

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mohammed Khaidher University of Biskra



Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Foreign Languages



The Role of Communication Games in Developing Students' Speaking Skill

A Case Study of First Year Students of English at Biskra University

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Master Degree in Science of Language

Submitted by:

MERDAS Souheir

Supervised by:

Mr. TURKI B. D.

Board of examiners:

President	Mr. Mehiri Ramdane	University of Biskra
Supervisor	Mr. Turki Barkat Djamel	University of Biskra
Examiner	Mr. Bouhitem Taher	University of Biskra

Academic Year: 2012/2013

Dedication

To the dearest people to my heart

*My dear mother who spent days and nights praying and asking
Allah to help me,*

My dear father who encouraged and supported me,

My lovely sister 'Ismahane' who helped and supported me,

*My dear teacher, friend, and sister Ms. 'Dounia Kaib' whom I
always find by my side in hard moments, and who really deserves
all respect and love,*

And to all my relatives, friends, and colleagues

I dedicate this work.

Acknowledgments

I am heartily grateful to my teacher and supervisor Mr. Turki D. B. for his continuous encouragement, guidance, help, and trust.

I am thankful to all the members of the jury for reading and evaluating my dissertation.

I owe my gratitude to the teachers of oral expression at the department of English at Biskra University for taking time to fill in my questionnaire.

I would also like to thank first year students at the department of English for being collaborative during the administration of the questionnaire.

I am extremely thankful to all my teachers who provided me with lessons and handouts during my studies at the University.

Abstract

This research is conducted to investigate the usefulness of communication games in developing students' speaking skill. One of the most common problems that most students face when learning a language is their inability to speak it. In an attempt to find a solution to this issue, we decided to conduct this study which deals with communication games as a technique that can be used for teaching language learners. Thus, we hypothesized that the use of communication games may enhance students' speaking skill through involving them in classroom interaction. We have adopted a descriptive methodology of investigation which consists of two questionnaires administered to first year students and their teachers of oral expression at the department of English. The most significant outcomes of our research are the students' and teachers awareness of the utility and effectiveness of the proposed activities and their readiness to put them into application. Therefore, it has become evident that those communication games play an important role in ameliorating the students' proficiency of the speaking skill.

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Introduction

Speaking is one of the basic language skills that must be given a special emphasis in the language classroom. It is also the aim of any language learner because we cannot say that one knows a language only if he or she can speak it. However, knowing a language does not necessarily mean knowing speaking; speaking is not merely making some sentences that are grammatically correct, and pronouncing them appropriately. Speaking is interactive, and should be taught through communication. Therefore, the teacher has to give his or her students the opportunity to interact with each other, and thus, to communicate using the target language. One way is including communication games in teaching the speaking skill.

1. Statement of the Problem

One of the most common challenges that the language teacher faces when teaching EFL first year students is the inability of many students to speak, or even to hold a very short conversation in English. In an attempt to solve this problem, we will analyze one of the strategies or techniques that may help the language teachers to enhance their students' verbal interaction and, therefore, to develop their speaking skill.

2. Aims of the Study

The aims of this research are:

a) To find a procedure through which first year English students can easily get involved in classroom interaction, and develop their speaking skill ; and more importantly,

b) to demonstrate the usefulness of communication games in making the language learners able to hold a conversation using the target language.

3. Significance of the Study

Speaking is one of the most important language skills that must be mastered by language learners. It is considered as the core of any language, and the scale through which we can measure the learners' mastery of language. Therefore, teachers have to focus on developing their students' speaking skill by applying different techniques and strategies. The use of communication games is one of those techniques that may help the teacher to engage his or her students in classroom verbal interaction, and that give first year English students the opportunity to develop their speaking skill.

4. Research Questions

The questions that can be asked in this research are:

- a) Are communication games useful for teaching speaking?
- b) To what extent are communication games helpful for learners to get involved in classroom interaction and, therefore, to enhance their speaking skill?

