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## *The Role of Classroom Tasks in Fostering EFL Students' Communicative Competence.*

*Case Study: 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Students of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider  
University of Biskra.*

A Memoire Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Master Degree in Language Sciences.

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## DEDICATION

As always, first thanks **Allah** for giving me the chance for better education. I would like to dedicate this humble work to:

All I'm, I owe to you, the greatest Mum in the universe, I would realize nothing in life without you; your unconditional love, affection, support and ceaseless prayers. My mother **Roukia**

For you my superman, Dad, I still remember every golden advice you gave me. Because of you I fight for the BEST ....you are the BEST....my father **Ibrahim**

For my elder brother...**Houssin**, who guides me and protects me all the time.

To the great person who makes my dreams come true, who make me love reading, my inspiration in life...my brother **Ferhat**

For my sweetheart ...my brother **Hamza**

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## ABSTRACT

The present dissertation entails the investigation of the improvement of students' communicative competence through the use of tasks in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. As it is noticeable, the major challenge that often faces EFL classrooms is that most students do not have the ability to communicate well in the target language (L2) as they do in their native language (L1). The lack of competence and the poor performance of students in English Language indicate that they need to practice the language frequently during and out class time and to be exposed to certain amount of real world knowledge in order to satisfy their communicative needs. First of all, we put forward one main hypothesis and two sub ones that claim the need of applying different language tasks when teaching foreign languages. This research work aims at bringing into account the possibility of developing communicative competence through the extensive use of language tasks. Following the descriptive method of inquiry we conduct our research in order to discover the role of language tasks in relation to students' communicative competence in L2 .As far as the field work is concerned, we have relied on two main tools of investigation which are in form of questionnaire and classroom observation, they were targeted to the teachers of English and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. As a result, we get some proposed answers and suggestions from both teachers and students that seem to be positively significant and valuable. Based on the findings, the majority of the respondents reflected the attitudes showing that the use of Task Based Language Teaching approach (TBLT) does enhance both oral and written competencies among students. They have stated that the approach encourages students' practice of the language, promotes their interactive and communicative abilities, prepares them for real-life communication, and develops their communication strategies. The respondents also believe that Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) is an effective method to be used in the language classroom as to enhance both teachers' and students' roles within EFL classes, and creates effective interaction and fluent communication inside and outside the classroom. All in all, the obtained results assert the validity of our hypotheses as well as answer the research main questions which lead us to confirm that if EFL teachers stress the role of language tasks in English classes, students will have the opportunity to practice the language extensively and that contributes to the improvement of their competence in L2 communication.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**ALE** : Anglais Langue de classe Etrangères

**CC**: Communicative Competence

**CLT**: Communicative Language Teaching

**EFL**: English as a Foreign Language

**ELT**: English Language Teaching

**L1**: First Language

**L2**: Second Language

**MKUB**: Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

**nd**: no date

**Q**: Question

**SLA**: Second Language Acquisition

**TBA**: Task-Based Approach

**TBI**: Task Based Instruction

**TBL**: Task-Based Learning

**TBLT**: Task Based Language Teaching

**TPR**: **Total** Physical Response

# The Role of Classroom Tasks in Fostering EFL Students' Communicative Competence

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## General Introduction

Communicative competence has become a central issue in the teaching of English as a foreign language over time. Teachers are becoming more aware that one of the major goals of language teaching is to enable learners to communicate effectively with others from diverse cultural background. For this reason, the ability to communicate efficiently in English becomes a goal oriented in English language teaching (ELT). Hence, the foreign language teachers shifted from relying on traditional approaches of teaching which is mainly based on developing the grammatical system of the language to follow the path of the communicative language teaching (CLT) or what is called the Communicative Approach. This latter gives more opportunities for EFL learners to use the language in real situations that support them to communicate their needs, ideas as well as their interests. So, as Harmer (2001) stated whatever techniques, procedures, and practices the teacher may use, the major goal of teaching and learning any language is to improve the learner's communicative ability.

### 1. Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, teaching English as a foreign language within the classroom environment gives a crucial importance to communicative approaches and syllabuses. Hence, it focuses on the use of language in real situations in order to achieve communicative purposes. Whereas, for many years ago, teachers were completely concerned with teaching pure grammatical issues and no attention was given to the social and discursive functions of the language. Later on, EFL teachers shift their attention toward new methods that enable learners to practice the language. As a result, they conduct a constant investigation of what may help their students to increase their level of oral proficiency because of learning the language in class frequently and speaks it the moment it should be through active classroom tasks and extensive learning activities. So, the problem that will be raised in this proposal is specifically about how may language tasks, which are carried within the classroom atmosphere, improve the students 'ability to communicate efficiently in the target language. then, how does the lack of classroom tasks lead to the failure of mastering the communicative competence of the second language and this what opens new horizons for discussing the notion of communicative competence as

being a goal for English language teaching (ELT) and its development as a result of intensive classroom tasks and activities.

## **2. Significance of the Study**

The present work has designed objectives and purposes that may be reached at the end. Remarkably, the notion of communicative competence has been a subject of great interest for scholars and educationists of second language teaching. Thus, they had carried out constant researches in the field of language acquisition and applied linguistics investigating the subject of communicative competence as an ultimate goal for managing effective teaching within the classroom. After all, the significance of this proposal is mainly about how important is the classroom communication system when offering a promising chance for helping instructors create a more interactive learning, student-centered classroom, and give opportunities to 2<sup>nd</sup> language students at the English department in Biskra University to use and operate with the language in real life situations seeking to move on from getting them speaking to each other to the more complex problem of getting them communicating. Moreover, EFL activities invite students to exchange their opinions, ideas, lifestyles and backgrounds, and this mostly will have a positive impact on both individual motivation and on group dynamic, as well as on making the teaching and learning of English a joyful experience for both teachers and students. All in all, teachers at the English department in Biskra should present effective educational practices within the classroom and involve students in them and that is what reflect and rehearse language as it is used authentically within and outside the classroom. Also, they ought to motivate students to practice a lot of language tasks, face –to face encounters, and group work engagement for more effective communication.

## **3. Aim of the Study**

Language production tasks which are carried within the classroom environment are not just language activities that need to be rehearsed and practiced . However, one of their major objectives is to develop student's art of getting around language problems in communication. Hence, this work aims at enhancing EFL learners' communicative ability which is mainly based on classroom learning through certain tasks and practices. So, as any academic work, this proposal is done specifically to reach the following points:

1. Investigating the classroom environment where activities are used for developing communication among English students.
2. Increasing the student's opportunities for practicing the language in communicative tasks.
3. Ensuring the importance of task performance in order to establish a real communicative classroom.
4. Making foreign language teachers aware about the validity of applying classroom practices that spark the creativity of students and foster their communicative ability.
5. Giving an overview of how does the new teaching method integrate in recent classroom tasks and practices.

#### **4. Research Questions**

The questions that will be addressed in this investigation are as follows:

1. Should EFL teachers focus on the extensive use of language in different tasks to reach communicative purposes?
2. How can EFL teachers apply different tasks in their classrooms to improve the communicative competence of their students?
3. What kind of practices students need in order to be communicatively competent?
4. How does group dynamic ease the communication among students when dealing with a given task?
5. How much do students gain feedback at the end of each task?
6. How do EFL student deal with the different types of classroom tasks?
7. Are EFL students aware about the communicative objectives of classroom practices?

#### **5. Research Hypotheses**

This study hypothesizes that “If students are fully engaged in classroom tasks, then their level of communicative competence will increase”.

*Sub hypotheses:*

- If EFL teachers intertwine the Task Based Approach with the Communicative Approach in their classrooms, then, they will help their students to improve their communicative competence and overcome any breakdowns in communication.
- If 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English in Biskra University learn the target language cooperatively inside the classroom, then, they will be able to raise the level of their interaction and communication as well.

## **6. Research Methodology Design**

The present work gives a descriptive treatment to the subject that is the investigation of the influence of classroom tasks on enhancing students' level of communication in English. The research we are undertaking has two main variables which are classroom tasks and communicative competence and it aims to find a relation between them. To evaluate the validity of our hypotheses and to fit the goals of our study to the present proposal we used two main tools that are in form of "Questionnaire" which was administrated to EFL teachers and students at the English department of Biskra in order to obtain their responses and opinions, and to benefit from their suggestions about the problem. Also we used a second tool that is "Classroom Observation" which is relied on to ensure the validity and reliability of our hypotheses. As a sample for the study, we selected randomly two groups of 2nd year, out of a population of twelve (12) groups (approximately 546 students) and then selected randomly thirty (30) for the study. The teachers were selected randomly as well. We dealt with a sample of ten (10) teachers to check their background information as well their awareness of classroom tasks and their role in optimizing 2<sup>nd</sup> year English students' competence in communication. Finally we expect to carry our work in sufficient time and obtain good results.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

This research work is basically divided into two main parts: the review of literature that consists of two chapters and the analyses of the findings which encompasses one practical chapter.

The first chapter of part one sheds the light on some related concepts to classroom tasks that may foster the communicative competence of EFL students. Moreover it includes a detailed explanation of certain procedures and practices that raise students' consciousness about learning as group dynamic that permits students themselves to benefit from each other, influence each other, and hold conversations and discussions to reach the communicative objectives of the language.

The second chapter of part one spots the light on the notion of communicative competence by giving a general insight about its historical background. What does communicative competence consist of? And how significant is the communicative approach of teaching in ELT?

The third chapter which is the field work of the proposal is devoted to test the validity and the reliability of our hypotheses as well as to ensure that classroom activities and practices will enhance the communication among EFL students. In addition, it will contain questionnaires for both partners of teaching-learning process that need to be answered and then analyzed.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Classroom Tasks

**"The classroom is an opportunity for learners to begin the journey toward the success and to grasp the reality that beyond those classroom hours are dozens of hours weekly that can be devoted to practice meaningful uses of the new language".**

**(Brown, 2007:147)**

# Chapter one

## Classroom Tasks

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## Introduction

Classroom tasks are crucial parts of effective teaching and learning process. From English as Foreign Language (EFL) perspectives, effective classroom tasks provide students with the best opportunities to speak the target language freely while learning and communicating. Thus, tasks are defined as sort of activities that simulate genuine and enthusiastic exchanges of ideas and stress the learners' ability to get around language problems and difficulties. For many studies, the subject of incorporating tasks as a fundamental unit within teaching syllabi and classroom instructions as well as assessment and testing has been considered as an effective way to optimize the level of language proficiency and communicative language uses. Moreover, the extensive use of tasks can provide a diagnostic evaluation to learners' skills and proficiencies, their weaknesses and strengths and how they might be reinforced.

That first chapter provides us with general guidelines about the different types of tasks carried inside the EFL classes, the best techniques to practice tasks, and a framework for describing tasks and an overview about Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Also, it clarifies the role of language tasks in the teaching-learning process and in the second language (L2) communication.

### I.1. Task Definition

The concept of 'task' is considered as an essential element in recent classroom teaching and testing and also in learner evaluation and assessment. Tasks are merely used as teaching tools to measure the students 'ability to get around language problems and achieve a particular learning goal. For recent teaching adjustments, the concept of task becomes central to theories of classroom learning. Richards *et al.* (1986: 289; Cited in Nunan, 2004:02) gives the following definition to language tasks:

An activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative . . . since it provides a purpose for a classroom

activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake.

In tasks teachers try their best to control and monitor the group and to provide learners with different kinds of practice opportunities that do not exist outside the classroom, so they will have overall insights about the process of learning through the extensive use of tasks. Skehan (1998) define tasks in the following points:

A task is an activity in which

- Meaning is primary
- Learners are not given other people's meanings to regurgitate
- There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities
- Task completion has some priority
- The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

(Cited in Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2001:10)

Language tasks have assigned characteristics that are presented in the following framework with their full descriptions:

<b>Design feature</b>	<b>Description</b>
1. Goal	The general purpose of the task, e.g., to practice the ability to describe objects concisely; to provide an opportunity for the use of relative clauses.
2. Input	The verbal or non-verbal information supplied by the task, e.g. pictures; a map; written text.
3. Conditions	The way in which the information is presented, e.g. split vs. shared information, or the way in which it is to be used, e.g. converging vs. diverging.
4. Procedures	The methodological procedures to be followed in performing the task, e.g. group vs. pair work; planning time vs. no planning time.
Predicted outcomes: Product	The 'product' that results from completing the task, e.g. a completed table; a route drawn in on a map; a list of differences between two pictures. The predicted product can be 'open', i.e. allow for several possibilities or 'closed', and i.e. allow for only one 'correct' solution.
Process	The linguistic and cognitive processes the task is hypothesized to generate.

**Table 01:** A framework for describing tasks (Adopted from: Ellis, 2003:21)

## I.2. Types of tasks

### I.2.1. Target and Pedagogical Tasks

Nunan (2004:02) distinguished between two types of tasks: Target tasks that are used in the world beyond the classroom. They are tasks that reflect real-world uses of language and which might be considered a rehearsal for real-world tasks. Such as: role plays in which students practice different roles.

A piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include painting a fence, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, ... In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between.

And Pedagogical tasks which are carried within the classroom. They are particularly designed activities which are carried within the classroom and aim to require the use of specific interactional strategies and may also require the use of specific types of language such as: language skills, grammar, and vocabulary.

A pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form.

(Nunan, 2004: 04)

Also pedagogical tasks may help course designers to organize lessons and plan curricula for more effective language teaching and learning. "Task is a pedagogical unit that can be used as a basis for designing language courses" (Quoted in, Ellis: 27)

### I.2.2. Focused and Unfocused Tasks

According to Ellis (2003:16) "unfocused tasks may predispose learners to choose from a range of forms but they are not designed with the use of a specific form in mind. In contrast focused tasks aim to induce learners to process receptively or productively, some particular linguistic feature". Focused task contains the topics that are extracted from real life or from the academic curriculum, it has two major objectives either by stressing the

communicative use of language; the performance of the task in different communicative context or by establishing the use of a specific target feature.

### **I.2.3. Pica's Task Classification**

In the literature of TBLT, different classifications were given to tasks. Pica (1993) (as cited in Richard and Rodgers, 2001: 234) proposed five types for tasks which work accordingly to the kind of interaction that happens while task completion.

➤ **Jigsaw tasks**

These type of tasks involve learners to join different pieces of information in order to figure a whole (e.g. four individuals or groups may have four different parts of a poem and have to gather the poem together)

➤ **Info-gap tasks**

They are tasks in which one student or group of students has one set of information and another student or group has a complementary set of information where they must negotiate and find out what the other party's information in order to complete a given activity. These activities require the students to fill in missing information and then it requires their predictability of the vocabulary and information, in order to link between communication and negotiating of meaning and the speaker's and the listener's responses and reactions.

➤ **Problem-solving tasks**

Students are given a problem and a set of information and they are asked to arrive to a solution to the problem in which they have to reach a single resolution of the outcome

➤ **Decision making**

Students are given a problem for which there are a number of possible outcomes and they must choose only one shared resolution through negotiation and discussion.

➤ **Opinion exchange**

Where learners are engaged in free discussion and exchange of ideas however they don't need to reach agreement.

### I.3. The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

The task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach which claims that effective language teaching and instruction relies mainly on task implementation within and outside the classroom environment. The term of ‘task’ is a central unit of teaching instructions and methods .It is included within the communicative approach, that is, learning occurs through communication or use of the language. It stresses the negotiation of meaning while students communicate and interact when working on a given task. The interaction lets students face new knowledge rather than only their previous knowledge of the language. Teachers when using the Task-based learning, they mainly focus on the completion of the task instead of focusing on the correctness of language used there.

As the profession has continued to emphasize classroom interaction, learner-centered teaching, authenticity, and viewing the learner’s own experiences as important contributions to learning, task based instruction draws the attention of teachers and learners to tasks in the classroom.

(Brown ,2007:242)

Therefore, students use the language freely without worrying too much about form, which comes naturally. “Instead of a language structure, students are presented with a task they have to perform or a problem they have to solve” (Harmer, 2001: 86). Thus, tasks have such an obvious relationship to the real world. Many role plays, discussions, problem-solving tasks and information exchange tasks are performance of the learners’ internalized knowledge. In performing such tasks, learners move from receptive language form to creative language use. Brumfit (1984:90) “The first assumption is that we are concerned in the classroom with the language use, not language knowledge; the second is the view that we learn language effectively by using it in realistic situation”.

Shavelson and Stern (1981: 478; Cited in Nunan, 2004:40 ) suggested that task designers should take into account the following elements when designing any kind of learning activities:

- **Content:** “the subject matter to be taught”
- **Materials:** “the things that learners can observe/manipulate”

- **Activities:** “the things that learners and teachers will be doing during a lesson”
- **Goals:** “the teachers’ general aims for the task”
- **Students:** “their abilities, needs and interests are important”; the cognitive, physiological and psychological aspects are stressed.
- **Social community:** “the class as a whole and its sense of ‘groupness’” .

#### I.4. Tasks in Language Teaching and Learning

EFL teachers consider tasks as a vital part of teaching, so that they design their lectures mainly around task practices in order to make language teaching and learning more interactive and communicative. Ur (1981:02) suggested that:

Most courses now emphasize the importance of fostering learners’ ability to communicate in the foreign language rather than their skill in constructing correct sentences, and there is a corresponding increase in the time and energy allotted to communication exercises in the classroom.

Classroom tasks play a crucial role in recent approaches of language teaching mainly the communicative approach that stresses the realization of any piece of language. Key assumptions of task-based instruction are suggested by Feez (1998:17 ; Cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:224)

- \_ The focus is on process rather than product
- \_ Basic elements are purposeful activities and tasks that emphasis communication and meaning
- \_ Learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully while engaged in the activities and tasks
- \_ Activities and tasks can be either:  
Those that learners might need to achieve in real life; those that have a pedagogical purpose specific to the classroom
- \_ Activities and tasks of a task-based syllabus are sequenced according to difficulty;

- The difficulty of a task depends on a range of factors including the previous experience of the learner, the complexity of the task, and the degree of support available.

#### **I.4.1. The Role of the Teacher**

Teachers act as role players in the wide range of activities within the task based language teaching. In other words, they have an interconnected set of teaching roles; they do not only plan educational programs and create teaching syllabuses but also they have to select and arrange the various tasks and activities that learners practice inside the classroom and to engage them in different kinds of tasks. Thus, EFL teachers within Task-Based Approach (TBA) have to play different roles in different classroom activities for good teaching practices. Sometimes the teacher acts as a provider of information, other time he acts as a guide while performing a task and as a monitor during the whole task. Those three roles are the most relevant ones when teachers want to engage students in communicative tasks and obtain the fluency in language use. As Harmer (2001:275-276) stated, the teacher may act the following roles:

##### ➤ **Prompter**

When students face difficulties in solving such kinds of activities and “get lost”, teachers may intervene and help them by offering some suggestions to the problem. Students then will be better engaged within the activity without feeling an exited or frustrated.

##### ➤ **Participant**

Teacher may play the role of participant in discussion and role play in order to push learners towards communication.

##### ➤ **Feedback provider**

Teachers need to know how much they should talk and what kind of talk there should be in the classroom. Here, it is the mission for the learner to know how to gain more practice from the information given by the teacher.

Richard and Rodgers (2001:236) stated three major roles for teachers that will be mentioned as follows:

➤ **Selector and sequencer of tasks**

Accordingly to the learner's skills and satisfying to his needs and interests, the teacher selects and adapts certain instructions to be followed seeking to find out good and effective results that satisfy both him and the students.

➤ **Preparing learners for tasks**

students should be prepared before engaging in any kind of tasks, teacher introduces the activity in such a way where learners feel comfortable, interested and motivated to do the task. "Most TBLT proponents suggest that learners should not go into new tasks "cold"".

➤ **Consciousness rising**

raising students' awareness of the task objectives is a central role for teachers to adapt in their classes.

#### **I.4.2. The Role of the Learner**

The type of classroom activities proposed in TBLT implied new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners. Learners now have to participate in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. According to Richard and Rodgers (2001: 235) the learners play specific roles within several kinds of language activities:

➤ **Group participant**

Tasks are most of times done in pairs and groups. Participants are engaged in various activities that require real communication, meaningful interaction and dynamic learning where students practice the language the language in natural and real communicative contexts.

➤ **Monitor**

Learners monitor their prior knowledge as well as own learning. "Class activities have to be designed so that students have the opportunity to notice how language is used in communication" (*ibid.*)

➤ **Risk-taker and innovator**

“The skills of guessing from linguistic and contextual clues, asking for classification, and consulting with other learner may also need to be developed”. (Richards and Rodgers: 2001:235) .Background knowledge and linguistic experience are required for the students to perform well in tasks; learners have to be creators of their own learning.

