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On:

Investigating the Role of Using Small Group Discussion in

Enhancing EFL Learners' Speaking Fluency

Case Study of Second Year EFL Students at Biskra University

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Dedication

This work is dedicated:

To my parents and all the members of my family

To all my dear teachers

To all my friends

Acknowledgments

Above all, I would thank ALLAH, the Almighty for providing me with the patience and will to study, reach this level and finish my dissertation; all great praise to him.

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Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the role of small group discussion in enhancing learners' speaking fluency. The hypothesis of the study assumes that the learners' engagement in small group discussion leads to the improvement of their speaking fluency. We have chosen the descriptive method in order to describe the two variables, small group discussion as an independent variable, and its impact on the learners' speaking Fluency as a dependent variable. We have used two data gathering tools: a questionnaire to forty (40) second year students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra and a structured interview to five (5) teachers of Oral Expression. The findings showed that teachers and students hold positive attitudes towards the role of using small group discussion and believe it helps in enhancing learner's speaking fluency along with motivation and self-esteem.

Key words: small group discussion, speaking fluency, attitudes, motivation.

List of Abbreviations

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

Q : Questions

L2 : Second language

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General

Introduction

General Introduction

The English language is widely recognized as an international language since it is the most–used language for communication between people around the world. In the last few decades, globalization enables English to spread in the whole world. In addition to that, the communicative purpose also leads to a large number of English learners. In order to achieve that communicative purpose, they need to develop their four principal language skills: listening, writing, reading, and speaking. Speaking, for instance, is one of the most important skills for communication.

In EFL teaching and learning, the ability to speak fluently is a problem faced by both teachers and learners. In fact, with the implementation of the communicative approach, teachers have been required to use some communicative techniques, such as the small group discussion in EFL classes. Small group discussion was assumed to solve the issue of speaking fluency and help learners to become well communicators using the English language.

1. Statement of the Problem

Learning foreign languages has many goals to be achieved but the main goal is to be able to communicate effectively in that language. We observed that learners of English as a foreign language (EFL learners) have problems communicating in English, among which, is the inability to speak fluently. The latter is highly remarked as a problem in oral classes.

The reasons behind the learner's inability to speak fluently are numerous and varied. To start with, learners are taught the language with the idea that they are only receptive to grammar.

In fact, most of the teachers tend to use the maximum of class time talking without involving the learners in the process of communication; as a result, the learners will become less involved and by time the communicative purpose will not be achieved. Furthermore, the ability to speak freely is not given by nature to all learners; so, this remark is for shy learners. In fact, shy learners must be taken into account as special cases. Since the classroom is the primary context, in which learners have the opportunity to use the target language, the teachers' methods are believed to influence greatly learners' language use.

Developing learners speaking skills, precisely speaking fluency, requires teachers to overcome many obstacles. Teachers could give learners more time to learn and communicate in English in class. They could also organize the class into small group discussion so that all learners would have an opportunity to speak and express themselves. This study is expected to permit the learners to assume more responsibility for their own learning through developing social skills and becoming involved in class practices.

2. The Aims of the Study

This study attempts to investigate the role of small group discussion towards the improvement of EFL learner's speaking fluency. This study aims at:

- ✓ Investigating how small group discussion can affect speaking fluency.
- ✓ Analyzing teachers' and students' attitudes of towards small group discussion.

3. Research Questions

1. How can small group discussion enhance the speaking fluency?

2. What are the teachers' and the students' attitudes towards the small group discussion as a technique to improve the speaking fluency?

4. Hypothesis

Our research is supposed to test the following hypothesis:

If the EFL learners are engaged in small group discussion, their speaking fluency would improve.

5. Research Methodology

The research methodology that will be adopted in this study is descriptive. We believe that it is the most suitable for our research. The choice can be justified by the fact that this research methodology can provide us with insightful information and useful results. The data collection tools that will be used are a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire will be submitted to students in order to know their attitudes and opinions about the role of using small group discussion in enhancing speaking fluency. The interview will be conducted to teachers. The teachers will be asked to answer some questions to collect information about the way they use to teach speaking skills in oral classes. Indeed, the use of these data collection tools is advantageous for our investigation.

5.1. The Sample

The population of our study will be the second year students of English at the University of Biskra. As for the sample, it consists of 40 students and 5 teachers of Oral Expression.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, we attempt to form a comprehensive definition of speaking fluency. Then, we are going to shed light on the importance of speaking fluency to know to what extent the speaking fluency is important for the learners. Lastly, we are going to deal with the teaching and assessment of speaking fluency. In the second chapter, we try to define the small group discussion, its types, its importance, and the activities to be employed with small group discussion. In the third chapter, we will expound the research methodology. This chapter introduces the research method and tools that will be used, as well as the participants of the study (both teachers and students). It will also treat a broad outline of the data analysis description. Most importantly, it contains the data analysis and the results. By the end, the results of the study will be translated into some practical suggestions for second-year teachers of oral expression in order to develop their learner's speaking fluency.

Chapter One:

Speaking Fluency

Introduction

The main concern of English language learners is communication. The latter requires the development of the speaking skill, being one of its core constituents. Indeed, in the process of developing the speaking skill, learners must promote fluency because being a fluent speaker means that the learner can strongly convey the intended message with ease and without hesitations. In this chapter, speaking fluency is focused on both as a main factor in any successful communication and as a major issue in fostering learners' speaking skill. First, we have provided some definitions of speaking fluency from various scholars' perspectives. Second, we have shed light on speaking fluency and its importance. Third, we have dealt with the relationship between speaking fluency and teaching English as a foreign language, in which we tried to focus on the activities that teachers may implement in order to increase learners' speaking fluency. In addition to that, some practical instructions that are believed to improve speaking fluency have been suggested for teachers. Finally, we have shed light on the relationship between speaking fluency and language assessment, focusing on the process of fluency assessment.

1.1 Definitions

In teaching and learning a foreign language, the main goal is communication with other users of that language; hence, speaking fluency is a commonly used term in language teaching. Indeed, many scholars tried to clarify the term fluency. According to Hartmann and Stork (1976), "a person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structures accurately whilst concentrating on content rather than form, using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational speed when they are needed" (p.86). As reported by them, the main concern of

speaking fluency is the comprehension of language meaning rather than the structure of the language itself. Additionally, Fillmore (1979) defined four abilities of speaking fluency:

- The ability to talk in long-time duration with only few pauses.

- The ability to produce sentences coherently reasoned, and semantically.

- The ability to have appropriate expressions to be applied in a wide range of contexts.

- The ability to function the language with creativity and imaginative manner.

According to his definition, fostering previous abilities would be significantly important to attain speaking fluency development. Furthermore, Brumfit (1984) characterised fluency as the ability "to be regarded as natural language use, whether or not it results in native-speaker-like language comprehension and or production" (p.56). Brumfit (1984) confirmed Fillmore's four kinds of fluency, and referred to the inter-relations of the four characteristics as follows: speed and continuity, coherence, context-sensitivity, and creativity. Another attempt to provide an accurate description of what the term fluency means belongs to Richards, Platt and Weber (1985), who defined fluency as "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions" (p. 108).

Additionally, the word "fluency" has been portrayed as the ability to express oneself in an intelligible, reasonable and accurate way without much hesitation (Hughes, 2002). Hughes mentioned three features of fluent communication: Clear words and sentences in order to give a chance to the listeners for understanding. Then, the produced language must be comprehensible. Finally, he claimed the obligation of presenting the previous features in an accurate manner. In the same vein, fluency has generally been taken to refer to the capacity to use language freely, smoothly and spontaneously. Likewise, Castaneda and Roderquez-Gonzalez (2011) have defined

EFL speaking fluency as the ability to speak smoothly, continuously and at an effective speed when the speaker does not always have to stop to think of the right word.

In order to clarify a major misconception that surrounds speaking fluency, Thorunbury (2005) stressed that being a fluent speaker in EFL does not mean speed in speaking that language but being aware of some factors that cause the fluency. For instance, in terms of the right place of pauses in a conversation, he stated that a fluent speaker needs to stop from time to time only to make his/her message clear for the listeners. Hedge (2000) maintained that "the term fluency relates to the production and it is normally reserved for speech. It is the ability to think about unit of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate showiness, or undue hesitation" (p. 54). This is another piece of evidence that fluency is speaking without hesitation and pauses.

1.2 The Importance of Speaking Fluency

In teaching and learning a foreign language, the speaking skill is as important as any other skill. Brumfit and Johnson (1979) have identified two aspects of language, which are the accuracy and fluency. According to them, teachers are required to focus on accuracy. On the one hand, accuracy has as its chief concern the language structure, vocabulary, and the assistance of learners to express the meaning and construct the sentences in acceptable sounds. On the other hand, fluency is another aspect in which teachers must focus only on the meaning of the message; however, in class, the teacher must involve all learners to participate in fluency activities. Yang (2014) stated that "speaking fluency can be practiced in the communicative activities, which require all students participating in it" (p.57). Furthermore, Nation (1997) pointed out the importance of fluency, mentioning that it is one of the most crucial components of EFL learning.

However, he believed that while teaching speaking skills, teachers must involve the quarter of class time focusing only on fluency.

In addition, speaking fluency is one of the most important criteria of international language exams, including IELTS and TOEFL that assess fluency in a speaking session. EFL teachers need to teach their students the knowledge, as well as to help them with regard to utilising the known content more fluently. However, a slow speed talking or hesitant style passing the message is an obstacle in communication. Speaking fluently is challenging from memorizing to using the language to solving problems. This is the objective to maintain the communication effectively (Yang, 2014).

1.3 Speaking Fluency and Teaching

1.3.1 Fluency Activities

In teaching the speaking skill, it is necessary to implement activities which may help to improve the fluency. According to Kumar (2013), there are three modes of activities which any teacher must use in class, namely imitation, rehearsal, and extemporaneous speech to enhance the speaking fluency. Following his assertions, imitation activities are considered as fundamental; however, in this type of activity, a speech model needs to be copied by the learners. Next, rehearsal is the activity where pseudo-communication takes place in such activities as role-plays and skits. On the other hand, extemporaneous speech activities provide an opportunity to extemporize speaking and use the language more creatively and freely.

A variety of speaking activities needs to be implemented in class, such as information gap game, show and tell, and skit playing (Kumar, 2013). Nonetheless, these kinds of activities have been classified into four groups according to their speech forms. The first group is the activities

defined as impromptu monologue. Explaining a picture that showed to the learner for the first time is an example of this group; an information gap game is among the second group of activities, where learners carry out unplanned conversation. Both of these two groups include extemporaneous speaking.

The next two activities that consist of planned speeches and show and tell, which is a popular speech practice in English language, belong to the third category. This group is a set of prefabricated speech activities. The fourth group is that of planned conversations; skit-playing activities are among them, and these two activities include rehearsed speech.

The implication of the categorisation is that each of these four types of activities should have its own distinctive aims. Through conversation activities, learners can pick up phrases useful in conversation, while monologue activities tend to provide different types of expressions. An impromptu speech can both be diagnostic and confirmatory since it may reveal the weakness of the learner's speech as well as show what has already been acquired. However, it will not lead to the improvement of speaking unless the learner recognises the weakness; whereas, a prefabricated speech, which includes newly introduced language items, directly contributes to language acquisition. These characteristics of each activity should be taken into account in modifying speaking activities.

1.4 Suggestions to Enhance Speaking Fluency

1.4.1 Increasing the Amount of Speaking Time

In teaching and learning speaking skills, fluency has been considered as a commonly encountered issue by foreign language learners. Indeed, this problem is a result of less

employment of speaking activities. Kellem (2009) has suggested three major instructions in order to promote speaking fluency in class:

- Organizing the learners into pairs or small groups in class

- Encouraging the learners to employ free conversation in class

- Encouraging the learners to employ the language outside the class

As can be drawn from the previously mentioned instructions, Kellem (2009) illustrated that, in large classes, learners have to be organised upon the size into pairs or small groups. However, a wide variety of activities can be implemented such as interviews, information gaps, role plays, and group discussions. Besides the various advantages of that such kinds of activities bear, they mainly serve the achievement of a fundamental objective which is to increase talking-time in class.

1.4.2 Allowing Time to Prepare before Speaking

As reported by Foster and Skehan (1996), one of the major factors which operate in favour of fluency development is convenient planning. In other words, learners must prepare what would be said, while they want to have conversations. On the contrary, other scholars insisted on the preparation prior to the activity of speaking, especially for the students whose level is either low or intermediate.

Kellem (2009) asserted that written planning which is silently carried out before speaking "helps maintain focus on the act of speaking and creating meaning with an interlocutor. Examples of planning include taking notes on a topic for homework, composing written answers to interview questions before discussing them, and writing potential questions" (p.10). To sum up,

while learners engage in conversation, the teacher should give a few minutes for them. Indeed, this technique may improve learner's communication attention (Kellem, 2009).

1.4.3 Use Familiar and Motivating Topics

By large, the choice of topics in any kind of language is deemed to have a central role in the process of teaching and learning. The topics can determine the level of engagement and subsequently the level of learners' retention. With respect to speaking fluency, using motivating topics is another tool to enhance such a skill. As a matter of fact, Kellem (2009) pointed out that the more familiar and relevant topics are, the easiest they are to deal with. In addition, he mentioned that, while focusing on fluency development in class, learners needs to be asked about their interests. Furthermore, a list of topics such as interests, hobbies, friends are provided from which learners are free to choose.

