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Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English and Literature

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**EFL oral proficiency enhancement through group working educational games.**

**An empirical study on first-year students at MKU of Biskra.**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment to the department of English and Literature

for the requirements of the Master degree in the sciences of language

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# Dedication

*I dedicate my work to my beloved parents* ***"Safia"*** *and* ***"Noureddine"***, *whose constant love, support, and guidance have been the foundation of my journey. Your belief in me has been my driving force, and I am forever grateful for your sacrifices and encouragement.*

*To my caring sister* ***"Belkis"***, *thank you for always standing by my side, offering words of encouragement, and inspiring me to reach for the stars. Your constant support and love have been a source of strength throughout this journey.*

*To my dear brothers* ***"Seifeddine"*** *and* ***"Allaeddine"*** *and his wife* ***"Maissa"***, *may Allah bless them.*

*To all my family numbers especially my dearest aunt* ***"Aicha"***, *who is considered my second mother, thank you for your unconditional love, care, and support throughout my life. Your presence has been a source of strength and inspiration, and I am grateful for your guidance and nurturing.*

*To my best friends* ***"Chiraz"*** *and* ***"Raouia"*** *who have been by my side through thick and thin. Your presence in my life has brought joy, shared experiences, and a strong bond that has made this journey all the more meaningful.*

*Finally, I dedicate my work to the people of Palestine, who have shown incredible resilience, strength, and determination in the face of adversity. Your struggle for justice and freedom serves as a constant reminder of the power of perseverance and the importance of standing up for what is right. Your constant spirit inspires me to seek positive change through education and understanding.*

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# Acknowledgements

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## Abstract

This study aims to improve English as a Foreign Language (EFL) oral proficiency by group working educational games. It involves conducting a study on first-year students at the University Mohammed Kheider of Biskra. It seeks to implement the use of group working activities in EFL, including discussions, presentations, projects, and games. The data was collected through online and written questionnaires distributed to the students, with a population of 683 students, and 73 of them answered the questionnaires. The data was analysed to assess the impact of these activities on enhancing oral language skills. The study findings demonstrate that the use of group working educational games in EFL has a positive impact on improving oral language proficiency among students. They significantly benefited from these activities in enhancing their ability to speak English. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations of the study, such as the small sample size and the specific university context. Thus, caution should be exercised when applying these findings in other contexts. This study contributes to the existing benefits of group working activities in enhancing oral language skills for EFL students. It highlights the importance of integrating cooperative activities in language classrooms to improve oral proficiency.

*Key-words:* **Biskra University, First-year EFL, Group work, Speaking skill.**

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## General Introduction

**Introduction**

The importance of oral proficiency in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) cannot be underestimated. Effective communication skills are crucial for language learners to succeed in various real-life situations. This research proposal aims to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing group working educational games to enhance EFL first-year students' oral proficiency at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra.

In recent years, educational games have gained recognition as an engaging and interactive teaching tool. By incorporating educational games into language learning, students can develop their linguistic abilities while enjoying a dynamic and collaborative learning environment. Group working educational games promote active participation, critical thinking, and effective communication, making them a promising approach to enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency.

**Statement of the Problem**

Effective oral communication skills are essential for EFL learners, yet many students face difficulties in expressing themselves fluently and confidently. First-year students at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra often encounter challenges related to limited vocabulary, grammar usage, and overall oral fluency. These challenges can hinder their language acquisition and impede their progress. Therefore, there is a need to explore innovative strategies, such as group working educational games, to address these issues and improve EFL students' oral proficiency.

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**Significance of the Study**

This study holds several significant implications for EFL language teaching and learning:

**Research Gap**

Limited research has focused specifically on the use of group working educational games for enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency. This study aims to address this research gap by investigating the effectiveness of these games in a specific context, Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra. The findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on effective strategies for improving oral proficiency in EFL contexts.

**Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of group working educational games in enhancing EFL first-year students' oral proficiency at MKU of Biskra. The specific objectives include:

- Identifying the specific difficulties faced by first-year EFL learners in oral proficiency.

- Examining the impact of group working educational games on EFL learners' oral proficiency.

- Assessing the students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of group working educational games for oral proficiency enhancement.

**Research Questions**

This research aims to answer the following questions:

**RQ1:** What are the specific difficulties faced by first-year EFL learners in oral proficiency?

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**RQ2:** How can group working educational games contribute to enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency?

**Hypothesis**

**H1:** The implementation of group working educational games will lead to a significant improvement in EFL learners' oral proficiency.

**Research  Methodology**

To achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions, a quantitative data collection method will be employed. This will involve using a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The questionnaire will be designed to gather students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of group working educational games for oral proficiency enhancement.

**Population and Sampling**

The research will focus on first-year students at MKU of Biskra who are enrolled in the EFL program. The total population of first-year EFL students at MKU of Biskra is approximately 683 students.

A convenience sampling technique will be used to select participants for the study. The sample size will consist of 73 participants, which represents 10,9% of the total population. The participants will be randomly selected from the first-year EFL student population.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected from the online questionnaire will be analysed using quantitative techniques. Statistical analysis will be applied to summarize the data, identify patterns, and examine relationships. This analysis will provide valuable insights into participant

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performance and perceptions, allowing us to draw evidence-based conclusions about the variables under investigation.

## Literature Review

The following literature review provides an overview of previous research related to the use of educational games for language learning and the enhancement of oral proficiency in EFL contexts.

### Educational Games in Language Learning

Numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of integrating educational games into language learning environments. Educational games have been found to enhance learners' motivation, engagement, and overall language proficiency. For example, Chen and Cheng (2019) conducted a study exploring the effects of educational games on EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition and found that games facilitated vocabulary retention and usage. Similarly, Li and Chen (2018) investigated the impact of educational games on EFL learners' reading comprehension and reported significant improvements in learners' reading abilities.

### Group Working in Educational Games

Group working activities within educational games provide learners with opportunities to collaborate, negotiate meaning, and practice their oral skills in an interactive and supportive environment. Research has shown that collaborative learning promotes language development, as learners engage in discussions, negotiate meaning, and provide feedback to one another (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). Additionally, group working activities foster the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for effective communication (Li & Xiong, 2019).

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**Oral Proficiency Enhancement through Educational Games**

While the effectiveness of educational games in improving various language skills has been widely acknowledged, limited research has specifically explored their potential in enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency. However, some studies have indicated positive outcomes. For instance, Chen (2017) conducted a study on the use of educational games to improve EFL learners' speaking skills and found that learners demonstrated increased fluency, accuracy, and confidence in oral communication. Similarly, Liu and Huang (2019) investigated the effects of educational games on EFL learners' pronunciation and reported significant improvements in learners' pronunciation accuracy and intonation.

# Chapter One: Group Work

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## Chapter One: Group Work

## Introduction

Group work is a collaborative approach where individuals come together to achieve a common goal. It is commonly observed in educational settings, and its benefits have been widely recognized. In this document, we will explore the definition of group work, its advantages and disadvantages, different types of group work, relevant theories, and conditions for its effectiveness. By understanding the dynamics of group work, educators can create engaging learning environments that foster active participation, critical thinking, and social development among students.

## Definition of group work

Group work refers to the collaborative effort of two or more individuals working together to accomplish a shared task, often observed in educational settings. Various researchers have provided definitions for group work. Johnson and Johnson (1994) in their definition, a small group comprises two or more individuals who engage with each other. These individuals rely on each other and establish their identities within the group, which is also perceived by others as their belonging. They share common norms and engage in interlocking roles. Furthermore, they mutually influence one another, derive satisfaction from group participation, and work towards shared objectives (p. 13).