### **I.5. Cooperative Learning**

The definition of cooperative learning implies that learners learn from each other in pairs or groups. It mainly emphasizes learner centered in which each member of the group is responsible for his own contribution to tasks. It requires tasks where learners benefit from each other's social skills and group interaction skills such as turn taking, listening, helping, agreeing, disagreeing, and accepting others' opinions. Richards and Rodgers (1986:195) suggested a definition for that term:

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each others ' learning. It may be contrasted with competitive learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of “A”.

Researchers on classroom tasks highlight the importance of students' cooperation when emphasizing the crucial role of interaction in helping students to establish their own knowledge besides to benefit from others' knowledge or experience when learning a foreign language. In cooperative learning, students are “a team whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully.” (Brown,2001:47).For effective and meaningful collaboration and in order to help teachers to foster their students' cooperation in pair or group work, Ellis (2003:271) noted eight elements which will be summarized as follows:

- **Student's orientation of the task**

Fluency will be achieved in group work if students are serious and aware enough about what does the task intend to reach “the task is worthwhile and not simply an opportunity

for some ‘fun’. They have to have designed objectives and goals to be reached at the end of any task.

- **Individual accountability**

Students have to make accountability for their own contributions to accomplish a given task.

- **Group composition**

Two major elements will be taken into account; size and membership. Both elements can achieve a good work.

- **Distribution of information**

Students who lack the proficiency and are not able to work well ‘put in charge of the information’

- **Physical arrangement of students**

Students have to seat in arranged way, so they can interact easily, share ideas and talk in quite manner.

- **Collaborative skills**

Task engagement and students collaboration is the job of teachers when monitoring the group work, teachers need to train students how to use communication strategies, how to agree and disagree and how to negotiate meaning with other members of the group.

- **Permanence and Cohesion**

According to Ellis(2003:271) “cooperative learning requires that students have time to consider how their group is functioning and find ways of working together effectively”. Students have to stick on their groups in order not to lose the “positive independence” to the group.

- **Teacher's role**

In concerning to the achievement of effectiveness and fluency in tasks, teachers may play different roles as they pointed out by Jacobs (1998; As cited in, Ellis, 271) “modeling, collaboration, observing and monitoring the students ‘performance and intervening when a group is experiencing obvious difficulty”

According to Meyers (1993;Cited in: Herrell and Jordan,nd:99), cooperative learning has certain principles that help the learners to improve their level in learning the language.

Principle	Example	Benefits to English language learners
Cooperative tasks are designed so that individuals must work together for the task to be accomplished.	Jigsaw activities involve each member of the team being given a piece of the information so that they must work together or no one will have all the necessary data.	English language learners must be encouraged to participate in the tasks or the whole team will fail to accomplish their assignment.
Positive interactions are developed and encouraged.	The group's evaluation is based on individual and group marks. Group members are rewarded for peer tutoring and supporting weaker students.	Because peer tutoring and group support of individuals are encouraged and rewarded. All students are supported to successes.
Students have opportunities to work in different teams.	A variety of plans are used for grouping such as interest groups, random groups, heterogeneous groups, etc.	English language learners have an opportunity to get to know other students in meaningful ways and to demonstrate their competence in a variety of ways.
Social, language and content skills are all learned in the process of interacting with the group.	Social and academic language interactions in cooperative groups help the students to learn pro-social behaviors as well as content knowledge.	English language learners Benefit from the verbal interaction. Learning social norms and content-related language.

**Table0 2:** Principles of Cooperative Learning. **Adopted from Meyers, 1993**(Cited in: Herrell and Jordan,nd:99)

## I.6. Related Issues to Language Tasks

### I.6.1. Fluency Vs. Accuracy

If the activity is designed to measure the correctness of a piece of language that is accuracy, but if it stresses the use of language as fluent and flexible as the speaker may do that is fluency and that is what ‘communicative’ and ‘non-communicative’ activities focus on. Communicative Language Teaching pays less attention to accuracy and the emphasis is mostly given to fluency. Harmer had noticed that “Activities in CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the accuracy of the language use is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing” (2001: 85)

Communicative Language Teaching aims to develop fluency in language use. Fluency can be developed if students practice different classroom activities where they negotiate meaning, share ideas and experiences, and avoid communication breakdowns by using communicative strategies. As Morrow (in Brumfit, 1984:129) stated:

Fluency is natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence.

Richards (2006:14) classified language activities according to their accuracy and fluency:

- *Activities focusing on fluency*
  - Reflection of the use of language naturally
  - Stressing the importance of realizing the communicative goals of the language
  - Negotiating of meaning is essential
  - communication strategies are required
  - Produce language that may not be predictable
  - The interdependence of use and context
- *Activities focusing on accuracy*
  - Reflect classroom use of language
  - Stressing the correctness of language form
  - The use of language does not attached the context

- Practice small samples of language
- Communication is not any more stressed
- Control choice of language

### **I.6.2. Authenticity in Tasks**

How can real communication take place in such an unreal setting? Can English teachers turn classrooms into a foreign environment for better learning? What does it mean to be exposed to authentic materials when learning a new language rather than your first one? And what are the benefits from using such kind of materials? Those questions and others are frequently asked within CLT classrooms. In CLT, one of the most debated issues has always been the use of authentic materials in teaching activities and is also concerns the achievement of ‘real’ communication in English classes. Authenticity of the task means whether the task is designed for language learning or for the practice of newly learned grammatical items. It has been agreed upon the importance of using authentic materials within English classrooms to trigger students to operate with the language in real world contexts. Thus, the more teachers bring the real world materials to the classroom, and try to involve students in every new learning experience, the more effective teaching they present. Clarke and Silbertstein argued “Classroom activities should parallel the ‘real world’ as closely as possible since language is a tool of communication, methods and materials should concentrate on the message and not the medium” (1977: 51). Moreover, when language classroom speech does not fit the language of the real world, students most of times have a sort of misunderstanding of people outside of the classroom and that what may lead to the failure of acquiring the new language as it would be. In CLT authentic materials cope with the different language communicative situation provided by the teacher “CLT is an eclectic blend of the contributions of previous methods into the best of what a teacher can provide in authentic uses of the second language in the classroom”.(Brown, 2007:18)

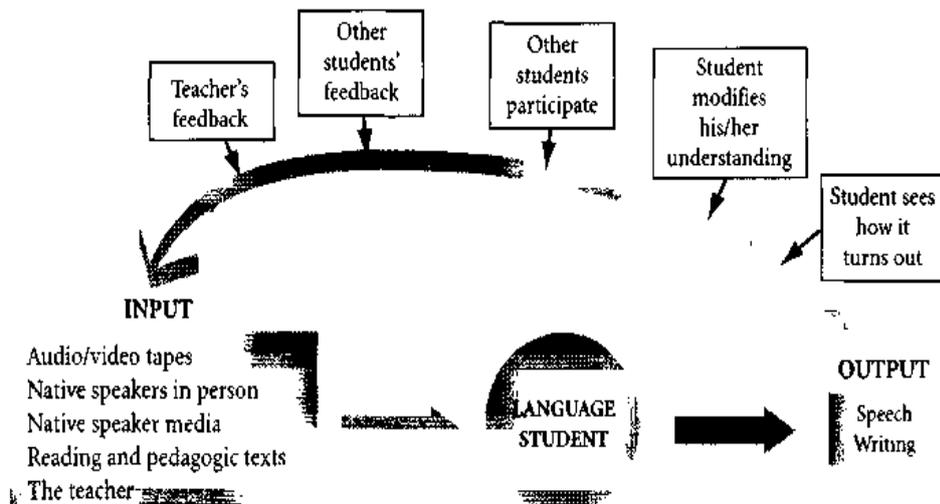
### **I.6.3. Input, Output and Feedback in Language Tasks**

Many current studies have estimated that students learn best any foreign language when they are exposed to samples of that language which are at or just above the student's current level of acquisition of the language. “Input refers to the spoken, written and visual data that learners work with in the course of completing a task. Data can be provided by a

teacher, a textbook or some other source”. (Nunan, 2004: 47). For many language teachers, successful comprehension of the language has a central role to develop in communicative processes. Krashen has coined the term of comprehensible input in 1980 under his famous theory in second language acquisition (SLA) known as input hypothesis where he suggested that language acquisition is driven exclusively by ‘comprehensible input’. Krashen has estimated that language acquisition happens incidentally. So that, learners are exposed to certain degree of comprehensible input and what makes that input comprehensible is proposed by Krashen (1981;Cited in Bygate, Skehan and Swain,2001:54):

Firstly, speakers employ ‘simplified registers’ when speaking to learners, these registers provide learners with the kind of ‘modified input’. Secondly, listeners can use contextual information to help them decode input containing unknown forms and thereby comprehend and acquire them.

Adjusting what teachers may say to match the students’ knowledge and language level is often regarded by EFL teachers. They always try to make the input easier and simpler for the students. Input in language teaching has to be modified and simplified in order to fit students’ level of understanding and comprehension too. So that, teachers may use shorter and simpler pieces of information, highlight new words or repeat unfamiliar patterns in order to arrive at full comprehension of input as well as successful way of learning for their students. The modification of input contributes too much in improving language competence and in promoting the process of interaction among the students. Long (1981;As cited in Ellis, 2003:23) claimed that “the ‘best’ input for language acquisition is that which arises when learners have the opportunity to negotiate meaning in exchanges where an initial communication problem has occurred”. Output also plays a great role in language acquisition and second language learning, it accompanies input. Bygate, Skehan and Swain,2001 :56) stated that: “output work together with input, the former serving as a cognitive trigger for the kind of input processing needed for acquisition”



**Figure 01:** The Circle of Input and Output. **Harmer (2007:250)**

Feedback in language learning has significant importance as input and output. For instance, there are several ways of getting students to benefit from feedback which are through two main types where feedback can be presented, the first is teacher-learner feedback “as well as providing cognitive feedback (about the comprehensibility or accuracy of what the learner has said), teachers give affective feedback (showing approval and disapproval)”. (Lynch, 1996:117). The second type is called learner-learner feedback where students correct and modify each other’s ideas and notice the gap between what they believe and what they should believe. Several reasons elaborate the correction of feedback and urge the students to advice and correct their feedback are proposed by Lynch (1996:118):

- \_ It raises learners’ speaking opportunities
- \_ It stresses the learners’ consciousness towards language forms
- \_ It urges students to judge pieces of language
- \_ It in an acknowledgement where learners know more about specific areas than others
- \_ It creates real communication among the students

The following table describes the four types of feedback in the learning process. Negative, Positive and Implicit and Explicit.

	Implicit	Explicit
Positive	Clues showing the listener understands	Confirmation (approval)
Negative	Signals that repair is Necessary	Correction (disapproval)

**Figure 02:** Alternative Forms of Feedback (Lynch, 1996:117)

## I.7. Task Techniques

Language tasks have various techniques where learners practice the language in different ways, either they exercise the language in group work, role play or free discussion.

### I.7.1. Group Work

Group work is a key feature in the practice of English language teaching, it has to do with classroom management as a whole and class grouping when arranging certain kinds of tasks and activities. Group work has drawn remarkable advantages in the field of teaching and learning in the language classroom. Dewey (1916:302) said that: “certain capacities of an individual are not brought out except under the stimulus of associating with others” (as cited in Ellis, 2003: 266) .Students may work in large groups, do activities, solve learning problems and engage in various tasks within the classroom. During group work many advantages will be appeared; the amount of speaking will be raised, the amount of interaction will be higher and all group members will be active and the most important group work will improve learner’s autonomy and contribution and eases the cooperation and negotiation between group members. Interaction helps a lot in the students’ language development and raises the amount of talking for each student. When negotiating meaning they learn new words and new meanings. Group dynamic has to pass through four stages of group development that are given by Bruce Tuckman (1965) Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing where learners firstly get together and form groups then members of the group try to be highly involved with each other and the job of the team leader is to help members to pose their views, and to achieve task purposes. Then in the third stage, members are eventually agreed on how the group operates and finally, the group is going

to meet its objectives effectively and efficiently. Group work has many advantages that contribute to the achievement of successful language learning.

Advantage	Comment
1. The quantity of learner speech can increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In teacher-fronted classrooms, the teacher typically speaks 80% of the time; in group work more students talk for more of the time.</li> </ul>
2. The variety of speech acts can increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In teacher-fronted classrooms, students are cast in a responsive role, but in group work they can perform a wide range of roles, including those involved in the negotiation of meaning.</li> </ul>
3. There can be more individualization of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In teacher-fronted classrooms, teachers shape their instruction to the needs of the average student but in group work the needs of individual students can be attended to.</li> </ul>
4. Anxiety can be reduced	
5. Motivation can increase	
6. Enjoyment can increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel less nervous speaking in L2 in front of their peers than in front of the whole class</li> </ul>
7. Independence can increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be less competitive when working in groups and are more likely to encourage each other.</li> </ul>
8. Social integration can increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are ‘social animals’ and thus enjoy interacting with others in groups; in teacher-fronted classrooms student-student interaction is often proscribed.</li> </ul>
9. Students can learn how to work together with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activities help students to become independent learners.</li> </ul>
10. Learning can increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activities enable students to get to know each other.</li> <li>• In typical teacher-fronted classrooms, students are discouraged from helping each other; group work helps students to learn collaborative skills.</li> <li>• Learning is enhanced by group work because students are willing to take risks and can scaffold each other’s efforts.</li> </ul>

**Table 03:** Ten Potential Advantages of Group Activities in Language Instruction **(Based on Jacob 1998) (Cited in :Ellis 2003:267)**

### I.7.2. Role-Play

It is an effective way of getting students to practice the language and to use it in real life contexts. It involves high amount of interaction among the learners and helps them a lot to know how to behave in specific social contexts. Ur (1999:131) said that:

Role-play... is used to refer to all sorts of activities where learners imagine themselves in a situation outside the classroom ...sometimes playing the role of someone other than themselves and using the language appropriate to this new context.

Role plays help students use language fluently. They also help them learn to be creative, imaginative, and resourceful. Within role play the teacher provides a brief description of (i.e., the characters and situation). And in the other hand the students create the words and design actions. Ur (1981:09) claimed that:

Role -play exercises are usually based on real-life situations: hence the speech they acquire is close to genuine discourse, and provides useful practice in the kinds of language the learners may eventually need to use in similar situations outside the classroom.

According to Littlewood (1981:49) there are certain techniques to be followed when practicing a role play that are mentioned here:

- \_ Learners have to imagine themselves as if they are outside the classroom and live the situation in real life context e.g., meeting a friend in the street or make a business negotiation.
- \_ They have to create roles related to those situations; either they act as themselves or to create a
- \_ They have to behave as if the situation is real one according to their roles.

Revell (1979: 60) sees role play as: "an individual's spontaneous behavior reacting to others in a hypothetical situation."'. For instance, Role play may take many forms:

- **Dialogues:**

Ur (1999:132) considered this type as “out of fashion” and “traditional language learning” it based most of times on learning a given dialogues by heart then perform it in different ways and moods (happy, sad, bored....etc.) in pairs or groups. He claimed that:

The dialogue is a good way to get learners to practice saying target language utterances without hesitation and within a wide variety of contexts; and learning by heart increases the learner’s vocabulary of ready-made combinations of words or ‘formulates’

- **Plays**

Plays are a kind of expansion that happens in dialogues where learners study a play and then perform it in pairs or groups.

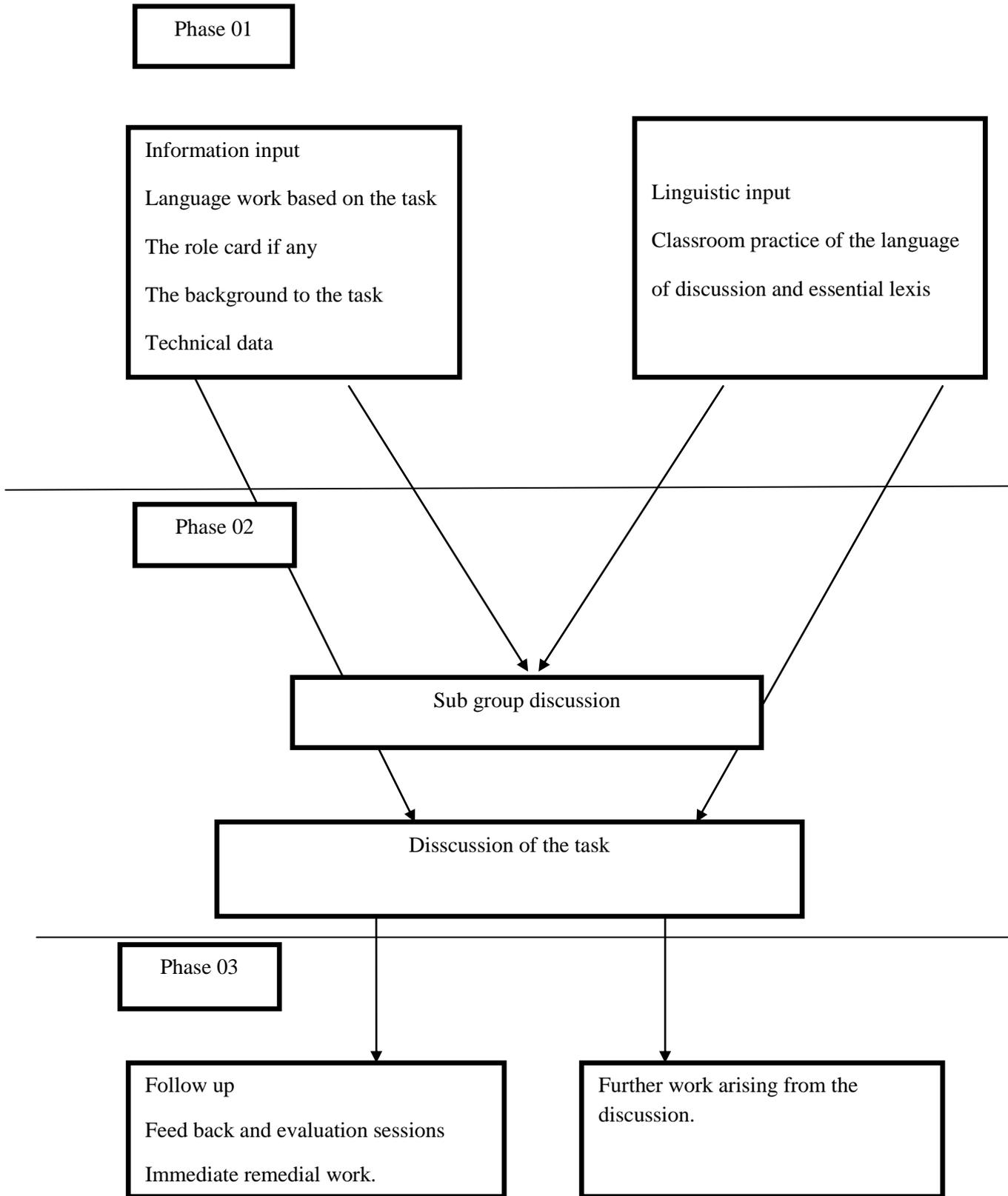
- **Role cards**

It is a kind of role play where the teacher provides the students with cards that have instruction printed in them. These cards control and guide the students’ performance.

- **Simulation**

“The individual participants speak and react as themselves, but the group role, situation and task they are given is an imaginary one” (Ur, 1999:132)

Simulation has three major phases: the first one is when giving the participants the background information of the task; the second one that include the negotiation and discussion of the given task and the third one is about the feedback and the evaluation of that feed back. Those three phases are shown under here in a diagram proposed by Herbert and Sturtidge (1979; Cited in Littlewood, 1999:81):



**Figure 03:** The Structure of Simulation (Littlewood, 1999:81)

### I.7.3. Discussion

Discussion in the target language helps students to get to express themselves freely without any imposed instructions from the teacher; the turn is given to students to say whatever comes to their minds from ideas, suggestions, and beliefs. According to Ur (1981:02) “The most natural and effective way for learners to practice talking freely in English is by thinking out some problem or situation together through verbal interchange of ideas ; or in simpler terms, to *discuss*” . When holding discussions there is much to be learnt from what have been said, learners will get an efficient fluency practice of the foreign language and will develop their debating skills when involving in conversations and discussions.

### I.8. Communicative Activities

Communicative activities seek to develop students’ communicative competence through linking grammatical development to the ability to communicate. In recent methods, learners’ ability in carrying out communicative activities is highly demanded in the spoken English classroom. For instance, this kind of activities urges students to understand, simulate and exchange communication between the students and/or the students and the teacher.

The communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as communicative act in its own right.

(Richards and Rodgers 2001:224)

Communicative activities had been come from the division of activities identified by Littlewood (1981); pre-communicative and communicative activities, one which focus on form and the other which focus on meaning.

- **Pre-communicative Activities**

refer to the kind of activities that stress the correctness and acceptability of the linguistic forms aiming to give the students fluent control over those linguistic forms by stressing the connection between the form and meaning, its main criterion for success is whether the learner produces acceptable language.