In conclusion, it is suggested to invest more time and effort to work on the motivational aspect of the language learning process. It is worth noting that better results can be obtained when teachers place more emphasis on learners' motivating topics with the aim of encouraging them to speak more fluently and engagingly about such topics which will consequently enhance their speaking fluency.

1.4.4 Set Time Limits

It is significantly important to set time limits in class while creating a comfortable speaking atmosphere. In this regard, Kellem (2009) has suggested that setting time limits is considered as tool for:

- Increasing the learner's speaking speed in class.
- Decreasing the learner's pauses while articulating long speeches.

To illustrate this point, Maurice (1983) introduced the 4/3/2 activity, in which he mentioned that it consists of the presentation of a three-minute speech. Then, the exact same speech will be reduced to two minutes and finally into one minute. This type of activity is likely to provide an opportunity to build the speaking fluency efficiently.

In summation, while creating speaking activities, especially for activities of fluency, teachers need to address their learners' with precise time limits. Consequently, learners are better able to exhibit observable progress over time.

1.4.5 Teach Formulaic Sentences

While developing the fluency in class, it is primordial to prioritise the learning of chunks, collocations, and formulaic sequences (Wood, 2007). Involving the language use in class requires setting some sorts of phrases in conversations. One of such strategies is the frequent use of classroom English phrases such as Can you repeat that, what does ~ mean? Other examples are agreeing/disagreeing (I agree because…, I see your point, but…) or stating opinions (In my opinion…, I think...). In conclusion, developing such strategies for EFL learners is likely to increase their fluency, via providing an opportunity for them to use already learned chunks of language.

1.4.6 Studying Abroad

Learning the language in its home country has a major impact. In this respect, Dekeyser (2007) concluded that a "majority of study- abroad students make measurable progress in speaking, especially in terms of fluency, at least in programs of longer duration" (p.211). In his point of view, studying in a country in which the language is used all the time will have significant advantages in terms of learner's oral fluency. Inversely, other researchers such as Handley and Wang (2018) reported that "counter to much previous research on oral fluency

development during study abroad, only a small effect of study abroad on oral fluency development was observed in this study " (p.25). They also demonstrated that, compared to the language learners studying at home, the improvements of learner studying abroad were not of higher significance.

In this study, two samples were compared: One from the Chinese students studying a local program, while the other sample was from Chinese students studying in the UK. According to the results, those students in the UK achieved a significant development in terms of fluency whereas local students program were less fluently than the others were. To sum up, studying the language while interacting with native speakers will influence the development of speaking fluency.

1.5 Speaking Fluency and Language Assessment

While speaking, a speaker needs to translate his ideas and thoughts into comprehensible sounds fast; this rapid translation of thoughts to speech appears in three stages: By conceptualising what to say, then by formulating how to say it, and finally articulating the right sounds (Dell et al. 1997; Levelt, Roelofs, & Meyer, 1999). In this process, the speaker conveys his/her thoughts rapidly, which means that speakers conceptualise and formulate the next part of a message while articulating the same (De Jong, 2016).

In the speech production process, if at any stage, the speaker cannot keep up with his articulation; then he will become disfluent (De Jong, 2016). He defined a disfluent speaker through a number of possible scenarios, including situations such as when a speaker "stops speaking (and is temporarily silent), perhaps he will use a filled pause (e.g., "uh uhm"), slow down the current articulation, or use a repetition (e.g.,"the" "the")" (p.203). Additionally, he pointed out the point related to articulation more precisely through presenting the possibility of

speaker "lagging behind his own articulation, a speaker also becomes disfluent while monitoring his own speech, he notices some kind of error that needs a repair" (p.203). According to him, a disfluent speaker struggles with, filled pauses – (e.g.; "the the", "um um"). Moreover, constraints such as students who stop speaking are often revealed in speech production as well. Furthermore, Janse (2003) stated that, in terms of the stages needed to articulate a comprehensible sounds, the normal articulation rate is evidenced by six syllables per second. Besides, at everyday speech, disfluencies such as silent pauses, filled pauses, lengthenings, repetitions, and repairs have been encountered by speakers. Around six to ten per hundred spoken words in speech are normal (Fox & Jean, 1995).

In everyday speech, to communicate effectively, a speaker of a second language (L2) needs to translate his ideas and thoughts into a comprehensible output rapidly. Becoming fluent in the language, along with attaining the native-like accent is, in fact, the hardest skill of speakers of L2. Speaking is one of the most challenging skills due to time constraints. However, a fluent speaker is the one who can handle the time constraints in which he can deliver the intended message in the right time. In the following, we will first deal with studying the speaking fluency from a psycholinguistic point of view in order to investigate where disfluencies come from (speech production) and what their effect may be (comprehension process).

1.5.1 The Psycholinguistic Approach to Fluency

Since the 1950's, the aspects of fluency and speech error have been investigated in order to investigate the processes of speech production. De Jong (2016) has pointed out the importance of paying attention to the research methods while investigating the processes of speech production, stating that "the research methods that have been employed to investigate causes for disfluencies are corpus research and (controlled) speaking experiments. Both research methods

struggle with the extremely time-consuming data analysis that is needed to answer research questions" (p. 204).

Additionally, researchers have also started to investigate the disfluencies effects on the listener's comprehension processes. For this purpose, researchers set up controlled listening experiments, in which participants listen to short passages or sentences; however, they need to answer what has been heard by the use of the software program (De Jong, 2016). In what follows, the questions of where disfluencies come from (speech production processes), and their effect (comprehension processes) will be introduced briefly.

1.5.1.1 The Production Process

As previously mentioned, speaking has been considered as a rapid process, in which, all stages run incrementally. If, at any of the stages of processing, a speaker encounters a problem, the articulation of planned speech may end. Furthermore, researchers declared that, in general, speakers are more likely to be disfluent. For instance, when speakers plan what to say, disfluencies are more likely to occur.

Besides, global aspects also play a major role (De Jong, 2016). However, when talking about unfamiliar topics, speakers tend to be disfluent (Bortfeld, Silvia , Jonathan E, Michael F, & Susan E, 2001). Finally, inter-individual differences such as age and gender to some extent can be predicted, playing a role in disfluencies. For instance, Branigan, Lickely, and Mckelvie (as cited in De Jong, 2016) mentioned that young speakers tend to be more fluent than the older ones; female speakers are also more fluent than male speakers are.

1.5.1.2 The Perception Process

In the psycholinguistics approach for speech comprehension, disfluencies have been considered as aspects of speech which have no benefit for the listener (Fox & Jean, 1995). Consequently, as asserted by Levelt (as cited in De Jong, 2016), the listener may need to "edit" in order to comprehend the message of the speaker. Furthermore, the communicative meaning of disfluencies has been acknowledged. Clark and Fox (as cited in De Jong, 2016) argued that the filled pauses "uh" and "um" are normal English words, in which speakers signal that they are searching for a word. De Jong (2016) elaborated on the idea of filled pauses by saying "although they do not add to the propositional content of the speaker (the primary message), they are part of the collateral message, in which the speaker is informing the listener about his performance" (p. 205).

1.5.2 Applied Linguistics Approach to Fluency

In the applied linguistic approach, fluency aspects are considered as indicators of L2 proficiency (De Jong, 2016). However, from the psycholinguistic approach described above, it is obvious now that being a proficient speaker does not necessarily mean speaking without disfluencies. However, according to De Jong (2016), L2 proficiency has been partially related to fluency indices because disfluencies are also elements of communicative effective speech.

1.5.2.1 Production

In applied linguistics, researchers have investigated the effect of task complexity on linguistic output, namely on task complexity, the fluency showing that increasing the task complexity will lead to decreases in fluency. For example, when there is less planning time, also when talking about there and then versus here and now. Besides, tasks that require talking about

many elements. All of them lead eventually to decreases in fluency (De Jong, 2016). Applied linguistics researchers have also explored the relationship between L2 proficiency and fluency. This type of research is considered important because it may indicate which measures of fluency are indicative of L2 proficiency.

1.5.2.2 Fluency and L2 Proficiency

In the English language, in general, it is stated that most of L2 speech for most speakers is considered less fluent compared to the L1 speech. However, fluency is at least partly related to L2 proficiency, which is demonstrated by progress in fluency aspects over time (De Jong, 2016). To abstract these results, researchers have agreed that the speed of speech (speech rate) and pausing (mean length of run) are related to proficiency, except for the measure mean duration of silent pauses (De Jong, 2016). From these results, it is agreed that aspects of speed and pausing of speech can be used to indicate the levels of proficiency or to distinguish L1 from L2 speech. However, because L1 speakers show also individual differences in terms of amount and type of disfluencies, and because there is a considerable overlap of measures of fluency when comparing a group of L1 speakers to a group of L2 speakers, indeed, it is believed that it is impossible to give a quantitative definition of " fluent speech" (De Jong, 2016).

Davies (2003) claimed that the whole number of disfluencies does not distinguish L1 speech from L2 speech. However, the difference is in the distribution of disfluencies. For more details, Davies stated that L2 speakers would pause more often within clauses than L1 speakers do. In fact, there remains a major overlap between pausing act in L1 and pausing act in L2 as shown by De Jong (2016). It means when L2 fluency is measured obviously, the personal speaking style will be measured in addition to L2 specific aspects related to proficiency. Segalowitz (as cited in De Jong, 2016) propose to measure aspects of L2 specific fluency. Data

from L1 and L2 should be gathered to take L1 fluency into consideration, and partial out sources of variability that are not related specifically to the disfluencies in L2, but characterise a person's general performance in the given testing conditions. In this way, it is agreed that disfluencies that are specifically related to L2 speech are discriminated from disfluencies of L1 speech (De Jong, 2016). Following this suggestion, collecting data from L1 speech and L2 speech, and relating measures of fluency to measures of proficiency were advanced to prove the hypothesis. In fact, it was revealed that at least for inverse articulation rate, the relation with proficiency improved after partialling out L1 fluency behaviour.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to shed the light on the speaking skill in general, and speaking fluency in particular. Fluency was focused on as an indicator of speaking proficiency. However, our main concern was mainly to outline the major definitions and the variations among them, as well as the importance of speaking fluency for the EFL learner. In addition, we delineated the relationship between fluency and teaching English as a foreign language. On the one hand, we demonstrated the activities teachers have used for fluency development. On the other hand, we dealt with some practical instructions for increasing learners' fluency. Finally, we explored the assessment of fluency from two perspectives, namely applied linguistics and psycholinguistics.

Chapter Two:

Small Group Discussion

Introduction

Most teachers believe that the goal behind use of small group discussion is to engage students in conversations. In EFL teaching and learning, small group discussion is considered as the difficult teaching strategy, because, it is hard to manage. However, an appropriate use may encourage students to engage in conversations. In other words, teachers are invited to maximize the use of such strategy.

2.1 Definition

In teaching and learning a foreign language, the main goal is communication with other users of that language; hence, small group discussion is a commonly used term in language teaching. Indeed, many scholars tried to clarify this latter, According to Kidsvatter (1996), a small-group discussion dividing the large classroom into small groups of students in order to reach specific goals permits students to assume more responsibility for their learning, and develop their leadership, and become involved in an alternative instructional approach.

Refering to Bany and Johnson (1964), a small group exists when two or more persons have as one quality of their relationship some interdependence and possess some recognizable unity. Small group discussion refers to one or more meetings of people who communicate, face-to-face, to fulfill a common purpose and achieve a group goal. The main concept in the definition of small group discussion is communication. The practice of group discussion requires an understanding of communication theory and an ability to communicate.

According to Forsyth (1999), there are five different considerations in identifying a small group discussion. They are as follows:

1- Interaction (the communication of members with each other).

2- Structure (the organization of group members into certain roles, such as moderator and note-taker).

3- Group cohesion (the sense of unity of group members).

4- Social identity (do the group members share a perception of being members of the group? Is the membership important to their self-identity).

5- Goals (the objectives that group members is working to accomplish).

2.2 The Types of Small Group Discussion

Students learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Regardless of subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. To implement a small group in the teaching and learning process, teachers most often look to three types of group work, there are:

a) **Informal Learning Groups**: The informal learning means that students work together to attain a learning goal that is temporary, these groups last from a few minutes to one class period. Teachers can organize informal groups at any time in a class of any size to check students' understanding of the material and allow applying what they are learning.

b) **Formal Learning Group:** the Formal learning group means that students working together, for one class period to several weeks. The goal is to realize a shared learning goal and complete specific tasks.

c) **Study Teams:** The study teams is considered as long-term groups with stable membership. The objective is to provide members with support, encouragement, and assistance in order to

complete course requirements and assignments. Typically, study teams are heterogeneous in membership, meet regularly, and last for the duration of the class (a semester or year).

2.3 The Importance of Small Group Discussion

Small group Discussion is considered as important teaching strategy due to its relationship to the development of participatory citizenship, critical thinking, and classroom community. (Larson and Kieper, 2002).

Moreover, Larson, and Keiper (2002) argued that small group discussion provides several educational purposes; it means that small group discussion is the strategy that can raise the students' amount of talk and engage them in communication. It requires both teachers and learners with one another to talk at a high cognitive and affective level. In addition, small group discussion improves students's thinking, and enables them to interpret, analyze, and exchange information. During the discussion, students can exchange ideas, thought, and give opinions.

In addition, small group discussion enables students to become active participant rather than a passive recipient of information. In other words, small group discussion encourages students to respond with ease and appropriate manner. Up to the point, Brindly (1994) argued that students can learn more if they talk to each other rather than taking teachers' information. . Besides, students will engage in lessons, if they are allowed to communicate.