5. Hypothesis

In this study, we hypothesize:

- 1) If EFL first year students are exposed to communication games, they will be able to get involved in classroom verbal interaction, and, thus, to speak in English.

6. Research Methodology

In this research we are going to use the descriptive method since we are going to describe a phenomenon that takes place in the classroom situation. This study will be conducted through two questionnaires that will be submitted to 80 first year English LMD students at Mohammed khaidher University of Biskra, and to some of their teachers of oral expression at the department of English. This sample will be selected randomly.

7. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of two main parts: a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part is composed of three chapters. The first chapter gives a general idea about Communicative Language Teaching; its definition, origins, goals, major principles, as well as its major activity types, and the roles of the teacher and learners in those activities. The second chapter gives an overview on speaking; its definition, types, distinctive characteristics in comparison to writing, its major activity types, and its importance in the language classroom. It also deals with oral communication; its nature, and its two important components: accuracy and fluency in addition to communicative competence and its main constituents. The third chapter concerns communication games. It includes the definition of communication games, its types, advantages, and the steps that the teacher should follow while using them. This chapter also includes some examples of communication games, and some practical considerations concerning the use of those activities. The practical part contains one chapter. This latter includes the methodology used in this research, as well as the description and the analysis of the teachers' and students' questionnaires. The results obtained from the study are summarized, and then

discussed at the end of this chapter. Some pedagogical recommendations are also given at the end of this dissertation.

Introduction

The present chapter aims at giving a general overview on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It firstly provides a definition to this approach accompanied by some of its features. Then, it attempts to explore the origins of CLT and how this latter has developed over time. Moreover, this chapter deals with the major principles as well as the main goals of the Communicative Approach. Classroom activities in CLT to which students may be exposed to maximize interaction in the language classroom are also included in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter sheds the light on the roles of both teachers and learners in Communicative Language Teaching classroom activities.

1.1. Identifying Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching or the Communicative Approach is an approach to foreign or second language teaching which focuses on the idea that language should be learnt through communication. According to J.C. Richards and R. Schmidt (2002: 90), CLT is “an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language learning is communicative competence and which seeks to make meaningful communication and language use a focus of all classroom activities”.

Unlike the preceding approaches and methods to language teaching which viewed language learning as merely memorization and repetition of language structures and forms, communicative language teaching stipulates that students should be taught communicative competence rather than linguistic competence. That is, learners need to learn not only how to form grammatically correct sentences, but also how to communicate appropriately. Hence, teaching the grammatical aspect is insufficient for knowing and using a language.

However, focusing on communicative competence does not mean that Communicative Language Teaching neglects grammatical competence. But, it considers it as a part of communicative competence and teaches it implicitly. According to Al-Humaidi (2013: 2), since CLT focuses on meaning rather than form, the language form is learnt through meaning and not the other way around. And, this is what makes this approach distinctly different from the other structural methods.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) claimed that Communicative Language Teaching should be viewed as an approach rather than a method (qtd. in Al-Humaidi 2013: 1). Rodgers (2001) explained the differences between a method and an approach. He argued that the approach is a much broader concept which includes language teaching philosophies that can be differently perceived and used in teaching, while the method is a limited stable teaching process including specific techniques and activities (ibid).

1.2. Background to CLT

For many years, language teaching was dominated by traditional approaches and methods to language teaching such as the Audio-lingual Approach in the United States and Situational Language Teaching in Great Britain. Traditional approaches were based on the belief that learning a language requires learners to master grammatical competence. This basic competence was taught directly through drilling and memorization of language structures and rules. Therefore, grammatical rules were taught in a deductive way. The teacher presented his or her students with the language structure then he or she gave them the chance to practice using those rules (J. C. Richards 2006: 6).