In other words, it is described as involving a small group where members interact, depend on one another, identify with the group, adhere to shared norms, assume specific roles, influence each other, find the group rewarding, and work toward common goals. In

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simpler terms, group work involves students collaborating to complete tasks, each fulfilling their role diligently to achieve successful outcomes.

According to Bhatia and Solanki (2012), group work is used to be defined as "pupils who working together as a group or a team " or just "students working together in small groups" (p. 2). So, it can be defined as students working collectively in small groups or teams.

Vidal (2004) adds the simple term of group work as "a spirit of communication, cooperation, coordination and commonly understood procedures "(p. 2). In addition, Vidal emphasizes the importance of communication, cooperation, coordination, and shared procedures in group work.

Group work helps students to develop social, communicative, and critical thinking skills, it helps them to raise their motivation and interest in the classroom (Konopka, 1963).

Engaging in group activities facilitates language practice through information exchange and collaborative learning, as highlighted by Ur (2000): "In group work, learners perform a learning task through small group interaction. It is a form of learner activation that is of particular value in the practice of oral fluency; learners in class that is divided into five groups gets five times as many opportunities to talk as in full - class organization" (p.232). This approach not only enhances oral fluency but also provides learners with multiple opportunities to participate actively in discussions.

Furthermore, group work has been shown to improve learning outcomes, promote learner responsibility and creativity, and establish an interactive classroom environment where students actively engage with the teacher and peers through listening, interpreting, and discussing together.

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# Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Work

**Advantages of Group Work**

A considerable number of experts have talked about why group work is great. Long and Richards (1987) say that working in groups helps you learn to be patient, listen well, and get helpful feedback from your teachers. Also, Vidal (2004) thinks it helps you think better, understand different viewpoints, and feel more confident.

Group work significantly enhances students' engagement and participation within the classroom milieu, facilitating the mitigation of apprehension and stress while fostering uninhibited self-expression. As suggested by Ur (1981), group work offers several benefits, including increased participation and motivation among students. Reserved individuals often feel more comfortable expressing themselves within a peer group setting. Additionally, collaborative interactions within small groups enhance communication and engagement (1981, p. 12).

According to Brown (2007, pp. 224-226), the benefits of engaging in group work can be summarized as follows:

- Group work facilitates interactive learning.

- Group work fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment, encouraging learners to take responsibility and develop autonomy.

Additionally, Burke (2011, p. 88) lists six advantages of group work:

1. Groups have more ideas and knowledge, so they can solve problems better.

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2. Groups come up with more creative solutions because different people bring different ideas.

3. Talking about things in a group helps everyone remember and understand things better.

4. When everyone works together on a decision, they feel happier and more involved.

5. Group work shows people how they come across to others and helps them understand themselves better.

6. Employers really like it when people can work well in teams.

Mello (1993, pp. 253-259) also says there are five good things about group work, like learning how groups work, doing better on projects, getting better at talking to people, hearing different opinions, and getting ready for work (Gatfield 1999, p. 366).

These reasons show how working in groups can make a big difference in school and later in your career.

**Disadvantages of Group Work**

Despite the benefits of group work, several researchers have highlighted some drawbacks. Nolasco and Arthur (1986) point out those students sometimes feel that teachers use group work as a way to avoid their teaching responsibilities, instead shifting all the work onto the students.

Another issue with group work is that some students prefer to work alone rather than with their peers. Additionally, forming groups can be time-consuming for teachers and may result in increased noise levels in the classroom. Moreover, it's challenging for teachers to manage multiple groups simultaneously. Lastly, teachers lacking experience in group work implementation may struggle to achieve favorable outcomes (Harmer, 2005).

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# Types of Group Work

Davis (1993, p. 147-148) identifies three main types of group work: informal learning groups, formal learning groups, and study teams.

## 1. Informal Learning Groups

In this type of group work, students collaborate for various durations, whether it is a few minutes, a few hours, or the entire session. Informal groups are utilized to discuss lecture content, solve problems, or address questions raised during the lecture. They serve to enhance the value of tasks, foster a pleasant and supportive atmosphere, and aid students in understanding the material (Davis, 1993).

## 2. Formal Learning Groups

Formal learning groups are structured to complete specific tasks within a single session or over a week. Students work together in these groups with the aim of saving time, completing assignments efficiently, and achieving satisfactory outcomes (Davis, 1993).

## 3. Study Teams

Study teams are long-term groups formed to provide ongoing support and motivation to students throughout the semester. They collaborate to accomplish projects or assignments, offering mutual encouragement and assistance (Davis, 1993).

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## Theories of Group Work

Group work is commonly associated with social learning theories, as discussed by Vygotsky (1962) and Piaget (1932). These theories highlight the significance of problem-solving activities and discussions to facilitate social interaction.

### Vygotsky Perspective

Vygotsky (1962) emphasizes the importance of collaboration in learning. He suggests, "Learning activates various developmental processes that occur only when the child interacts with others in their environment and cooperates with peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90). This implies that a child's cultural development is heavily influenced by social interactions. MacCaferty et al. (2006) elaborate, "According to Vygotsky, actively guiding learning plays a crucial role in the cognitive development of individuals and the advancement of human culture. Vygotsky termed the theoretical concept that facilitates this process as the zone of proximal development" (p. 11).

Vygotsky introduces the concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), which represents the gap between what a child can learn independently and what they can learn with the guidance of others. Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as "the difference between the actual level of development as determined by problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined by problem-solving under adult supervision or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 11). This concept underscores the importance of social interaction for learners, as interactions enable the sharing of information, construction of understanding, acquisition of new ideas, functions, structures, and development of cognitive skills.

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**Piaget Perspective**

Piaget posits that children construct their own knowledge and understandings through interactions with their surroundings, gaining insights into how the world operates. Piaget's theory (1932) is highlighted by Gillies and Ashaman (2003), who emphasize its significance in group learning. They argue that "interacting with peers is a primary catalyst for change because children express their ideas openly. They communicate directly with one another in ways that are easily understood" (p. 12).

# Conditions for Effective Group Work

Burke (2011, pp. 89-93) identifies five essential factors for effective group work: group size, group assignment, group monitoring, teaching students, and evaluation.

## 1. Group Size

Davis (1993, p. 151) suggests that "groups of four or five members work best. Larger groups decrease each member's opportunity to participate actively". Larger groups, consisting of more than six members, may lead to problems such as lack of motivation and interest, resulting in students not having sufficient opportunity to contribute or fulfill their responsibilities. Wright and Louwson (2005, pp. 122-135) note that group work in larger classes can have advantages, as it encourages greater participation and fosters a comfortable learning environment.

## 2. Assigning a Group

Assigning groups is another crucial factor for successful group work, with options including random selection, teacher selection, or student selection. Random selection involves the teacher calling out names randomly from a list, particularly in larger classes to save time. Teacher selection, more suitable for smaller classes, allows instructors to consider factors like age, gender, and academic levels when forming groups (Connery, 1988). Student

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selection, where learners form their own groups, is common at Mila University, but research suggests that "groups assigned by instructors tend to perform better than self-selected groups" (Felder and Brent, 2001, as cited in Burke, 2011, p. 90). However, Cooper (2001, p. 1-2) suggests that self-selected groups may spend more time discussing personal stories and problems, leading to certain disadvantages.