Furthermore, McGonigal, (2005 as cited in Davis, 2009, p. 97) declared that small group discussion provides students with opportunities to develop their communication skills and acquire knowledge through the face-to-face exchange of information, ideas, and opinions .Besides, small group discussion enables students' articulation of ideas, and respond to classmates' points of view, and develop their problem- solving skills.

2.3.1 Getting Small Group Discussion Started

According to Davis (2009, p.100), the appropriate way for teachers to begin any discussion is to give questions. These questions should have multiple answers, also, teachers should encourage students to prepare one or two questions, then, teachers select the most interesting question, after that, he /she has to divide the classroom into small groups, the objective is to discuss their questions together. Besides, teachers may begin with short writing task, and give students time in order to enrich the discussion.

2.4 The Benefits of Small Group Discussion

Many researchers emphasized the benefits of small group discussion on students' communication development. However, the benefits can be summarized as the following:

- It provides more opportunities for communication (Brecke & Jensen, 2007)

- It raises the oral interaction of the students (Cohen, 1994).

- It raises students' critical thinking (Totten, *et al.,* 1991).

- It develops students' transformation of knowledge, and it enables students to retain what they have learnt for a long duration. (Beckman, 1990).

- It raises students' autonomy i.e. they will do certain activities on their own (Vygotsky, 1978).

- It decreases students' stress .also it increases students' motivation (Slavin, 1995).

- It enables students to speak with confident (Jacobs and McCafferty, 2006).

- It reinforces students' self-confidence (Huber, 2004).

- It enables students to reach a high productivity of the target language (Johnson and Johnson, 1994).

- It develops learners' personal growth and their sense of responsibility (Zhang, 2010).

2.5. Some Factors in Small Group Discussion

There are several communicative activities, which teachers may follow for developing student's skills, and attain to a successful discussion. The most functional ones are as follows: role play, group work, and the topic.

2.5.1. Role Play

It is considered as one of the most important activities in small group discussion. Qing (2011, p. 37) defined role-play as "the projection in real life situation with social activities". According to Ur (1981, p. 9), role-play provides students with opportunities to practice communication. In a role-play, the classroom is divided into small groups, often pairs. They are asked to imagine that they are in different situations and act accordingly. Most students believe that is the easiest way to express themselves because the situations reflect the real life. In other words, role-play can develop student's speaking skill, and oral proficiency through the interaction.

2.5.2. Group Work

In group work, the classroom is usually divided into groups, however, the group may consists of four or five students. They are given a topic or a situation to work on together. Harmer (2001, p.117-118) argued that working in groups provides more advantages to students, which are as follow:

• Raising students' amount of speaking.

• Enhancing students' skills of cooperation and negotiation.

• Promoting the students' autonomy, it means that the students becomes responsible for their own learning. Although working in groups has its advantages, also it has its disadvantages as mentioned by harmer:

• It is likely to be noisy.

• Not all students enjoy it since they would prefer to be the focus of the teacher.

• Organizing the groups can be chaotic.

2.5.3. The Topic

Verbal exchange of ideas is the appropriate method for students to, speak freely in English and discuss topics together (Ur, 1981, p.5). However, it is noticed that students 'participation in the classroom depends on the topic being discussed, for that reason; Ur mentioned that teachers have to provide their students with interesting topics. In addition, he stated, "the topic is still seen by most teachers as the central focus of classroom discussion".

2.6. Strategies for Small Group Discussion

Before going to the class, teachers should bear in mind many strategies that may support the creation of good small group discussion. Davis (2009, p.97-98) suggested these strategies, they are as follows:

2.6.1. Clarification of the Teachers' Expectation at the Beginning of the Term

From the first lesson in the syllabus, teachers have to clarify their role in discussion. In addition to students' responsibilities, Teachers have to inform students about the importance of participation. In other words, the small group discussion is for testing and exchanging ideas; for

that reason, students have to prepare themselves for achieving the goals of small group discussion

2.6.2. Planning

Before starting the lesson, teachers have to organize a list of questions for guiding his/her discussion; also, he/she has to create appropriate activities such as group work, and brainstorming in order to reach effective results. He/she has to bear in mind two or three manners to start the discussion. However, he/she also has to take into consideration the end time of the session, wrap-up, and synthesis (Faust and Courtenay, 2002 cited in Davis, 2009, p.97).

2.6.3. Sharpened Students Discussion Skill

Developing the learner's attitude and skills to participate in the teacher's responsibility that involves identifying the roles that make a worthful and purposeful small group discussion, and explaining that any conflicts raised among them during the discussion is a natural thing, and if it happens he/she will try to provide a solution.

2.6.4. Sharpened your Discussion Skills

The teacher must act as an effective leader in small group discussion through his/her involvement in the discussion. He/she should play several roles as a gatekeeper "Makayla, you've been quite. Do you have something to add?", a mirror, an observer, a validator "Great point'', a negotiator "Can you come to a consensus on this?", and a reality tester "Do you realize how our comment scan be interpreted?''(Forsyth, 2003 cited in Davis, 2009, p.98).

2.6.5. Taking Cultural Norms into Account

In the classroom, there are different types of students who have different norms. Some students are considered as silent and respectful while others are interrupting and loudly speakers. ; For that reason, teachers have to provide instructions and explain the small group discussion rules to students. In addition, they have to give a support to students after the classroom (Davis, 2009, p.98).

2.7. Activities for Small Group Discussion

It exists three types of small group discussion activities (Ur 1981, p. 27-106), which are brainstorming activities, organization activities, and compound activities.

2.7.1. Brainstorming Activities

Brainstorming Activities is considered as the most well-known small group discussion activities. Teachers used these activities in order to engage their students in the participation. These brainstorming activities are as follow:

a) Guessing Games: represent one of the most favorable activity. It is generally based on questions that are known by one or two participants. , Guessing games are considered as easiest tasks for teachers in the classroom, also, they help to create enjoyable classroom learning. All students enjoy it because it develops the language use with fun.

b) Finding Connections: For this activity, students have to find the connection between different items, the students with a rich vocabulary can practice this activity with ease, i.e. advanced levels of students. Teachers use such activity in order to provide students with new vocabulary.

2.7.2. Organizing Activities

They refers to the activities teachers use for helping the students' integration of their ideas. In addition, it helps students to make a comparison between things. These activities are functioned through the following:

a) Comparing: refers to the activities that are based on contrast and analogy. It requires students to discuss and find out the similarities and differences between various items to carry out a task of classification.

b) Putting in Order: In this activity, teachers have to check their students' understanding of the topic. However, students are given several pictures, sentences or passages, and they have to organize them in logical order, for example, students are given a picture from a series which compose a logical sequence of events, in which, they have to classify them into logical order..

2.7.3. Compound Activities

In this activity, it is considered as the combination between both brainstorming and organizing activities. The objective of this activity is to involve a variety of thinking processes, such as imagination, and language function. This type of activities are more appropriate for advanced students, and the most appropriate activities is debate.

a) Debates: In this activity, the objective is to know students' points of view about an issue. Debate starts by dividing the class into groups, each group note down the possible argument about a motion of debate; after that, the group gives his/her point of view.

2.8. The Role of the Teacher

In EFL teaching and learning, a teacher has several roles to do in the classroom. As reported by Harmer (2003, p. 275-276), there are three particular relevance roles which the teacher should play if he/she wants his /her students to speak fluently.

a) Prompter: teachers have to encourage students' participation in the activity, and they have to help them. Students sometimes gets lost, so that, they are needed to careful suggestions to improve the activity.

b) Participant: Teachers should not be afraid from participation when asking their student to produce a language because the teacher's participation in the classroom activities such as discussion or role-play can produce new information to get the activity along. Also, they motivate the learners to continue their engagement and to create an enjoyable atmosphere. However, teachers need not to be involved in participation because too much participation can dominate the speaking, and prevent them from performing the other roles.

c) Feedback Provider: Teachers should provide their learners with a helpful and gentle correction to help them to overcome the difficulties and misunderstanding because overcorrection distribute the communication, also, teachers should allow their student to assess what they have done after completing the activity.

2.9. The Role of the Learner

In small group discussion, the essential role of the learner is as a group member who must work with other group members to make certain that everyone in the group has mastered the content to teach. In small group discussion, the student plays the major role. Slavin (1995) believed that in order to ensure participation among students, "[they] are expected to help each

other, to discuss and argue with each other to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding." (p. 2). Through small groups, students become responsible for their own learning. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) put it, learners "are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning" (p.199). In this context, this does not mean that the teacher has no role to perform. Instead, he is there as a counselor, educator, friend and facilitator of learning; his job is more than handing out grades and marking papers with red ink.

Richard and Rodgers (2001) reported that within small group discussion work, "each group member has a specific role to play in a group, such as noise monitor, turn-taker monitor, recorder or summarizer."(p.197). Similarly, Kagan (1994; in Woolfolk, 2004,p. 495) stated that the teacher must assign a variety of roles for each group member, to make sure that everyone in the group is involved in a specific role in accomplishing an overall group task. The following table lists some roles that learners can perform.

Role	Description
Encourager	Encourages reluctant or shy students to participate.
Raiser	Shows appreciation of other's contribution and recognizes accomplishment.
Gate keeper	Equalizes participation and makes sure how one dominates
Coach	Helps with the academic content, explains concepts.
Question commander	Make sure all students' questions asked and answered.
Taskmaster	Keeps the group on task.
Recorder	Writes down, decisions and plans

Reflector	Keeps group aware of progress (or lack of progress).
Quiet captain	Monitors noise level.
Materials monitor	Picks up and returns materials.

Table2. 1: Learners' Role in Small Group Discussion (Kagan, 1994; in Woolfolk, 2004, p.496)

2.10. Implementation of Small Group Discussion

Richards and Renandya (2002, p.226-230) pointed out that there are three stages in the implementation of group discussion: Pre- discussion, Discussion, and, Post – discussion.

2.10.1. Pre-Discussion

Teachers should divide the learners into groups of four because it is a suitable number of participants for fluent interaction, and each group of them select many discussion topics deriving from their current Professional, academic or developmental concern.

1) Forming the Groups: Discussion success is based initially on the satisfaction of all the participants to make effective contributions. Learners' participation depends on their prior knowledge and/or experience of the topic under discussion. The next step is the formation of a partner group of observer evaluators to ensure that the students not only have the opportunities to participate in the discussion, but also to observe, and evaluate the process. In this way, the discussion became learner-centred which allow the teachers to focus more on the feedback.

2) Identifying and Organizing the Topic. Some learners find difficulty in producing and arranging discussion topics on their own. For that, it is the teacher responsibility to pre-teach Brainstorming and Mind - Mapping Technique, to help their learners to gain confidence and fluency. also to help them to be able to choose an appropriate topic because most of the topics chosen by groups are often so broad, and requires to breakdown into sub-topics.In this case, the initial framework of the learners is derived from brainstorming, and the teacher's role is to check that the framework is effective, and offering advice if necessary.

2.11. Evaluation of Small Group Discussion

As reported by Davis (2009, p.103-104), evaluating a small group discussion has many steps that the teacher should follow, the first one, the teacher should ask him/ herself a few evaluative questions after the class, and these questions are:

_ What portion of the class contributed to the discussion?

_ How much did you dominate the session?

_ What is the quality of the student comments?

_ What questions worked especially well?

_ How satisfied did the small group seem?

The above questions indicate that the teacher should make a general overview of the discussion session to have a clear idea about what is good and what is bad and try to modify it. The second one, he /she has to allow his/her students to assess the discussion by asking them such questions: What is going well with the group discussion? , Are you satisfied with your participation in-group discussion? , and let them write their responses to know the learners' point of view about the session. The third one if the teacher wants to make an analysis of how he

conducts a discussion, video record a session, and the best way to analyze the recording is to arrange the student according to the activities and behaviors they do in the classroom. , These activities are as follow :

_ **Initiating:** suggesting tasks or topics, defining problems, identifying actions.

_ **Eliciting:** asking for information and ideas.

_ **Informing:** providing information, stating facts.

_ **Blocking:** changing the topic, raising irrelevant questions.

_ **Entrenching:** Interrupting others, breaking the continuity of the subject.

_ **Clarifying:** restating other's point of view to be easier to understand.

_ **clouding:** making noise, making the issue more difficult to understand.

_ **Summarizing:** providing the conclusion, making a summary of the topic.

_ **Interpreting:** explaining the individual opinion to others.

_ **Consensus Proposing:** providing a general conclusion for a group agreement.

_ **Consensus Resistant:** persisting on the topic and arguments when the other have decided or lost interest.

_ **Harmonizing:** offering jokes at the right time to reduce the tensions.

_ **Disrupting**: interrupting the other groups, trying to make noise.

_ **Evaluating:** Asking whether the groups are satisfied with the topics, and permit them to suggest other tasks and practices. Finally, after recording the small group discussion session, the teacher should think about the appropriate way to raise the positive activities and decrease the negative. In addition, he /she may ask his/her colleagues to assist him /her to review a record.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shed light to a general overview of small group discussion and its definition, besides its types and its importance in developing the learner's speaking skills. Also, we tried to shed light on how the teacher should prepare his /her lesson to have an effective small group discussion, alongside with mentioning the most effective factors of a good small discussion, and the activities that assist the teacher to manage the small group discussion and to create an enjoyable atmosphere. Finally, we have summed up with the evaluation of small group discussion to be able assess the success and the failure of the small group discussion in getting the student speak in EFL fluently. In this chapter, we have showed that small group discussion is one of the most valuable teaching strategies that offer EFL students an opportunity to express their ideas freely and without fear.