However, traditional structural theories were unable to provide an inclusive description to language. That is, Audio-lingual and Situational Language Teaching

approaches focused only on the form of language and neglected another broader aspect of language: the functional aspect. This is what was argued by the American linguist Noam Chomsky who declared: “the current standard structural theories of language were incapable of accounting for the fundamental characteristic of language-the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences” (J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 64). They thus failed to help language learners to be competent speakers in the target language.

After Audio-lingualism had been refused in the United States in the mid-1960s, British applied linguists started questioning the reliability of the Situational Language Teaching approach. By the end of the sixties, Situational Language Teaching became no longer useful in teaching the language. According to Howatt (1984):“There was no future in continuing to pursue the chimera of predicting language on the basis of situational events” (qtd. in J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986 : 64).

What was rather needed in language teaching was a focus on the functional and communicative aspects of language. J.C. Richards (2006: 9) stated that for the mastery of language ability, language learners needed to be communicatively competent and to know how to use the language appropriately for several communicative purposes such as giving advice, making requests, and so on, and not only to know how to form grammatically correct sentences. This led to a shift in language teaching from teaching pure grammatical competence to emphasizing communicative competence instruction, and therefore, to the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) came as a reaction or a re-evaluation to traditional approaches to language teaching. It derived from the work of many educators in different disciplines such as the work of John Firth, M. A.K. Halliday in functional linguistics, the American sociolinguists Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, and William Labov in

sociology , and John Austin and John Searle in the field of philosophy (J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 64 ; S.J. Savignon 2002: 4).

Another cause for the emergence of the Communicative approach was the rise of European countries interdependence. When the number of immigrants and foreign workers increased, the Council of Europe, a regional organization for cultural and educational cooperation, decided to create a syllabus to teach adults the major languages of the European Common Market. After much consultation and investigation undertaken by some experts, the idea was to develop a Communicative syllabus for language teaching (J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 65).

1.3. Major Principles of CLT

1.3.1. Language is Learnt through Communication

The primary and the main principle in CLT is that language is taught through communication. J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers (1986: 69) argued that CLT “starts from a theory of language as communication”, responding to what Hymes referred to as ‘communicative competence’, and contrasting what Chomsky referred to as ‘linguistic competence’ which is concerned with an ideal speaker and listener who knows the whole language perfectly avoiding any kind of errors to apply this knowledge in a perfect performance in an idealized situation, or, in other words, to produce grammatically correct sentences. Hymes’ communicative competence refers to the speaker’s ability to communicate appropriately in a given speech community (J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 69, 70; J. C. Richards, R. Schmidt 2002: 94). Teaching language as communication is what makes the communicative approach completely different from other traditional approaches which focused on form rather than meaning. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) stated that the most significant characteristic that makes communicative

different from the audio-lingual method is that this latter views language learning as a mere learning of sounds, words, and sentences, whereas language learning in CLT is learning to communicate (qtd. in J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 67). According to CLT, students will be communicatively competent if they are taught through communication. Lee and Van Patten (1995, 2003) claimed that the more learners are engaged in communication, the more their communicative ability will improve (qtd. in A.G. Benati 2009: 60). Therefore, teachers should maximize communication in their language classrooms.

1.3.2 Learners Should be Engaged in Authentic Use of Language and in Meaningful Communication

The second major principle in CLT is that students should be exposed to authentic use of language and engaged in meaningful communication. Widdowson (1979) claimed that Communicative Language Teaching focuses on the use of authentic learning activities and materials in meaningful communication acts (qtd. in F.Zang 2012: 117). Authenticity means “the quality of being genuine or true” (Oxford Learners Pocket Dictionary 2008: 24). It refers to the extent to which something is natural and real. Many Proponents of CLT agreed upon the significance of the authenticity of the learning situation for improving the learning process. Corder (1981), for instance, claimed that using language in real situation, and giving students the opportunity to perform authentic communicative functions are of great importance (qtd. in A.G. Benati 2009: 11). A.G. Benati (2009: 68) also argued that teachers should maximize the use of authentic materials, and have his or her students prepared for the real language outside the classroom. Meaningful communication is also one of the key factors that promote language learning, and that CLT focuses on. Communication is meaningful when the content being dealt with by students is relevant,

purposeful, interesting, and engaging (J.C. Richards 2006: 22). According to J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers (1986: 72), the learning process is much better sustained when learners are exposed to meaningful language, because it facilitates the learning of foreign language.