## 3. Teaching Students

Effective teaching greatly influences learning outcomes, with teachers actively participating in group activities. Richards and Rodgers (2001) believe that "the teacher must turn around the class helping students, giving feedback, encouraging the group to solve its own problems" (p.199). It's important for teachers to recognize that many students may be unfamiliar with group work and require guidance, feedback, and correction of mistakes (Davis, 1993).

## 4. Monitoring the Group Process

Davis (1993, p. 152) suggests that creating a plan of action can enhance the effectiveness of group work. This plan should outline each student's responsibilities and tasks, with the teacher meeting with each group personally to discuss the plan. Checkpoints should be established for long-term tasks, allowing the teacher to assess progress and provide guidance. Davis also advises, "If the task spans several weeks, you will want to establish check points with the groups. Ask groups to turn in outlines or drafts or to meet with you" (Davis, 1993). In cases where groups encounter issues such as lack of motivation or conflicts, it may not be beneficial to dissolve the group.

## 5. Evaluation

Evaluation of the group process is essential. According to Burke (2011), students should assess their group's effectiveness by listing contributions, evaluating the process, and

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identifying what worked and what didn't. This assessment enables instructors to improve future group projects (p. 92).

This assessment enables instructors to evaluate the effectiveness of group projects and apply the most suitable methods for future endeavours (Burke, 2011, p. 92).

## Group Work Activities

Group work activities play a crucial role in developing students' speaking skills, as they provide ample opportunities for practicing speaking. As Lightbown and Spada (1999) point out, "pair and group activities are implicit in the communicative approach to language teaching, as it focuses not only on the understanding of the structural elements of a language, but also on the role of the social interaction and language use in learning the language" (p. 92). Engaging in group activities helps students build self-esteem and confidence, thus motivating them to achieve successful outcomes. This study focuses on role-plays, problem solving, and discussions, which are commonly used activities at the University of Biskra.

### Role play

Role-playing activities are highly beneficial in university settings as they enhance learning outcomes, such as educational role play. Many students appreciate these activities because they often feel hesitant to speak up in class. However, role-play activities encourage participation and discussion, helping students speak without fear of making mistakes or facing criticism. Additionally, they create an enjoyable atmosphere for learning. This technique is widely used in classrooms and provides students with diverse experiences, allowing them to learn new functions and expand their vocabulary. Ultimately, these experiences contribute to students speaking more fluently and accurately (Ladousse, 1987).

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Qing (2011) defines role-play as "the projection of real-life situations with social activities" (p. 37). Role plays provide students with the opportunity to engage in both real-life and imaginary scenarios (Klippel, 1984), allowing them to immerse themselves in various situations and enhance their understanding of social interactions.

Thornbury (2005) states that "Role plays involve the adaptation of another 'persona' as when the student pretends to be an employer interviewing a job applicant or celebrities mingling at a party" (p. 98).

Role play activities empower hesitant students to express their opinions freely. Dickson (1981: 382) claims that "learners say what they want to say, not what someone has told them to say." These activities enable students to engage in simulated real-life situations and develop their speaking skills and confidence.

**Problem Solving**

Barker and Gaut (2002: 160) define problem-solving as follows: "a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing the information, and making a decision based on their findings."

According to this definition, problem-solving involves collaboration among individuals to address challenges. This process entails gathering information about the problem, analyzing it, and making decisions based on their findings. During problem-solving activities, learners strive to find solutions to various issues based on their understanding. For instance, the teacher may initiate a discussion on a particular topic, such as a social problem, and invite students to propose potential solutions.

**Discussion**

Discussion occurs when students exchange ideas and opinions about a given topic in the classroom with their teacher. This activity is particularly useful in oral expression lessons,

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and many students find it beneficial for developing their speaking skills. For example, the teacher may initiate a discussion on a social issue like divorce, prompting students to suggest potential solutions. These discussions can extend over one session or multiple sessions. Another instance of discussion may occur after a short research presentation, allowing students to share their thoughts, opinions, and questions.

According to Dillon (1983, p. 51), "discussion is a rubric, too, covering various activities in which students and teachers discuss what they do not know." Engaging in discussions helps students enhance their speaking abilities, make quick decisions, and justify their answers without fear of criticism from their peers. This supportive environment is one of the primary reasons why many teachers at the University of Biskra incorporate discussions into their teaching practices.

In summary, group work activities, including discussion, are highly beneficial for students as they foster responsibility, interaction, capability, and comfort. Moreover, these activities play a significant role in improving students' speaking skills.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, group work holds great potential as a valuable educational approach that facilitates student learning and development. Through collaboration and interaction, students can enhance their social skills, critical thinking abilities, and motivation. The advantages of group work include the generation of diverse ideas, the opportunity for creative problem-solving, improved understanding and retention of information, increased self-awareness, and the development of teamwork skills highly valued in professional settings. However, it is essential to acknowledge the potential drawbacks of group work, such as individual preferences for working alone and the challenges faced by teachers in managing multiple groups effectively. By considering various factors, including group size, assignment,

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monitoring, teaching strategies, and evaluation, educators can create optimal conditions for successful group work experiences. Overall, group work offers a promising avenue for educational practitioners to create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that foster active student participation and meaningful learning outcomes.

# Chapter Two: The Speaking Skill

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## Chapter Two: The Speaking Skill

## Introduction

In this chapter, we will explore the factors that influence the speaking skills of students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It is important to understand these factors as they can significantly impact students' ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language. Throughout this chapter, we will delve into the psychological barriers that students often face, such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. By examining these factors and their implications, we can gain insights into how educators can create supportive learning environments and implement strategies to enhance students' speaking skills.

## Communicative language teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach aimed at developing students' ability to communicate effectively and fluently both in the classroom and in real-life interactions. It's widely regarded as one of the most significant and practical theories in language education today (Savignon, 1987; Savignon, 2002). CLT offers teachers and learners a wide range of flexible methods and opportunities (Kennedy, 2002). According to Hymes (1972), the goal for language teachers is to cultivate communicative competence, which involves understanding language structures, social norms related to language, and using language appropriately in different contexts.

Canale and Swain (1980) outlined four key components of communicative competence:

1. Grammatical competence.
2. Sociolinguistic competence.

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3. Strategic competence.

4. Discourse competence.

Grammatical competence focuses on the accuracy of language use, including vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. Sociolinguistic competence emphasizes using language appropriately in various social situations. Discourse competence involves effectively combining phrases and sentences in conversation. Strategic competence pertains to the ability to manipulate language to achieve communication goals (Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983). Walter in Ulviana (2011) further elaborates on these skills, highlighting the importance of using language appropriately across different contexts.

## The Speaking Skill

Speaking, as described by Bailey (2002), is the "...productive aural/oral skill, consisting of generating structured verbal expressions to convey meaning" (p.124). According to the Oxford Advanced Dictionary (1990), speaking involves conveying views, emotions, and ideas through verbal communication (p.58). Gebhard (1996, p.169) added that "speaking is one of two productive skills in language teaching. It is a process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal or oral form". Speaking is fundamentally an interactive process of constructing meaning, encompassing the generation, reception, and processing of information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

In other words, speaking is a productive skill that serves as the cornerstone of effective communication for EFL learners, enabling them to convey messages, information, and thoughts.

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# Types of Speaking

Brown (2004) categorized speaking into various types based on its aims:

**Mimicry-Based Speaking**

This type focuses on imitation, where students repeat specific speeches to improve their pronunciation, intonation, and accuracy. It aims to refine various language elements but relies heavily on repetition, providing limited practice beyond rote learning (Brown, 2004).