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Chapter Three

Field work

Introduction

This chapter will provide a description of the practical part of the current study. The fieldwork is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with the research method, the participants, the research instruments used for gathering data, and the procedures followed throughout this process. On the other hand, the second section will describe and analyze the data that has been so far gathered via the questionnaire and the interview. This chapter will later discuss the results and provide some suggestions for future research.

3.1.1. Research Method

The researcher investigates the role of small group discussions in enhancing learners' speaking fluency. Accordingly, the research method is descriptive in nature. The analysis of data followed both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

3.1.2. Participants

The population of the study was second-year students of English at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra. The sample consisted of (40) students who were randomly selected. The reason for choosing second-year students was because their level permits the acquisition of new methods. Besides, five (5) teachers of oral expression were randomly selected to provide appropriate data.

3.1.3. Data Gathering Tools

The researcher used two research instruments. The first was the students' questionnaire which aimed to gather information necessary to analyze students' attitudes towards the role of using small group discussions in promoting speaking fluency. The second instrument was the

teachers' interview. It aimed to analyze the teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of small group discussions in the classroom and its impact on their learner's speaking fluency. The researchers also used it to support the results obtained from students' questionnaire.

3.1.3.1. The Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is composed of eighteen (18) questions. It was divided into four sections. All the questions were multiple-choice questions. The students had to tick a suitable answer from options according to their opinions.

The first section dealt with background information (Q1-Q2). Therefore, the students were invited to demonstrate their level in English and whether they liked English or not. The second section dealt with a general overview of speaking fluency (Q3-Q7). Students were invited to show their speaking skill level, also to say if they find difficulties in speaking or not. Moreover, the researcher asked about students' speaking fluency level (Q5). He also asked about the main problems that hinder students' speaking fluency (Q7).

In section three, the students were asked whether they like small group discussions or not (Q8). Moreover, the researcher asked also about the type of activities students like (Q9). In addition, he tried to explore the problem of fear related to students' participation in small group discussions. The researcher asked students to evaluate the use of small group discussions (whether it is beneficial or not). He asked about whether teachers provide them with feedback or not. In the last section, the researcher asked about the student's attitudes toward the use of small group discussions.

3.1.3.2. The Description of Teachers' Interview

The researcher interviewed five (5) teachers of oral expression at Biskra University. The researcher provided them with seven (7) questions. Teachers have been asked whether small group discussions can improve the students' speaking fluency. In addition, they were asked about the suitable way to encourage students' engagement in small group discussions. The interview aimed to gather data about the teachers' attitudes towards the use of small group discussions in enhancing speaking fluency.

3.1.3.3. Procedures

The researcher administered the questionnaire to forty (40) students via internet. They were provided with full instructions and informed that their answers would be taken into consideration, and there were no true or false answers. Rather, we needed only to check their opinions about our topic.

3.2.1. The findings of the students' questionnaire

Q1: Do you like the English language?

Table 3. 1 Respondents' Attitude towards the English Language

Option	Frequency	%
Yes	40	100%
No	0	0%
Total	40	100%
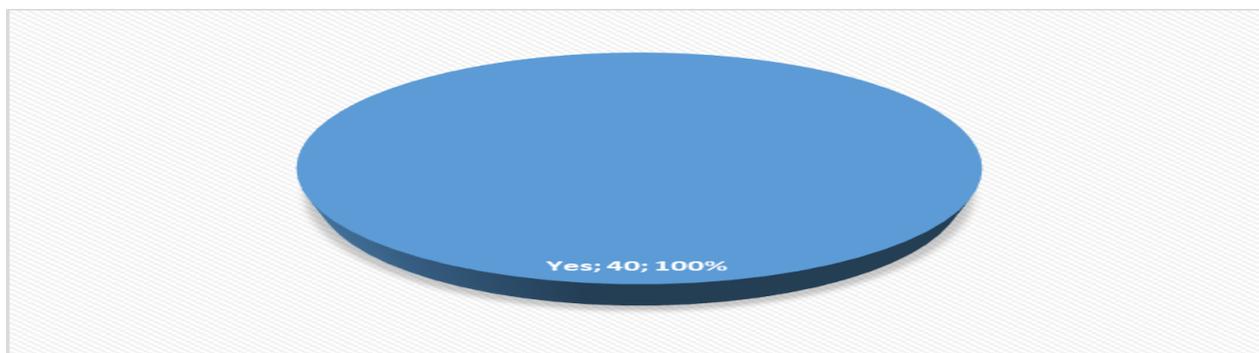
Figure 3. 1 Respondents' Attitude towards the English Language

The aim of this question is to see the respondents' attitudes toward studying English. From the table above, we notice that second year students like the English language. All of them answered the first choice, "yes". This result indicates that 100% of students like the language. For that reason, we may find them highly motivated to learn and speak the English language. The results may also refer to a positive attitude to learn English.

Q2: What is your level in English?

Table 3. 2 Respondents' Level in English

Option	Frequency	%
Excellent	3	7.5%
Very Good	9	22.5%
Good	19	47.5%
Average	9	22.5%
Poor	0	0%
Total	40	100%
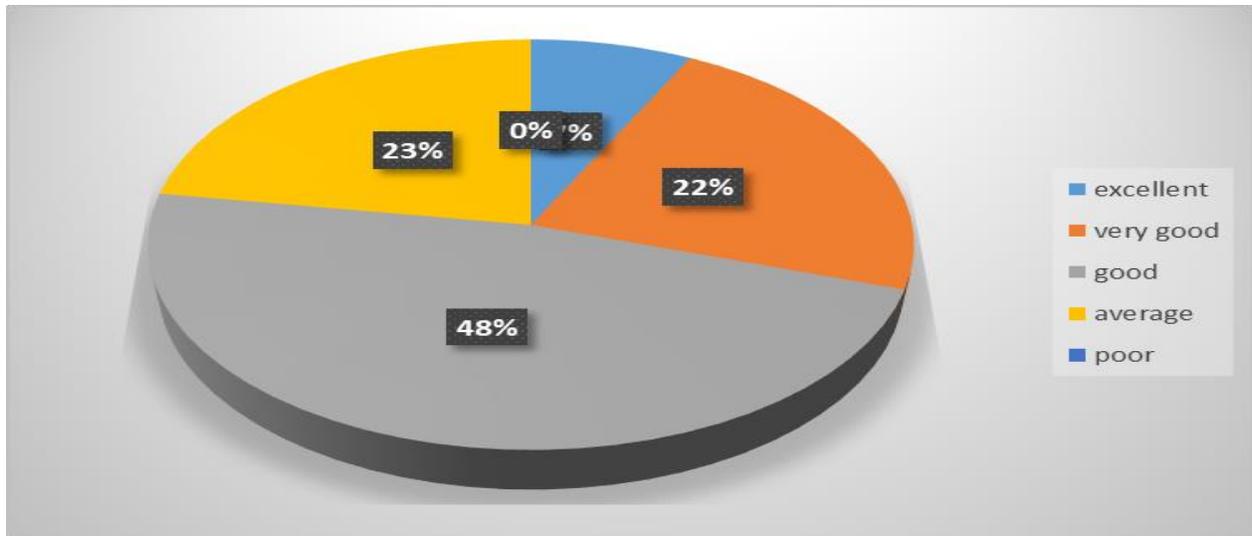
Figure 3. 2 Respondents' Level in English

In this question, we want to examine respondents' level in English. They were asked to indicate their level in English. As shown in the table, we notice that (48%) claim that their English level is good. Other respondents with a percentage of (22%) claim their level is average. Equal percentage of respondents with (22%) claim that they have a very good level in English, whereas only (8%) claim that their level is very good, and none of them mention that their level is poor. These results indicate that most of the students' levels are good.

Q3: Do you find yourself a good speaker?

Table 3. 3 Respondents' Views on their Speaking Ability

Option	Frequency	%
Yes	20	50%
No	20	50%
Total	40	100%
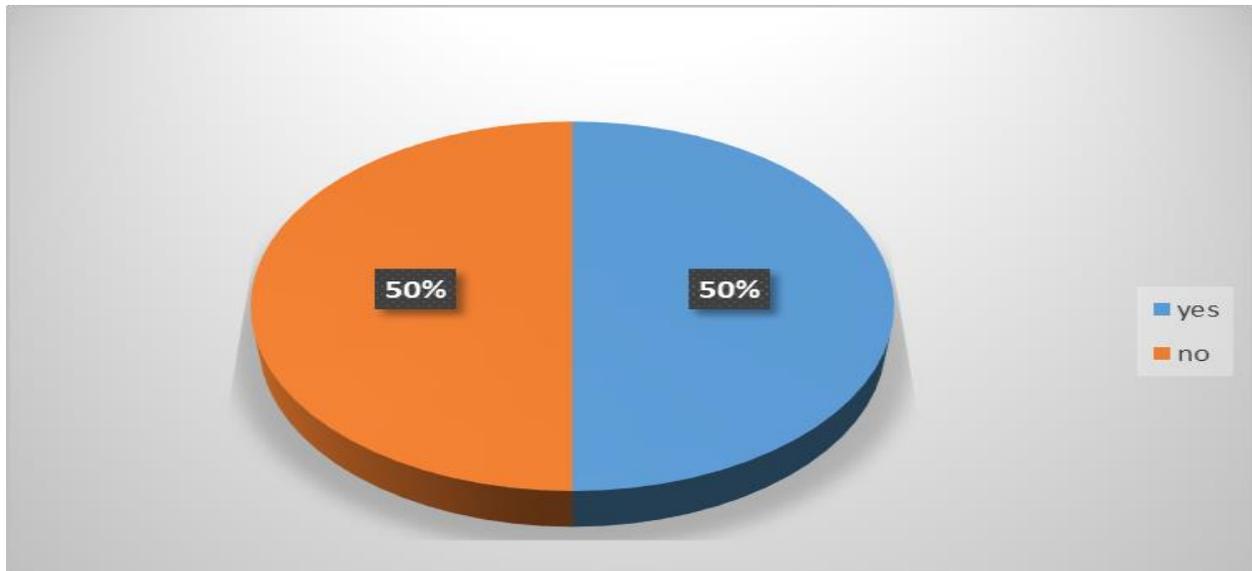
Figure 3. 3 Respondents' Views on their Speaking Ability

The aim of this question is to check respondents' speaking ability. From the table, we can notice that twenty students (20) representing (50%) of the respondents claim that they are good English speakers. The same number of students (20), representing (50%) claim that they are not good speakers. These results indicate that students need to develop their speaking skill. They have to practice speaking as much as possible to ameliorate their speaking ability.

Q 4: Do you face any difficulties while trying to speak in English?

Table 3. 4 Respondents' Difficulties While Speaking English

Option	Frequency	%
Yes	30	75%
No	10	25%
Total	40	100%
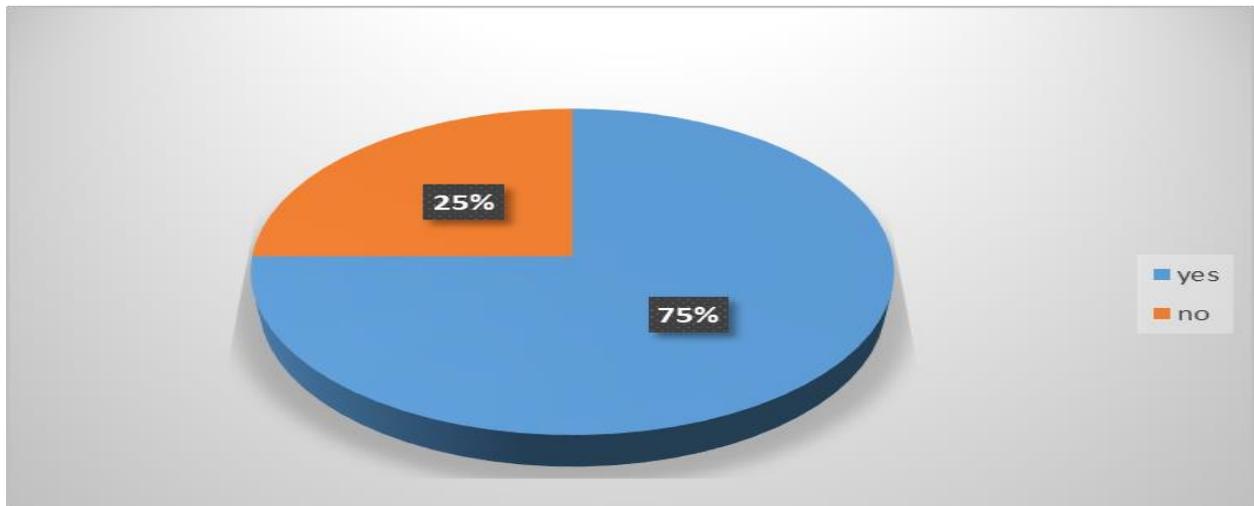
Figure 3. 4 Respondents' Difficulties While Speaking English

The aim of this question is to determin respondents' speaking difficulities. They were asked to answer by "yes" if they face difficulties or by "no" if they do not. The majority of students (75%) chose "yes" while (25%) answered by "no" this indicates that students do not master the speaking skills, and they do not speak fluently. Moreover, speaking is regarded difficult may be due to the lack of practice or the lack of motivation.