1.3.3. Fluency and Accuracy are both Significant in Language Learning

Communicative Language Teaching aims at developing both fluency and accuracy of the language learner. According to J. C. Richards, and R. Schmidt (2002: 90) one of the basic principles of CLT is improving students' fluency and accuracy. Fluency is the ability to speak naturally using stress, rhythm, pausing, intonation, as well as interjections and interruptions. On the other hand, accuracy is the ability to produce sentences that are grammatically correct (ibid 204). In spite of the fact that the communicative approach gives priority to fluency as Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) argued, it does not neglect the importance of accuracy in learning the language.

1.3.4. Communication Involves the Integration of Language Skills

Another principle of Communicative Language Teaching is including and emphasizing the teaching of the four language skills. J.C. Richards (2006: 9) stated that when CLT emerged, grammar became no longer the focus of language teaching, there was rather a shift to the teaching of knowledge and skills.

1.4. Goals of CLT

Like any other language teaching approach, communicative language teaching has many objectives and goals such as developing students' ability to speak fluently, and engaging them in meaningful communication. However, the primary and the overall goal

of the communicative approach, is to develop language learners' communicative competence.

According to J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers (1986: 69) the goal of language teaching in the communicative approach is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as 'communicative competence'. J.C. Richards and R. Schmidt (2002: 90) also argued that CLT is an approach which focuses on communicative competence as the main goal of language learning. In the same path, S. J. Savignon (2002: 1) claimed that the main goal that CLT aims to develop is communicative competence. It refers to the language learners' ability to communicate meaningfully and appropriately with other language speakers, far from reciting dialogues and concentrating only on the correctness of grammatical knowledge. In other words, communicative competence is the knowledge of not only if something is grammatically correct, but also if it is appropriate in a given speech community. This competence is by itself composed of other sub-competences. Those latter are : 1) grammatical competence which concerns the formal correctness of language ; 2) sociolinguistic competence or socio-cultural competence which includes the knowledge of how to deal appropriately with different types of speech acts such as requests, apologies, and invitations ; 3) discourse competence which refers to the knowledge of how to begin and end conversations ; and 4) strategic competence which refers to the knowledge of communication strategies that the speaker uses for compensating and correcting speech deficiencies and problems (J.C. Richards and R. Schmidt 2002 : 90,91). Therefore, a successful communicative teacher is the one who makes communicatively competent students.

1.5. Major Activity Types in CLT

Activity types in CLT are numerous and unlimited. In spite of being to some extent different, they all share the same objective: to engage students in communication, and to develop their communicative competence. W. Littlewood (1981: 20) distinguished between two main types of activities in Communicative Language Teaching: “Functional communication activities” and “social interaction activities”.

1.5.1. Functional Communication Activities

Functional communication activities are those exercises which emphasize the functional aspect of communication, and in which students are asked to use the language they know, even if it is not grammatically accurate or appropriate for a particular situation to get meanings. Examples of such a type of activities may be looking for the similarities and differences found in several sets of pictures, discovering missing features in a map or a picture, completing maps, following directions, and solving problems from shared clues. The principle of this activity is that the teacher creates an appropriate situation for the learners to overcome an information gap or to solve a problem by sharing and processing information in order to find a specific solution or to arrive to a particular decision. The success of functional tasks depends on the nature of the classroom situation (W. Littlewood 1981: 20, 22; J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 76).