- **Communicative Activities**

are about activities where linguistic forms have to parallel the communication of meaning. Learners attain the meaning from the discourse and the production of several linguistic forms. Here, the criterion for success is whether the meaning is conveyed fluently.

In communicative classrooms, teachers use communicative tasks in order to give the students the opportunity to share information, practice the language and work collaboratively and cooperatively for the completion of language activities. Nunan (1989) suggested,

The type of classroom activities proposed in CLT also implied new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners. Learners now had to participate in classroom activities that were based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students had to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher for a model. (Richards, 2006:05)

Littlewood (1981:20) had proposed two types of communicative activities which he called 'functional communication activities' and 'social interaction activities', the first type has to do with the different meanings of language forms; every word and every piece of language has a function and conveys an intended meaning. Appropriateness of the language to certain situation is not stressed, even grammatical accuracy does not matter, the most important subject is whether the language learners use is semantically and functionally effective or not. The second type emphasizes the social and functional aspects of any communicative act. Littlewood suggested that "Another important aspect of communicative skill is the ability to take account of the social meaning as well as the functional meaning of different language forms".

## Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to look at certain aspects of classroom tasks. It supplies us with different activities designed to have useful features that have contributed to both student's motivation in language tasks. As it has been viewed in this chapter, tasks often provide students with real exposure to language through different uses of the target language. Furthermore, Task Based Approach (TBA) as a practical method to language teaching brings the claim that language learning is better achieved through creating the useful types of interactive and cooperative processes in the classroom, and the best manner to create these conditions is to use designed communicative tasks inside the classroom environment.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Communicative Competence

"The **people who've made** the most positive impression on me and who've had the most **positive influence on others** as well all share one quality. They're **excellent communicators**".

**McGraw-Hill(2007)**

## Chapter Two

### Communicative Competence

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## Introduction

It is clear that English, as a global and international language or as a Lingua Franca is nowadays widely used in communication between people and countries. So that, the over growing need for communication in the English language has made English Language Teaching (ELT) follow the steps of the communicative approach as a best method for language teaching. By the 1970's, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced as a reaction to the previous teaching methods and teachers become more aware of achieving the goals of CLT. For those reasons, Communicative competence (CC) becomes more recommended in the teaching of foreign languages. Hence, it has been widely accepted that Communicative competence becomes the ultimate goal of any useful language teaching program. In precise terms, CLT stresses the idea that learning a second language does not involve only learning its rules of grammar, acquiring its vocabulary items and knowing how to spell different words in the correct pronunciation, but also knowing how to use that background knowledge in real situations and to apply those rules in different contexts and use them in various conversations. Nowadays, in teaching and learning foreign languages there has been a move towards increasing and enhancing communication within classrooms and language teaching becomes for communicative competence in real life situation. Thus, Communicative language teaching syllabus sets as its major goal the teaching of CC. Nowadays, most EFL teachers see English as a medium of communicating either in or out the classroom and students regard English as a communicating tool after graduation and when involving in any profession that needs that language.

Many issues will be discussed in this chapter, firstly what does that new concept 'communicative competence' mean? What are its theoretical frameworks? And how is it applied in the recent teaching methods? In addition, how does communicative competence come to play an important role in the fields of teaching and researching in foreign languages over many years? How classroom tasks offer different possibilities and better opportunities for students to learn language. Then, how communicative competence and the communicative approach should be incorporated into L2 teaching and learning at the university level.

## II.1. Communicative Competence Definition

Communicative competence is a linguistic term which refers to a learner's ability in using language accurately and fluently. It does not only refer to a learner's ability to apply and use certain grammatical rules, but also to negotiate meaning with other language speakers, to express his views regarding certain issues, and to know what and how to use certain utterances appropriately according to certain situations. Communicative competence had first come with Hymes' definition where he said that his new concept equates to Chomsky's competence with Saussure's langue "Chomsky associates his view of competence and performance with the Saussurean concepts of langue and parole" (1972:273). However competence and langue are different, the first is concerned with individuals and the second is mainly about social issues and aspects of language because langue is a purely social concept "Elle est la partie sociale du langage, extérieure à l'individu" (Saussure, 1967:31) while competence is claimed to be more an individual property than a social product.

The new term in the field of linguistics underlies the view that language learning is embedded in the communicative approach to language teaching. For instance, Communicative competence (CC) came at the field of language teaching and learning by Dell Hymes in 1972. He believed that the ability to communicate efficiently in a given language is more essential than just knowing its rules of grammar. The term CC can be defined simply as what Brown (2003:28) said:

Learners do not first acquire language as a structure system and then learn how to use this system in communication, but rather actually discover the system itself in the process of learning how to communicate

For that, Students should learn how to use a language in their daily communication in order to demonstrate their mastery of a language. And for sure, language does not occur without oral or written forms that appear in communication. Munby (1978:16) defines competence in terms of knowledge and use.

I should take competence as the most general term for the capabilities of a person...competence is dependent upon both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use. Knowledge is distinct, then, both from competence (as its part) and from systemic possibility (to which its relation is an empirical matter).

According to Brown communicative competence it is “The aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts.”(Brown,2007:219) .So, communicative competence has contributed a lot to the teaching of foreign languages.

## II.2. Communicative Competence in Language Teaching

In the 1990s the communicative approach has been widely incorporated in EFL classes. Because it offers a set of very useful principles grounded in the notion of communicative competence as the goal of second and foreign language teaching, and a communicative syllabus and methodology as the way of achieving this goal, communicative language teaching has continued to evolve as our understanding of the processes of second language learning and its development. It has four major components that Ellis (2003:27-28) had combined in one single quotation which says:

CLT, however, drew on very different models of language. Thus, whereas the earlier methods were based on a view of language as a set of linguistic systems, CLT drew on a functional model of language (Halliday's) and a theory of communicative competence (Hymes'). To adopt Widdowson's terms ,whereas structural approaches to teaching focus on *usage*, i.e., the ability to use language correctly, communicative language teaching is directed at *use*, i.e., the ability to use language meaningfully and appropriately in the construction of discourse .

Moreover, communicative language teaching theory and practice aims at achieving a number of different educational demands and goals. And since it is characterized with eclectic features and came from diverse sources, there is no doubt that it satisfies many teachers that follow other approaches to language teaching.

### II.2.1. The Role of The Learner

Generally speaking, a good learner can be defined as a learner who works hard within and outside the classroom. From the communicative prospective, learners are communicators of that language .furthermore, learning a second language under the heading of the communicative approach involves learners in extensive use of the target language and offer them with comprehensible exposure to different authentic materials

seeking to increase their competence in communication over a period of time when learners are practicing language forms and then perform them in different social and cultural contexts. Also, it encourages them to express their opinions and beliefs and to handle social relationships and solve daily problems. Larson-Freeman(1986:131) supposed that:

Students are, above all, communicators. They are actively engaged in negotiating meaning- in trying to make them understood even when their knowledge of the target language is incomplete. They learn to communicate by communicating. Since the teacher's role is less dominant than in a teacher- centered method, students are seen as more responsible managers of their own learning.

Breen and Candlin (1980:110; As cited in Richard and Rodgers 2001:235) proposed a number of specific roles for learners in Task Based Instruction (TBI). Students learning English as a new language additional to their first or second language in CLT are given a variety of roles;

The role of the learner as negotiator-between the self, the learning process and the object of learning-emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way

### **II.2.2. The Role of The Teacher**

Teacher's roles in communicative teaching classrooms are quite different from those of traditional classrooms; within the communicative approach, the teacher involves his students in face- to face interaction, cooperative learning and communicative activities. For instance, the large demand of successful education and effective teaching has made the teacher's role exceeds giving information all the time and taking sessions and sessions to explain lectures to the students. Thus, the good teacher within CLT is conceived to be more than just a lecturer and provider of information all the time. Hedge(2000:63) claimed that:

A communicative classroom also involves the teacher in a wider range of roles beyond that of providing and presenting new language. A good deal of time will be spent on managing learning: setting up activities, organizing material resources, guiding students in group work, encouraging contribution, monitoring activities, and diagnosing the further needs of students.

According to Breen and Candling (1980:99; Cited in, Richard and Rodgers, 2001:167) the most important roles of teachers being followed by CLT view are divided into twofold; as fundamental roles that are as a **facilitator of the process of communication** and as **an independent participant**

The teacher has two main roles: the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the teaching-learning group. The latter role is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it. These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher

And it involves secondary roles are as **an organizer of resources** as a **guide** or as a **researcher and a learner**:

First, as an organizer of resources and as a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities....a third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities. Richard and Rodger (*ibid.*)

Other roles for the CLT teacher are best viewed in being **as a needs analyst**; whose job is to determine learners' needs, wants and lacks "the CLT teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs" (*ibid.*). **A counselor**; he has to know about the learners attitudes toward teaching methods, styles and syllabi to respond to them. Also the teacher has to be **a group process manager**;

## II.3. Communicative Competence Theoretical Foundation

### II.3.1. Chomsky's Competence/Performance Model

the term of competence has been treated by the generative grammarian Chomsky in 1965 in his work of "Aspects of the Theory of Syntax" when he clearly distinguished between two key terms in the field of linguistics that are competence and performance; between having the knowledge of the rules of grammar and being able to use these rules in actual setting and real communication. He (1965:04) stated "we thus make a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of the language) and performance, the actual use of language in concrete situations". Chomsky's work on

communicative competence is purely reframing of Saussure's technical distinction between *langue* and *parole*. He (1965) believed that:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interests, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.

(Quoted in Brown, Malmkjar and Williams, 1996:02)

Also, Brown (2007:30) gave other approximate definition to both Chomsky's linguistic concepts "Competence refers to one's underlying knowledge of a system, event, or fact. It is the nonobservable ability to do something, to perform something". And "performance is the overtly observable and concrete manifestation or realization of competence"

### II.3.2. Dell Hymes' Sociocultural Appropriateness of Language

Communicative competence as a whole term had been firstly coined by Dell Hymes (1972); who introduced the idea of communicative competence in terms of the sociocultural appropriateness of language utterances and gave a more general use of language rather than Chomsky whose definition was very narrow and precise. He believed that the ability to communicate properly should be cultivated in language teaching. Students should learn how to use a language in their daily communication in order to demonstrate their mastery of a language.

The term of communicative competence was employed by Hymes to define the ability of speakers to use the language in various contexts to fulfill various objectives and needs. In other words, it is to be knowledgeable about the setting, the persons and the different meanings of a discourse when speaking and when bringing a discourse into realization beside the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and other aspects of language form. Hymes had noticed that the competence performance model provided by Noam Chomsky does not fit sociocultural features of the language as it normally been treated in recent time. Brown (2007:218) believed that "recent trends have put less emphasis on structural and cognitive characteristics of communication and more on the myriad social,

cultural, and pragmatic implications of what it means to communicate in a second language”

Communicative competence in the usage of Hymes (1971) involves four sectors of communication:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (Adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed and what it's doing entails

(In Brumfit et al., eds., 1979: 19)

In addition, Hymes suggests that any speech event is made up of seven components:

1. Sender (addresser: speaker, writer).
2. Receiver (address: listener, reader).
3. A message form
4. A channel
5. A code (language, regional dialect/ style).
6. A topic (the subject of discussion).
7. A setting (situation, context, place and time)

(In Brumfit et al., 1979)

### II.3.3. Canale and Swain's Model (1980)

- **Four Areas of Communicative Competence**

Hymes defined communicative competence as “the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication” (Canale, 1983:05). Canale and Swain proposed a theoretical framework in which they outline the four main areas of communicative competence: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. The first two types of competence are about language in itself that means how to use language for a range of different functions and how to produce and understand different genres of texts. The last two types are mainly for what concerns language users and their sociocultural differences; that is

knowing how to fit our use of language according to the participants the setting and the several contexts (e.g., to know when and where to use language appropriately for written as well as for spoken communication) also, knowing how to keep on communicating when having gaps in one's knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies). Riazi (2006:342) had provided a brief description of these four aspects of communicative competence.

In sum, grammatical competence emphasizes the ability of students to produce accurately structured comprehensible utterances, while sociolinguistic competence points to the ability to use socially-determined cultural codes in meaningful ways. Discourse competence stresses on the ability of the language user to shape and communicate purposely in different genres, using cohesion and coherence, and lastly, strategic competence aims at the learner's ability to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

When comparing Canale and Swain's communicative competence with that of Chomsky's in a broad sense, Chomsky's "competence" is equivalent to the "grammatical competence" suggested by Canale and Swain, and all other components of their framework are absent in Chomsky's definition.

#### II.3.4. Widdowson's Model

- **Language 'Use' and 'Usage'**

The difference between language use and usage is related to Saussure's distinction between langue and parole and Chomsky's competence and performance as well. Widdowson's usage is "the citation of words and sentences as manifestations of the language system", and use is "the way the system is realized for normal communicative purposes", having the knowledge and knowing how to apply it appropriately for certain communicative purposes. It would, therefore, display that learning a language involve both acquiring its linguistic and communicative aspects. Widdowson (1978:03) claimed that:

We are generally acquired to use our knowledge of the language system in order to achieve some kind of communicative purpose. That is to say, we are generally called upon to produce instances of language use: we do not simply manifest the abstract system of the language; we at the same time realize it as meaningful communicative behavior.

- **Signification and Value**

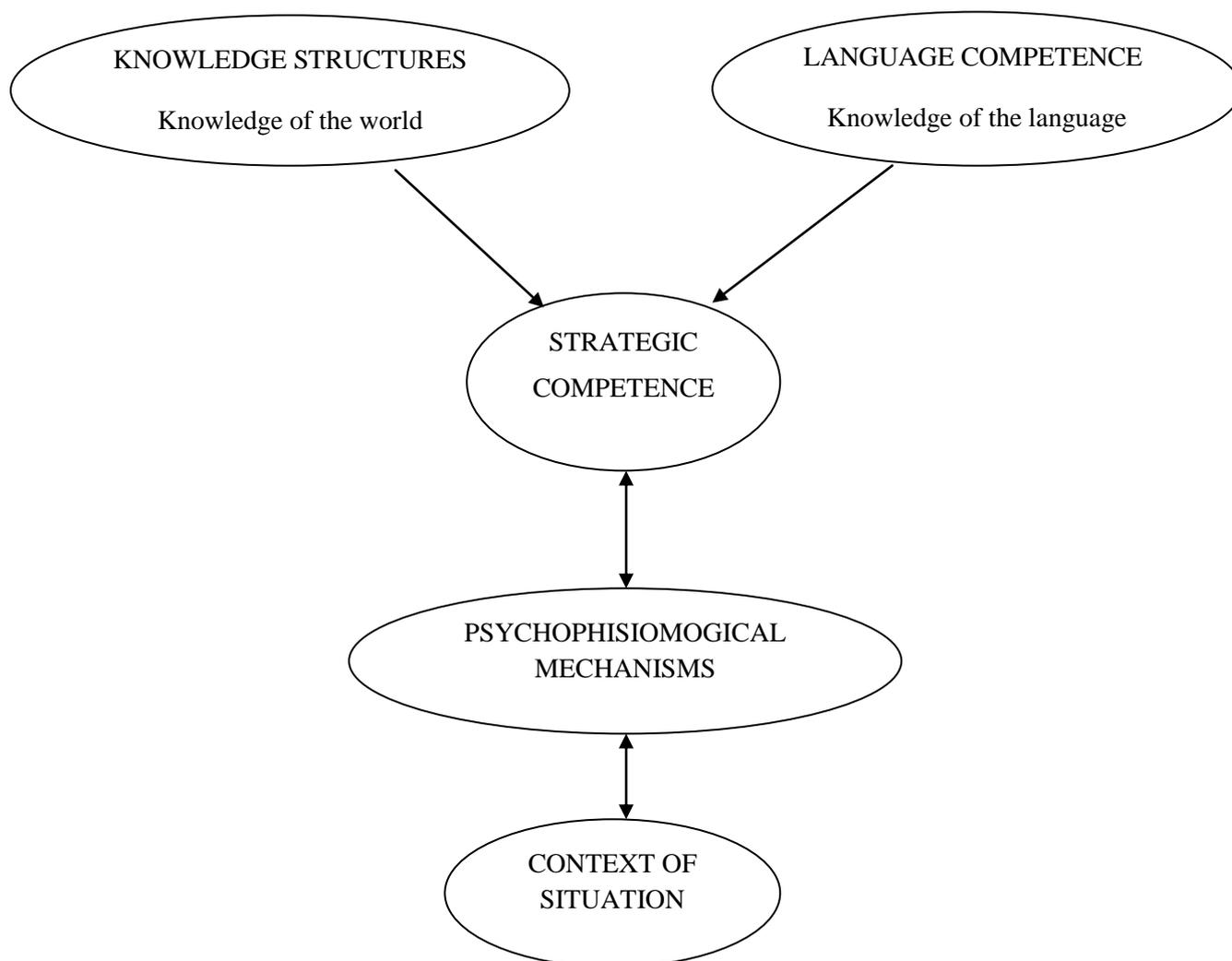
Beside the concepts of use and usage, Widdowson added ‘signification’ and ‘value’. It would seem helpful to make a distinction between two kinds of meaning. A sentence carries meaning and represents a proposition. Widdowson (1987:11) had proposed that:

It would seem helpful to make distinction between two kinds of meaning. Sentences have meaning as instances of usage: they express propositions by combining words into structures in accordance with grammatical words. We will call this kind of meaning *signification*.

The second type of meaning indicates that a sentence may have a value only when it is communicated. “The second kind of meaning is that which sentences assume when they are put to use for communicative purposes. We will refer to this as *value*”. (*ibid.*)

### **II.3.5. Bachman’s Model (1990)**

Bachman’s (1990) model of communicative competence that he called “communicative language ability” includes both the knowledge of language and also its communicative use in appropriate contextualized situations. For instance, it includes three major elements that are language competence, strategic competence and physiological mechanisms. Language competence comprises two sub components: organizational and pragmatic competence. The former, organizational competence consists of grammatical and textual competence paralleling Canale’s (1983) discourse competence. Then, pragmatic competence which had been considered as an essential element under the heading of the communicative competence that is related to grammatical and textual competence. Pragmatic competence consists of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence, Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2008:159) stated that “the former referring to knowledge of speech acts and language functions and the latter referring to the knowledge of how to use language functions appropriately in a given context”.



**Figure 4:** Components of Communicative Language Ability in Communicative Language use (Bachman 1990:85; Cited in Brown,249: 2007)

## II.4. Components of Communicative Competence

### II.4.1. Linguistic Competence

It refers to a speaker's knowledge of phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical and grammatical aspects of language. In other words, it is enabling the speaker to know rules governing the language so that he can build various discourses and written forms and then be able to spell them correctly in meaningful utterances. Brown (2007: 219) suggested that the grammatical 'linguistic' competence "encompasses knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar, semantics, and phonology" (Canale & Swain, 1980:29).

### II.4.2. Strategic Competence

According to Canale and Swain (1980:25) strategic competence can be defined in terms of “how to cope in an authentic communicative situation and how to keep the communicative channel open” . Generally speaking, strategic competence relies on using ‘communicative strategies’; those kinds of strategies are used when learners of a foreign language feel the complexity of L2 expressions and cannot express their ideas in the right place with the right intended meaning, here the non-native speaker he will either switch to other subject or change his primarily intention. Also, strategic competence had been defined as “the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence” (Canale and Swain, 1980:30). Other definition was given to strategic competence by Bachman (1990:85).when he said that that type of competence : “acts or serves as an ‘executive’ function of making the final decision among many possible options or wording, phrasing and other productive and receptive means for negotiating meaning” .

### II.4.3. Sociolinguistic Competence

It refers to the knowledge about different social and cultural features of language, for 2<sup>nd</sup> language learner to master the foreign language he has also to understand the speaker’s background knowledge of the social rules and norms of interaction between individuals and also institutions. Also, It is the kind of competence that “ requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used” ( Cited in Brown,2007:220) .in other words; sociolinguistic competence is defined as the mastery of sociocultural rules of appropriate use of L2; that is, how utterances are produced and understood in different sociolinguistic contexts (e.g., understanding of speech act conventions, awareness of norms of stylistic appropriateness, the use of a language to signal social relationships, etc.).

### II.4.4. Discourse Competence

Brown (2007: 220) suggested that discourse competence is “the ability to connect sentences [...] and to form meaningful whole out of a series utterances.” .This refers to a speakers’ ability to produce unified, cohesive and coherent spoken or written discourse of different genres .He (2007:247) said that “it is the ability we have to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of series of utterances,

Discourse means everything from simple spoken conversation to lengthy written texts (articles, books, and the like)” .