Q5: Do you feel yourself a fluent speaker?

Table 3. 5 Respondents' Views on Being a Fluent Speaker

Option	Frequency	%
Yes	22	54%
No	19	46%
Total	40	100%
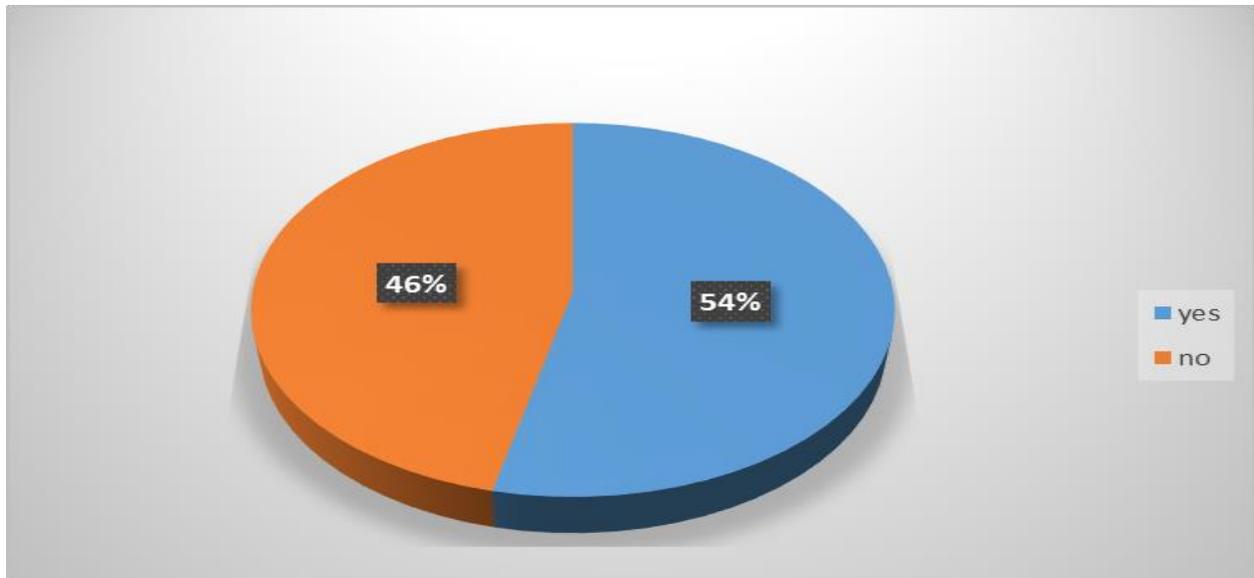
Figure 3. 5 Respondents' Views on Being A Fluent Speaker

The aim of this question is to see whether respondents obtain fluency in their speaking or not. As the table shows, respondents percentage of (54%) claim that they are fluent speakers. However, the other respondents with a percentage of (46%) claim that they are not fluent. That is to say, the majority of respondents possess a good fluency and consider themselves as a fluent speakers.

Q6: How do you find your level of fluency?

Table 3. 6 Respondents' Level in Fluency

Option	Frequency	%
Excellent	2	5%
Very good	6	15%
Good	27	67%
Poor	5	13%
Total	40	100%
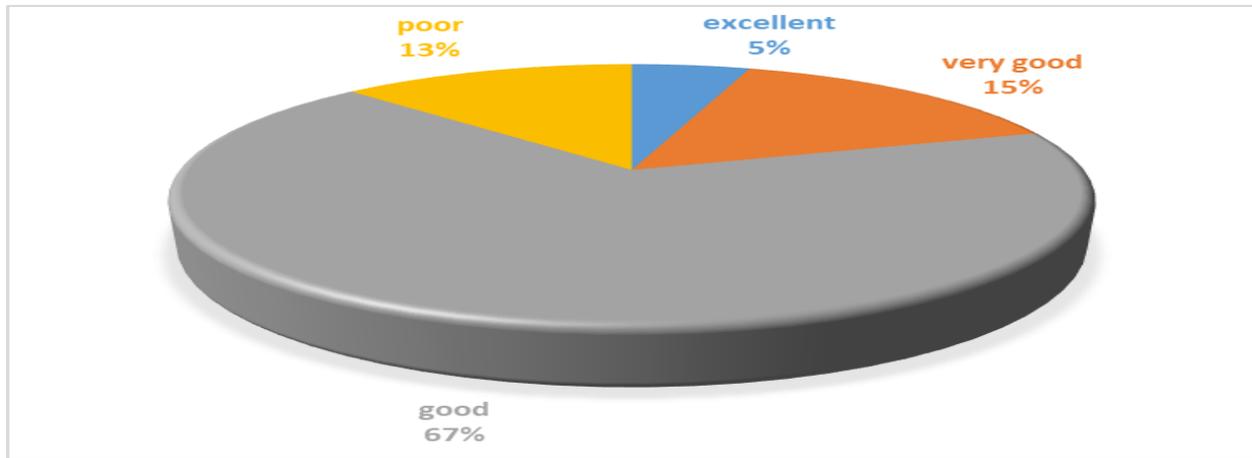
Figure 3. 6 Respondents' Level in Fluency

In this question, the aim is to know the students' level of fluency. The students were invited to evaluate their fluency level. The majority of respondents (67%) claimed that their level is good. (15%) of the respondents claimed their level to be very good while (13%) of the respondents claimed that they had a poor level. However, only (5%) of respondents considered themselves as excellent speakers. These results indicate that the majority of students have a good level of fluency, and only a few are excellent.

Q7: Which of the following is the main problem that hinders your speaking fluency?

Table 3. 7 The Problems that Hinder Students' Fluency

Option	Frequency	%
Frequent use of mother tongue	5	10%
Lack of speaking	23	57%
Fear from the Feedback	4	10%
None of them	9	23%
Total	40	100%
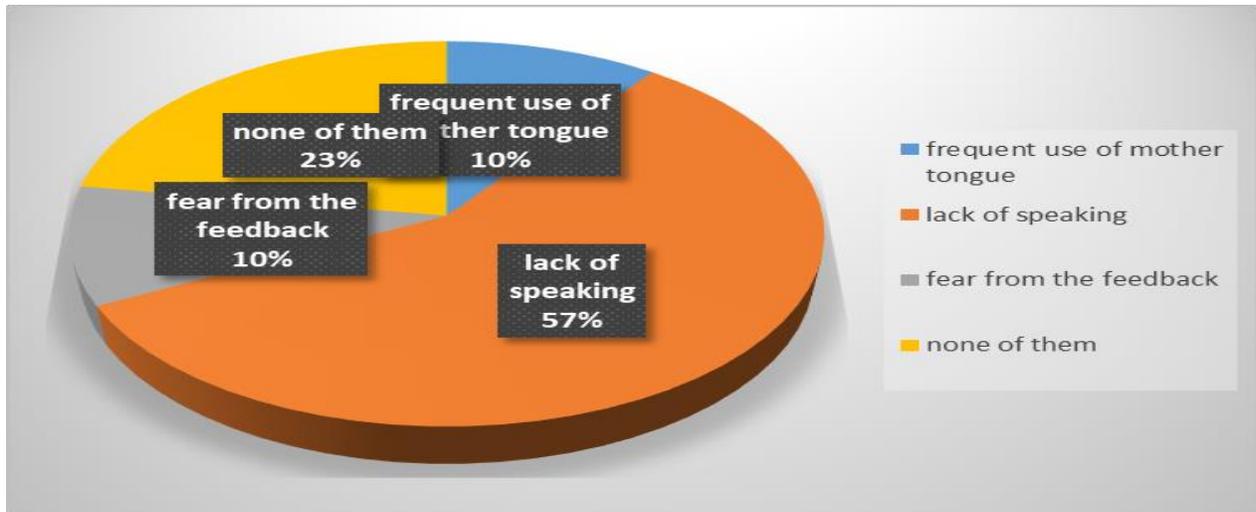
Figure 3. 7 The Problems that Hinder Students' Fluency

The aim of this question is to see the difficulties that the respondents face. The table clearly shows that (57%) of students considered the lack of speaking as the main problem that hindered them from speaking fluently. However, (10%) of the respondents regarded the fear from the feedback and frequent use of the mother tongue as the salient factors behind their lack of fluency. On the other hand, (23%) found that none of these reasons responsible for their fluency problems. The results indicate the lack of speaking is the main problem. The results also indicate that speaking activities are not used in the class.

Q8: Do you like to work in groups in the classroom?

Table 3. 8 Respondents' Preference to Work in Groups

Option	Frequency	%
Yes	28	70%
No	12	30%
Total	40	100%
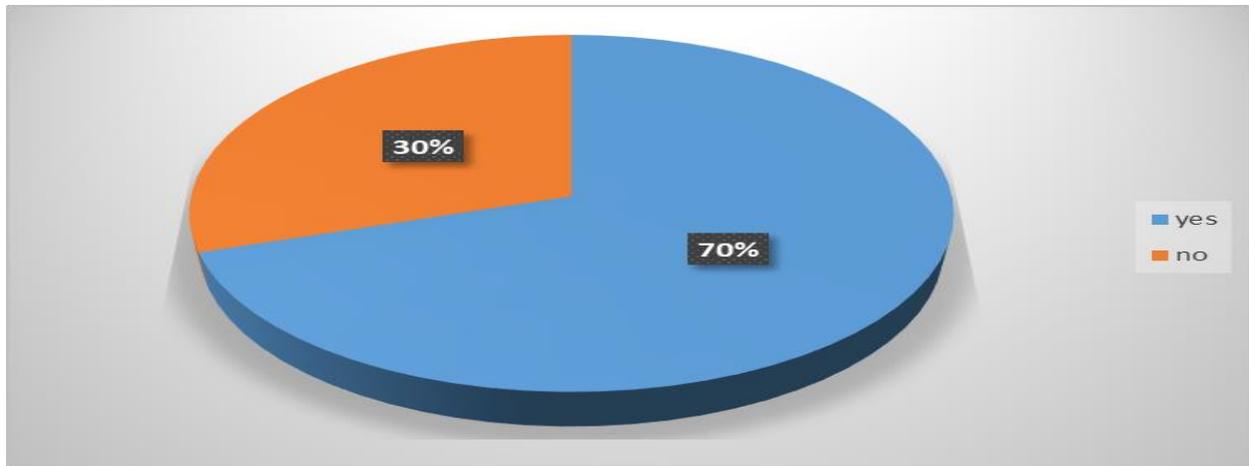
Figure 3. 8 Respondents' Preference to Work in Groups

The aim of this question is to see the respondents' views toward working in groups. From the table above, we can notice that the majority of student's (70%) answered by "yes." It means that they like to work in groups. On the other hand, (30%) answered by "no". The findings display that group work is the most favorite activity for most of the students. The result indicates that the majority of respondents prefer to work in groups, i.e., they like working with each other in a collaborative enjoyable way.

Q9: What type of activity do you like most while working in small groups?

Table 3. 9 Respondents' Views on the Type of Activity they Like in Small Group Work

Option	Frequency	%
Discussion	16	40%
Games	16	40%
Interview	2	5%
Roleplay	6	15%
Total	40	100%
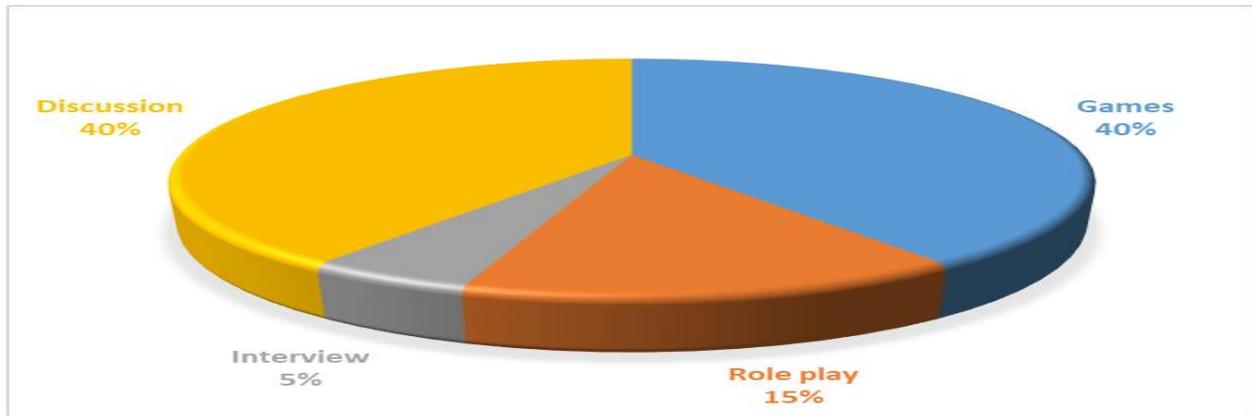
Figure 3. 9 Respondents' Views on the Type of Activity They Like in Small Group Work

In this question, the aim is to see what type of classroom activity that the respondents enjoy the most. They were invited to answer whether they prefer discussions, games, interviews, or role-plays. The aim of this question was to opt for one type of task in preference to another may help to know the kind of instruction students prefer. From the table above, we can notice that (40%) of students liked discussions; (40%) liked games; (15%) preferred role plays; and only (5 %) preferred interview activity. As a result, the researcher indicates that respondents enjoy more when they opt for games activities and discussion because this allows students to share their thoughts and ideas at ease and have fun in the classroom.

Q10: Do you feel afraid while participating in small group discussions?

