appeals to students.

Item 10: From your experience, how does the grade influence learners’ participation in an oral activity?



Figure 27: Grades influence on learners' participation

No.	Grades influence on learners' participation	8 teachers	100%
1.	Receiving marks for participating in an oral activity usually motivates learners to take it more seriously and participate.	3	37.5%
2.	Learners usually don't like to participate in the oral activity if there were no assessment.	0	0%
3.	Learners usually like to participate in any oral discussion/ activity whether it is assessed or not.	1	12.5%
4.	Learners are hardly motivated to participate in any oral activity whether assessed or not.	4	50%

Table 27: means of assessment used in your oral classes

From Table 27. above we see that grading oral activities motivated students according to (37.5%) of teachers, while (50%) of the teachers believe that Learners are hardly motivated to participate in any oral activity whether assessed or not. This means that most of the students had the motive to speak, without the need to stimulus to do so.

Item 11: How do you usually correct your students' when they make mistakes and errors in speaking? (You can choose more than one option.)

8 responses

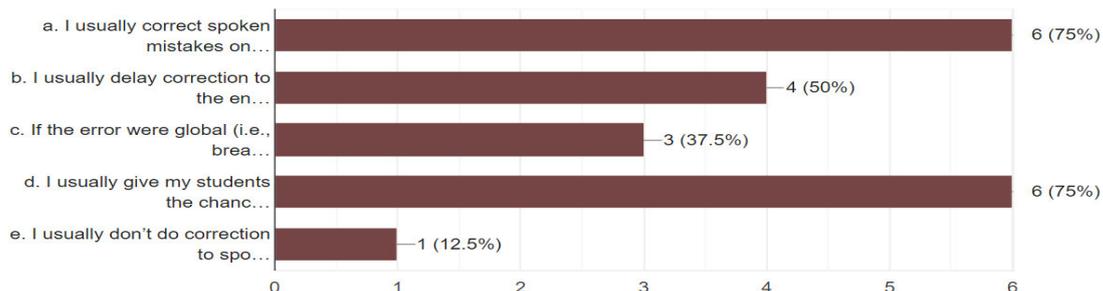


Figure 28: Errors correction by teachers

No.	Errors correction by teachers	8 teachers	100%
1.	I usually correct spoken mistakes on spot to let all of my students learn the correct form.	6	75%
2.	I usually delay correction to the end of the activity/discussion to give them special focus.	4	50%
3.	If the error were global (i.e., breaks communication), I prefer to correct it on the spot.	3	37.5%
4.	I usually give my students the chance to correct themselves; if they couldn't, I may ask other students to do the correction, or I myself correct them.	6	75%
5.	I usually don't do corrections to spoken mistakes in order not to affect students' motivation.	1	12.5%

Table 28: Errors correction by teachers

According to table 28. above, teachers have different opinions in terms of the mechanisms they used to correct their students. The majority of teachers (i.e., six out of eight) corrected spoken mistakes on spot to let all of their students learn the correct form immediately, especially when the errors were global (i.e., breaks communication). Four teachers said that they delayed correction at the end of the activity to give the mistake special focus. six teachers confirmed that they gave their students the chance to correct themselves; if they couldn't, the teacher might ask other students to do the correction, or s/he his/herself

corrected them. Nonetheless, only one teacher confessed that s/he did not do corrections to spoken mistakes in order not to affect students' motivation.

Item 12: To what extent being competent (i.e., knowing how to use the language correctly) affects fluency in speaking?

To what extent being competent (i.e., knowing how to use the language correctly) affects fluency in speaking? 

8 responses



Figure 29: how being competent affects fluency in speaking

No.	how being competent affects fluency in speaking	8 teachers	100%
1.	Being competent in the language greatly affects fluency; the more the language is correctly produced, the more fluently it is spoken.	4	0%
2.	Being competent in the language may correlates positively with fluency.	4	50%
3.	Being competent in the language doesn't affect fluency; there is no relation between accuracy of language and fluency in speaking.	0	50%

Table 29: how being competent affects fluency in speaking

According to table 29 the teachers were divided between “Being competent in the language may correlates positively with fluency. “(50%) and “Being competent in the language doesn't affect fluency; there is no relation between accuracy of language and fluency in speaking. “, 50% say being competent in the language leads to fluency that is, the more the language is correctly produced, the more fluently it is spoken. The positive correlation between

competency in language and fluency in speaking is undoubted; it is a common knowledge. The reason why the researcher asked such question was to document teachers' opinions in this regard.