**Intensive Speaking**

Intensive speaking involves oral participation in activities like reading passages aloud, group tasks, and dialogues. Its goal is to enhance lexical and grammatical proficiency, serving as a progression from imitative speaking and encouraging engagement in classroom interactions, such as pair work (Brown, 2004).

**Responsive Speaking**

In responsive speaking, teachers encourage students to use language in brief conversations with simple content, such as asking and answering questions, greetings, and comments (Brown, 2004).

**Interactive Speaking**

According to Brown (2004), interactive speaking encompasses both transactional language, for exchanging information, and interpersonal exchange, for maintaining relationships through colloquial language use.

**Extended Speaking**

Extended speaking represents the most advanced level, where students can articulate stories and longer passages while adhering to grammar, phonology, and contextual language appropriateness.

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## The Importance of Speaking Fluency

Fillmore (1979) outlines four key aspects of speaking fluently: "…the ability to fill time with talk…the ability to construct coherent, reasoned, and semantically rich sentences; the ability to express appropriate ideas across a wide range of contexts; and the ability to be creative and imaginative in language use". Moreover, Porter and Grant (1992) caution against the notion those EFL learners should speed up at the expense of clarity, which may hinder understanding. Lennon (1990) argues that speaking fluency is not about drawing attention to the act of speaking but rather to the message being conveyed.

For Richards (2006) he defines fluency as the ability to engage in meaningful communication using naturally occurring language, even in the face of limitations in communicative competence. Additionally, Brown (2003) emphasizes that oral fluency emphasizes conveying content over form. Lennon (2000) further defines fluency as "the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under temporal constraints of on-line processing" (p. 26). Ur (2000) underscores the significance of speaking among the four language skills, asserting that language proficiency entails the ability to speak fluently and accurately. For Westrup (2003) he notes that "a student who can speak English well may have a greater chance for further education, finding employment, and gaining promotions" (p.5). He highlights the practical benefits of speaking fluency, suggesting that proficient English speakers have better opportunities for education, employment, and advancement. Additionally, Hedge (2000) suggests that fluency is a key criterion by which language proficiency is judged, indicating that the ability to communicate comfortably, smoothly, and confidently is paramount in assessing language competence.

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## Kinds of Speaking Situation

According to Bentayeb (2008, p.28), speaking situations can be categorized into three types:

### 1. Interactive Speaking Situation

This type involves both a speaker and a listener engaged in direct communication, whether face-to-face or through mediums like telephone conversations. It revolves around turn-taking, allowing the speaker to ask questions, react, and provide comments while also listening to their partner.

### 2. Partially Interactive Situation

In such situations, the speaker addresses a live audience, such as during a presentation. Although the audience remains silent and listens attentively, the speaker observes their reactions, including facial expressions and body language, to gauge their understanding and reception of the information presented.

### 3. Non-interactive Speaking Situation

Here, the speaker delivers their speech solely through various communication channels without direct interaction with the audience. Examples include recorded videos, speeches broadcasted via radio or television. In these scenarios, the speaker cannot perceive the audience's verbal or non-verbal responses.

## Characteristics of a Good Speaker

Baker and Westrup (2003) claim that "Accurate speakers do not make mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation. Fluent speakers can express themselves appropriately

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and without hesitation" (p.7). According to Hormailis (2003, p. 6), a good speaker possesses several characteristics:

a) Vocabulary: A wide range of words enhances speaking proficiency. It involves selecting the right words for effective communication (Ur cited in Hormailis, 2003, p. 6).

b) Grammar: Warriner, as cited in Ramli (2003, p. 6), argues that clear communication relies on understandable grammar. Hence, speakers should understand and use grammatical structures correctly to convey comprehensible messages.

c) Fluency: Longman, as cited in Hormailis (2003, p. 17), defines fluency as the quality of speaking smoothly and coherently. Fluency is essential for effective communication.

d) Pronunciation: Pronunciation refers to accurately producing speech sounds for effective communication. Kelly (2000, p.11) warns that "to use the stress and the intonation inaccurately can cause a problem." Therefore, imitating native speakers or individuals with precise pronunciation aids in achieving good pronunciation.

## Speaking Problems

According to Nunan (1991), mastering the skill of speaking is often deemed the most crucial aspect of learning a second or foreign language, with success gauged by one's ability to engage in conversations. Luoma (2004) emphasizes that "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop" (p.1). This highlights the difficult journey required to attain proficiency in spoken language, necessitating sustained effort and time investment to achieve advanced competency. Brown (2000, p. 270-271) identifies several issues that learners may encounter in their speaking endeavors.

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**Clustering**

Brown suggests that fluency in speech relies on phrasing rather than a word-by-word approach (p. 270). When speakers articulate word by word with frequent pauses, they struggle to seamlessly cluster letters or words together, hindering fluent expression.

**Repetition**

Repetition of words within a sentence, such as "I mean," "well," "like," or "you know," constitutes redundancy. Additionally, restating the same idea without introducing new information leads to redundancy.

**Reduced Forms**

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) elaborate on "these forms involve unstressed vowels, omitted sounds, and other alternations of the full form, such as assimilation, contraction, and blending" (p. 230). Students unfamiliar with these informal speech patterns may struggle to comprehend them.

**Performance Variables**

Unprepared speakers often experience hesitation, backtracking, and pauses as they attempt to articulate their thoughts, leading to performance inconsistencies (Brown 2000).

**Informal Language**

Limited exposure to colloquial expressions, including idioms, slang, and functional phrases, hampers students' grasp of the target language's informal register (Brown 2000).

**Rate of Delivery**

Inappropriate speaking rates—either too fast or too slow—result in comprehension difficulties for listeners. A balanced delivery pace ensures audience engagement without sacrificing clarity (Brown 2000).

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**Stress, Rhythm, Intonation**

Stress-timed rhythm and intonation patterns are pivotal in effective communication, influencing how speakers emphasize and modulate their voices during speech (Brown 2000).

**Lack of Interaction**

Absence of interaction partners deprives learners of the opportunity for conversational negotiation and impedes language and speaking skill development (Brown 2000).

# Factors Influencing EFL Students' Speaking Skills

Juhana (2012, p.101) outlines several psychological factors influencing students' proficiency in speaking a foreign language:

**Fear of Making Mistakes**

Fear of making mistakes significantly inhibits students' participation in classroom interactions. Alongside this fear, Juhana (2012, p. 101) notes concerns regarding correction methods and negative assessments. Additionally, students worry about potential ridicule from classmates and criticism from teachers, leading to reluctance in oral participation. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to foster emotional connections with their students and encourage them to engage actively, despite any apprehensions about making errors.

**Shyness**

Shyness is a prevalent psychological barrier hindering student interaction. Bowen (2005) and Robby (2010) argue that shyness, often inherent in certain individuals, manifests as reticence during speaking activities. This reticence poses challenges for effective communication in the classroom. Consequently, addressing this issue becomes crucial to motivate students to improve their speaking skills (Gebhard, 2000). Baldwin (2011) emphasizes that speaking before an audience ranks among the most common fears, often

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causing mental blocks or forgetfulness. Thus, creating a supportive classroom environment, as advocated by Pesce (2011) and Chinmoy (2007), encourages students to view shyness as an obstacle to overcome rather than fear.