1.5.2. Social Interaction Activities

In this type of activities, in addition to conveying meaning effectively, students are also required to take into consideration the social context in which the interaction occurs. Social interaction activities are very similar to those communication situations outside the

classroom. Because of the classroom artificiality and limitations, the teacher uses some techniques to create different social situations such as dialogues, role plays, simulations, and improvisations. The task is successful when students use functionally effective forms and, more importantly to produce socially appropriate utterances (W. Littlewood 1981: 20, 43; J.C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 76).

1.6. The Learners' Role in CLT Activities

Being a learner-centered approach, Communicative Language Teaching requires the learner to be almost independent from their teacher's instruction and continual control. This makes the learners responsible of their learning behavior inside the classroom, and urges them to perform different tasks.

M. Breen and C. N. Candlin (1980) claimed that learners in CLT mainly act as joint negotiators within a group and within the exercises undertaken by that group (qtd. in .C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986:77). C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers (1986: 77) argued that students communicate primarily with each other, and that the responsibility in communication is the responsibility of the whole group and not of one particular participant.

At first, the learners find it very difficult to get accustomed to the 'heavy' responsibility of interaction. They may; therefore, lose their self-confidence and become afraid of getting involved in such a type of activities. Therefore, the teacher should take this psychological factor into account, and tries to apply some strategies to make his or her students familiar with those activities. For example, he or she may check his or her students' comprehension of the activity, then he or she can perform the task himself or herself with some students for better understanding (W. Littlewood 1981: 18).

1.6. The Teachers Role in CLT Activities

Since the learner is the focus of Communicative Language Teaching activities, the teacher's role in those exercises is less dominant. However, this does not mean that the teacher is a passive participant in classroom activities. Rather, she or he has many tasks to perform.

According to M. Breen and C. N. Candlin (1980) the teacher has two major roles in CLT activities. The first role is to facilitate the communication process and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant in those activities (qtd. in .C. Richards and T.S. Rodgers 1986: 77). Other secondary roles assumed by the teacher are: an organizer, a guide, a researcher, and a learner at the same time (ibid).

The teacher also acts as a needs analyst who is in charge of determining and responding to the learner language needs, a counselor who acts as a communicator to match the speaker's intention and the hearers' interpretations through paraphrasing, confirming, and feedback; as well as a group process manager who arranges the classroom situation for communication an communicative activities (ibid, 78).

W. Littlewood (1981: 19) suggested other roles for the teacher in communication activities. He argued that the teacher's presence in classroom activities represents a psychological support to students, especially those who find a difficulty to be independent participants. Moreover, the teacher may act as a controller who prevents the learners' resort to their first language, and who sometimes corrects some critical errors that may negatively affect the learners' speech. Another important role for the teacher is that of acting as an advisor who provides learners with necessary language items when they are unable to maintain interaction.

Conclusion

To put it in a nut shell, this chapter discussed the main points concerning Communicative Language Teaching. It gradually moved from the general, abstract, and theoretical side of CLT which includes its nature, major principles, and goals to its specific, concrete, practical side including the major types of CLT classroom activities that the learners practice to develop their communicative competence, as well as the roles that the teacher and the learner are supposed to perform in those activities.

Introduction

The second chapter is devoted to a more practical aspect of communication. That is, communication as a practice rather than a theory. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part gives a general overview on the speaking skill; its definition, types, distinctive characteristics in comparison to writing, its major activity types, and its importance in the language classroom. On the other hand, the second part concerns oral communication, its nature, and its two important components: accuracy and fluency in addition to communicative competence as a key factor that reflects the speaker's ability to comprehend and use the language effectively, and that influences his or her success in communicating with other users of language.