Table 3. 10 Respondents' Fear to Participate in Small Group Discussion

Option	Frequency	%
Always	4	10%
Sometimes	11	27%
Rarely	13	33%
Never	12	30%
Total	40	100%
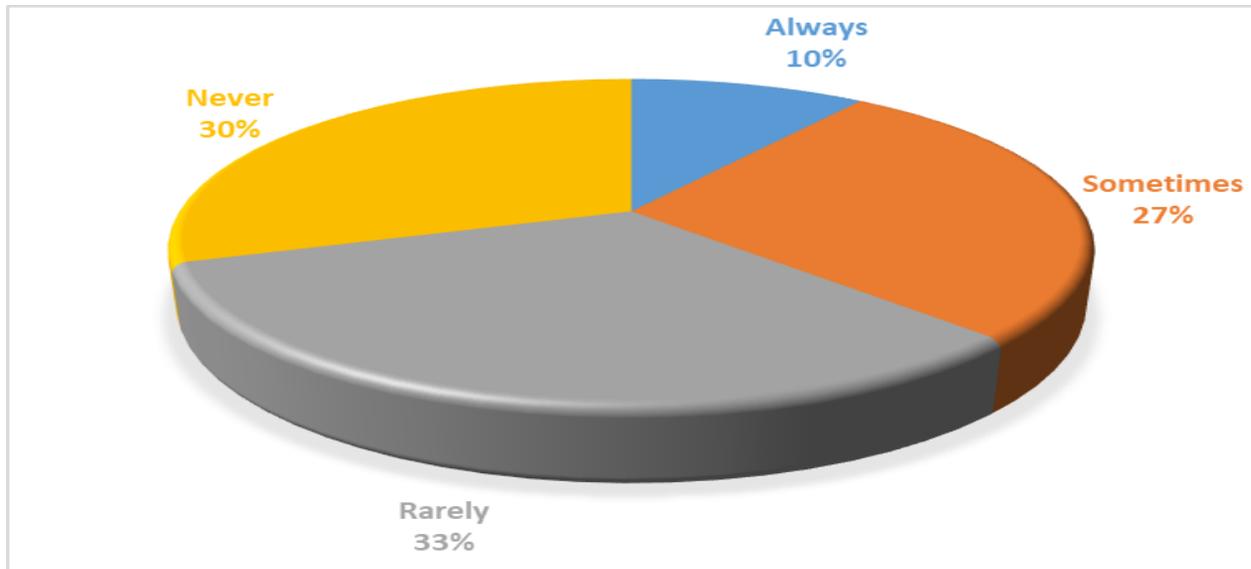
Figure 3. 10 Respondents' Fear to Participate In Small Group Discussion

In this question, the aim is to see if the respondents face any fears that prevent them from participating in the classroom. From the table above, we can notice that (30%) of the respondents answered by "never"; while (33%) responded by "rarely". In addition, (27%) responded by sometimes. Besides , only few students (10%) felt afraid while participating in small groups. This result indicates that the majority of students do not feel afraid while working in groups.

Q11: Is the problem of fear related to?

Table 3. 11 The Causes behind Respondents' Fear

Option	Frequency	%
Lack of language use	24	60%
Lack of knowledge	13	32%
Fear of teacher's Feedback	3	8%
Total	40	100%
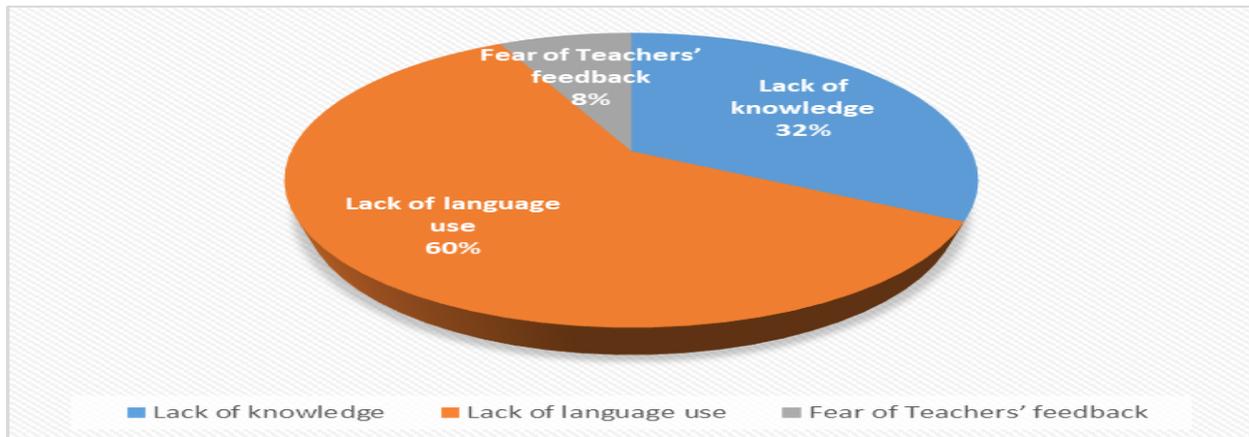
Figure 3. 11 The Causes behind the Respondents' Fear

As an addition to the previous question, the aim here is to closely look to what causes the fears of the respondents. In the table above, we can notice that (60%) of students responded by "lack of language use". The majority of students have a problem with language use. This result indicates that they do not master the language well; therefore, they feel afraid while participating in small groups. On the other hand, (32%) answered by "lack of knowledge" while only a few students (8%) fear their teacher's Feedback. This result indicates that the main problem is the lack of language use.

Q12: What type of atmosphere that exists in your classroom?

Table 3. 12 Respondents' Classroom Atmosphere

Option	Frequency	%
Friendly	24	60%
Neutral	13	32%
Fearful	3	8%

Total	40	100%
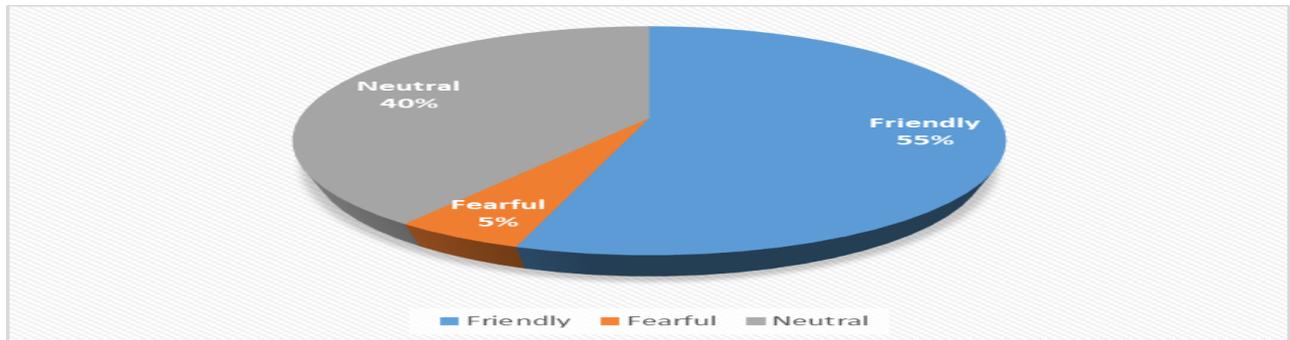
Figure 3. 12 Respondents' Classroom Atmosphere

The aim of this question is to gain an idea about the environment of the classroom and its atmosphere that affect students. From the table above, we can notice that the majority of students (55%) responded by "Friendly" which means that students have an opportunity to communicate and discuss topics together. Other respondents (40%) answered by "neutral" while only (5%) of students claim that their classroom represent "a fearful atmosphere in class". Since this is a small percentage, those respondents may have unexpected difficulties that lack them from having an enjoyable atmosphere, for instance, crowded classroom or noisy classmates. We deduce that students feel an enjoyable atmosphere in their classes so that they can communicate with each other.

Q13: How often do you participate in small group discussions?

Table 3. 13 Respondents' Participation in Small Group Discussion

Option	Frequency	%
Always	5	12%
Sometimes	23	58%
Rarely	12	30%
Never	0	0%

Total	40	100%
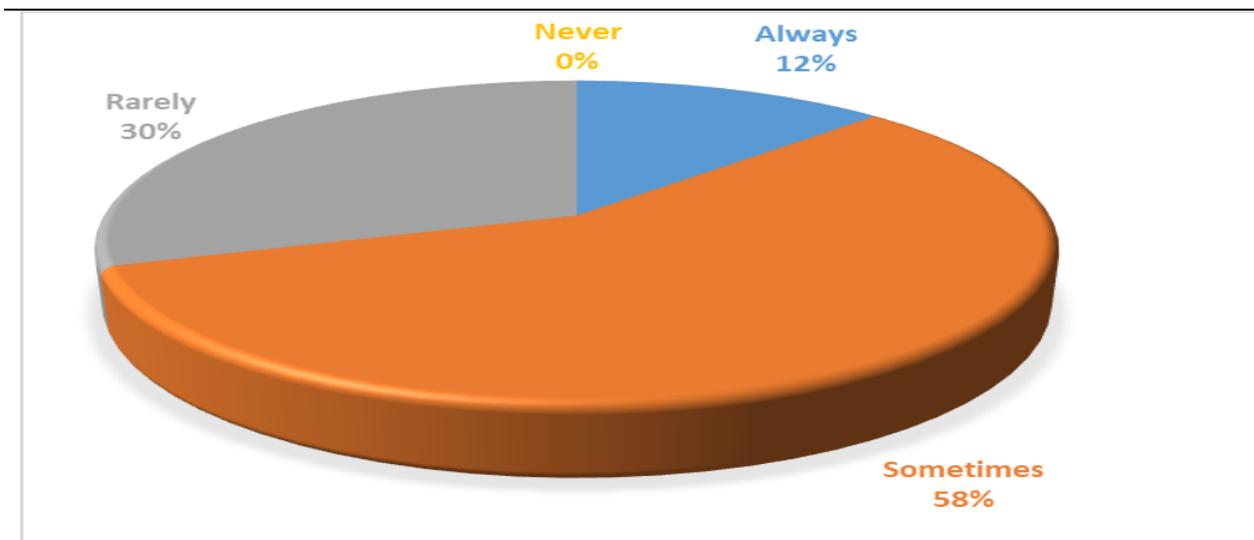
Figure 3. 13 Respondents' Participation in Small Group Discussion

The aim of this question was to investigate the learners' participation in small group discussions. From the table above, we can notice that (12%) responded by "always." They want to ameliorate their performance. However (58%) responded by "sometimes" because they may have no motivation, fear making mistakes, or shyness .For that, we deduce that respondents often participate in the classroom.

Q14: how is the relationship between you and the teacher?

Table 3. 14 Respondents' Views on the Relationship with their Teachers

Option	Frequency	%
Good	23	57%
Distant	5	13%

Neutral	12	30%
Total	40	100%
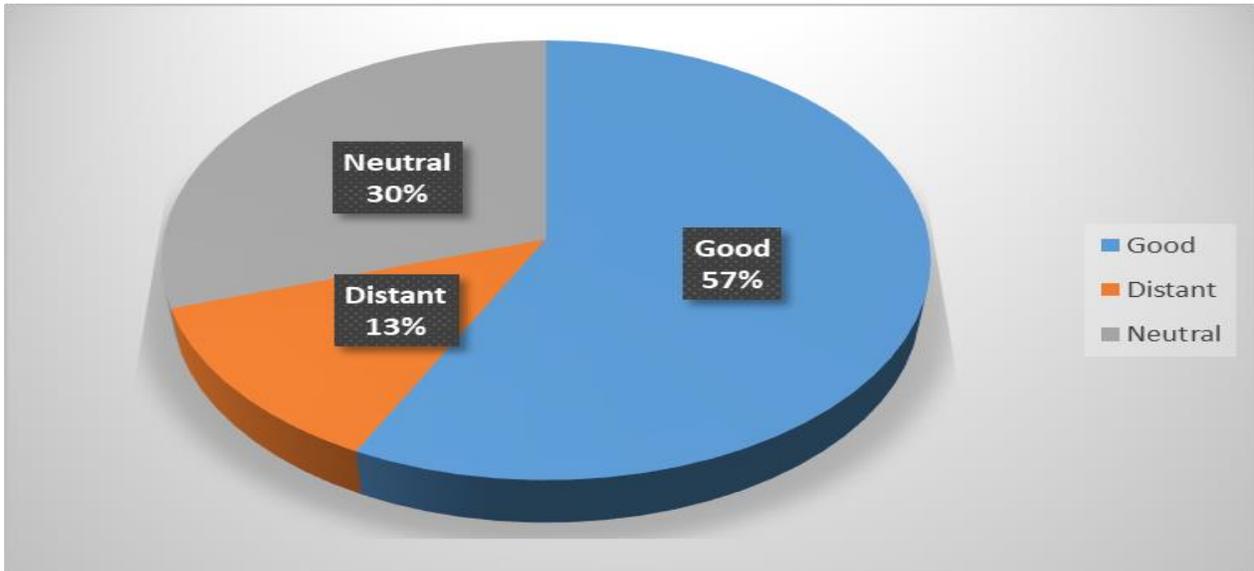
Figure 3. 14 Respondents' views on the relationship with their teachers

The aim of this question is to see how is the relationship between the teacher and students and how that can affect students' learning to speak and participate in the classroom. From the table above, we can notice that most students who represent (57%) declared that the relationship between them and their teachers is good. It means that the teacher is close to the students and act as a guide and motivator which allow students to feel conformable and perform well on the classroom. However, (30%) of them declared their relationship is neutral, and the rest of respondents who represent (13%) declared that it is distant. This may be because the teacher's style of teaching and learners' style of learning are not compatible which lead to the distance between these two parties. The result indicates that the relationship between students and the teacher is positive in general.