**Anxiety**

Anxiety, characterized by tension and nervousness, significantly impacts language learning situations (Horwitz et al., as cited in Nascente, 2001). Nascente (2001) identifies anxiety as a primary impediment to effective language acquisition. Similarly, Horwitz (1991, as cited in Sylvia and Tiono, 2004) asserts that anxiety regarding language proficiency can detrimentally affect students' speaking abilities, resulting in reduced fluency and perceived performance. Therefore, creating a supportive learning atmosphere is essential to alleviate anxiety among students (Koichi Sato, 2003). To address this, teachers must employ strategies that encourage active participation and provide positive reinforcement (Keramida, 2009). Additionally, fostering a comfortable classroom environment can help students feel more confident in engaging with speaking activities (Tsui, as cited in Nunan, 1999).

**Lack of Confidence**

Students often lack confidence in their speaking abilities, particularly when they doubt their intelligibility to others. He and Chen (2010) attribute this lack of confidence to inadequate English proficiency levels. Consequently, students may refrain from participating in discussions due to self-perceived communication limitations. Tsui (as cited in Nunan, 1999) posits that students lacking confidence may experience communication apprehension, further inhibiting their speaking skills. Hence, building students' self-assurance becomes imperative for teachers (Brown, 2001). Ye Htwe (2007) suggests increasing exposure to English to bolster confidence, while Kubo (2009) recommends regular practice sessions to refine pronunciation and encourage free expression of thoughts and ideas.

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**Lack of Motivation**

Motivation plays a pivotal role in students' learning outcomes (Songsiri, 2007). Nunan (1999) highlights motivation as a determinant of students' reluctance to engage in English-speaking activities. Zua (2008) defines motivation as an internal driving force influencing learners' enthusiasm for study. Gardner (as cited in Nunan, 1999) identifies various factors contributing to students' motivational deficits, such as uninspiring teaching methods and unclear curriculum objectives. Consequently, teachers must address these factors diligently (Babu, 2010). Siegel (2004, in Aftat, 2008) emphasizes the teacher's role in fostering motivation through effective instructional methods. Moreover, Aftat (2008) underscores the importance of nurturing students' curiosity and passion for English, advocating for supportive learning environments. Liu and Huang (2010) propose enhancing students' awareness of English's significance, stimulating their interest, and fostering self-confidence to combat motivational challenges.

## Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has provided an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence EFL students' speaking skills. We have explored the psychological barriers, including fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation, which can hinder students' oral communication abilities. It is crucial for educators to address these factors and create a conducive learning atmosphere that encourages active participation, fosters emotional connections, and provides positive reinforcement. Strategies such as promoting a supportive classroom environment, increasing exposure to English, conducting regular practice sessions, and stimulating students' curiosity and passion for the language can greatly contribute to building students' confidence and motivation.

# Chapter Three: Data Analysis

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# Chapter Three: Data Analysis

# Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the data collection and analysis. It provides a description of the research tool used in this research. The analysis of data gathered by both a students' online and written questionnaires as well as its interpretation is also presented in this chapter. Data analysis will be reported in tabular presentations so that the results will be clearer. By the end of the chapter, the researcher suggested some recommendations.

# Research Instruments

For the purpose of finding out the aims of the present research, answering our research questions and confirming or rejecting our hypotheses an online and written questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool. We have administered one online and written questionnaire to first year students at Biskra University.

# Students' Questionnaire

The reason why we used the online questionnaire is because it can be used with a large number of subjects; giving them time to answer the items, the data gathered will be more reliable. Also, we used the same questionnaire in a written form and delivered it to first year students at Biskra University to make the work more authentic. Finally, this questionnaire is mainly designed to answer two questions, what are the specific difficulties faced by first-year EFL learners in oral proficiency? How can group working educational games contribute to enhancing EFL learners' oral proficiency?

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## Piloting the Questionnaire

It is important to pre-test the questionnaire on a group of students similar to the intended sample before administering it. Piloting the questionnaire helps in discovering possible weaknesses in some items or deleting others which are inappropriate and unrelated to the subject. Therefore, it was checked by the supervisor. As a result, some items were reformulated and some were deleted.

## Administration of the Questionnaire

Students' online questionnaire was distributed on May, 15th 2024. The questionnaire was randomly distributed online to first year students at the department of foreign languages, English division, Biskra University on their Facebook group. The total number of first year students is 683, but only 73 of them have answered this questionnaire.

## Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 16 items. These items are required to be answered either in (yes/no ) questions , or in picking-up the most appropriate answer from a series of options , and ask students to provide their opinions. This questionnaire involves three parts: the first one includes general information consists of items from 1 to 3 about students' level in English language, the length of time students have been learning English at the university level, and the frequency of the engagement of students in group working activities during English classes. The next part consists of items from 4 to 7 which investigate students' opinions towards the use of educational group working games, its benefit, and influence on the English

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language learning process. The last part includes items from 8 to 16 aiming on gathering information about students' speaking skill, and how can the use of group working educational games help to improve these skills, and provide a positive leaning environment.

# Results of Students' Questionnaire

**Section One: General Information**

**Item 1:** What is your current level of English proficiency?

**Table 1**

*Students' Level in English language*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| Beginner | 52 | 71,2% |
| Intermediate | 14 | 19,2% |
| Advanced | 7 | 9,6% |

This item was asked in order to know the students' level in English language. According to the statistics above, the majority of students (71,2%) have an intermediate level in English, while (19,2%) have an advanced level, and only (9,6%) have a beginner level. From the results we can infer that all the participants in answering this questionnaire have an acceptable level in English language.

**Item 2:** How long have you been studying English at the university?

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**Table 2**

*The length of time students have been learning English at the university level*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 6 months | 9 | 12,3% |
| 6 months to 1 year | 63 | 86,3% |
| 1 year to 2 years | 1 | 1,4% |
| 2 year to 3 years | 0 | 0% |
| More than 3 years | 0 | 0% |

This question was displayed to learners in order to know the length of time students have been learning English at the university level. As the table shows, (86,3%) of the students have been studying English at a university level from six months to one year, others (12,3%) for less than six months, whereas, a minority (1,4%) from one to two years. The results indicate that most of the students are well familiar with the English language.

**Item 3:** How often do you engage in group working activities during your English classes?

**Table 3**

*The frequency of the engagement of students in group working activities during English classes*

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| Response | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | 52 | 71,2% |
| Frequently | 8 | 10,9% |
| Always | 13 | 17,9% |

This question investigates the frequency of the engagement of students in group working activities during English classes. The results show that (71,2%) of students occasionally do engage in group work activities during English classes, while (17,9%) are always engaged, and (10,9%) are frequently engaged. From the results, we can conclude that for most of the time students are engaged in group work activities during their English classes.

**Section Two: Group work**

**Item 4:** Have you ever participated in group working activities as part of your English language learning?

**Table 4**

*Students' participation in group working activities as part of their language learning process*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 71 | 97,3% |
| No | 2 | 2,7 % |

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This question was asked in order to know if the students have ever participated in group working activities as part of their language learning process. A considerable number of answers (97,3%) was by "YES", while (2,7%) was by "NO", which shows the importance of group working activities in the teaching-learning process of the English Language, and the crucialness of allowing and engaging students in group working activities.

**Item 5:** If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please indicate which types of group working activities you have participated in. You can tick more than one choice.