2.1. Speaking

2.1.1. The Nature of Speaking

Speaking is a large researchable area in language teaching that has been studied and investigated by many scholars and researchers. In terms of its definition, speaking is “the product of creative construction of linguistic strings, the speaker makes choice of lexicon, structure, and discourse” (H.D. Brown 2004: 140). It is also “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and processing information” (H.D. Brown; A. Bruns and H. Joyce qtd. in M. Florez 1999: 1). Hence, speaking is a productive skill that requires knowledge of the used language and that takes place in the course of interaction.

According to W.G. Widdowson (1978: 58-59) speaking can be understood in two ways: in terms of usage, and in terms of use. In terms of its usage, speaking is producing bits of language such as words and sentences that are grammatically correct by means of

the vocal organs. Here, speaking is simply a productive skill that is expressed through the aural medium. However, in terms of its use, speaking is both productive and receptive. In this sense, it is a communicative activity which occurs in natural communication, and which can be considered as a part of a dialogue or any other type of oral communication.

In the past, teaching speaking was dominated by teaching pronunciation, intonation, and other elements of language such as grammar and vocabulary (Brown, Yule 1983: ix). However, researchers have recently focused on teaching speaking as communication. According to S. Thornbury (2005: iv), speaking is not to know merely the grammar and vocabulary of language, combining correct sentences, and pronouncing them appropriately. Rather, speaking is “interactive and requires the ability to co-operate in the management of turns. It also typically takes place in real time”. This idea was also supported by J. Harmer (2001: 269) who claimed that in order for a learner to speak fluently, he or she has not only to have linguistic knowledge, but also to have the ability to communicate appropriately.

Being a primary means of communication among different people in different situations, speaking is influenced by many surrounding factors. That is to say, the act of speaking is affected by the person who speaks to whom, when, where, and for what purpose. M. Florez (1999: 1) claimed that the form and the meaning of speech is determined by the situation where it takes place, the participants who exchange the speech, and their shared experience, as well as the speakers’ intention or the purpose they aim to attain.

The ability to speak in a foreign language is a very difficult and hard task. It is so because, as M. Pawlak, E. Kimczak, and J. Majer (2011: xiv) argued, it requires the learner to have a good mastery of language ‘subsystems’, and to use them automatically and without much thinking in a natural communication focusing on both producing and

understanding others' speech. Speaking also requires the learner to have a sufficient knowledge about the purpose, the manner, and the time to communicate, and to be skilled in manipulating and controlling interaction (M. Pawlak , E. Kimczak, and J. Majer 2011: 4). Therefore, speaking skill should be given much focus in the language classroom.

2.1.2. Differences between Speaking and Writing

Speaking and writing are two basic language skills that must be mastered by the language learner. Speaking is producing strings of language using the vocal organs. Writing is a process of creating ideas, organizing them, writing drafts, and polishing those drafts. In spite of the fact that speaking and writing are interrelated processes which have many similarities, they differ from one another in several ways.

The most distinctive features of speaking and writing is that speech is usually spontaneous, informal, unplanned, and open-ended, whereas written texts are often structured, formal, preplanned, and restricted. According to J. Cummins, and C. Davison (2007), conversations take place in real time usually without planning, while written texts are already planned, and they are not simultaneous. That is to say, they are written in one time and read in another.

Another difference between writing and speaking is that spoken language is generally simple, while written language is usually complex consisting of complicated sentences and structures.

In speaking, it is easy for the speaker to notice whether the listener received the message or not through the listener's reaction. However, in writing, the writer cannot notice the influence of his or her text on the reader, so that he or she must focus on the needs and interests of his or her audience. D. Crystal (2005: 2) claimed that in addition to

what they say, speakers can rely on other ‘extra-linguistic clues’ such as facial expressions and gestures to check the comprehension of the listener. Writers, on the other hand, cannot receive any immediate feedback. They, therefore, must take into consideration the effects of their writings on different readers in different settings, and how those writings might be interpreted by them.