Q15: How do you find a small group discussion?

Table 3. 15 Respondents' Attitude towards Small Group Discussion

Option	Frequency	%
Beneficial	36	90%
Non-Beneficial	4	10%
Total	40	100%
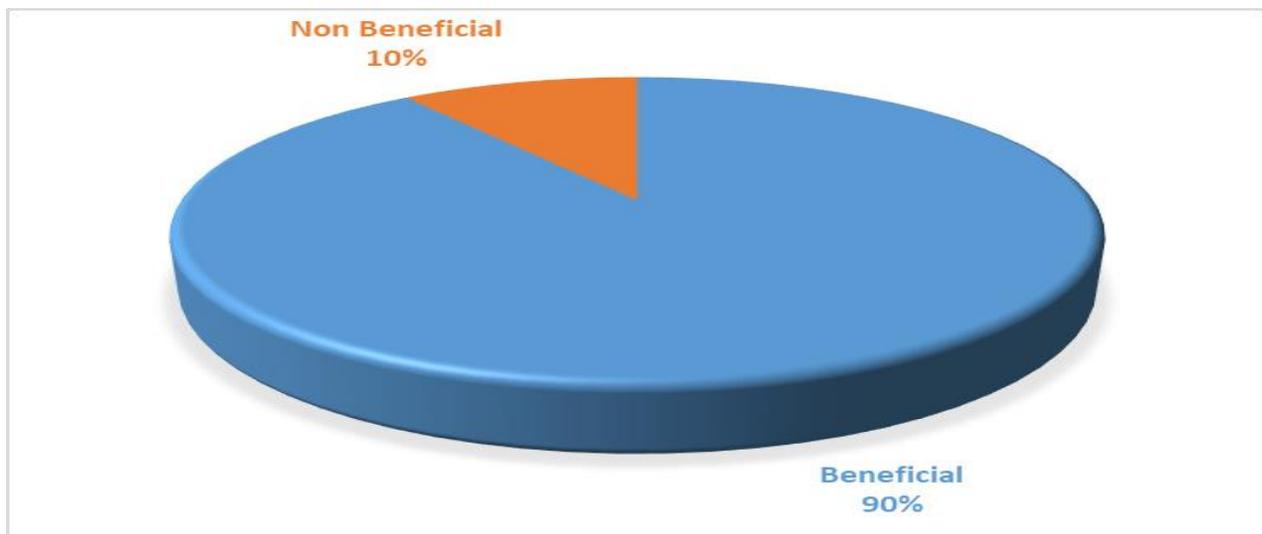
Figure 3. 15 Respondents' Attitude toward Small Group Discussion

This question examines the students 'opinions about the advantages of small group discussions. The table above shows that the majority of learners (90%) responded by "beneficial." That is to say, learners were aware of the benefits of small group discussions on their learning performance. (10%) of the respondents, however, answered by "non beneficial." This may be due to lack of motivation to engage in groups and communication. The results indicate that respondents have a positive attitude toward the use of small group discussion and it has a benefit on students' speaking fluency.

Q16: Do you prefer to discuss topics chosen by?

Table 3. 16 Respondents' Views about Discussing a Topic

Option	Frequency	%
Teacher	16	40%
You	24	60%
Total	40	100%
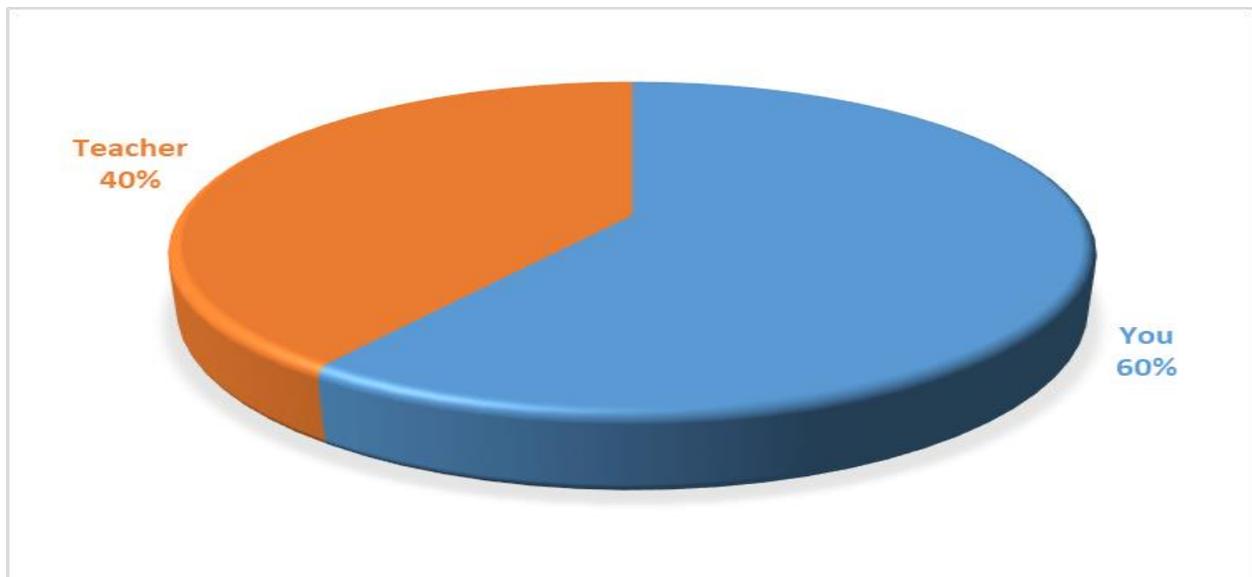
Figure 3. 16 Respondents' Views about Discussing a Topic

The aim of this question is to see respondents' views on who makes the choice of the topic to discuss in the classroom. According to the data in the table (16), we notice that (60%) of the students preferred to choose their topics by themselves. However, (40%) preferred to discuss topics chosen by the teacher. This indicates that students prefer to be given an opportunity to choose their topics and discuss them together.

Q17: How often does your teacher provide you with feedback?

Table 3. 17 Teacher's Feedback

Option	Frequency	%
Always	6	15%
Sometimes	26	65%
Rarely	7	17%
Never	1	3%
Total	40	100%
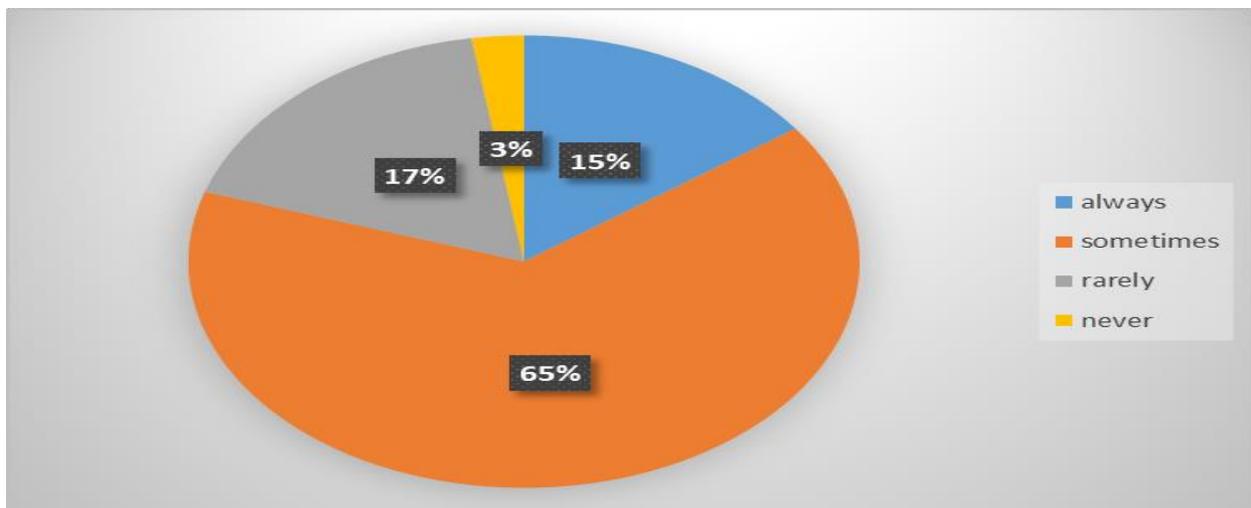
Figure 3. 17 Teacher's Feedback

This question aims to see how often the teacher provides students with feedback and how it may affect them. From the table above, we can notice that the majority of respondents (65%) responded by "sometimes," and (17%) of respondents answered by "rarely" whereas (3%) of respondents answered by "never". Meanwhile, (15%) of respondents declared that their teachers always provide them with feedback. This indicates that the teacher provides students with feedback quiet often.

Q18: Do you think that small group discussions enhance your speaking fluency level?

Table 3. 18 Respondents' Opinions about the Effect of Small Group Discussion on their Fluency

Option	Frequency	%
Yes	32	80%
No	8	20%
Total	40	100%
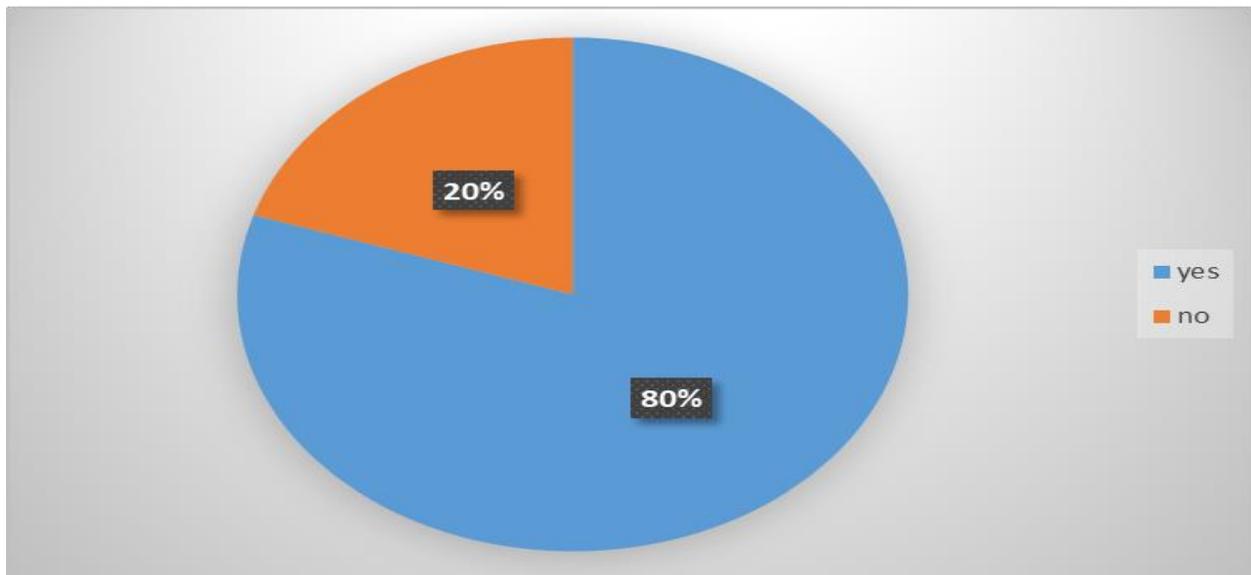
Figure 3. 18 Respondents' Opinions about the Effect of Small Group Discussion on their Fluency

The aim of this question is to investigate respondents' attitude toward the use of small group discussion to develop students' speaking fluency. From the table above, we notice that most of students have positive attitude towards small group discussion as activity, they believe that small group discussion can enhance their speaking fluency level. (80%) said "yes", it means that they have a positive attitudes towards the use of group discussions in the classroom whereas the (20%)

of students said "no". In other words, they believe that small group discussion cannot enhance their speaking fluency. The findings indicate that small group discussion is appreciated by the students as the majority of them held a positive attitude towards it, and think that small group discussion may enhance the level of their speaking fluency.

3.2.2. The Findings of the Teachers' Interview

1. Do you think that small group discussions enhance learners' speaking fluency?

Teacher 01: "Yes, I do."

Teacher 02: " Of course, small group discussion improves the learners' speaking fluency"

Teacher 03: "Yes, I do"

Teacher 04: "Yes, of course"

Teacher 05: "Yes, I think that small group discussion improves the learners' speaking fluency".

In the interview, all the teachers declared that the small group discussion enhances the learners' speaking fluency. They believe that it is beneficial to teach English as a foreign language. The teachers also believe that it is the best activity to enhance fluency.

2. What items of small group discussion have to be encouraged?

Teacher 01: "_ Correct use of vocabulary, _ Organization of ideas, _ The accurate use of Pronunciation"

Teacher 02: "- The topic aims"

Teacher 03: "we should focus on the objectives of learners' participation"

Teacher 04: "_ methods to conduct the discussion"

Teacher 05: "The most important element that is indeed in need to be encouraged is transmitting ideas"

In this question, we noticed different types of answers provided by teachers. Teachers believe in different specific objectives of each item. Teacher 1 declared that the most important items are:

• The accurate use of language vocabulary.

• The accurate use of Pronunciation

• Organization of ideas.