2.4. Discussion of the Results

in terms of the most applied as well as valued in-class activities in the oral class, delivering oral presentations was reported to be on top, followed by open discussions. That is, teachers' views showed that "Open discussions" were the most used means for assessment (92%). In terms of the most recurrent topics discussed in the class, "science, religion, cultures, habits and rituals" were the most to discuss followed by "social media" was also of the topics usually handled, while other topics like "Language issues" was rarely discussed. Students, from their side, expressed that the topics usually suggested for discussion in their oral classes met their interests, needs and expectations with an average of 33%. Such not satisfying choice of topics calls on teachers to rethink of students' needs and to suggest topics which more interesting and catchy to them.

four teachers confirmed that they received no training (e.g., workshops) in terms of teaching the oral skill, and almost all of their efforts was personal. However, the other four teachers agreed that they had received no training regarding how to teach the oral skill. There is no doubt that teachers try their best to achieve the goals and objectives of their classes.

Conclusion

the teachers agreed that it should involve some focus on the accuracy of structure and pronunciation, also there should be some focus on vocabulary. Teachers were also asked if fluency should be emphasized over accuracy in speaking. While four teachers agreed with the statement, the other four teachers disagreed. It is believed that fluency in speaking is better achieved if the language was accurate because the more the linguistic elements are accurate, the more confident and fluent the speaker becomes.

General Conclusion

This study presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from different stages of the research with regard to the theoretical and practical aspects of literature presented in chapter one and two. The collected data was consisted of two questionnaires, one for students as well as another for teachers. The results of both of the questionnaires were carefully analyzed, interpreted and represented statistically and descriptively in figures and tables. From these results, we found out that students are willing to enhance their speaking skills but they are affected by many factors, and teachers are trying their best to help them. To conclude, this has tested the hypotheses suggested in the beginning of the research and confirmed that that students do not make enough efforts to develop speaking skills because of lack of confidence and anxiety of making mistakes. Also, proved the hypothesis regarding “the traditional teaching methods that emphasize extensive linguistic input rather than communicative output result in what is known as 'mute English learners', who can only read and write but are unable to speak.” to be wrong.

Recommendations

To begin with, students are the stakeholders, so, first and foremost, they are the ones who need to have the inner power and passion to work on themselves to be fluent speakers. However, there are several recommendations and suggestions which need to be taken into account in order to enhance the status of the speaking skill and produce fluent English.

- 1- Students should know that speaking is an important task in learning a foreign language.
- 2- Students need to increase the time allocated for English, by watching English TV shows, documentaries, and YouTube videos as well as listening to recordings because listening to language is the primary step to fluency. It is good to mention that the audio-visual learning has the biggest influence over the subconscious acquisition of language.
- 3- Teachers are advised to eliminate the traditional methods and be updated with the best methods and techniques for running their classes (e.g., performing pair and group tasks, simulations, picture stories, games, showing videos, and holding open discussions) in order to develop their students' oral fluency in the best way possible. As for public speech and formal presentations, teachers need to train their students to professionally employ their assets.
- 4- Teachers are also required to create a positive atmosphere for communication and discussions, by choosing interesting and catchy topics. They also need to constantly encourage students to speak and practice whether inside or outside of the classroom.
- 5- The oral class should basically focus on vocabulary and pronunciation. That is, practicing language functions, chunks, and frozen expressions as well as correct pronunciation is a big challenge for students. Therefore, primacy should be given to teach students how to use vocabulary appropriately in context, on which pronunciation practice can be built later.
- 6- Technology is still not well-invested in Algeria. The class should necessarily be equipped with the internet service, a smart board, a video conference, and audio-visual data show in order to easily show YouTube videos and online documents anytime when needed.
- 7- Communication with native speakers is very beneficial for developing students' fluency. Therefore, it is advised that a fixed part of the oral class be innovated where students hear the authentic English „live“ either by inviting native speakers of English to the class, or through online sessions get prepared and supervised by teachers.

- 8- It is not sufficient for students to have one or two courses for the oral skill. Speaking needs to be more emphasized in the English courses in general and to have at least three courses specified for speaking and communication.
- 9- Last but not least, the English Departments at universities are recommended to provide the oral class teachers with regular training with regard to class management using the best methods and techniques. Training can be done through holding regular meetings and working as a team or by holding workshops run by experts.

Suggestions for Further Research

Studying the impact of being taught by native speaker teachers on learners' oral fluency, compared to teaching by non-native Arab teachers.

Investigating the effect of using non-traditional techniques like the audio-visual aids on learning the oral skill, compared to the traditional techniques like presentations and listening activities.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Students Questionnaire

Researcher: Ouacheme Nourreddine

Your most appreciated contribution is expected to be honest and straightforward. Please read all the questions before answering and you are kindly requested to fill this questionnaire by putting a circle on the right letter/letters. Questions of the questionnaire are related to the speaking skill of English (i.e., Oral communication/ Conversation Comprehension/ Interactive English), and it is directed to the EFL oral course students.