## II.5. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative language teaching (CLT), also known as the communicative approach is mostly based upon “the push toward communication”. (As cited in Brown, 2007: 241)It is the best method that offers a variety of activities and tasks within class time (pair work, discussions, role play...etc). As a new approach, the communicative approach of teaching aims at developing the use of language in different contexts by different persons, and with different styles and strategies of communication. Harmer(2001:84) stated that:

The communicative approach or communicative language teaching is the name which was given to a set of beliefs which included not only re-examination of what aspects of language we teach, but also a shift in emphasis how to teach

The subject of “what to teach” means what forms of language teachers should teach their learners and the “how to teach” is mainly related to the way teachers involve their learners in language tasks and activities. Harmer (1981:32)said:

Communicative language teaching has two main stands: the first is that language is not just bits of grammar, it is also involves language functions such as inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting etc., which students should learn how to use .they also need to be aware of the need for appropriacy when talking and writing to people in terms of the kind of language they use (formal, informal, tentative, technical etc.). The second stand of communicative language teaching developed from the idea that if students get enough exposure to language and opportunities for its use ...then language learning will take care of itself.

Supporting to Harmer’s definition, Brown (2007:241)claimed that “classroom goals are focused on all components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence”. Moreover, he attributed four main features to communicative language teaching (CLT) that are considered as definitions; which are summarized as follows:

- Classroom goals emphasis both linguistic and communicative competence.

- Language techniques Stress the functional aspect of language more than the organizational one in order to reach meaningful objectives.
- Fluency has more importance than accuracy in language use.
- When learning, students have to use the language either productively or receptively.

From EFL teachers' views the Communicative Language Teaching approach offers a great chance for the students to develop their communicative skills and promote their level of performance when doing tasks. Moreover, it develops their comprehension and understanding when facing cultural background of various topics while learning the foreign language. Teachers when applying such method in the classroom, they look for its communicative goals and the best ways that may achieve these goals. In addition, CLT as a language teaching method has rich and eclectic theoretical characteristics that view the language teaching from the communicative perspectives. Harmer (2001:84) believed that:

- Communicative language teaching Stresses both form and content and their independence.
- It involves all the competences together and not separately.
- listening, reading, writing and speaking (the 4 skills) are integrated in within
- It emphasizes the use of authentic language materials within teaching.
- It drives the acquisition of a new language forward.

In recent years, language teaching has been viewed from a very different perspective which applies the CLT in recent teaching methods. The method that comes as a reaction to traditional approaches to language teaching like the Audio lingual Method, the cognitive based approaches, the Total Physical Response (TPR), the Natural Approach, and many others. CLT turns learning from memorization of dialogs and drills, to the use of communicative activities, discussions, role plays, group work activities and cooperative learning. Finocchiaro and Brufit had provided us with distinctive features that make CLT differ from the Audio lingual method in the table underhere:

Audio lingual	Communicative Language Teaching
1. Attends to structure and for more than meaning.	1. Meaning is paramount
2. Demands memorization of structure-based dialogues.	2. Dialogues, if used, center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized.
3. Language items are not necessarily contextualized.	3. Contextualized is a basic premise.
4. Language learning is learning structures, sounds, or words.	4. Language learning is learning to communicate.
5. Mastery or “over-learning” is sought.	5. Effective communication is sought.
6. Drilling is a central technique.	6. Drilling may occur, but peripherally.
7. Native-speaker-like pronunciation is sought.	7. Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
8. Grammatical explanation is avoided.	8. Any device that helps the learner is accepted –varying according to their age, interest, etc.
9. Communicative activities only come after a long process of rigid drills and exercises.	9. Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.
10. The use of the students’ native language is forbidden.	10. Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible.
11. Translation is forbidden at early levels.	11. Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it.
12. Reading and writing are deferred till speech is mastered.	12. Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired.
13. The target linguistic system will be learned through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system.	13. The target linguistic system will be learned better through the process of struggling to communicate.
14. Linguistic competence is the desired goal.	14. Communicative competence is the desired goal.
15. Varieties of language are recognized but not emphasized.	15. Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methodology.
16. The sequence of unities is determined solely by principles of linguistic complexity.	16. Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content, function, or meaning that maintains interest.
17. The teacher controls the learners and prevents the fro doing anything that conflicts with the theory.	17. Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.
18. “Language is habit” so errors must be prevented at all costs.	18. Language is created by the individuals
19. Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal.	19. Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
20. Students are expected to interact with the language system, embodied in achiness or controlled materials.	20. Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through air and group work, or in their writings.
21. The teacher is expected to specify the language that students are to use.	21. The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use.

22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in the structure of the language.

22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.

**Table 04:** The major distinctive features of the Audio lingual Method and the Communicative Approach. **Adopted from: Finocchiaro and Brufit, 1983:91-93 (Cited in Richard and Rodgers, 2001:156-157).**

## II.6. Communicative Strategies

Communicative strategies are those used by speakers of the foreign language when they have to communicate meanings from which they lack linguistic sources. They are considered as an essential part of strategic competence; that is the set of communicative strategies which help compensate of failures in communication. Faerch and kasper (1983; Cited in Brown, 2007: 137) defined communicative strategies as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”. It has two categories: **a. Avoidance strategies** which is broken down into several sub-strategies; **lexical avoidance** where learners try to be far from using lexical item that they do not know their significance. For example: a conversation between a learner and a native speaker

L: I lost my road.

NS: you lost your road?

L: Uh.....I lost. I lost. I got lost.

Here, the foreign learner avoid using the item *road*, he appears to be unable to come with the right word *way*

The second type is **Phonological avoidance** where certain words in L2 have difficult way of pronunciation, learners escape from using them in their speech or writing.

**Topic avoidance** is the most frequent type of avoidance where learners change the whole topic.

**b. Compensatory strategies:** it compensates missing knowledge such as; **pre-fabricated patterns, code switching, and appeal to authority** that is defined in the table under here.

<b>Avoidance Strategies</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Message abandonment : leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties</li> <li>2. Topic avoidance : avoiding topic areas or concepts that pose language difficulties</li> </ol>
<b>Compensatory Strategies</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Circumlocution: describing or exemplifying the target object of action(<i>e.g., the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew</i>)</li> <li>2. Approximation: using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible(<i>e.g., ship for sailboat</i>)</li> <li>3. Use of all-purpose words: extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking(<i>e.g., the overuse of thing,stuff,what-do-you-call-it,thingie</i>)</li> <li>4. Word coinage: creating a nonexisting L2 word based on a supposed rule(<i>e.g.,vegetarianist for vegetarian</i>)</li> <li>5. Prefabricated patterns:using memorized stock phrases, usually for “survival” purposes(<i>e.g., where is the ———— or comment allez-vous?where the morphological components are not known to the learner</i>)</li> <li>6. Nonlinguistic signals: mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation</li> <li>7. Literal translation: translating using literally a lexical item, idiom, compound word, or structure from L1 to L2</li> <li>8. Foreignizing: using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and /or morphology (<i>e.g., adding to it a L2 suffix</i>)</li> <li>9. Code-switching: using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation while speaking in L2</li> <li>10. Appeal for help: asking for aid from the interlocutor either directly(<i>e.g., what do you call...?</i>)or indirectly (<i>e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression</i>)</li> <li>11. Stalling or time-gaining strategies: using fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think(<i>e.g., well, now let’s see, uh, as a matter of fact</i>)</li> </ol>

**Table 05 : Communicative Strategies. Adapted from Dörnyei 1995: 58(Cited in Brown 2007:138)**

## II.7. Assessing Students 'Performance

The focus on learner performance has been an important dimension to communicative language teaching since its first appearance. The assessment of students may take two forms, either they do it by themselves or by the teacher. Assessment of performance can be either explicit or implicit, the first one is when the teacher comment on student' answers or feedback in general and implicit when he prefer not to comment on the student' answer and directly give the turn to other student. Assessing students 'work can be seen in different ways as they had been stated by Harmer (2001:101) comments that refer to positive or negative signs of assessment i.e., when the teacher says that what the student has done seems right or wrong. Also, marks and grades can be useful because students are always looking for good marks and high grades, and the third way is through reports that come at the end of the term or an academic year where the teacher writes reports on students' behavior and work during the whole term. Although teachers' assessment provides the accurate evaluation for learners' achievement, students can also assess and evaluate each other. Thus, the frequently students judge their language production, the more they raise their awareness and contribution to the learning process. And that what Cram believed (1995: 282; Cited in Nuanan ,2004:149):

The major purpose of self-assessment is to provide the opportunity for learners to develop an understanding of their own level of skill, knowledge or personal readiness for a task in relation to their goals. This level will often be compared with a previously determined level and incorporated either into a summative report of gains made during a course or into a cumulative record of learner achievement.

### Conclusion:

All in all, improving learners' communicative competence has mostly been among the major goals of learning any foreign language. Thus, an important aspect of learning is for students to be able to communicate what they know, or what they have as a previous experience. So teachers need to encourage their students to verbalize their own knowledge so that they can learn more efficiently and effectively. In addition, improving communicative competence in teaching involves thinking about different tools and methods that teachers may use or follow in order to arrive at good results in teaching-learning process.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **The Field Work**

**Data collection**

**Analysis**

**Results**

# Chapter one

## Classroom Tasks

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## Introduction

After reviewing the literature about classroom tasks and their influence on improving EFL students' Communicative competence in the first two chapters, the last chapter presents our case study which was conducted under the descriptive method of investigation seeking to find a relation between language tasks and communicative competence. Also, to qualify the role of classroom tasks in developing 2<sup>nd</sup> year students' communicative competence. It contains detailed analyses of both the learners' and teachers' questionnaires and classroom observation. Then, it provides us with some suggestions and recommendations about the treated subject. For the present work, we designed two questionnaires, one for English teachers and one for 2<sup>nd</sup> year LMD students of English to obtain their responses and if possible their comments and suggestions.

### III.1 Students' Questionnaire

#### III.1.1. Description of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire was managed to 2<sup>nd</sup> year LMD students of English at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra (MKUB). It was applied to explore their understanding of Communicative competence and language tasks. Also, to investigate their need to learn English and practice it at the university. It is composed of four sections. 23 questions that contain three major types of questions: closed-ended, open-ended and multiple choice questions where the teachers/students answer by yes/no, put a tick in the corresponding boxes after reading the questions attentively or give their full statements wherever needed. The present study aims at clarifying and qualifying the importance of relying on language tasks in the development of students' communicative competence in L2.

The reason behind choosing to work with second year students is to benefit from their experience because they passed the first year as freshmen learners of English, so they already have tried classroom tasks and classroom environment in the university.

#### **Section One:** (01 Q to 05)

That section contains five questions (05) that give a general background about our respondents: their gender, average and their choices for learning English at the university level and reasons behind learning that language.

- **Section Two:** (06 Q to 13)

The overall objective of this section is to check students' knowledge and views about tasks carried within class time, also, about interaction, group work and cooperative learning.

- **Section Three:** (14 Q to 22)

This section intends to investigate whether the students have the knowledge about concepts as: Communicative competence, CLT and if they are aware enough about the importance of communication in the foreign language as they are about their L1.

- **Section Four:** (one item)

Section four provides us with the students' comments and suggestions about the treated subject.

### III.1.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

We have worked with second year LMD students of English as a population .We dealt with a sample of thirty (30)students (13% males and 87% females) from a total population of about 533 students (12 groups ). Our participants were from two different classes, diverse background and different levels.

### III.1.3 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire:

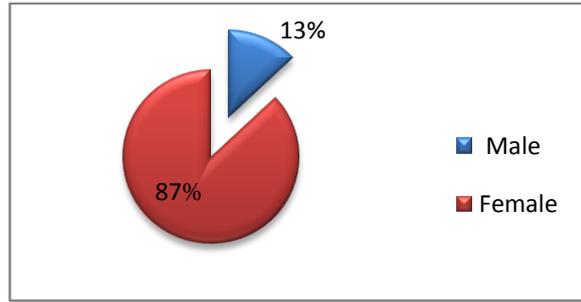
Answers from the students' questionnaire have been collected and analyzed in order to get some significant results that may help us to identify and qualify the research problem.

#### Section One: Back ground Information

**Item 01:**Your gender is:

Gender	Number of students	Percentage %
Male	04	13
Female	26	87
<b>Total</b>	30	100

**Table 06:** The students 'gender



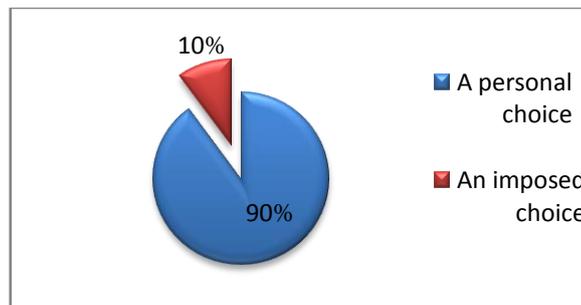
**Graph 01:** The students’ gender

The table (06) shows that the majority of our respondents are females; it illustrates that 87% of females are very interested in studying English and have the goodwill to learn languages. Thus, their dominance is higher than males in the English classrooms who present a small rate of 13% that refer only to 4 students.

**Item 02:** Learning English at the university is:

Gender	Number of students	Percentage %
A personal choice	27	90
An imposed choice	03	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 07:** Choice of studying English



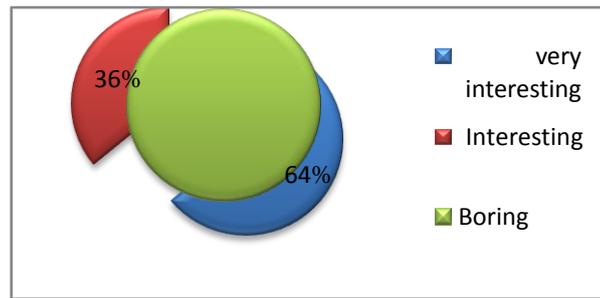
**Graph 02:** Choice of studying English

90% choose English willingly and with no obligation from either their parents or their relatives, they like it and that what helps them a lot in learning and communicating in that language . Just few students who were obliged to do so. For certain reasons such as: Their parents obliged them to learn English for its status in the world or for the sake of getting a profession after graduation. Or it was imposed by the administration.

**Item 03:** Learning English is:

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Very interesting	19	64
Interesting	11	36
Boring	00	00

**Table 08:** The position of English



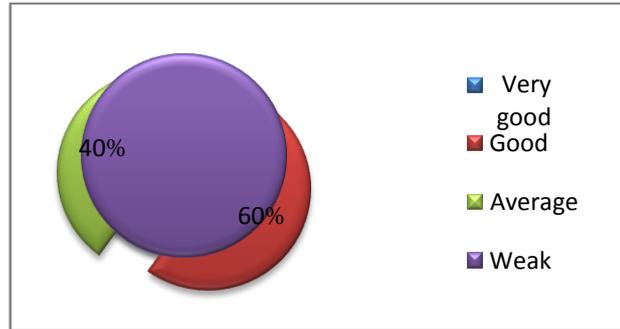
**Graph 03:** The position of English

The table (08) indicates that the students views about English was between very interesting (64%) and interesting(36%) and most of them are too interested to learn English .Moreover, no one sees English as a boring subject. So that, this result reveals that learners are interested and motivated to study English.

**Item 04:** Your level as a student of English is:

Average	Number of students	Percentage%
Very good	00	00
Good	18	60
Average	12	40
Weak	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 09:** The students' level



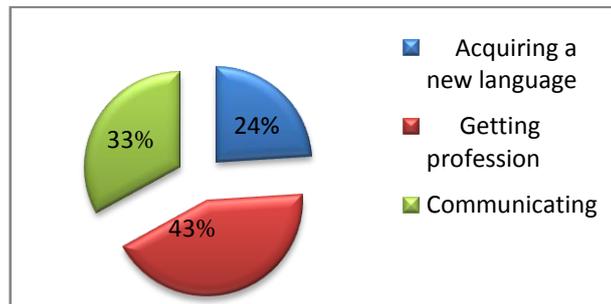
**Graph 04:** The students’ level

As far as the students’ level is concerned, most students 60% are good and 40% at the average. The majority of the students seem to be good learners of the language; they are too motivated and have the desire to do well in learning the English language, they work hard and plan their objectives and try hardily to realize them gradually.

**Item 05:** What is your main purpose for learning English as a foreign language at university?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
For acquiring a new language.	07	23
For getting profession.	13	44
For communicating.	10	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10:** Students ‘purposes for learning English



**Graph 05:** Students’ purposes for learning English

2<sup>nd</sup> year students were asked about their aims behind learning English at university, the majority answered that their purposes are either for getting profession (44% )or for communicating (33%). And just few of them (23%) are with the reason of acquiring additional language.

- **Justify your answer:** answers were different as well as justifications:

**For acquiring a new language;** to learn another language more than just their L1 (acquiring new words, expressions, vocabulary and new additional language). Moreover, to get a profession for some is not an aim, for communication they believe that they can communicate in L2 without a deep study for that language (its linguistic features).(Educational reasons).

**For getting profession;** students want to be teachers of English in the future. The need for work after graduating (Social reasons).

**For communicating;** English is the language of the world (It is universal and global) and it is needed for communication, it is the language of technology. In order to communicate with natives. (Cultural reasons).

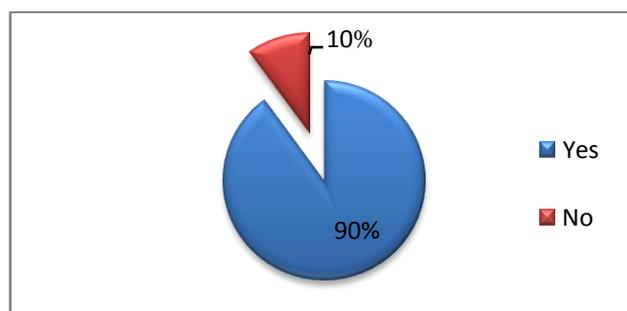
### Section Two: General Information

- **Part 01 : About Classroom Tasks**

**Item 06:** Tasks are frequently used by EFL teachers within the Classrooms?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	27	90
No	03	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 11:** The use of tasks within EFL classrooms



**Graph 06:** The use of tasks within EFL classroom

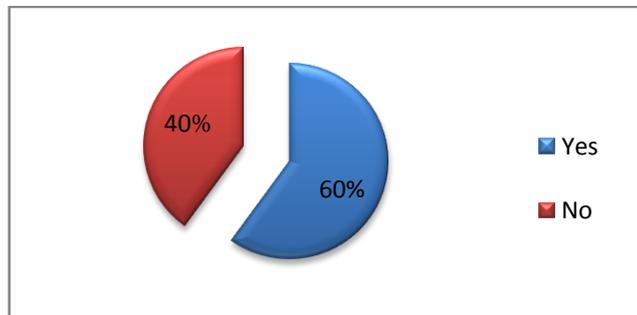
From asking that question, we aim to know if tasks have a centered position in EFL classrooms, and if teachers give much importance to tasks when planning the curriculum and designing teaching instructions .We get good results which estimated that 90% said

that tasks are frequently presented within the class. i.e., English teachers give learners the chance to practice the language as much as possible to raise their level in communication.

**Item 07:** Do you think that the amount of time given to task performance is enough for you to improve your competence in communication?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	18	60
No	12	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 12:** The amount given to task performance



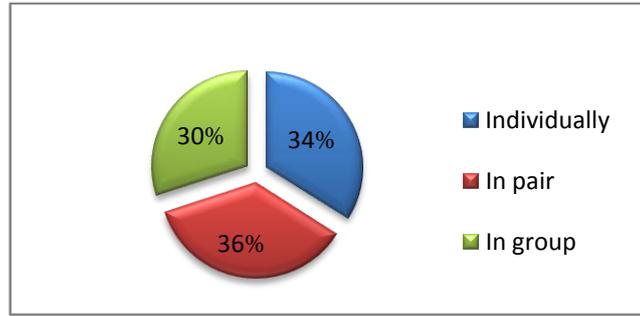
**Graph 07:** The amount given to task performance

According to the participants' responses, time allocated to task performance is sufficient for their communicative competence to be higher. They are fully involved in different activities and tasks that offer them with effective educational practices, purposeful interaction and meaningful communication.

**Item 08:** When doing a task, do you prefer to do it?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Individuelle	10	34
In pair	11	36
In group	09	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 13:** The ways of doing tasks



**Graph 08:** The ways of doing tasks

Students' answers were approximately similar, the respondents prefer to do tasks in different ways as it mentioned under here:

**Individually;** to know their weaknesses, evaluate themselves. Some students are too serious and care too much about the activity when they work individually, it helps them a lot in controlling the task performance, the feeling of foredoom so they can do it the way they want and give it more personal touch.