**Table 5**

*The types of group working activities that are commonly used in English teaching classrooms*

| Responses | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Group discussions | 22 | 30,2% |
| Group presentations | 24 | 32,9% |
| Group projects | 12 | 16,4% |
| Group games | 12 | 16,4% |
| Others | 1 | 1,4% |
| None | 2 | 2,7% |

This question is related to the previous one, it was asked in order to know the types of group working activities that are commonly used in English teaching classrooms. The answers came as follows, (32,9%) declared that they have participated in group presentations, others (30,2,5%) in group discussions, whereas other students (32,2%) were divided between group games, and group projects, in the other hand, (2,7%) answered that they did not participate in group work activities; finally, the last (1,4%) suggested that they participated in group plays. From the answers above, we can conclude that first year students at the

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University of Biskra have been participating in a variation of group working activities, which indicates a diversity in the teaching process of the English language.

**Item 6:** How do you perceive the impact of group working activities on your English language learning?

**Table 6**

*The degree of importance of using group working activities in the English language learning process*

| Responses | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Very beneficial | 46 | 63% |
| Somewhat beneficial | 25 | 34,3% |
| Not beneficial at all | 2 | 2,7% |

This question was raised in order to investigate the degree of importance of using group working activities in the English language learning process. The answers came as follows, 46 students (63%) responded with "very beneficial", while 25 students (34,3%) answered with "somewhat beneficial", and only two students (2,7%) answered with "not beneficial at all". From the results, we can infer that using group working activities in English language classes is both crucial, and beneficial especially for novice learners.

**Item 7:** What do you consider as the main benefits of group working activities? Tick all that apply

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**Table 7**

*The area in which group working activities can benefit students more*

| Responses | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Improved collaboration and teamwork skills | 37 | 50,7% |
| Enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving abilities | 5 | 6,8% |
| Increased exposure to different perspectives and ideas | 16 | 22% |
| Enhanced communication and interpersonal skills | 15 | 20,5% |
| Others | 0 | 0% |
| None | 0 | 0% |

This item was displayed in order to know the area in which group working activities can benefit students more. The responses to this question came as follows, 37 students (50,7%) picked "improved collaboration and teamwork skills" as an answer; 16 students (22%) responded with "increased exposure to different perspectives and ideas", in the other hand, 15 students (20,5%) answered with "enhanced communication and interpersonal skills", while only five students (6,8%) picked "enhanced critical thinking and problem solving abilities" as an answer. From the results, we can understand that adding group working activities to the teaching-learning process in English language classes can benefit students positively from different areas.

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**Section Three: The Speaking Skill**

**Item 8:** How confident do you feel when speaking English?

**Table 8**

*The degree of confidence that the students feel while speaking in English in the classroom*

| Responses | Numbers | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Very confident | 8 | 11% |
| Moderately confident | 30 | 41% |
| Somewhat confident | 19 | 26% |
| Not confident at all | 16 | 22% |

This question was asked in order to know the degree of confidence that the students feel while speaking in English in the classroom. The results above indicate that 30 students (41%) are moderately confident, while 19 students (26%) are somewhat confident; whereas 16 students (22%) are not confident at all. On the other hand, 8 students (11%) answered that they are very confident while speaking in English in the classroom. From these results, we can conclude that the majority of first year English learners at Biskra University feel confident while using the English language in their classrooms.

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**Item 9:** What areas of your speaking skills would you like to improve?

**Table 9**

*The areas in which students have weaknesses that need to be improved*

| Responses | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Pronunciation | 25 | 34,2% |
| Vocabulary | 11 | 15,1% |
| Grammar | 14 | 19,2% |
| Fluency | 23 | 31,5% |
| Others | 0 | 0% |
| None | 0 | 0% |

This question was asked in order to know the areas in which students have weaknesses that need to be improved. The table shows that 25 students (34,2%) picked pronunciation as an answer, and 23 students (31,5%) picked fluency as an answer. On the other hand, 4 students (19,2%) have chosen grammar as an answer, while 11 students (15,1%) picked vocabulary as an answer. From these results we can conclude that the majority of students have weaknesses in both pronunciation and fluency that need to be improved.

**Item 10:** Have you ever used educational games to enhance your speaking skills in English?

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**Table 10**

*Using educational games to enhance students' speaking skills in English*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| Yes | 64 | 87,7% |
| No | 9 | 12,3% |

This question was asked in order to know if the students use educational games in their English language learning process in order to enhance their speaking skill level. The majority of students (87,7%) answered with "yes", whereas a few (12,3%) answered with "no". This shows that a considerable number of students do use education games in order to improve their English language speaking skills.

**Item 11:** If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, did you find the educational games beneficial for improving your speaking skills?

**Table 11**

*The benefits of using educational games for improving students' speaking skills*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| Yes | 60 | 82,2% |
| No | 13 | 17,8% |

This question is related to the previous one, and it was asked in order to know whether using educational games was beneficial for improving students' speaking skills or not. The table shows that the majority of students (82,2%) picked "yes" as an answer, while (17,8%) picked "no" as an answer). The results show that using educational games by the students in

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order to improve their speaking skills is both beneficial and crucial for the English language learning process.

**Item 12:** How engaging do you find educational games as a tool for improving your speaking skills?

**Table 12**

*The extent to which educational games are engaging as a tool to improve students' speaking skills*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Very engaging | 35 | 48% |
| Moderately engaging | 25 | 34,2% |
| Somewhat engaging | 13 | 17,8% |
| Not engaging at all | 0 | 0% |

This question was asked in order to know to what extent educational games are engaging as a tool to improve students speaking skills. The answers show that 35 students (48%) selected "very engaging" as an answer, while 25 students (34,2%) picked moderately engaging as a response, and 13 students (17,8%) answered with somewhat engaging. We can infer from the results that using educational games as a tool in the teaching-learning process can be a very effective way to enhance students' speaking skill.

**Item 13:** Have you noticed any improvements in your speaking skills as a result of participating in group working educational games?

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**Table 13**

*The participation of students in group working educational games to improve their speaking skills*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| Yes | 62 | 84,9% |
| No | 11 | 15,1% |

This question was raised in order to know whether participating in group working educational games resulted in any speaking skill improvement or not. The table shows that a considerable number of students (84,9%) answered with "yes", whereas the others (15,1%) answered with "no". From the results we can conclude that the use of group working educational games, and engaging students in them can result in improving their speaking skills.

**Item 14:** Would you recommend the use of group working educational games for enhancing speaking skills in English?

**Table 14**

*The recommendation of using group working educational games for enhancing the speaking skills*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| Yes | 65 | 89% |
| No | 8 | 11% |

This question was asked in order to know whether the students recommend the use of group working educational activities in the classroom in order to improve their English

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language speaking skills. The results show that the majority of students (89%) answered with "yes", while the rest (11%) answered with "no". From these results, we can understand that group working educational games have a crucial role in helping the students to improve their English language speaking skills, in which it is recommended to be used in the teaching-learning process.

**Item 15**: In your opinion, what factors contribute to the effectiveness of group working educational games for improving speaking skills? Tick all that apply.

**Table 15**

*Students' opinions about the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of group working educational games for improving the speaking skills*

| Responses | Number | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Clear instructions and objectives | 10 | 13,7% |
| Appropriate level of challenge | 25 | 34,2% |
| Opportunities for interaction and collaboration | 27 | 37% |
| Engaging and relevant content | 10 | 13,7% |
| Others | 1 | 1,4% |
| None | 0 | 0% |

This question was raised in order to know the students' opinions about the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of group working educational games for improving the

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speaking skills. The answers of this question came as follows, 27 students (37%) answered "opportunities for interaction and collaboration", while 25 students (34,2%) answered with "appropriate level of challenge", also 20 students (27,4%) were divided between "clear instructions and objectives" and "engaging and relevant content"; only one student (1,4%) suggested that "educational games are more beneficial when you practise them alone not with a group because it will be like wasting time". From the results we can conclude that all factors mentioned above help in making group working educational games more effective.