However, Teacher 3 declared that teachers should focus on the objectives of learners' participation. He also insisted on choosing the best methods in order to conduct a discussion session. On the other hand, Teacher 5 encouraged the transformation of ideas. This means encouraging students to interact with each other to share their ideas because learners have different perspectives toward the topic. However, Teacher 2 insisted about the importance of the topic aims. That is to say that, teachers have to verify all objectives of each topic. Finally, Teacher 4 insisted about the importance of the methods that have to be conducted in discussion, which is to say that, the main concern is to use the appropriate methods to manage small group discussion session.

3. What is the appropriate way to encourage learners to engage in small group discussion?

Teacher 01: "By letting learners express themselves freely, _ By taking each one his/her turn".

Teacher 02: "The appropriate way to encourage the learners is to appreciate their thoughts"

Teacher 03: "The appropriate way to encourage the learners to engage in small group discussion is through involving them in their prefered topics"

Teacher 04: "The appropriate way to encourage learners to engage in small group discussion is through the choose of interesting topics".

Teacher 05: "The appropriate way to encourage the learners is by telling them that they are concerned and their opinions are valuable"

In this question, Teacher 1 declared that we should encourage learners to take part in discussions and to let them express themselves freely. However, for the passive and shy students, teachers' role is asking learners to give opinions in a friendly way. On the other hand, Teacher 2 believed that appreciation of the learners' thoughts is the best way to engage learners in small group discussions. Moreover, teacher 3 insisted in involving learners in their preferred topics because it helps them to engage in small group discussion. However, Teacher 4 insisted in choosing interesting topics, that is to say, interesting topics can help learners to engage in small group discussion. Finally, teacher 5 insisted to encourage and appreciate learners' opinions in order to encourage them engaging in small group discussion.

4. Do you think that topics proposed by learners enhance speaking fluency?

Teacher 01: "Sometimes, yes. Learners choose easy topics in which little vocabulary is learnt. They tackle topics they master .Consequently, their speaking fluency is not really improved. That is why it is important to impose certain topics"

Teacher 02: "Yes"

Teacher 03: "Yes, it does .But sometimes learners prefer to talk about topics they are familiar with, and which is not good for them, and will not enhance their speaking fluency"

Teacher 04: "Sometimes."

Teacher 05: "Sometimes."

Some teachers declared that the topics provided by learners might improve their speaking fluency. However, some of them declared that when learners choose their topics, their speaking fluency would not be enhanced, that is why it is important to impose specific challenging topics. In addition, one of them declared that proposed topics enforce the learners 'speaking fluency.

5. What is your aim behind the use of small group discussion?

Teacher 01: "Enhancing learners 'general culture"

Teacher 02: "Share a lot of ideas"

Teacher 03: "To develop learners 'speaking fluency. Enhancing learners' Pronunciation"

Teacher 04: "Interaction between learners. Motivating the learners"

Teacher 05: "Teaching vocabulary and discovering new ideas. Exchanging experience"

In this question, teachers provided us with different answers, which are:

_ Enhancing students 'speaking fluency.

_ Teaching vocabulary and discovering new ideas

_ Ameliorating students' general culture.

_ Exchanging experience.

_ Enhancing learners' Pronunciation.

_ Motivating learners.

_ Reinforce the learners' interaction with each other.

6. Do you provide your students with feedback within or after small group discussion?

Teacher 01: "It depends .In the case of repeated mistakes, feedback is provided within the small group discussion; otherwise feedback is given at the end"

Teacher 02: "I provide a feedback to my learners after any small group discussion"

Teacher 03: "I get used to have within and after small group discussion"

Teacher 04: "It depends to the task."

Teacher 05: "I provide learners with a feedback within and after any small group discussion."

All teachers declared that they provide learners with Feedback within and after any small group discussion.

7. Does your feedback focus on fluency?

Teacher 01: "Yes"

Teacher 02: "Yes"

Teacher 03: "Yes"

Teacher 04: "No"

Teacher 05: "Yes"

In this question, (Teacher1, Teacher2, Teacher3, Teacher5) declared that their Feedback focuses more on fluency. However, T4 declared that his Feedback does not focus on fluency.

3.3.3. Discussion of the Results

3.3.3.1 Discussion of Students' Questionnaire

The analysis of students' questionnaire shows positive response that support the hypothesis. The researcher deduces that students like the English language and they try to improve their level. That is seen in developing their speaking to be productive. In addition, students face some difficulties to speak in the classroom which is due to lack of practicing, absence of motivation and fear of making mistakes.

Furthermore, respondents want to sound as native that is why they want to develop their fluency in English to speak rapidly without making pauses. The respondents stated when that they have a good level in fluency, and to gain fluency the more you speak the more you gain fluency. Moreover, respondents have a clear idea about small group discussion and its importance, they like working collaboratively in a small group because it is fun, enjoyable and comfortable. They speak freely without having any fear and exchange ideas and discus.

Likewise, respondents made it clear that they prefer discussion and games as an activity to adopt in the classroom because they enjoy it more than any other activity, the teacher give the opportunity to students to choose a topic and discus about it. Also, respondents stated that they are not afraid to participate in the classroom but sometimes they feel demotivated or less interested, this can be due to lack of language as students stated.

As a consequence, respondents stated that the relationship between the teacher and students is friendly good relationship, this means the teacher tries to be close to students and provide them with feedback and guide with a positive attitude. Respondents made it clear that small group discussion develop students speaking fluency.

3.3.3.2 Discussion of Teachers' Interview

The teachers' answers show that small group discussion enhances learners' speaking fluency. They insisted about the importance of the accurate use of vocabulary and language

pronunciation. Besides, working in small group discussion affect learners' speaking fluency, and make learners communicate in the right way especially those who have fear and shyness; they find themselves in comfortable situation and can interact and share their ideas with their classmates. According to their experience, this strategy has to be encouraged.

Concerning the learners' proposed topics, they confirmed that their learners benefit from it during oral expression sessions, and their speaking fluency would be enhanced afterwards. Also, they believed that good teachers make good learners because teacher play a major role to improve learners' speaking fluency by making the appropriate atmosphere, and help them with many methods to get the best result. Moreover, all the teachers agree to provide their learners with a feedback, within or after any small group discussion, this strategy is successful to develop learners' speaking fluency. Finally, teachers confirmed that their feedback focuses on fluency most often.

Conclusion

To conclude, the chapter tackled the practical part to test the validity of the hypothesis. From students' questionnaire and teachers' interview it was clear that the findings have a positive result which confirms the role of small group discussion on EFL students speaking fluency.

General Conclusion

In teaching and learning English language, speaking fluency can be taught in various methods, and the present study has dealt with the relationship that exists between speaking fluency and small group discussion. Its main concern was investigating whether the use of small group discussion enhance learners speaking fluency of second year students of English at Biskra University. We hypothesized that if the EFL learners are engaged in small group discussion, their speaking fluency would improve.

The present study is a total of three chapters. The first chapter has attempted to shed the light on the speaking skill in general, and speaking fluency in particular. Fluency was focused on as an indicator of speaking proficiency. However, our main concern was mainly to outline the major definitions and the variations among them, as well as the importance of speaking fluency for the EFL learner. In addition, we delineated the relationship between fluency and teaching English as a foreign language. On the one hand, we demonstrated the activities teachers have used for fluency development. On the other hand, we dealt with some practical instructions for increasing learners' fluency. Finally, we explored the assessment of fluency from two perspectives, namely applied linguistics and psycholinguistics.

The second chapter have shed light on a general overview of small group discussion and its definition, besides its types and its importance in developing the learner's speaking skills. Also, we tried to shed light on how the teacher should prepare his /her lesson to have an effective small group discussion, alongside with mentioning the most effective factors of a good small discussion, and the activities that assist the teacher to manage the small group discussion and to create an enjoyable atmosphere. Finally, we have summed up with the evaluation of small group

discussion to be able assess the success and the failure of the small group discussion in getting the student speak in EFL fluently. In this chapter, we have showed that small group discussion is one of the most valuable teaching strategies that offer EFL students an opportunity to express their ideas freely and without fear.

The third chapter which is the practical part is concerned with the analysis of the obtained results gathered from students' questionnaire, and teachers' interview. The results showed that our hypothesis is confirmed, and there is a strong relationship between small group discussion and speaking fluency. That is to say, most learners like to work in small group discussion. Teachers care about their learners' motivation and try to reduce their fear of speaking fluently by raising their confidence. This work is expected to be beneficial to teachers of oral Expression in order to improve their learners' speaking fluency.

Recommendations

All teachers have a significant role in teaching English as foreign languages. They are sources of information in the classroom. In addition, they adopt an enjoyable environment in the classroom. As for enhancing speaking fluency through small group discussion, the researcher provided several recommendations for learners and teachers, which are as follow:

For Learners:

- Learners should engage as much as possible in a small group discussion to develop their level of fluency.

- Learners have to avoid the use of the mother tongue as much as possible.

- Learners have to be encouraged to talk and should not be afraid of making mistakes.

For Teachers

- Teachers should use small group discussions as an activity to enhance learners' speaking fluency level.

- Teachers should encourage students to talk outside the classroom.

- Teachers should provide lessons in an enjoyable atmosphere.

- Teachers should make students aware of the small group discussion' importance.

- Teachers have to engage all the students in communication.

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APPENDICES

Appendix N° 01:

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students

Dear students:

You are kindly invited to answer this questionnaire which is an attempt to collect data for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. Our study is an attempt to investigate the role of using small group discussion in enhancing EFL learner's speaking fluency. We would be so grateful if you could sincerely provide us with precise, clear, and complete responses. Please tick (√) your answer(s) in the corresponding box (es) and write full statements whenever necessary. Be sure that your answers will remain anonymous and will only be used for this study purposes.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Mr. Hamza Aberkane

Section One: Personal Information

Question 1: Do you like English language?

a- Yes ……………………… ☐

b- No ………………………. ☐

Question 2: is your level of English?

a- Excellent…………………… ☐

b- Very good………………….. ☐

c- Good……………………….. ☐

d- Average…………………….. ☐

e- Poor……………………….. ☐

Section 2: General Overview on Speaking Fluency

Question 3: do you find yourself good speaker?

    a- Yes …………………………. ☐

    b- No………………………….. ☐

Question 4: do you face difficulties while speaking?

    a- Yes…………………………. ☐

    b- No…………………………. ☐

Question 5: do you feel yourself fluent speaker?

    a- Yes, I am fluent speaker……. ☐

    b- No, I am not fluent speaker…. ☐

Question 6: do you find your level of fluency?

    a- Excellent ……………………. ☐

    b- Very good………………….. ☐

    c- Good……………………….. ☐

    d- Poor……………………….. ☐

Question 7: which one of the following is your main problem that hinders the speaking fluency?

    a- Frequent use of mother tongue ☐

    b- Lack of speaking……………. ☐

    c- Fear from the feedback…….. ☐

    d- None of them……………….. ☐

Section Three: General Overview about Small Group Discussion

Question 8: do you like to work in groups in the classroom?

    a- Yes…………………………… ☐

    b- No…………………………… ☐

Question9: what type of activity do you like while working on small groups?

    a- Games……………………… ☐

    b- Role-play…………………… ☐

    c- Interview…………………… ☐

    d- Discussion………………… ☐

Question 10: do you feel afraid while participating in small group discussions?

    a- Always…………………….. ☐

    b- Sometimes………………… ☐

    c- Rarely……………………… ☐

    d- Never……………………… ☐

Question 11: is the problem of fear related to? Explain why

    a- Lack of knowledge………… ☐

    b- Lack of language use. …….. ☐

    c- Fear of Teachers' feedback… ☐ .

Question 12: What type of atmosphere exists in your classroom?

    a- Friendly……………………. ☐

    b- Fearful……………………. ☐

    c- Neutral…………………… ☐

Question 13: How often do you participate in small group discussions?

a- Always………………………. ☐

b- Sometimes………………….. ☐

c- Rarely………………………. ☐

d- Never……………………….. ☐

Question 14: is the relationship between you and teacher?

a- Good…………………………. ☐

b- Distant………………………. ☐

c- Neutral………………………. ☐

Question 15: how do you find small group discussion?

a- Beneficial ……………………. ☐

b- Non-beneficial……………….. ☐

Question 16: do you prefer to discuss topics chosen by?

a- You ………………………….. ☐

b- Teacher………………………. ☐

Question 17: how often does your teacher provide you with feedback?

a- Always……………………….. ☐

b- Sometimes……………………. ☐

c- Rarely……………………….. ☐

d- None………………………….. ☐

Section Four: Students' attitude toward the use of small group discussion in enhancing their speaking fluency

Question 18: Do you think that small group discussions enhance your speaking fluency level ?

a- You ………………………….. □

b- Teacher……………………… □

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix N° 02:

Teacher's interview

Dear teacher,

This interview is designed to gather data about the role of using small group discussion in enhancing learners' speaking fluency, For that, it would be very grateful if you could share with us opinions, ideas and experiences about this subject. You are kindly requested to answer the questions, and all the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and only for an academic purpose.

Question 1 : Do you think that small group discussions enhance learners' speaking fluency ?

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Question 2 : What items of small group discussion have to be encouraged ?

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Question 3 : What is the appropriate way to encourage learners to engage in small group discussion ?

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Question 4 : Do you think that topics proposed by learners enhance speaking fluency ?

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Question 5 : What is you aim behind the use of small group discussion ?

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Question 6 : Do you provide your students with feedback within or after small group discussion ?

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Question 7 : Does your feedback focus on fluency ?

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