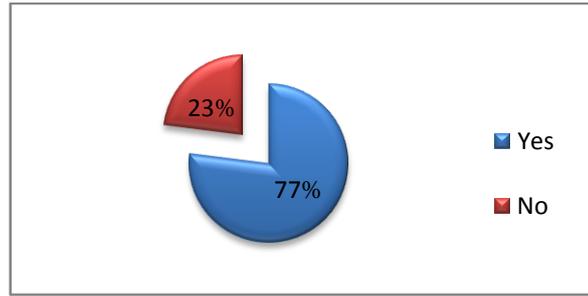
**In pair;** to share and exchange ideas. One partner is enough to perform the task in good way, each one help the other correct his mistakes.

**In group;** to exchange ideas as a whole group and the task will be done better in group, it will be easy and students benefit a lot from each other's knowledge or experience.

**Item 09:** you feel at ease (comfortable) during classroom tasks in English (L2)?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	23	77
No	07	23
<b>Total</b>	30	100

**Table 14:** Students' feelings towards classroom tasks



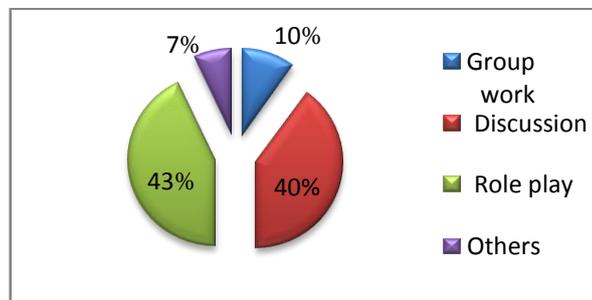
**Graph 09:** Students’ feelings towards classroom tasks

Most of the learners respond with “yes” when it comes to feeling at ease while doing tasks in English. The tables above reveals that 77% of students feel comfortable while involved in language activities in class and that creates good conditions that foster language use to achieve communicative purposes. 23% do not feel good when engaging in classroom tasks. They are unmotivated or they have the fear when being exposed to language tasks; they also feel shy when practicing the language in front of the teacher and their classmates.

**Item 10:** Which of those classroom tasks you like to practice the most?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage
Group work	03	10
Discussion	12	40
Role play	13	43
Others	02	07
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 15:** The most desired tasks by EFL students



**Graph 10:** The most desired tasks by EFL students

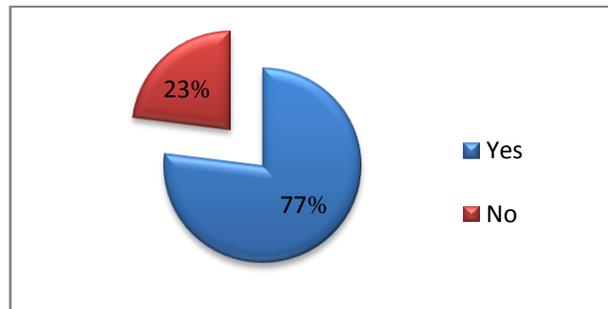
Discussion with 40% and role play with 43% are the most preferred kinds of tasks for the students, they nearly have the same rate. So that, they are considered to be

important techniques for creating various social situations and relationships between students. Group work comes after with 10% that indicate that students want to be free in using language and in selecting what they want to convey or suggest as solutions to the task. Role play comes first because learners enjoy acting and performing roles in the target language.

**Item 11:** Do you feel that classroom tasks improve your language skills?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	23	77
No	07	23
<b>Total</b>	30	100

**Table 16:** Improving students' language skills through the use of classroom tasks



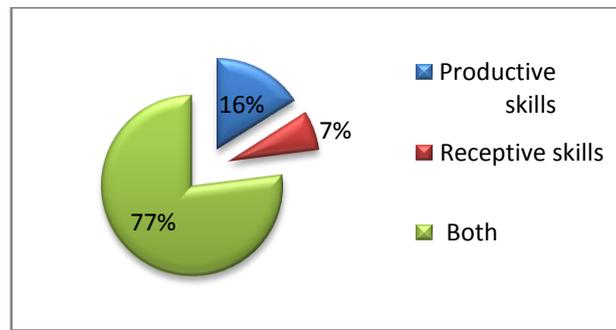
**Graph 11:** Improving students' language skills through the use of classroom tasks

77% of our respondents believe that classroom tasks improve their language skills; tasks include all the four skills. The type of tasks used is mainly targeted to foster students' skills either productively or receptively. For instance, in classroom tasks, students have the occasion to speak in front of others and the teacher; they perform writing tasks in devoted sessions. They have to listen to native speakers' speech and songs and to take notes for better understanding and after all they practice reading in the target language.

**Item 12:** The tasks used in the classroom involve:

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Productive skills	05	16
Receptive skills	02	07
Both	23	77
Total	30	100

**Table 17:** Classroom tasks and language skills



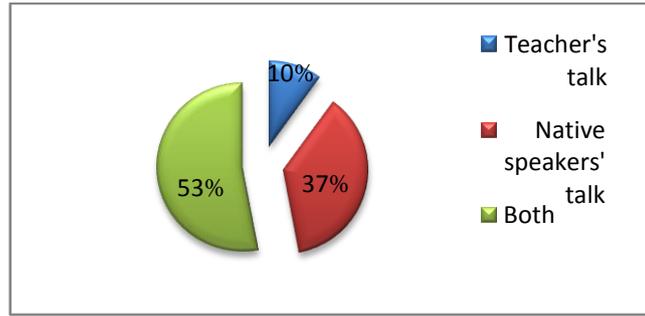
**Graph 12:** Classroom tasks and language skills

Both productive and receptive language skills are involved in language tasks; they are interrelated (reading comprehension, writing “paragraphs and essays”, speaking “oral presentation and free discussion”, listening comprehension). The majority of the respondents reply with “Both”. So that, language skills are given equal importance and distribution in tasks carried in the classroom environment.

**Item 13:** In oral lectures do you prefer?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Teacher’s talk	03	10
Native speaker’s talk	11	37
Both	16	53
Total	30	100

**Table 18:** The kind of talk preferred by the students



**Graph 13:** The kind of talk preferred by the students

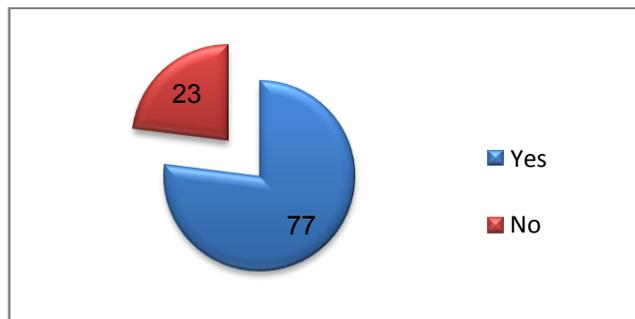
Concerning the kind of talk used in the classroom, students prefer to listen to both native speaker’s talk and teacher’s talk. As it is shown in the table above 53% of the students like both of them. That indicates that students have the desire to benefit from both native and non-native talk in order to make the difference between what is authentic and non-authentic.

- **Part 02: About Communicative Competence**

**Item 14:** Have you ever heard the term “communicative competence”?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	23	77
No	07	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 19:** Students’ knowledge about communicative competence



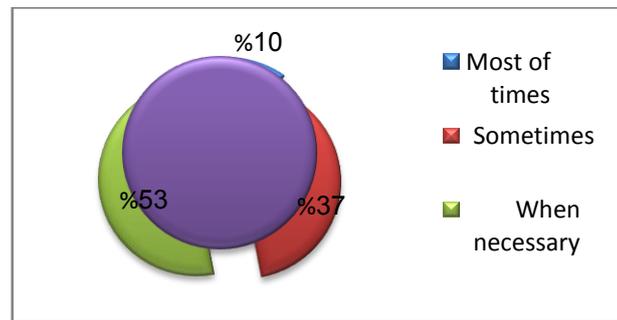
**Graph 14:** Students’ knowledge about communicative competence

77% have heard the term of “communicative competence” and it is too good and satisfied result. Just 23% who have not yet heard about that term. This shows that the majority of the respondents have an idea about what communicative competence demonstrates as a new concept related to teaching and learning any foreign language.

**Item 15:** In the classroom, you talk:

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Most of times	03	10
Sometimes	11	37
When necessary	16	53
Never	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 20:** Students’ amount of talking during class time



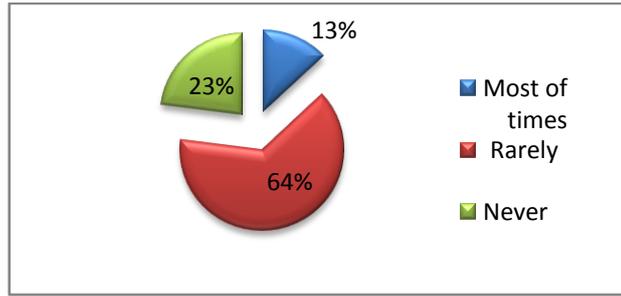
**Graph 15:** Students’ amount of talking during class time

The majority of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English (53%) speak that language only when necessary; when they are asked or they have to talk within the class. About 37% they talk sometimes. The rest 10% speak most of times. And it is too little for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year students to speak just when necessary or even sometimes.

**Item 16:** How often do you talk in English outside the classroom?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Most of times	04	13
Rarely	19	64
Never	07	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 21:** Students’ amount of talking outside the class



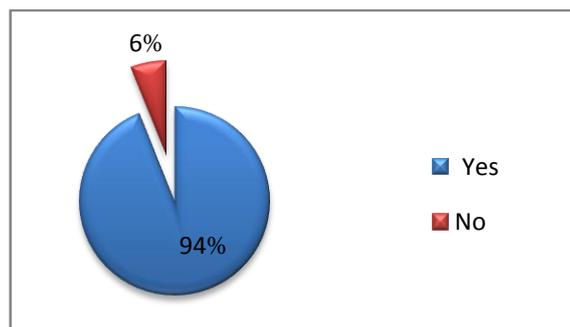
**Graph 16:** Students’ amount of talking outside the class

The results drawn from table (16) shows that 2<sup>nd</sup> year students do not practice English outside the classroom. The majority (64%) replied with ‘rarely’. So, students have no desire to communicate in the target language outside the classroom, may be others outside the classroom do no appreciate them when talking in a foreign language. Thus, they feel undesirable. That let them give up practicing English outside their classes and satisfy themselves with the amount of speaking inside the classroom even if it is too little.

**Item 17:** Do you enjoy communication in English?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	28	94
No	02	06
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 22:** Students’ feeling towards communication in English



**Graph 17:** Students’ feelings towards communicating in English

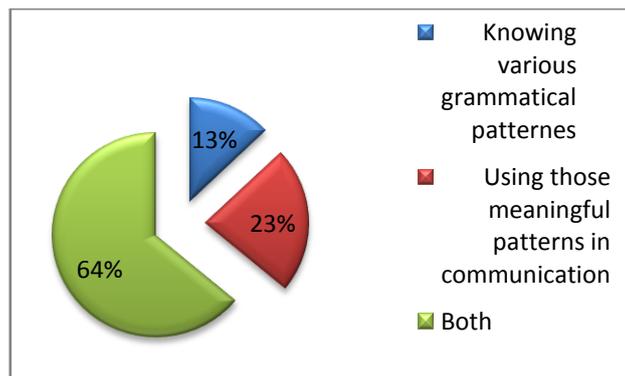
The above table indicates that 94% of the respondents enjoy the communication in English, because they are interested in that language and have the desire to improve their level and competence in English (have good pronunciation, eliminate errors and mistakes, ). Also, they feel so comfortable, confident, amused and too special when speaking in

English. They want to have an eye on others' cultures and to exchange ideas, beliefs and feelings. However, just a few ones (06%) do not like that. They feel shy when communicating in foreign language, so they prefer to be far from any kind of discussion or talk.

**Item 18:** Do teachers in communicative classrooms stress the students' ability of?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Knowing various grammatical patterns	04	13
Using those meaningful patterns in communication	07	23
Both	19	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 23:** Teachers' focus in communicative classrooms



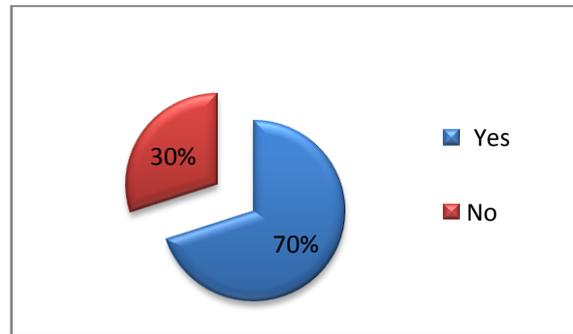
**Graph 18:** Teachers' focus in communicative classrooms

From this question we need to know if EFL teachers focus on the developing of their students' communicative abilities or they only teach the language in purely grammatical focus. For instance, we have received that teachers teach both structural and communicative features of the language, they stress students' ability to use correct and fluent pieces of language, more formal and meaningful, linguistically accurate and socially acceptable.

**Item 19:** Do you think that interacting with your peers increases your speaking opportunities?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	21	70
No	09	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 24:** Raising Students 'speaking opportunities through classroom interaction



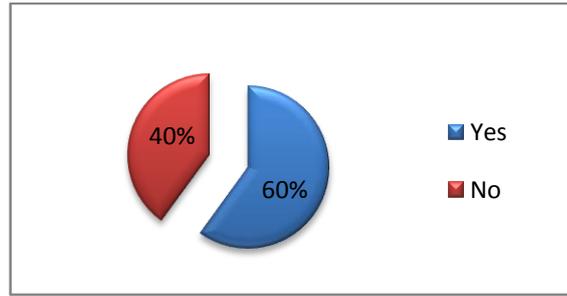
**Graph 19:** Raising Students 'speaking opportunities through classroom interaction

As shown in this table, 70% of the students believe that interacting with their classmates give them more chances to speak and to raise their talking time. So that, the more they interact and communicate with their peers, the more they speak and the more their competence in English will be advanced. For instance, students fully engaged in classroom activities can also develop many aspects of both linguistic and communicative competence through interacting with peers.

**Item 20:** Do classroom activities provide you with real communication?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	18	60
No	12	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 25:** Classroom activities and communication



**Graph 20:** Classroom activities and communication

Classroom experience provides learners with the chance to communicate their needs, opinions and ideas. When they do activities through interaction, communicating their thoughts and beliefs towards the completion of the given activity. 60% believe in that, however, others do not.

**Item 21:** What do you do when communication in L2 breaks down?

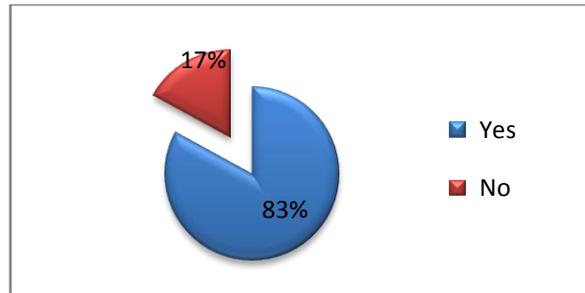
Concerning this item students choose the following resolution when the communication in L2 breaks down:

- Use facial expressions and gestures.
- Switch to L1.
- Try to use other word that has the same meaning to the intended one.
- Change the subject totally.
- You have to be armed with background knowledge of the language.
- Try the best to return the communication back.

**Item 22:** Do you think that you have the ability for communicating effectively in that foreign language?

Responses	Number of students	Percentage %
Yes	25	83
No	05	17
<b>Total</b>	30	100

**Table 26:** Students' ability to communicate effectively in English



**Graph 22:** Students 'ability to communicate effectively in English

The aim of this question is to see whether 2<sup>nd</sup> student of English in Biskra University have the ability to communicate well in that language or not. We have obtained that 83% of the respondents are good communicators in English, so that they practice speaking freely and they achieve successful performance of communicative tasks.

### Section Three:

#### Item 23: Students' comments and suggestions

Concerning this question, we have got different suggestions and comments from our respondents in how to develop their competence in communication:

- Watching movies, listening to songs, and chatting with others( natives and non-natives
- Using previous knowledge to communicate.
- Do plenty of activities during the lesson, speak a lot and participate in class tie
- Practice speaking in English in and outside the classroom(talking with friends in the phone using English)
- Extensive listening to natives ( speech, records, songs...etc)
- Teachers should speak in English outside the class when they deal with their students.
- Practicing free discussions and role plays frequently.

## III.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

### III.2.1. Description of the Questionnaires

The 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire was directed to EFL teachers of the English Branch at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra to evaluate their overall understanding about the value of using tasks in their classrooms and its effectiveness in developing students' competence in communication. For instance, that questionnaire seeks to answer two main questions:

- What are the teachers' attitudes of about the application of CLT approach in the language classroom to enhance communicative competence among English students?
- What are the teachers' beliefs in tasks as an effective tool to be relied on in the language classroom practices to enhance competence of communication among English students?

The teachers' questionnaire was composed of (21) questions that held four parts; the first part is about background information about teachers; their gender, age and qualification. The second part encompasses teachers' views about incorporating language tasks within their classrooms and its effectiveness for successful communicative language teaching. The third part includes questions about the role of the teacher in a Communicative Language Teaching framework, and their knowledge about communicative competence as a new concept in recent classroom applications and syllabuses. The last and fourth part is about further suggestions and comments added by the teachers as alternatives for fostering the communicative competence among their students.

### III.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaires

The questionnaire is handed to 10 teachers (40% males and 60% females) at the English Branch at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra (MKUB). It contains three major types of questions: closed-ended, open-ended and multiple choice questions that seek valuable answers from teachers. The results obtained from that questionnaire may confirm the reliability of our research hypotheses as well as its main questions.

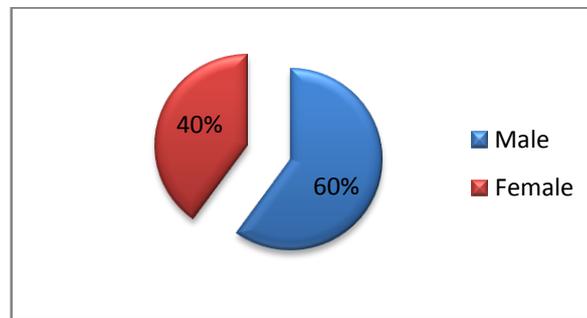
### III.2.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire:

#### Section One: Background Information

**Item 01:** Teacher's gender:

Gender	Number of students	Percentage %
Male	06	60
Female	04	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 27 :** Teachers' gender



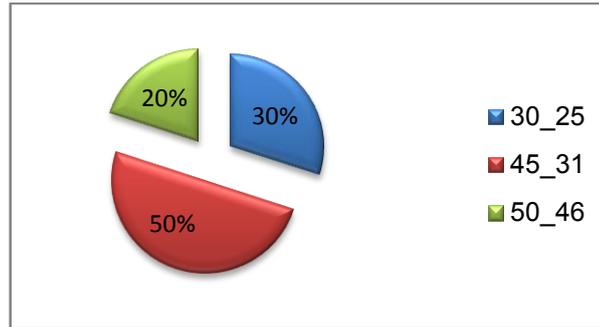
**Graph 23:** Teachers' gender

From the table above, we see that the majority of teachers (60%) are females, while (40%) represents males. These results reveal that in recent times, females are more interested in teaching than males. In the field of foreign language teaching, females are more likely to be widely involved in teaching different languages while males find themselves more in professions that require scientific streams or work in certain crafts.

**Item 02:** Teacher's age is between:

Age	Number of teachers	Percentage %
25_30	03	30
31-45	05	50
46-50	02	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 28:** Teachers' age



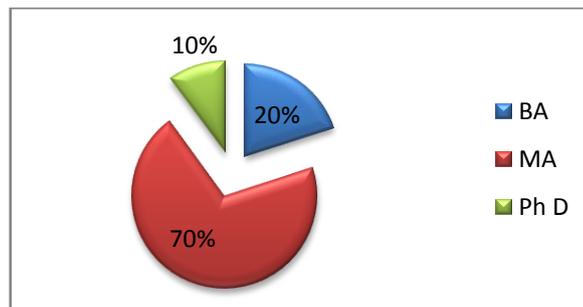
**Graph 24:** Teachers ‘age

As it had been received, 30% of the teachers are from 25\_30 years old at the department of English in Biskra University . They still young teachers and had experienced teaching just for few years, 50% from 31\_45 who had taught for acceptable period of time and 20% from 46\_50 are old teachers and have more experience in teaching and their qualifications make them more likely to be more professional and advanced.