**Item 16:** Do you think that incorporating group working educational games into English language classes can make the learning process more enjoyable?

**Table 16**

*The implementation of group working educational games in English language classes to make it more enjoyable*

| Response | Number | Percentages |
|----------|--------|-------------|
| Yes | 70 | 95,9% |
| No | 3 | 4,1% |

This final question was asked in order to know whether the implementation of group working educational games in English language classes can make the learning process more enjoyable or not. The results shows that the majority of students (95,9%) answered with "yes", whereas (4,1%) answered with "no"; this means that adding group working educational games as a tool in the English language t-aching-learning process can create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, also the students will benefit from it by improving their language skills especially the speaking one.

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# Interpretation and Discussion of the Results

## Section One: General Information

In the first section, the analysis of the data gathered shows that a considerable number of participants (90,4%) that answered this questionnaire have an acceptable level in English language; so, most of them are familiar with this language. In addition, it shows that the majority of them have been studying English at a university level from six to 1 year. Furthermore, most of the time students are engaged in group work activities during their English classes.

## Section Two: Group Work

In this section, the majority of participant (97,3%) admitted that they have been participating in different types of group working educational games during their English language classes. As the majority of them (97,3%) declared that using group working activities such as, group presentations, group project, group discussions, and group games is very beneficial, and it has affected them positively in enhancing different language skill, especially the speaking one.

## Section Three: The Speaking Skill

Concerning this section, the majority of the students (67%) stated that they do feel confident whenever they speak or using the English language; however, they have some language areas such as, pronunciation and fluency that need to be improved. In addition, most of the students (87,7%) declared that they use educational games inside and outside the classroom as they find it beneficial for them for improving their speaking skills. Furthermore,

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most of the students noticed that using group working educational games resulted in an improvement in their language skills, especially the speaking skills; as they recommend it to be used in the teaching-learning process of the English language. Finally, almost all students (95,9%) believe that using group working educational games into English classes will make the learning process more enjoyable, and will make their speaking skills enhanced.

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided the analysis and the interpretation of the students' online and written questionnaire. The analysed data was reported in tabular presentations. The questionnaire was used with first year students at Biskra University, 73 subjects from 683 were used as a sample in answering this questionnaire. Also, it was delivered in May 16, 2024; it was consisted of 16 items, which were divided into three sections. The first section was about students' background information, whereas the second section was about using group work to enhance students' speaking skill, which consists of four items. The last chapter was about the speaking skill, which consists of 8 items. All the items were required to be answered either in (yes/no ) questions, or in picking-up the most appropriate answer from a series of options , and ask students to provide their opinions.

This questionnaire have shown that the majority of EFL first year students at Biskra University are familiar with the English language in which they have an acceptable level in it. In addition, it has shown that, they have been participating in different types of group working activities such as, group presentations, group project, group discussions, and group games during their English language classes. Also, this questionnaire provided that different educational games such as group work proved to be effective in teaching the English language, in which the students recommend it to be used in the teaching-learning process as they noticed and improvement in their language skills while they are engaged in it, especially

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for the speaking skills. Finally, almost all students declared that using group working activities in teaching the English language will make the teaching-learning process easier and enjoyable for them.

# Recommendations

The aim of this master's dissertation was to explore the effectiveness of group working educational games in enhancing EFL (English as a Foreign Language) oral proficiency among first-year students at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra . Through an in-depth study and analysis of the data collected, several key recommendations have emerged for teachers, students, administration, and further research. These recommendations aim to provide practical guidance and insights for improving EFL oral proficiency through the integration of group working educational games.

**For Teachers**

- ✓ Use different games to improve speaking skills in groups.
- ✓ Clearly define learning goals for speaking and align them with the curriculum.
- ✓ Create a supportive class where students feel comfortable participating and taking risks.
- ✓ Provide structured speaking practice through games that require expressing thoughts and opinions.
- ✓ Assess speaking skills regularly and offer feedback to students.
- ✓ Encourage students to reflect on their own speaking and set goals for improvement.
- ✓ Promote collaboration and peer feedback during group activities.
- ✓ Evaluate the effectiveness of the games and make necessary changes.

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✓ Share successful approaches and recommendations with other teachers.

**For Students**

✓ Actively join in educational games to practice speaking.

✓ Work well with classmates during games to learn from each other.

✓ Take advantage of the supportive class environment to improve speaking skills.

✓ Use game activities to share thoughts, ideas, and opinions.

✓ Reflect on personal speaking and set goals for progress.

✓ Welcome feedback from teachers and peers to enhance speaking abilities.

✓ Support and provide helpful feedback to classmates during group activities.

✓ Take responsibility for learning and actively participate in the games.

✓ Seek help when needed.

**For Administration**

✓ Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in incorporating group working educational games for oral proficiency development.

✓ Allocate resources and support to ensure the availability of appropriate materials, technology, and classroom space for implementing group working educational games.

✓ Encourage collaboration among teachers to share best practices, resources, and experiences related to implementing educational games for oral proficiency enhancement.

✓ Conduct regular observations and evaluations to assess the effectiveness of group working educational games in improving oral proficiency and provide continuous support and feedback to teachers.

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✓ Recognize and celebrate the achievements of teachers and students in utilizing group working educational games for oral proficiency development.

**For Further Research**

✓ Investigate the long-term impact of using group working educational games on EFL learners' oral proficiency beyond the first year of study.

✓ Explore the effects of specific types of group working educational games on different aspects of oral proficiency, such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy.

✓ Examine the perceptions and attitudes of EFL learners towards group working educational games as a means of enhancing oral proficiency.

✓ Investigate the role of teacher guidance and scaffolding in maximizing the benefits of group working educational games for oral proficiency improvement.

✓ Compare the effectiveness of group working educational games with other instructional approaches in developing EFL learners' oral proficiency.

✓ Investigate the potential cultural and contextual factors that may influence the effectiveness of group working educational games in different EFL learning environments.

In conclusion, the recommendations provided for teachers, students, administration, and further research offer practical guidance for enhancing EFL oral proficiency through group working educational games. By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions can create a supportive and interactive classroom environment that fosters active participation, collaboration, and continuous improvement in speaking skills. Furthermore, further research in this area can provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of these games and explore various factors influencing their effectiveness. By prioritizing the

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integration of group working educational games, we can empower EFL learners to develop their oral proficiency and excel in their language learning journey.

# General Conclusion

The current research examined the enhancement of students' speaking skills through group work. It is a total of three chapters. Chapter one and two were devoted to the literature review and chapter three to the field work.

Chapter one focuses on group work, starting with a definition and exploring its advantages and disadvantages. It discusses different types of group work, theories related to it, and the conditions necessary for effective implementation. The chapter also presents various group work activities, such as role play, problem solving, and discussion.

Chapter two focuses on speaking skills. It introduces Communicative Language Teaching and explores different types of speaking, such as imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive speaking. The chapter emphasizes the importance of speaking fluency and discusses the characteristics of effective speakers. Speaking problems are discussed, including clustering, repetition, reduced forms, performance variables, informal language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and lack of interaction. The chapter also addresses psychological factors that impact EFL students' speaking skills, such as fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation.