Please choose what best describes what you think for the following questions:

Gender: Female Male

Age:

University level: Second Year.

University Name: Barika University.

1. On an average day of study, how much time do you spend listening to spoken English?

- a. Less than 1 hour.
- b. 1_2 hours.
- c. More than 2 hours.
- d. I spend the majority of my free time listening to spoken English.

2. How well do you understand most of the English you listen to while learning English?

- a. I understand all of it easily.
- b. I understand the main message but don't understand some parts.
- c. I understand some of it with great difficulty.
- d. I don't understand what is said except for a few words.

3. In an average week of study, how much time do you spend speaking to native speakers of English?

- a. Less than 1 hour.

- b. 1_2 hours.
 - c. More than 2 hours.
 - d. I work with native speakers, so I have to speak with them for long periods of time.
4. What kind of activities/ tasks are usually carried out in your oral class? (You can choose more than one option.)
- a. Solving exercises. b. Watching and discussing videos. c. Listening activities.
 - d. Open discussions. e. Oral presentations. f. Tasks and games. g. Other.
5. Choose from the following characteristics of ‘the traditional methods’ the ones that exist in your oral class. (You can choose more than one option.)
- a. The teacher speaks more than the students (i.e., the class is rather teacher-centered).
 - b. Focus is directed to memorization and form rather than to communication and meaning.
 - c. Traditional arrangement of seating (i.e., no pair or group-work).
 - d. Teaching is done explicitly through rules and focus is on structure and form.
 - e. Technology is rarely used, only paper and pen.
 - f. Other.
6. Choose from the following characteristics of the modern methods the ones that exist in your oral class.
- a. Students are given more chances to speak (i.e., the class is more learner-centered).
 - b. The oral class focuses on achieving communicative interaction among students.
 - c. Seating is usually arranged in pairs and groups to carry out activities and tasks more effectively.
 - d. Focus is on meaning and functions, and learning is done indirectly through activities and tasks.
 - e. Technology is usually used (e.g., audio-visual aids, computer, internet...etc. f. Other.
7. How much traditional/non-traditional do you rate/consider the oral class you are enrolled in?

- a. Very traditional.
- b. Traditional.
- c. Half traditional.
- d. More non-traditional.
- e. Very non-traditional.

8. Saving face means not wanting to embarrass oneself in front of others. Based on this, which of the following statements best describes you?

- a. I'm not afraid of losing face. Speaking English with others is not a problem.
- b. I'm afraid of losing face, but I know I need to practice to get better at speaking, so I force myself to speak English with others.
- c. I'm afraid of losing face, so many times I avoid speaking English.
- d. My spoken English is so poor, so I don't dare to speak out.

9. What are the means of assessment used in your oral classroom? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a. Tests.
- b. Activities and tasks.
- c. Oral presentations.
- d. Homework (i.e., portfolio).
- e. Other.

10. How does the grade influence your participation in an oral activity?

- a. Grading the oral activity motivates me to take it more seriously and participate.
- b. I don't participate in the oral activity if there were no assessment.
- c. I like to participate in any oral discussion/ activity whether it is assessed or not.
- d. I don't like to participate in any oral activity whether assessed or not.

11. If you don't know a word or phrase during speaking, what will you do? (You can choose more than option.)

- a. I try to use another synonym, or use gestures (body language) to explain it.
 - b. I try to remember it even if it took me a while to recall it.
 - c. I wait for the teacher or other students to remind me with the word or to give me another suggestion.
 - d. I use L1 (e.g., Arabic) instead.
 - e. I feel embarrassed (shy) and stop speaking at all.
12. What do you do in order to have correct pronunciation? (You can choose more than one option.)
- a. I always pay attention to how English speakers on T.V produce sounds and apply stress and intonation, and I try to imitate them.
 - b. I always check dictionary for pronunciation.
 - c. I always practice English pronunciation in my free time.
 - d. I imitate my oral teacher's pronunciation.
 - e. Other.
13. Which of the following applies to you? (You can choose more than one option.)
- a. I feel comfortable and confident speaking the English language.
 - b. I feel comfortable but have few slips of the tongue when I speak.
 - c. I'm not so comfortable and hesitate when I speak, and I make some mistakes.
 - d. I feel uncomfortable and not confident as I make many hesitations, pauses, and errors in speaking and speak too slow.
 - e. I forget what I want to say and stop speaking.
14. Indicate with X the choice you think is correct for each of the following items:

No	Item	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
.		Almos t never	Rarel y	Sometime s	Usuall y	Always

1.	To what extent do you feel afraid of making mistakes when you speak?					
2.	When you learn a new vocabulary or expression (from some English TV show/ radio broadcast or any other source of learning), to what extent do you use it in speaking?					
3.	Do you use fillers (e.g., well, right, anyway, now let me see...etc.) to have time in conversation when you face difficulty in thinking of appropriate reply?					
4.	To what extent do you work on your pronunciation to improve your speaking skill?					
5.	To what extent do you pay attention to use correct grammar in speaking?					
6.	During the oral course discussions and activities, how often do you interact in English with other classmates?					
7.	To what extent do you speak English whenever you get the opportunity?					

8.	To what extent do topics discussed in your oral class meet your interests, needs and expectations?					
9.	To what extent do you consider yourself successful in choosing the right words for the right context while speaking?					

15. When you make speaking mistakes, what type of correction do you usually receive?
(You can choose more than one option.)

No.	Type of correction	1. Almost never	2. Rarely	3. Sometimes	4. Usually	5. Always
	Self-correction					
b.	Peer-correction					
c.	Teacher-correction					

16. What grades do you usually have in grammar exams?

1. Poor 2. Fair 3. Good 4. Very Good 5. Excellent.

End of Questionnaire (Thank you!)

Appendix B

Teachers' Questionnaire

Researcher: Ouacheme Nourreddine

Questionnaire

Your most appreciated contribution is expected to be honest and straightforward. Please read all the questions before answering and you are kindly requested to fill this questionnaire by selecting the right letter/letters. Questions of the questionnaire are related

to the speaking skill of English (i.e., Oral communication/ Conversation Comprehension/ Interactive English), and it is directed to the EFL oral course teachers.

Gender: Male Female

The academic degree: MA PhD Other:

Years of Teaching English:

Years of studying/working in an English-speaking country (Name the county(s)):

Name of University:

Number of times you've taught the oral skill course:

Please choose what best describes what you think for the following questions:

1. What kind of activities/ tasks do you usually carry out in the oral class? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a. Presentations/roll play
- b. . Watching and discussing videos
- c. Listening activities.
- d. Open discussions.
- e. Oral presentations.
- f. Tasks and games
- g. Other.

2. What kind of topics do you usually discuss in the oral class? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a. Politics.

- b. Social media.
- c. Arts
- d. Science
- e. Religion.
- f. Cultures, habits and rituals.
- g. Language issues.
- h. Other.

3. Have you ever participated in any kind of programs (e.g., workshops or special training) devoted to the oral skill? If yes: How many times?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. What are the means of assessment you use in your oral class?

- a. In-class activities.
- b. Oral presentations.
- c. Homework papers/ portfolio.
- d. Tests.
- e. Other.

5. What aspects of the oral class do you value the most and think should receive large percentage of assessment? (You can choose more than one option.)

- a. Presentations/roll play.
- b. Watching and discussing videos.
- c. Listening activities.
- d. Open discussions.
- e. Oral presentations.
- f. Tasks and games
- g. Tests
- h. . Other.

6. From your experience, how does the grade influence learners' participation in an oral activity?
- a. Receiving marks for participating in an oral activity usually motivates learners to take it more seriously and participate.
 - b. Learners usually don't like to participate in the oral activity if there were no assessment.
 - c. Learners usually like to participate in any oral discussion/ activity whether it is assessed or not.
 - d. Learners are hardly motivated to participate in any oral activity whether assessed or not.
7. How do you usually correct your students' when they make mistakes and errors in speaking? (You can choose more than one option.)
- a. I usually correct spoken mistakes on spot to let all of my students learn the correct form.
 - b. I usually delay correction to the end of the activity/ discussion to give them special focus.
 - c. If the error were global (i.e., breaks communication), I prefer to correct it on the spot.
 - d. I usually give my students the chance to correct themselves; if they couldn't, I may ask other students to do the correction, or I myself correct them.
 - e. I usually don't do corrections to spoken mistakes in order not to affect students' motivation.
8. To what extent being competent (i.e., knowing how to use the language correctly) affects fluency in speaking?
- a. Being competent in the language greatly affects fluency; the more the language is correctly produced, the more fluently it is spoken.
 - b. Being competent in the language may correlates positively with fluency.
 - c. Being competent in the language doesn't affect fluency; there is no relation between accuracy of language and fluency in speaking.

9. Please list any other potential problems and difficulties you might encounter in teaching the English oral skills.

The researcher welcomes your comments. If you have any, please add.

End of Questionnaire

Thank you for your cooperation.