**Item 03:** Degree (s) held:

Degree	Number of teachers	Percentage %
BA	02	20
MA	07	70
Ph D	01	10
<b>Total</b>	10	100

**Table 29:** Teachers’ degrees and qualifications



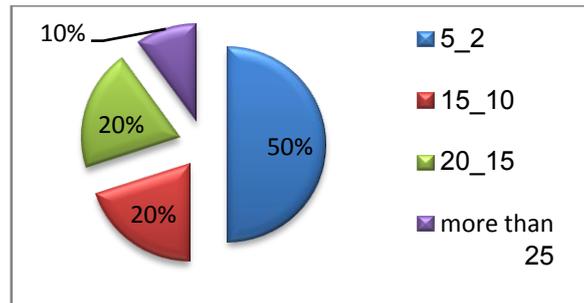
**Graph25:** Teachers ‘degrees and qualifications

Out of the total number of the sample (10), we had found that only 01 teacher who has a PhD in English, 07 of them have accomplished a Magister degree and the rest 02 have a License degree which equals a Bachelor of Arts degree. Those results specify that teachers’ level is advanced and they look for more opportunities to be proficient teachers and educators.

**Item 04:** How many years have you been teaching English at the University?

years	Number of teachers	percentage
2-5	05	50
10-15	02	20
15_20	02	20
More than 25	01	10
total	10	100

**Table 30:** Years of teaching English at University



**Graph 26:** Years of teaching English at university

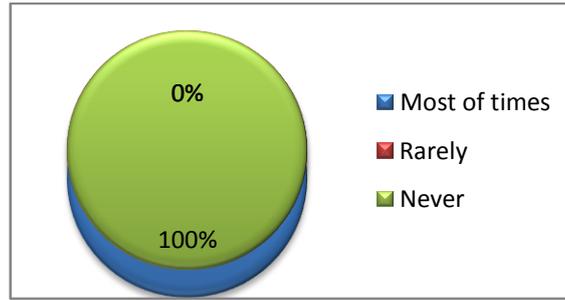
As far as teaching experience is concerned, most of English teachers have more than one year experience in teaching and that is good. The results indicate that teachers have the knowledge as well as the experience about teaching styles and strategies and the various approaches used in teaching. Thus, they are able to deal with learners' needs and to realize certain teaching objectives especially when it comes to the accomplishment of certain communicative goals of language teaching and learning.

### Section Two: About Classroom Tasks

**Item 05:** How often do you use language tasks within your classes?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Most of time	10	100
Rarely	00	00
Never	00	00
Total	10	100

**Table 31:** The frequency of task application inside EFL classes



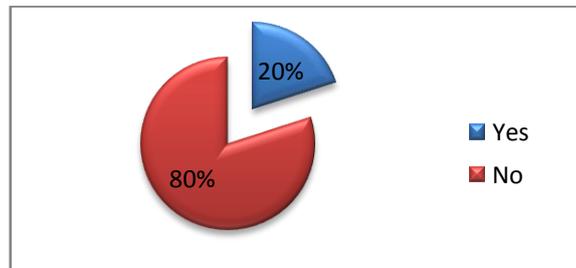
**Graph 27:** The frequency of task application inside EFL classes

The table (31) included different choices that came to check whether EFL teachers use language tasks inside their classes recurrently or not, and if tasks are given much importance when seeking to optimise students' ability of communicating in the target language. The obtained data shows that 100% of the teachers use tasks looking for best results in foreign languages teaching and in communication too.

**Item 06:** Do you think that time allocated to tasks is sufficient to practice the language?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	02	20
No	08	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 32:** Time allocated to language tasks



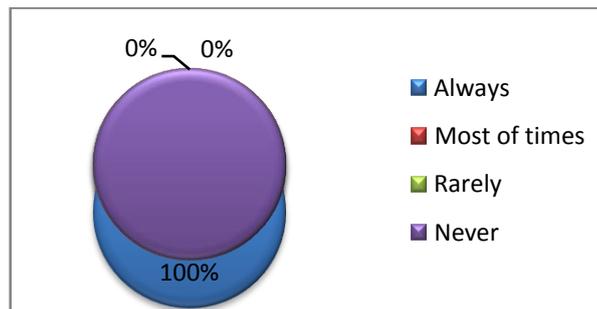
**Graph 28:** Time allocated to language tasks

Time allotted to the practice of language tasks is not sufficient and do not satisfy the students' communicative needs inside and outside the classroom environment. 80% of the teachers claimed that time allocated to practice the target language well is not enough for their students in order to optimize their competence in communication.

**Item 07:** Do you encourage your students to speak within the classroom?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Always	10	100
Sometimes	00	00
Rarely	00	00
Never	00	00
<b>Total</b>	10	100

**Table 33:** The teachers' frequency of encouraging students in speaking



**Graph 29:** The teachers' frequency of encouraging students in speaking

All participants, making up (100%), affirmed that they encourage their students to speak always within class time. Teachers seem to play the role of motivators and urge the students to use English frequently and fluently and that is too good for successful teaching-learning process.

**Item 08:** What sorts of tasks and activities do you use when teaching English?

Tasks and activities which are used frequently by teachers are:

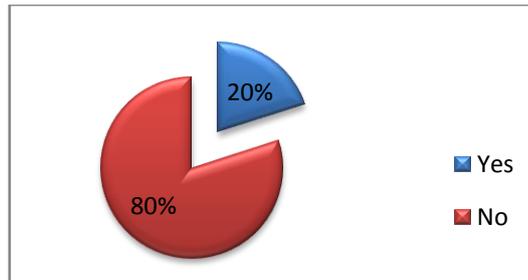
- Group work activities ,problem solving and true/false activities .
- Using songs, stories, pictures, movies.
- It depends on the module(oral/written expression).
- Role plays, free/open discussions.
- Direct questions(grammar secessions).
- Practice writing (different types of writing : essays, paragraphs and term papers).
- Research work, group dynamics and workshop.
- Communicative tasks.
- Listening comprehension with gap filling , reading texts.

Activities in CLT typically involve various elements of communication and require certain interactive skills from the side of students and teachers. Moreover, teachers are always looking for more opportunities and time to apply language tasks inside their classes.

**Item 09:** Do you think that these activities are sufficient in order to optimize the level of communication among your students?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	02	20
No	08	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 34:** The efficiency of tasks in optimizing students’ communicative competence



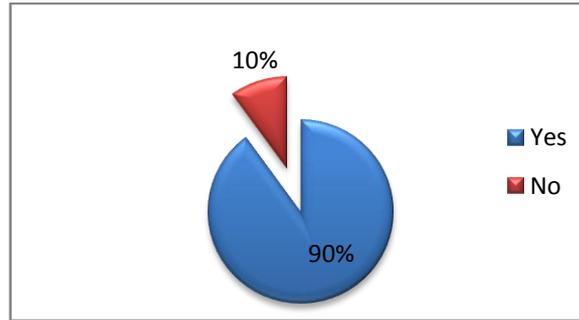
**Graph 30:** The efficiency of tasks in optimizing students’ communicative competence

Most of our teachers 80% said that tasks are effective but not sufficient in order to optimize the level of students’ competence in communication. Some of teachers 80% said that students have to practice the language outdoors too for the communication to be effective and more valid inside and outside the classroom.

**Item 10:** Do you incorporate cooperative learning in your classroom?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	09	90
No	01	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 35:** The implementation of cooperative learning within EFL classes



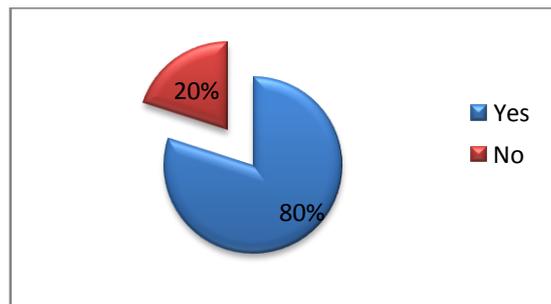
**Graph 31:** The implementation of cooperative learning within EFL classes

90% of the teachers imply cooperative learning in their classes to promote group discussions, collaborative learning and group dynamics, also in order to provide students with the various opportunities to speak and share ideas in a relatively relaxing way .All in all, cooperative learning leads to good results in the teaching process and the process of communication inside and outside the classroom.

**Item 11:**Do you use authentic materials within your classes?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	08	80
No	02	20
<b>Total</b>	10	100

**Table 36:** The use of Authentic materials inside English classes



**Graph 32:**The use of authentic materials inside English classes

The table (36) reveals that 80% of the participants believe that the extensive use of authentic materials is a valuable way that presents language learning in real life situations. Also, they often consider learning as a life-time task that it is not only linked to classroom or study but also to real life fields and contexts.

Authenticity offers foreign learners with the original sources for the language and eases the interaction and communication between non-native learners and native speakers.

**Item 12:** How useful do you think authentic materials are in the classroom?

Teachers who use authentic materials in their classes believe in their validity and accessibility in English Language Teaching (ELT) and give many reasons that support their views:

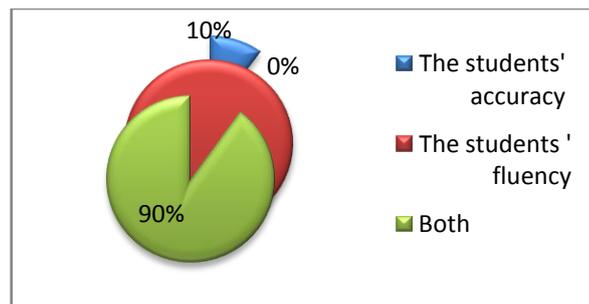
- Authentic materials link language to culture and context. It is too much useful.
- They represent original language, good to discover new things .
- Help students to learn English from its native speakers.
- They are motivating, students are exposed to authentic/ native pronunciation, stress, intonation, idioms, vocabulary in context and relating to culture.
- They make learning new language an interesting subject.
- Teachers have to vary in using different kinds of those materials to obtain good results in teaching.
- They help students to get involved in the course.
- If they are efficiently used, they can be effective.

All in all, the validity of utilizing authentic materials within EFL classes is agreed upon from the majority of the teachers.

**Item 13:** When assessing classroom tasks? , do you focus on?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
The students' accuracy	01	10
The students' fluency	00	00
Both	09	90
Total	10	100

**Table 37:** Classroom tasks assessment



**Graph 33:** Classroom tasks assessment

From the teachers' points of view, accuracy and fluency in classroom tasks and language assessment come together while evaluating their students' performance in tasks. The majority of the teachers (90%) replied with "Both".

### Section Three: About Communicative Competence

**Item 14:** How would you define the word "communicative competence"? In your own words

Different definitions were given to the concept of "communicative competence" by EFL teachers:

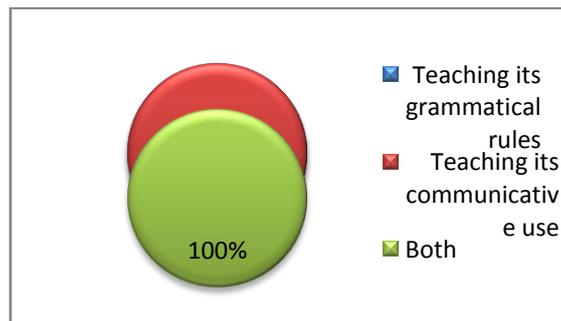
- The ability to use and understand the foreign language in 'real life situations' within or out of the L2 speech community.
- The ability to speak fluently and use the English jargon.
- It is the communicative production of the language.
- It is a social skill that is indicated through the proficiency of students in their four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
- To communicate effectively in a specific subject (fluency, accuracy, correctness and fluent use of language).
- It is how good we use the language (through speech or writing), to communicate ideas. It is a skill that learner must master in which he /she uses correctly and accurately the language by respecting rules of syntax, lexis, pronunciation.
- It is students' ability to express themselves either in oral or written.
- It is the ability to understand and react over a given situation.
- It means the ability of students to use the language accurately and fluently.

The teachers are clearly knowledgeable about the communicative competence.

**Item 15:** Teaching a language means:

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Teaching its grammatical rules	00	00
Teaching its communicative use	00	00
Both	10	100
Total	10	100

**Table 38:** The nature of language teaching



**Graph 34:** The nature of language teaching

This question investigates teachers' opinions about the nature of language teaching; whether their main focus in teaching is to teach the grammatical aspects of the language or to teach the students how to communicate in that language 'English'. The table above shows that the whole sample of teachers (100%) responds by 'Both'; i.e., teaching any language stresses both the linguistic and communicative aspects.

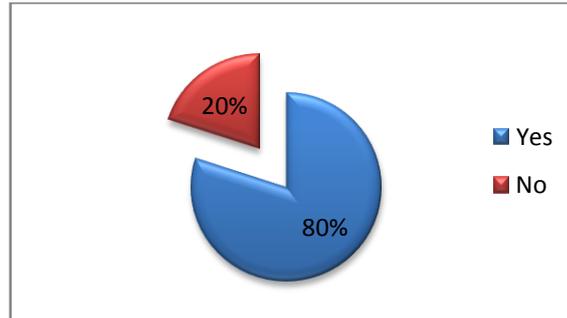
**Item 16:** As an EFL teacher, do you think that the Communicative Approach is effective in language classroom practice?

The majority of teachers agree that the communicative approach is a useful method in language practice; it is valuable because learning any language should stress its communicative use not just the grammatical one. For instance, the Communicative Approach by its techniques and principles that are devoted to attain communicative competence and successful learning.

**Item 17:** Have you ever used the term “communicative competence” when teaching?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	08	80
No	02	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 39:** Teachers’ use of the concept “communicative competence”



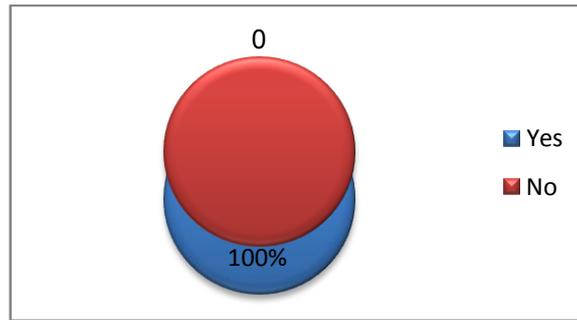
**Graph 35:** Teachers’ use of the concept “communicative competence”

Regarding that question, 80% of the teachers in the English classes had employed the term “communicative competence” while teaching, however, 20% of them had not utilized yet this term. The use of that term either explicitly or implicitly offers the students with an insight about what that new concept refers to? Also, it helps them to be familiar with the recent teaching methods. Moreover, it alerts them about the importance of communicating in the target language.

**Item 18:** Do you think that communicative competence is an important part of teaching English?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	10	100
No	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 40:** Teachers’ views about communicative competence



**Graph 36:** Teachers' views about communicative competence

The importance of teaching the communicative competence is almost agreed upon between all the teachers (100%). Being an oriented goal in recent teaching methods and curricula makes communicative competence has a remarkable role in ELT.

**If yes, which method do you think is more suitable for that? And why?**

Teachers had suggested some different ways and methods where communicative competence can be integrated:

- Cross-cultural syllabuses exist and are quite interesting
- Using authentic materials
- ESP courses
- Task Based Approach
- Learning is better through intensive practice of the language
- Self-express tasks
- Relating culture to language teaching
- The use of Internet Communicative Technologies (ICTs)

In teaching English, there seem to be different methods that are followed by the teachers at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra and all of these approaches search for raising the level of communication among EFL students.

**Item 19:** What roles may the teacher play within the communicative classrooms?

As it had been assumed from the teachers' responses EFL teachers may play the following roles:

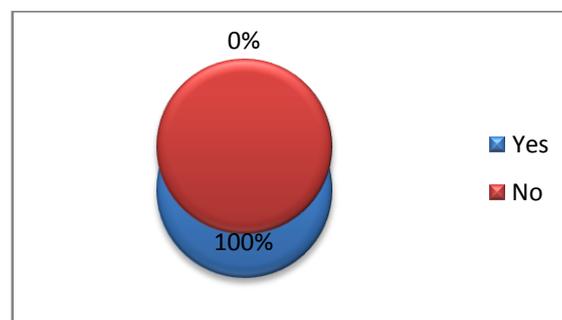
- A guide (but certainly not a controller, he should focus more on achieving communication as a goal in learning that language)
- A motivator
- An instructor (the learner/ student is the center of instruction, classroom norms and rules are planned by the teacher)
- A facilitator (he should facilitate the communicative process, use intensive vocabulary, explain the lectures and pieces of information)

It is important to note that teachers within communicative classrooms play certain roles which require from them to go beyond information giving and lessons explaining. Indeed, they have to contribute to the development of students' competence when communicating in the new language in a number of roles which were mentioned before.

**Item 20:** Do you think that English students do not perform well in tasks because they lack the competence in English?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	10	100
No	00	00
Total	10	100

**Table 41:** The lack of competence in English



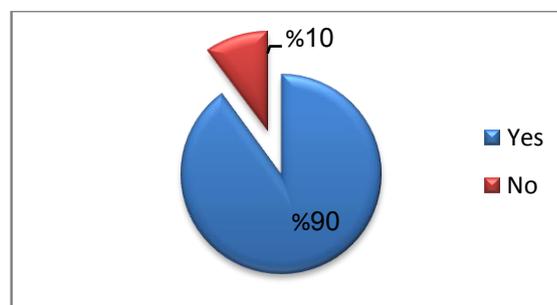
**Graph 37:** The lack of competence in English

Tasks are kind of tests to check students' output. For instance, they make students use the language effectively in the right context and urge them to speak and produce several utterances and not to be totally receptive learners of that language. Simply, tasks help students to discuss ideas with their classmates, and to say whatever they believe in, they push them to communicate their views and suggestions. In addition, the uses of authentic material within tasks improve the communicative competence of the students. 100% of the teachers have claimed that their students do not do well in tasks because they have deficiencies in language knowledge and can not achieve well in tasks as well.

**Item 21:** Do you think that classroom tasks are considered as an effective tool for improving students' communicative competence?

Responses	Number of teachers	Percentage %
Yes	09	90
No	01	10
Total	10	100

**Table 42:** Developing students' communicative competence through classroom tasks



**Graph 38:** Developing students' communicative competence through classroom tasks

The table above shows that 90% of teachers believe in the effectiveness of tasks in fostering EFL students' communicative competence because they involve learners in variety of activities. This latter requires interaction, cooperation and negotiation of meaning while working together in pairs and groups. Furthermore, students apply their knowledge and experience of the foreign language in order to achieve successful communication.

**Section Four: Teachers suggestions and comments:**

- You are kindly invited to provide us with any helpful comments and suggestions about how to improve student's competence in communication?

The suggestions and comments that were extracted from teachers' answers of the item are as follows:

- My suggestion may seem utopian but a semester training course (at the end of the courses) in the foreign language community will be very useful.
- Teachers of English, as a foreign language, should use audio-visual materials, expose students to native speakers' conversations, and attract students 'attention to the speaking skill importance.
- Great efforts should be done to improve students' competence in communication. Not only students who must be involved but the entire system also.
- Students should avoid anxiety, certain obstacles which may not help them to do well or to improve their level and this latter is the most difficult obstacle.
- Using cooperative learning (pairs and groups).
- Students should rehearse extensively pieces of language in front of themselves and others then correct their mistakes in order to use the language in the right place with the right intonations and meanings.

All in all, we can notice that the majority of the teachers are aware about the need of communication in the target language for the students. According to the teacher's suggestions, students have to practice the language frequently not only inside the classroom but also outside for more effective and fluent language use.

### III.3. Classroom observation (Oral/written expression)

#### III.3.1. Description of Observation

Classroom observation is a useful tool that aims to collect ‘live’ data about a research problem from naturally occurring social situations, it enables us to gather data about the physical, human, interactional and the program settings in order to confirm or reject certain hypotheses in language teaching and learning and to find solutions to particular research problems.

Observation can be of *facts*, such as the number of books in a classroom, the number of students in a class, the number of students who visit the school library in a given period. It can also focus on *events* as they happen in a classroom, for example, the amount of teacher and student talk, the amount of off-task conversation and the amount of group collaborative work. Further, it can focus on *behaviors* or qualities, such as the friendliness of the teacher, the degree of aggressive behavior or the extent of unsociable behavior among students.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 396)

The observation took place in the second semester of the academic year 2013 within oral and written courses and it lasted for 4 weeks that took three-hours (02 sessions) for each course per week. The study aims to find out whether oral/written tasks would develop the communicative competence of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English Branch at Biskra University or not.. We have observed certain elements that have a relation to our research work; the teacher introduction of the lesson, his/her method of teaching the assessment of students’ performance in classroom tasks. In the other hand, student grouping and task duration and objectives were observed too. Also we observe how students were performing certain kinds of language tasks, and how did the teacher manage the classroom and the level of interaction inside the classroom. For more details see (**appendix 5 and 6**)

#### III.3.2. The Observation analyses:

After carrying out our observation on 2<sup>nd</sup> year students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, we have attained the following results:

- **Classroom Observation (Oral expression)**

**Section One: On Classroom Activities**

**Item 01: Classroom tasks include any activities that encourage and require students to speak with and listen to others.**

Classroom tasks, as it was observed, urge students to speak frequently and to listen attentively to various pieces of the target language through certain task techniques such as: free discussion, role play and listening comprehension. Furthermore, language tasks offer the students with real exposure to language and to certain amount of comprehensible input that monitors their linguistic resources and satisfies their communicative needs. About 50% of the students agree that language tasks are those kinds of activities where students feel free using the target language either productively or receptively.