Speakers use their voices (pitch, rhythm, and stress), pauses and intonation, in addition to their gestures to communicate their thoughts, whereas writers rely only on words to express their ideas. According to D. Crystal (2005: 3), speaking includes intonation, loudness, rhythm, and other features of voice, whereas writing consists of capitalization, punctuation, and spatial organization.

Spoken discourse is involved and implicit, while written discourse is explicit (D. J. and L. Jr. 1982: 112; J. Cummins, and C. Davison, 2007), and individual. In other words, conversations always occur among two or more participants, and depend on the context in which they take place. McCarthy (1993) clarified that daily conversations are involving, and the negligence of some participants seems to be unfriendly, and it may sometimes cause problems (qtd. in J. Cummins, and C. Davison 2007). On the other hand, written texts are often written by one person, and the writer does not usually take into account the context of his or her writings.

Spoken discourse is usually unorganized and fragmented, whereas written discourse is often organized and tight. D. Crystal (2005: 2) argued that because he or she is obliged to think while speaking, the speaker usually repeats the same words, rephrases, and comments on what he or she has already said using pauses and intonation. Those latter make the speech unorganized, and sometimes unclear. On the other hand, writing is

carefully organized and structured, so that the reader can easily identify sentences and paragraphs in the written text.

2.1.3. Types of Speaking

There is no single type of speaking. Speaking differs according to the speaker's intentions and needs, as well as the time and the situation where the speech takes place. H. D. Brown (2004: 141,142) identifies five basic types of speaking:

2.1.3.1. Imitative Speaking

Imitative speaking is the type of speaking in which one only repeats what he or she has just heard. That is, to imitate or parrot back another speaker's word, phrase, or sometimes sentence. In imitative speaking, the speaker or the imitator is not obliged to interact with other speakers in an oral conversation, or to convey meaning, or even to understand what he or she has heard. Therefore, imitative speaking does not exceed the phonetic level of oral production.

2.1.3.2. Intensive Speaking

Another type of speaking is intensive speaking in which the speaker is required to produce short stretches of oral language, so that he or she needs to be to some extent competent in making grammatical, phrasal, lexical, or phonological relationships such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. The speaker's knowledge of semantic properties of language is needed, but interaction is minimal and often not required.

2.1.3.3. Responsive Speaking

In responsive speaking, the speaker has to understand what is said, and to be able to hold at most short limited conversations, standard greetings and small talks, and simple requests and comments. In such a type of speaking, the learner usually receives an authentic spoken prompt with one or two questions to reply.

2.1.3.4. Interactive Speaking

In interactive speaking, the speaker represents one participant in a larger group of interacting participants. In this case, interaction can be either in a form of transactional language in which the speakers aim at exchanging specific information, or in a form of interpersonal exchanges in which speakers aim to maintain their social relationships. In the second type of interaction, speech may be pragmatically complex because of the use of casual register and colloquial language, ellipsis, slang, and other sociolinguistic conventions. This feature makes interactive speaking distinctive from responsive speaking.

2.1.3.5. Extensive Speaking (Monologue)

Extensive speaking includes speeches, oral presentations, and storytelling tasks. In this type of speaking, the speaker has the whole time to speak without any kind of interruption from the listener because there is no chance for interaction. Listeners, here, can respond only through nonverbal responses. In extensive speaking, the speech is often planned and formal; however, this does not exclude informal monologues such as casually delivered speech.

2.1.4. Major Activity Types in Teaching Speaking

Different classroom activities are proposed for teaching speaking. They almost all aim at maximizing interaction among language learners, and at developing their communication proficiency. The most common activity types used for teaching speaking are:

2.1.4.1. Discussions

In discussions, students are given the opportunity to express their ideas, and to give their opinions and points of view concerning a given topic or object in front of their teacher and classmates. For many students, being given the chance to speak causes a great problem because of many psychological factors such as shyness and lack of self-confidence. Teachers should therefore take those factors into consideration, and look for solutions to help their students to overcome those difficulties. J. Harmer (2001: 272) asserted that one of the best ways to make students speak in the classroom is the use of the “buzz group”. In buzz group, learners are given the opportunity to discuss their view points among small groups before doing so in front of the whole class. ‘Buzz group’ can be applied in two ways. It can firstly be used for a whole range of discussions in which learners are asked to express their ideas and predictions concerning a particular object or situation such as discussing what should be included in a news broadcast, or predicting the content of a reading text. The other way is through showing students photographs, or introducing topics and asking them to say the first thing that comes to their minds.