Finally, Chapter three of the document focuses on data analysis related to the research conducted at Biskra University. The research instrument used was an online and a written

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questionnaire administered to first-year students. The questionnaire aimed to gather information about students' English proficiency levels, the duration of their English studies at the university, their engagement in group working activities, and their perceptions of the impact of group working educational games on their oral proficiency.

The results revealed that the majority of students had an intermediate level of English proficiency, and most of them had been studying English at the university for six months to one year. Additionally, a significant portion of students reported occasional engagement in group working activities during their English classes.

Furthermore, the data indicated that group working activities were widely implemented in the English language learning process, with various types of activities such as presentations, discussions, projects, and games. The majority of students perceived these activities as highly beneficial to their language learning, highlighting their positive impact on enhancing oral proficiency and creating a positive learning environment.

Overall, the findings suggest that incorporating group working educational games in English language classes can contribute to improving students; oral proficiency and fostering a positive learning experience. These results provide valuable insights for educators and decision-makers in designing effective language learning strategies and promoting collaborative learning environments.

All in all, this study shows that group work has a positive impact on the speaking skills of first-year EFL learners at Biskra University. Students actively participated in various group activities, such as discussions, presentations, projects, and games, and found them beneficial for improving their speaking skills. However, more research is needed to validate these findings and explore the impact of group work on speaking skills in different contexts.

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# Appendices

**EFL oral proficiency enhancement through group working educational games.**
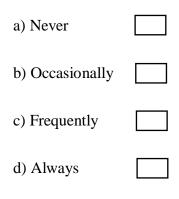
## Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire:

Please carefully read each question and circle the most appropriate answer from the options provided.

**Section One: General Information**

1. What is your current level of English proficiency?

a) Beginner ☐

b) Intermediate ☐

c) Advanced ☐

2. How long have you been studying English at the university?

a) Less than 6 months ☐

b) 6 months to 1 year ☐

c) 1 year to 2 years ☐

d) 2 years to 3 years ☐

e) More than 3 years ☐

3. How often do you engage in group working activities during your English classes?

a) Never ☐

b) Occasionally ☐

c) Frequently ☐

d) Always ☐

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**Section Two: Group Work**

4. Have you ever participated in group working activities as part of your English language learning?
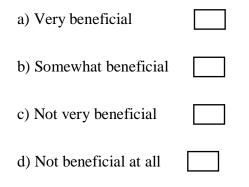
a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

5. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please indicate which types of group working activities you have participated in. You can circle more than one choice.

a) Group discussions ☐

b) Group presentations ☐

c) Group projects ☐

d) Group games ☐

e) Other (please specify) ☐

.....................

f) None ☐

6. How do you perceive the impact of group working activities on your English language learning?

a) Very beneficial ☐

b) Somewhat beneficial ☐

c) Not very beneficial ☐

d) Not beneficial at all ☐

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7. What do you consider as the main benefits of group working activities? Circle all that apply

   a) Improved collaboration and teamwork skills    ☐

   b) Enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving abilities    ☐

   c) Increased exposure to different perspectives and ideas    ☐

   d) Enhanced communication and interpersonal skills    ☐

   e) Other (please specify)    ☐

     .....................

   f) None    ☐

**Section Three: The Speaking Skill**

8. How confident do you feel when speaking English?

   a) Very confident    ☐

   b) Moderately confident    ☐

   c) Somewhat confident    ☐

   d) Not confident at all    ☐

9. What areas of your speaking skills would you like to improve?

   a) Pronunciation    ☐

   b) Vocabulary    ☐

   c) Grammar    ☐

   d) Fluency    ☐

   ☐

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e) Other (please specify)

.....................

f) None ☐

10. Have you ever used educational games to enhance your speaking skills in English?
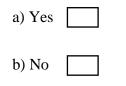
a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

11. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, did you find the educational games beneficial for improving your speaking skills?
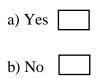
a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

12. How engaging do you find educational games as a tool for improving your speaking skills?

a) Very engaging ☐

b) Moderately engaging ☐
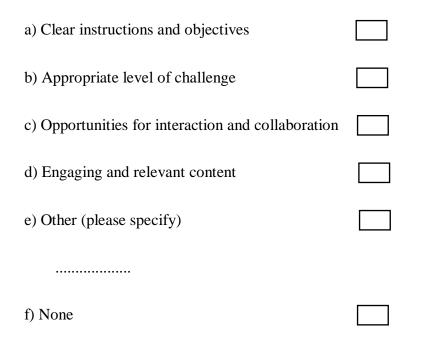
c) Somewhat engaging ☐

d) Not engaging at all ☐

13. Have you noticed any improvements in your speaking skills as a result of participating in group working educational games?
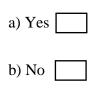
a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

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14. Would you recommend the use of group working educational games for enhancing speaking skills in English?

   a) Yes  ☐

   b) No   ☐

15. In your opinion, what factors contribute to the effectiveness of group working educational games for improving speaking skills? Circle all that apply.

   a) Clear instructions and objectives       ☐

   b) Appropriate level of challenge       ☐

   c) Opportunities for interaction and collaboration  ☐

   d) Engaging and relevant content       ☐

   e) Other (please specify)       ☐

      ...................

   f) None       ☐

16. Do you think that incorporating group working educational games into English language classes can make the learning process more enjoyable?

   a) Yes  ☐

   b) No  ☐

**Thank you for your participation.**

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**الملــــخص**

تهدف الدراسة العملية هذه إلى تحسين مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من خلال استخدام الألعاب التعليمية الجماعية، وذلك من خلال إجراء دراسة تجريبية على طلاب السنة الأولى في جامعة محمد خيضر ببسكرة. تضمنت الدراسة استخدام الأنشطة التعليمية الجماعية في اللغة الإنجليزية مثل المناقشات والعروض والمشاريع والألعاب. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيانات إلكترونية وكتابية تم توزيعها على الطلاب. وتم تحليل البيانات لتقييم تأثير هذه الأنشطة على تحسين مهارات اللغة الشفوية. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن استخدام الألعاب التعليمية الجماعية في اللغة الإنجليزية له تأثير إيجابي على تحسين مهارات اللغة الشفوية لدى طلاب السنة الأولى في جامعة محمد خيضر ببسكرة. وتبين أن الطلاب استفادوا بشكل كبير من هذه الأنشطة في تحسين قدرتهم على التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية. ومع ذلك، يجب ملاحظة أن الدراسة لديها بعض القيود، مثل حجم العينة الصغير والسياق الجامعي المحدد. لذلك، يجب أخذ الحيطة عند تطبيق هذه النتائج في سياقات أخرى. ينصح بإجراء مزيد من الأبحاث مع عينات أكبر ومتنوعة لتأكيد وتوسيع هذه النتائج. في الختام، تضيف هذه الدراسة إلى المعرفة المتوفرة حول فوائد الأنشطة الجماعية في تعزيز مهارات اللغة الشفوية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وتبرز أهمية دمج الأنشطة التعاونية في فصول اللغة لتحسين الكفاءة الشفوية. يجب أن تستمر الأبحاث المستقبلية في استكشاف العلاقة بين الأنشطة الجماعية ومهارات اللغة الشفوية، مع النظر في مجموعات المتعلمين المختلفة والإعدادات التعليمية المتنوعة، لتقديم نتائج أكثر شمولاً وموثوقية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** *العمل الجماعي، مهارة التحدث، السنة الأولى، جامعة بسكرة*