**Item 02: Activities within the classroom involve all the four skills.**

It was remarkable that language teaching courses are mainly related to the four skills of language and their development. For instance, both productive and receptive skills are said to be aural/ visual mediums for language learning and teaching as well as for communication. In brief, skills can be considered as vehicle that carries students' knowledge and competencies. 44% of the second year students believe that successful learning and fluent communication require them to be skillful in the language.

**Item 03: Most tasks carried within the classroom focus on fluency (flexible and fluent use of language) rather than accuracy (correctness and form).**

In oral expression courses, we had viewed that most of tasks are designed to measure the well performance and the successful achievement of language use. The observed data shows that learners' fluency is rarely demonstrated in task completion, only 28% who can use the language fluently and freely and about 50% can not speak it well and the element of fluency is almost absent.

**Item 04: Language tasks based on communicative activities.**

Classroom tasks yield the students with real communication through bringing out the best strategies and methods that emphasis the subject of human communication and its

development. As it had been viewed, the communicative aspect of tasks is stressed always with 34%. So, communicative activities are included within teaching syllabuses and methods and have foremost communicative goals.

### **Section Two: On Interaction and Group dynamics**

**Item 01: Students enjoy interacting with their classmates or with other students in the target language when doing oral tasks.**

As it had been estimated, classroom interaction is necessary for either the first (L1) or the second (L2) language learning to take place. Interaction most of times occurs when learners are involved in certain language activities where learners work together to reach certain language objectives. 56% of the students feel interested and enjoyable. Moreover, interaction develops positive attitudes for the learners' motivation and contribution in the task. For this reason, EFL teachers within CLT emphasis the effectiveness of interaction for better learning styles and methods and for satisfied educational results.

**Item 02: Group work helps students to get to know each other.**

Group work is the way of learning in which learners practice the language together seeking to benefit from one another's prior knowledge or experience. After observing the students working together in small groups, we have deduced that certain social skills are going to be developed and communicative aspects of language are often presented there. Also, we had noticed that teachers of oral expression try their best to create a pleasant and inspiring environment and monitor the students' attitudes towards one another in order to allow them work collaboratively and cooperatively and maintain positive interdependence between group members. 40% refers to those who agree that group work is an effective technique that allows the students improve their social skills.

**Item 03: Working in pairs and groups ease the cooperation and negotiation between group members.**

Cooperative learning proposes that learners have to learn to rely on each others' knowledge of the language, to share new information and to realize shared objectives and decisions. In addition, students will apply different skills when learning in pairs and groups such as: speaking, listening, turn taking, agreeing, disagreeing and making final decisions.

73% of the students are totally with the idea of cooperation and negotiation whenever working on a given task.

**Item 04: Group dynamics (pair/group) raise the Student Talking Time.**

Students within CLT classrooms are most of times talkative, use the language frequently and speak it much more frequently. From the observation, we can infer that group dynamic is an active way of learning that always helps the students work in good conditions and enjoyable learning environment.

**Section Three: On Teacher/ Students**

**Item 01: The teacher encourages his students to speak during classroom practices.**

As it had been noticed, the teacher within Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) classes play significant roles that are crucial for effective language practices as well language learning. Thus, the fundamental role that the teacher plays is as a ‘monitor’ who creates the best conditions for successful learning process and strong educational system. 62% had claimed that their teachers of oral expression are always urging them to speak during classroom tasks in order to enhance their abilities in communication as well as their fluency speaking.

**Item 02: The teacher makes the students work in pairs and groups when doing tasks.**

In oral sessions, the teacher asks the students to form small groups or even pairs when working on a task aiming to maximize their communicative competence because communication as a process requires more than one person to success and its success or failure depends mostly on the good or bad relationship between the group members. 50% of the learners said that oral expression teachers push them to work together in pairs and small groups when practicing the language.

**Item 03: During classroom tasks, the teacher is talkative.**

Another role for the teacher is as ‘provider of information’ or ‘resource’ that transmits information through speech or what is known as ‘teacher’s talk’. Teacher’s talk is crucial and needed in English language teaching. 40% of the learners said that teachers are always giving them a comprehensible input and useful feedback.

**Item 04: Students feel at ease when practicing the language in oral expression classes in front of the teacher and the classmates.**

Students' attitudes and feelings towards classroom tasks is an important factor that may foster or hinder the success of task completion. The majority of the students do not feel at ease when practicing the language in front of others (the teacher, the classmates) for that their performance does not match their capabilities neither their linguistic competencies. Just few students 28% who feel free and comfortable when carrying language tasks.

**Item 05: Students are talkative in oral courses.**

Between "rarely" and "never" 45% was the rate of students who do not talk inside the classroom. However, few of them 5% who talk "most of times" and "always" that reveals the absence of students' talk within oral courses.

**Item 06: Students talk to each other not only to the teacher.**

Interaction can be viewed from two main sides, either student-teacher interaction or student-student interaction. The second type of interaction is recommended in oral classes. 45% is the amount of interaction presented inside EFL classes and that needs to be developed in order to reach the communicative use of the target language.

**Item 07: Students use the language freely and learn to speak it even they make a lot of errors.**

We had perceived that 44% of the students who believe that errors are to learn from and every misuse of the language permit them to monitor their learning and correct their input. For instance, the accuracy of language in CLT is not with too much importance unlike fluency that is stressed and comes at first.

**Item 08: In oral classes, students are able to use the English pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm and to deduce different meanings of words.**

As it was seen, language tasks bring the students with different uses of the language that need to be practiced and rehearsed whenever they engage in different kinds of activities. Also, tasks are mainly based on performing various linguistic resources in various contexts and suitable situations. 44% from the whole sample have weaknesses in

language use and can not apply full and correct statements in the right place with the right intonation or even pronunciation.

#### **Section Four: On Communicative Competence**

**Item 01: The term “communicative competence” is frequently used within the classroom.**

We had noticed that the teacher of oral expression did not use the term “communicative competence” in her classroom. So that the majority of the students have no clear insight about what does that new concept mean in the teaching-learning process. 56% of learners did not hear about that concept. However, the non-use of the term does not mean that oral expression teachers neglect the communicative aspect of language teaching, but they teach it implicitly and every linguistic item of the language has its own communicative use.

**Item 02: Students are able to use the rules of the language then produce the language correctly and then use it appropriately.**

Accuracy and fluency in language tasks are stressed equally. Learners within CLT classrooms are often evaluated for both their accuracy when using the language correctly and respecting its grammatical rules and their fluency while producing full communicative samples of language. 56% of the students have the competence to produce correct language forms and then use them according to several situation regarding to their appropriateness.

**Item 03: Most 2nd year students are aware of the need of communication in the classroom.**

Concerning students' awareness and consciousness about the importance of communication in the target language inside the classroom is mostly apparent and clearly demonstrated. We have reached a result which indicates that 44% from the whole sample are aware about the need of communication in L2 to in order to increase their level of language proficiency and mastery. Moreover, 2<sup>nd</sup> year students are always searching for more opportunities to communicate their voices inside and outside the classroom and that leads them to train themselves to extensive practice of the new language.

**Item 04: Students are able to communicate effectively with their peers.**

Peer interaction is one valid strategy of learning. It involves students in new experiences where they receive feedback, give opinions, ask for information and observe how others work out language problems and communicate their needs. Oral expression teachers encourage cooperation among their learners rather than competition; good learners are working with weak learners to obtain the balance between their abilities.

**Item 05: The level of communication in English among EFL students is low and need to be developed.**

Concerning the level of communication among 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English, we have perceived that 50% of the students agree that the rate of communication between them is too little and do not satisfy their communicative needs. Thus, learners need to be motivated more to have the competence and the desire to promote their level of oral proficiency.

**Section Five: General Evaluation****Item 01: The course of oral expression develops students' language skills.**

The observed data shows that all the four skills of language are integrated within the oral expression course. The teacher devoted the whole session for one kind of skills and the rest of skills are presented in within. For every session, the students are discovering a new skill and practice it.

**Item 02: The classroom is comfortable and inviting.**

Classroom management, as it had been observed, suffers from many weaknesses. it was not suitable for carrying out the course of oral expression, no enough space for students to act freely and perform plays or oral presentations, table arrangement was not organized, the classroom environment was not clean. All in all, the classroom needs rearrangement and good condition in order to fit the learners' needs and for better teaching-learning process.

**Item 03: Students use the language freely without worrying too much about form.**

We have remarked that nearly the half of the sample 45% of learners focus more on language accuracy and grammatical correctness of language forms. Students' fear from making errors in language structures and forms hinder the assimilation of certain communicative goals as well as the process of communication as a whole. Many students can not use the language freely and give much importance to grammatical correctness of language neglecting the aspect of fluency in language use.

**Item 04: Students are serious and aware enough about what does the task intend to reach.**

We had remarked the following:

- The majority of students(56%) were not serious enough about language tasks' objectives
- Students treated task as a difficult problem which requires hard efforts, great mental abilities and genuine capabilities in order to be done.
- They also believe that every language task is merely the same as language test and that makes them worried and frustrated.

**Item 05: Speaking a lot in the target language is one of the best ways to learn this language.**

73% of the learners agree that those learners who speak a lot in the target language and who practice it frequently in and out doors are the ones success in acquiring that language and also have the communicative ability to achieve language goals and oral proficiency.

- **Classroom Observation (written expression)**

**Section One: On Classroom Activities****Item 01: Classroom written tasks include any activities that encourage and require.**

In written expression courses, we have observed that teachers of that module asked the students to write different kinds of written production such as: paragraphs, essays, and

term papers. Working on those types of writing helps the students a lot in developing their competencies in writing. Also, they train them to have good style in writing as to develop their expressive as well as creative potentials in the written form of communication. 60% of the students believe that written tasks enable them to use writing rather than just to produce it. Moreover, students at the end of each session practice writing in pairs and groups and that most of times helps them to communicate their ideas and views about a specific subject.

**Item 02: Classroom written tasks involve all the four skills.**

As it has been noticed, the writing process encompasses all the four skills of language. Students inside written classes before they engage in writing, they first listen to the teacher's explanation of the lesson. So that, listening carefully offers them with comprehensible input which supports them when writing and with the linguistic resources that students need before starting to write. Then, while writing the students are working together in small groups, they speak and listen to each other's ideas. After practicing writing, students exercised reading in front of the teacher and their peers. 60% indicates the rate of language skills' presence in the written course and in activities as well. All in all, we have come with the idea that tasks provide full opportunities for both productive and receptive skills to be practiced inside the classroom environment.

**Item 03: Written activities are mostly related to real life experience.**

As it has been viewed from the observation, tasks are often extracted from real life contexts. Indeed, they require students to write about their own life, experience and also about the different social, political, and cultural issues. For instance, the success of any piece of writing is related to whether it involves real life situations in the written production or not. All in all, we can say that classroom written tasks are contextualized activities that tie learning to the real world. 45% is the high rate that we have received from the observation and that shows that written tasks are always presenting students with real situations within the given task.

**Item 04: Most written tasks carried within the classroom aim at developing English students' competence in writing.**

Writing as a competence stands for students' skill in producing different samples of language. The teacher within communicative classes tries to involve his students in authentic and functional use of language to reach meaningful purposes and to raise their competence in writing several types of texts either this competence is from the linguistic aspect of language or from the communicative one. 45% of the students agree that their abilities in writing are developed and they become more aware about the importance of achieving both linguistic and communicative objectives. i.e., to write different texts which are correct in structures and characterized by fluency in use?

### **Section Two: On Interaction and Group Dynamics**

**Item 01: Students enjoy interacting with others I the target language when doing written tasks.**

Interaction within written activities is demonstrated inside the classroom, students feel interested and motivated to work together. Also, teachers create an interactive environment for writing efficiently and successfully. Moreover, students feel free when contributing to the task in front of their group partners before they are asked to present it in front of the whole class. 45% of students agree that interaction helps them too much to promote their ways of communicating and their interactive skills. So that, they offer and respond to different views, agree and disagree, confirm and refuse ideas.

**Item 02: Group work helps students to get to know each other.**

It has been observed apparently that working together in small groups in writing establish smooth, strong and good relationships among the students. Furthermore, writing is seemed to be a social activity that connects people together either having the same views about a particular topic or believing in the opposite view. Thus, such social skills aid the students to be accepted by their peers. 40% of students believe in the sociability of classroom tasks because such type of activities invite them to tell each other about their personal tastes, opinions, life styles and different backgrounds and thus provides excellent communication.

**Item 03: In written classes, 2<sup>nd</sup> year students ultimately benefit a lot from feedback.**

During the writing process, as it has been seen, students receive feedback from both the teacher and their peers. Peer feedback stands as a great chance for the success of writing process because it provides students with the motivation to carry on working in written tasks. 40% of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students benefit from their peers' feedback when they correct or comment on others views about the given topic.

**Item 04: Usually, written tasks have interactive and meaningful goals.**

In written tasks, the focus is on producing or completing together something such as: a paragraph, an essay, or a report and interactive tasks present the group efforts and knowledge about the given task. Also, tasks in written courses include the practice of different types of texts which are written to do things and to express meaning. In addition, if the reader of these texts recognizes what the writer intends to say, the communication will be fulfilled. In brief, writing is both a skill and a tool of interacting and expressing different views and ideas.

### **Section Three: On Teacher/Students**

**Item 01: The teacher encourages students to write extensively during classroom practices.**

As far as teacher's role is concerned, the written expression teacher organizes classroom writing and provides feedback on learners' written production. And the most important role is when he acts as a motivator who encourages his/her students to write extensively within classroom tasks. 65% of students claim that the teacher pushes them to practice writing extensively within and outside the classroom.

**Item 02: The teacher makes the students work in pairs and groups when doing written tasks.**

Concerning cooperative writing in English classes, we have noticed the following:

- Most written activities require students to work together .
- Students enjoy interacting in pairs and groups.
- Communicative language teaching defines tasks as cooperative activities where students work out various types of texts .

- Teachers of written expression arrange kinds of practices where students work cooperatively to attain effective communication inside the classroom.

**Item 03: During classroom tasks, the teacher gives comprehensible input to the students.**

As it has been remarked along our classroom observation, comprehensible input is presented within written courses in efficient way which enriches students' knowledge in written communication. 40% of students advantage from teacher's input a lot when fulfilling any kind of language tasks.

**Item 04: in written classes, the teacher offers students with real situations and helps them to work out written passages.**

We have observed the following concerning this item:

- 55% of students believe that their teacher is a reliable resource and useful aid who supports them while working on written tasks.
- Written teachers are always presenting students with real life situations presented in tasks requirements.

**Item 05: The teacher provides students with opportunities to write about their own ideas and discover their voices rather than acts as a judge who stresses students' errors.**

The written course seems to be a suitable place for the provision of opportunities for the application of knowledge and capabilities in the foreign language. We have seen that the teacher lets the students select whatever subjects they want to write about and not to be restricted to his/her topics. Also, he/she plays the role of controller of students' performance and work too and tries not to be a judge whose job is to stress students' errors.

**Item 06: Students can recognize and understand simple, familiar written words, phrases and sentences.**

Communication in the written form is mainly related to whether the written message is conveyed and understood by the reader or not. Students within written courses can reorganize different words, their implicit and explicit meanings and also can get the

general idea of text from its context. 45% of them can communicate meaning from different contexts.

**Item 07: 2<sup>nd</sup> year students are able to connect sentences and produce well developed paragraphs.**

In the second semester of written expression course, 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English have practiced writing of paragraphs following the writing process (planning, drafting, revising and editing). It is clear that students' writing is little by little developing. 65% indicates the progress of writing in 2<sup>nd</sup> year classes of English.

**Item 08: Students use real examples, evidence, and ideas to enhance their writing.**

Writing in any language requires using examples and evidence to transmit different messages successfully. Indeed, the use of arguments and supported ideas are often stressed when writing any kind of texts. 40% of students support their writing with various examples and evidences that make their written production well developed and well organized.

#### **Section Four: On Communicative Competence**

**Item 01: The term “communicative competence” is frequently used within the classroom.**

Teachers of written expression use the term of communicative competence rarely (55%) inside the classroom. However, they had already followed the communicative approach in teaching the written module. So, we can induce that communicative competence is taught implicitly within the English classes.

**Item 02: Students are able to use the rules of grammar then produce the language correctly and then use it appropriately.**

2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English believe that they can use the different linguistic forms of language to help them when writing in the foreign language. 65% of them think that their linguistic abilities let them achieve both accuracy and fluency in language activities.

**Item 03: Tasks used in the classroom provide the students with the background needed to communicate in the real world contexts.**

Communication inside the classroom occurred most of times when students are involved in performing written tasks. Thus, the communicative approach to language teaching calls for providing positive, encouraging and motivating factors that lead to achieve effective language practice. One of these helpful factors is demonstrated in written expression classes where teachers connect between the linguistic background knowledge of the task and its real and communicative contexts. 80% students share the idea that classroom tasks provide them with a large amount of background knowledge of that foreign language aiming to achieve better results in L2 learning and communication.

**Item 04: The level of communication in English among EFL students is low and need to be developed.**

Concerning the level of communication in English among 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English, we have received that 50% of students can not communicate well in English. Having the difficulty in communication limits students' abilities to perform efficiently in the both written and spoken language.

#### **Section Five: General Evaluation**

**Item 01: The classroom is comfortable and inviting.**

We have received that nearly 80% of the students do not feel good inside the classroom environment. In addition, most classes of English lack the well organized and the inviting area for good learning practices.

**Item 02: Students' background in English helps them a lot in improving their writing**

Students, in written expression module, relied too much on their previous knowledge and experience when they deal with certain types of written discourses. Indeed, students within the tasks find themselves practicing different aspects (at the level of vocabulary, word choice, spelling, cohesion and coherence) of language forms and implied meanings. So, students' writing is good or bad accordingly to their knowledge of the target language.

**Item 03: The course promoted students' language skills.**

As it has been observed, the course of written expression focuses on the development of students' language skills. Also, it was clear that the teacher had designed certain language tasks where learners practice all the four skills of language in relation to each other. 60% is the higher rate that shows students' agreement on the idea that the written course fosters their skills of language.

**Item 04: Effective academic writing requires considerable knowledge of linguistic elements (vocabulary, syntax, and punctuation).**

Academic writing tends to be formal and requires considerable amount of linguistic knowledge of the language to attain to attain its accuracy, fluency, and effectiveness. 75 of students believe in the need of having such linguistic competence in order to cover their lack in writing.

**Item 05: Writing is not an easy task for the majority of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English.**

We have seen that writing in a second or a foreign language is a difficult but not impossible task for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English rather than the other skills of language. Indeed, for many foreign language learners, writing is too difficult even in their first language because it requires a large amount of thinking abilities, imaginative faculties and expressive competencies and with much more practice students' writing will be much developed.

**Conclusion**

In this practical chapter, we aimed to strengthen the truth of the research problem hypotheses and its main questions with the analyses of both the questionnaire and the classroom observation. After analyzing both teachers' and students' questionnaires we have arrived at the following results: Communicative Language Teaching is a useful method which motivates and pushes students to speak the language fluently and whenever they want. Also, the extensive use of language tasks develops their oral and written production. Concerning data analyses of the observation, we have seen in the first section that the majority of students are familiar with the different tasks of language and about their importance, and we have also noticed, in the second and third sections, the positive

effects of classroom interaction, cooperative learning and students' awareness on the their abilities to achieve communicative competence. These results prove the crucial role of language tasks in fostering the students 'competence in communication.

## General Conclusion

This present study aimed at investigating the role of classroom tasks on fostering students' competence in English language communication. Our research, as other fields of inquiry, has its significance as well as its objectives. It initially hypothesized that if 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English do plenty of language tasks and activities during class time, then their competence in communication will be raised, and the two other hypotheses suppose the importance of communicative language teaching as well as the role of classroom interaction in raising the level of communication among the students. We had undertaken our research under the descriptive method seeking to prove the truth of our prediction which assumed that classroom tasks could improve the learners' level of English language competency in communication. The study involved 30 EFL students in Biskra University who responded to a questionnaire on communicative competence and the different activities practiced in the English courses. In addition, 10 teachers who taught English course in Biskra University were asked about their perceptions of students' performance in the classroom activities also their level of both interaction and communication within the classroom.

Through our research, we have investigated how classroom tasks ease the communication and interaction among 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of English in Mohammed Khider University of Biskra. We have also recognized the importance of following such new methods in English language teaching such as: the Communicative Language Teaching and Task Based Approach also the cooperative learning which aim at making communicative competence the goal of language teaching and provides students with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and satisfy their lack in language mastery either in oral or in written. Also, we have explored that involving students in different kinds of activities creates an enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom that leads to successful communication in the foreign language. In addition, working in pairs and groups submits the students with the best chance to practice the language with their peers and without teachers' interference. Furthermore, we have realized that the majority of teachers, at the English department had agreed upon the idea that Communicative Language Teaching is a very motivating method that urges the students enhance their oral and written competencies, and their interactive skills as well. Furthermore, relying on language tasks and Task Based Approach principles aiming to

improve the communicative competency is also a useful and fruitful way that achieves better results in language teaching and testing.

Finally, the results obtained from both questionnaires and observation indicate that teachers are highly aware of students' preferences in relation to communicative activities and had already noticed the students' lack of competence in communication and are working on finding valuable solutions and strategies that may solve that problem. These results have implications for both teaching syllabuses and material design and also in certain classroom practices. All these will provide valuable insight for various stakeholders such as language planners, curriculum designers, teacher trainers, language instructors as well as teachers, in order to make informed pedagogical decision regarding second language teaching. This is so, as the adoption of a communicative approach in second language teaching brings with it fundamental issues regarding teacher training, materials development, testing and evaluation, and so forth, which calls for further investigation, in order to help in enhancing the students' level of language competence and performance, especially in oral communication.

All in all, problems in enhancing the level of learners' competency in communication will continue to exist, the findings will help to direct future researches and investigations regarding that issue, either to be proved and to be relied on when teaching foreign languages or, in the other hand, to be rejected and refused in the field of foreign language teaching.

## Pedagogical Implications

The implementation of task based language teaching within EFL classes is an important part in improving students' communicative competence and stressed that teacher's methods and styles of teaching can facilitate or hinder the process of classroom teaching. In the current section, we will attempt to propose some pedagogical implications for both teachers of English and language students .We will also recommend some measures to be taken with regards to the teaching and learning of English as a communication tool. The wide impact of this research is to be interpreted as a work that opens new scopes for the issue of teaching methods and practices and to the materials design and its development. Thus, we find that it is better if we propose some suggestions and recommendations for English teachers' and learners' to benefit from them.

### Suggestions for Teachers

- ✓ Developing students' communicative competence is compulsory for English Language Teaching (ELT) in EFL classes and should be a priority when teaching and learning English today. Therefore, it is promising to implement integrated skills into English teaching when promoting the Communicative Teaching Approach. There is an urgent need for teachers to restructure the teaching practices and to start thinking seriously of abandoning that traditional ELT approaches which teaches language in isolation and to adopt communicative language components.
- ✓ CLT teachers can introduce new teaching methods that enhance communication in the new language, creating a diversified teaching process. They can use various resources to help students develop their communicative skills, which is another manifestation of the diversity of the teaching methods. For example, English teachers can incorporate cooperative learning within their classrooms in order to promote group discussions, thereby helping students work out several language problems in pairs and groups. Role plays can also be used to help students learn vocabulary and practice their writing skills.
- ✓ More specifically, teachers can help students create an English context when teaching English using variety of authentic materials; the primary principle underlying CLT is that language learners need opportunities to use the language in

authentic conversations. After all, daily life requires people to communicate in a wide range of contexts.

- ✓ Teachers need to help their students to understand the communicative purpose of learning and to develop their awareness of the need for communication, interaction, and negotiation of meaning through the use of activities such as problem solving, information sharing, and role play.
- ✓ Teachers need to respond to students learning activities. It is important that teachers make remarks on the language exercises of student. In the same vein, teachers need to ensure that students react to such remarks positively. This is important in all language activities.
- ✓ Teachers need to design communicative activities so as to provide opportunities for learners to produce the language. These communicative activities are designed to help learners to bridge the gap between linguistic competence and communicative competence.
- ✓ Task-based teaching is highly recommended for teachers to make language lessons more interactive especially when it links pair and group work with relevant activities. Best teaching-learning process results from creating the right kinds of interactional processes in the classroom. So, teachers need to create the best ways through the use of certain designed instructional tasks and to vary in using them in order to make learning more dynamic and to create an enjoyable atmosphere for the learners.

### **Suggestions for Learners**

- ✓ Learners should consider the classroom as a community where they learn through collaboration and sharing information; Second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in cooperative and meaningful communication. From Oxford's (1990: 145) standpoint "Cooperation implies the absence of competition and the presence of group spirit."
- ✓ Students should know how to benefit from group work and free discussions where they fully practice different pieces of the target language; within the classroom tasks they have an opportunity to practice the four skills together, build vocabulary, and use English to explain and elaborate ideas, and use strategies that

keep the conversation from breaking down. It is also helpful to set time limits, assign roles and responsibilities while working together in pairs and groups.

- ✓ Learners should have expectations of how instruction should proceed based on their experience and needs. For these reasons, discussing with learners the benefits of and the rationale for having them interact with each other during class time and the reason behind learning how to communicate in the target language.
- ✓ Learners have to use the language as much as possible and to benefit from both teachers' and peers' comprehensible input and feedback through communication during classroom activities. Also, teachers' talk and native speakers' talk are too beneficial for learners.
- ✓ A class presentation or a small group presentation methodology such as playing games, singing simple English songs, playing simple English drama, or creating interesting media will be applicable for the task of English and make communication more concrete and fascinated.

### **Conclusion**

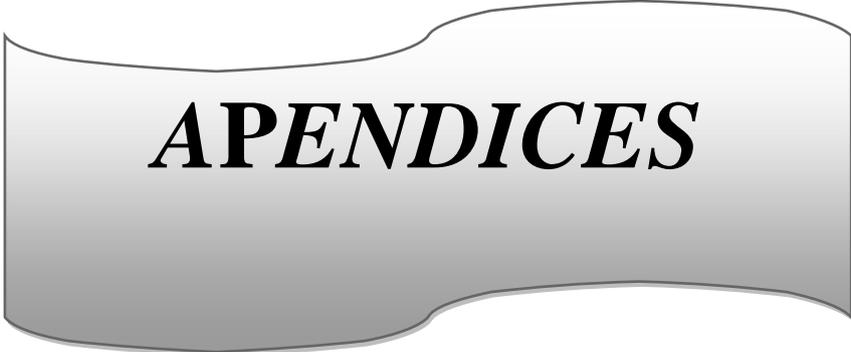
Living in today's multicultural world, language learners need to develop not only their linguistic competence but also their communicative competence to overcome both linguistic and communicative barriers they may encounter in interaction with people from other cultures. Giving the importance to communicative competence in today's communication in EFL classes is recommended for better educational system and successful teaching-learning process.

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***APENDICES***

## Appendix 01

### ✓ STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE:

*Dear Student,*

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your attitudes towards the use of classroom tasks in fostering English students' communicative competence.

Your responses are very important for the validity of our research. For that, we hope that you will give us your full interest and attention. Please, tick (✓) the choice that corresponds to your answer. Thank you very much in advance.

#### ✓ Section One : *Background Information*

1. Your gender is:
  - Male
  - Female
2. Learning English at the university is:
  - A personal choice
  - An imposed choice
3. Learning English is:
  - Very interesting
  - Interesting
  - Boring
4. Your level as a student of English is:
  - very good
  - good
  - average
  - weak
5. What is your main purpose for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at university?
  - For acquiring a new language
  - For getting profession
  - For communicating

**Justify your answer, please.**

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

✓ **Section Two: About Classroom Tasks**

6. Tasks are frequently used by EFL teachers within the Classrooms?

- Yes
- No

7. Do you think that the amount of time given to task performance is enough for you to improve your competence in communication?

- Yes
- No

8. When doing a task, do you prefer to do it?

- Individually
- In Pair
- In Group

**Justify your answer, please.**

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

9. Do you feel at ease (comfortable) during classroom tasks in English (L2)?

- Yes
- No

**Please explain why ?**

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

10. Which of those classroom tasks you like to practice the most?

- Group work
- Discussion

- Role play
- Others

**Please specify,**

.....

.....

.....

11. Do you feel that classroom tasks improve your language skills?

- Yes
- No

12. The tasks used in the classroom involve:

- Only productive skills
- Only receptive skills
- Both

13. In oral lectures do you prefer?

- Listening to teacher's talk
- Listening to native speakers' talk

✓ **Section Three: About Communicative Competence**

14. Have you ever heard the term "communicative competence"?

- Yes
- No

15. In the classroom, you talk:

- Most of times
- Sometimes
- When necessary
- Never

16. How often do you talk in English outside the classroom?

- Most of times
- Rarely
- Never

17. Do you enjoy communication in English?

- Yes
- No

**Justify your answer, please.**

.....

.....

.....

18. Do teachers in communicative classrooms stress the students' ability of?

- Knowing various grammatical patterns.
- Using those meaningful patterns in communication.
- Both.

19. Do you think that interacting with your peers increases your speaking opportunities?

- Yes
- No

20. Do classroom activities provide you with real communication?

- Yes
- No

**Justify your answer, please.**

.....

.....

.....

21. What do you do when communication in L2 breaks down?

.....

.....

.....

22. Do you think that you have the ability for communicating effectively in that foreign language?

- Yes
- No

✓ **Section Four: Suggestions and Comments**

- You are kindly invited to provide us with any helpful comments and suggestions about how to improve your competence in communication?

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

*Thank you for your cooperation...*

## Appendix 02

### ✓ *TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE :*

*Dear Educators,*

We would be so grateful if you could help us answering the following questions for the sake of gathering information about the role of classroom tasks in enhancing communicative competence among the English Branch students. Please, put a tick (✓) in the corresponding box(s) and make full statements whenever needed. Your answers will be of great help for the research. Thank you very much in advance.

#### ✓ *Section One : Background Information*

1. Teacher's gender

- Male
- Female

2. Teacher's age is between:

- 25\_30
- 31\_45
- 46\_60

3. Degree (s) held:

- BA (License)
- MA (Magister)
- PhD (Doctorate)

4. How many years have you been teaching English at the University?

.....

#### ✓ *Section Two : About Classroom Tasks*

5. How often do you use language tasks within your classes?

- Most of times
- Rarely
- Never

6. Do you think that time allocated to tasks is sufficient to practice the language?

• Yes

• No

7. Do you encourage your students to speak within the classroom?

• Always

• Sometimes

• Rarely

• Never

8. What sorts of tasks and activities do you use when teaching English?

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

9. Do you think that these activities are sufficient in order to optimize the level of communication among your students?

• Yes

• No

10. Do you incorporate cooperative learning in your classroom?

• Yes

• No

11. Do you use authentic material within your classes?

• Yes

• No

**If No, please say why?**

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

12. How useful do you think authentic materials are in the classroom?

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

13. When assessing classroom tasks? , do you focus on?

- the students' accuracy
- The students' fluency
- Both of them

✓ **Section Three: About Communicative Competence**

14. How would you define the word “communicative competence”? In your own words.

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. Teaching a language means:

- Teaching its grammatical rules.
- Teaching its communicative use
- Both

16. As an EFL teacher, do you think that the Communicative Approach is effective in language classroom practice?

.....

.....

.....

17. Have you ever used the term “communicative competence” when teaching?

- Yes
- No

18. Do you think that communicative competence is an important part of teaching English?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which method do you think it more suitable for that? And why?

.....

.....

.....

19. What roles may the teacher play within the communicative classrooms?

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

20. Do you think that classroom tasks are considered as an effective tool for improving students' communicative competence?

- Yes
- No

**Justify your answer, please**

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

21. Do you think that English students do not perform well in tasks because they lack the competence in English?

- Yes
- No

✓ **Section Four: Teachers' Suggestions and Comments**

- You are kindly invited to provide us with any helpful comments and suggestions about how to improve student's competence in communication?

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

Thank you for your contribution...

## Appendix 03 : Classroom Observation (Oral Expression)

### ➤ **COURSE EVALUATION FORM**

**Dear students,**

You are kindly invited to complete this course evaluation by assessing each statement a number which corresponds to your opinions. Place an (X) in the column that corresponds to your choice. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS EVALUATION!** We wish to obtain objective and anonymous responses from the class. By remaining anonymous, you can be honest and we can have a more accurate impression of how you feel about the course and the different tasks carried within the classroom.

#### ➤ **Rating system**

**1. Never**

**2. Rarely**

**3. Most of times**

**4. Always**

<b><i>On Classroom Activities</i></b>	<b><i>01</i></b>	<b><i>02</i></b>	<b><i>03</i></b>	<b><i>04</i></b>
1. Classroom tasks include any activities that encourage and require students to speak with and listen to others.				
2. Activities within the classroom involve all the four skills.				
3. Most tasks carried within the classroom focus on fluency (flexible and fluent use of language) rather than accuracy (correctness and form).				
4. Language tasks based on communicative activities.				
<b><i>On Interaction and Group Dynamics</i></b>				
1. Students enjoy interacting with their classmates or with other students in the target language when doing oral tasks.				
2. Group work helps students to get to know each other.				
3. Working in pairs and groups ease the cooperation and negotiation between group members.				
4. Group dynamics (pair/group) raise the Student Talking Time.				
<b><i>On Teacher /Students</i></b>				

1. The teacher encourages his students to speak during classroom practices.				
2. The teacher makes the students work in pairs and groups when doing tasks.				
3. During classroom tasks, the teacher is talkative.				
4. Students feel at ease when practicing the language in oral expression classes in front of the teacher and the classmates.				
5. Students are talkative in oral courses.				
6. Students talk to each other not only to the teacher.				
7. Students use the language freely and learn to speak it even they make a lot of errors.				
8. In oral classes, students are able to use the English pronunciation, intonation, stress, rhythm and to deduce different meanings of words.				
<b><i>On Communicative Competence</i></b>				
1. The term “communicative competence” is frequently used within the classroom.				
2. Students are able to use the rules of the language then produce the language correctly and then use it appropriately.				
3. Most 2 <sup>nd</sup> year students are aware of the need of communication in the classroom.				
4. Students are able to communicate effectively with their peers.				
5. The level of communication in English among EFL students is low and need to be developed.				
<b><i>General Evaluation</i></b>				
1. The course of oral expression develops students’ language skills.				
2. The classroom is comfortable and inviting.				
3. Students use the language freely without worrying too much about form.				
4. Students are serious and aware enough about what does the task intend to reach.				
5. Speaking a lot in the target language is one of the best ways to learn this language.				

## Appendix 04: Classroom Observation (Written Expression)

### ➤ **COURSE EVALUATION FORM**

**Dear students,**

You are kindly invited to complete this course evaluation by assessing each statement a number which corresponds to your opinions. Place an (X) in the column that corresponds to your choice. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS EVALUATION!** We wish to obtain objective and anonymous responses from the class. By remaining anonymous, you can be honest and we can have a more accurate impression of how you feel about the course and the different tasks carried within the classroom.

➤ **Rating system :**

**1. Never**

**2. Rarely**

**3. Most of times**

**4. Always**

<b><i>On Classroom Activities</i></b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>
5. Classroom written tasks include any activities that encourage and require students to work out various written discourses.				
6. Classroom written tasks involve all the four skills.				
7. Written activities are mostly related to life experiences.				
8. Most written tasks carried within the classroom aims at developing English students' competence in writing.				
<b><i>On Interaction and Group Dynamics</i></b>				
5. Students enjoy interacting with others in the target language when doing written tasks.				
6. Group work helps students to get to know each other.				
7. In written classes, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year students ultimately benefit a lot from peer feedback.				
8. Usually, written tasks have interactive and meaningful goals.				
<b><i>On Teacher /Students</i></b>				

9. The teacher encourages students to write extensively during classroom practices.				
10. The teacher makes the students work in pairs and groups when doing written tasks.				
11. During classroom tasks, the teacher gives comprehensible input to students.				
12. In written classes, the teacher offers students with real situations and helps them to work out written passages.				
13. The teacher provides students with opportunities to write about their own ideas and discover their voices rather than acts as a judge who stresses students' errors.				
14. Students can recognize and understand simple, familiar written words, phrases, and sentences.				
15. 2 <sup>nd</sup> year Students are able to connect sentences and produce well developed paragraphs				
16. Students use real examples, evidence, and ideas to enhance their writing.				
<b><i>On Communicative Competence</i></b>				
6. The term “communicative competence” is frequently used within the classroom.				
7. Students are able to use the rules of the language then produce the language correctly and then use it appropriately.				
8. Tasks used in the classroom provide the students with the background needed to communicate in real world contexts.				
9. The level of communication in English among EFL students is low and need to be developed.				
<b><i>General Evaluation</i></b>				
1. The classroom is comfortable and inviting.				
2. Students’ background knowledge in English helps them a lot in improving their writing.				
3. The course promoted students’ language skills.				
4. Effective academic writing requires considerable knowledge of linguistic elements (vocabulary, syntax, and punctuation).				
5. Writing is not an easy task for the majority of 2 <sup>nd</sup> year students of English.				

## **Appendix 05:**

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Notre thèse traite l'enquête de l'amélioration de la compétence communicative des étudiants par le biais de tâches en Anglais (ALE) dans classe étrangères. Comme il est perceptible, le problème majeur qui s'affronte souvent aux étudiants de la langue Anglaise. La plupart des étudiants n'ont pas la capacité de bien communiquer dans la langue cible comme ils le font dans leur langue maternelle (L1). Le manque de compétence et de la mauvaise performance des élèves en langue anglaise indiquent qu'ils ont besoin de pratiquer la langue fréquemment pendant et hors temps de classe et d'être exposés à certaines connaissances du monde réel pour satisfaire leurs besoins de communication. Dans ce cas, ce travail vise à mettre en compte la possibilité de développer la compétence communicative à travers l'utilisation extensive des tâches langagières. Tout d'abord, nous présentons à travers ce travail comment les tâches langagières sont essentielles pour les étudiants de langues étrangères et de la valeur de l'interaction et les performances dans ces tâches langagières. Ensuite, pour souligner l'importance potentielle de l'apprentissage coopératif pour les étudiants d'anglais sur le processus d'apprentissage pour développer la compétence communicative. Deuxièmement, nous essayons d'attirer l'attention des enseignants sur un élément très important qui est l'utilisation des tâches au sein des classes ALE qui ont un grand rôle dans le processus de communication. De plus, nous voulons encourager les apprenants à utiliser leurs connaissances antérieures quand ils interagissent et communiquent avec les autres dans la langue étrangère. En ce qui concerne le travail sur le terrain, nous obtenons des réponses des étudiants et des suggestions des enseignants. Ils sont des solutions efficaces pour améliorer le niveau des étudiants en communication. Cela, nous affirmons la validité de nos hypothèses ainsi que les réponses aux principales questions de recherche.

## Appendix 06:

### Oral Expression

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place/ Duration</b>	<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Skill(s)</b>	<b>Material(s) used</b>
<b>10 /02/2013</b>	Bentaibi ( R10) 09 :40_11 :10	Moon of india (episod 04)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading comprehension</li> <li>• writing</li> </ul>	Piece of writing
<b>13/02/2013</b>	<i>BC(06)</i> 08 :00_90 :30	Crime and punishment (disscusion in pairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking</li> </ul>	Piece of writing
<b>17/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi (R10) 09 :40_11 :10	Crime and punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening comprehension</li> <li>• Speaking</li> </ul>	Tape Records(authentic material)
<b>20/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi(R4) 08 :00_90 :30	Crime and punishment(role play)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speaking</li> </ul>	According to the play
<b>24/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi (R10)	(listening comprehension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• speaking</li> </ul>	Records(authentic material)
<b>27/02/2013</b>	<i>BC(06)</i> 08 :00_90 :30	Moon of India (Reading comprehension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• writing</li> </ul>	According to the play
<b>03/03/2013</b>	Bentaibi (R10) 09 :40_11 :10	Teacher is absent	/	/
<b>05/03/2013</b>	Enphi G 11 :20_12 :40	« Do it yourself » (Role play )	speaking	Piece of writing

## Appendix 07:

### Written Expression

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place/ duration</b>	<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Skill(s)</b>	<b>Material(s) used</b>
<b>10 /02/2013</b>	Bentaibi ( R13) 14 :50_16 :20	Exam Correction	/	/
<b>11/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi ( R01) 09 :40_11 :10	The writing Process (How to write a paragraph )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Comprehension</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Speaking and Listening</li> </ul>	Piece of writing
<b>17/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi (R13) 14 :50_16 :20	Techniques of writing a paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading comprehension</li> <li>• Writing</li> </ul>	Piece of writing
<b>18/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi(R4) 09 :40_11 :10	Reading comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking</li> </ul>	Piece of writing
<b>24/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi(R4) 14 :50_16 :20	The teacher is absent	/	/
<b>25/02/2013</b>	Bentaibi(R4) 09 :40_11 :10	Writing a paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Writing</li> </ul>	According to the play
<b>03/03/2013</b>	Bentaibi (R10) 14 :50_16 :20	Writing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking</li> </ul>	Piece of writing
<b>04/03/2013</b>	Bentaibi ( R01) 09 :40_11 :10	Writing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing</li> </ul>	Piece of writing