2.1.4.2. Prepared Talks

Prepared talks are a very common activity type in which the student chooses a topic, prepares it, and then presents it in front of the whole class. Because of preparation and

preplanning, prepared talks are usually formal and written. However, learners had better speak from notes rather than from long texts because they will be reading rather than speaking. Prepared talks are very important activities for both the speaker and the listener provided that they are well prepared and organized (J. Harmer 2001: 274).

2.1.4.3. Simulations and Role-plays

Simulation and role-play are those activities in which students are given the opportunity to perform or act out a role which to a large extent simulates a real-life situation. According to Davison and Gordan (1978), simulations are activities in which students are required to play a role of any human interaction or social process (qtd. in F. Klippel 1984: 121). On the other hand, role-plays are activities in which students are asked to perform short scenes that can be realistic or pure fantasy (ibid). J. Harmer (2001: 274) also claimed that roles played by students can be either as they themselves are in a particular situation depending on their imagination, or as roles of other characters different from their own. K. Jones (1982) argued that in order for the play to be successfully acted, students acting roles should think of themselves as real participants in real situations. Besides, they should be given the necessary and sufficient information to carry out the activity. The classroom should also be conditioned to simulate the real situation (qtd. in J. Harmer 2001: 274).

Simulation and role-plays are very beneficial and useful tools in teaching and learning. Since they are most of the time funny and enjoying, they motivate students to learn. They also help shy and hesitant students to speak because they feel less responsible of the language they produce. Furthermore, simulations and role plays give the students the chance to use a much wider range of language (ibid 275).

2.1.4.4. Communication Games

Communication games are activities which increase interaction among students through talking to one another in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture, put things in the right order, find similarities and differences between pictures, and so on (J. Harmer 2001: 272). Examples of communication games can be: ‘Telling a Story’, an activity which encourages students to use their imagination, and to tell a story (Bell and Gower qtd. in P. Watcyn-Jones 1995: 7), and ‘Call My Bluff’ in this game, a group of students is divided into two teams. Team A is given a word not known by group B. This latter has to guess the right definition among the three ones proposed by team A (J. Harmer 2001: 272). Communication games are mainly useful because they provide students with the opportunity to speak using the target language and maximize interaction in the language classroom.

2.1.4.5. Acting from a Script

It is a type of speaking activities in which students are asked to perform scripts of a play or a film. J. Harmer (2001: 271) claimed that students can be engaged in activities where they act out scenes from plays, their coursebooks, or even from dialogues written by themselves in front of the class providing that the teacher creates an appropriate atmosphere for the activity. Students should be given enough time rehearsing and practicing their dialogues before their final performance in front of their teacher and classmates. While students are performing their scripts, the teacher can act as a theatre director paying attention to the students stress and intonation.

2.1.4.6. Questionnaires

In questionnaires, students can choose any topic that seems interesting to them and design a questionnaire. In doing so the teacher represents a resource that helps them in the process of designing. The questionnaire outcomes can take the form of a discussion or a prepared talk. Questionnaires are very useful activities that help the learner acquire different language patterns through the repetition of those structures, and they thus develop their communication proficiency (ibid 274).

2.1.4.7. Storytelling

Storytelling is a type of activities in which students choose a story, prepare it, and tell it in front of the class. R. Wajnryb (2003: 8) claimed that stories in regard to their content, meaning, and dynamic unfolding are so motivating, involving, and engaging. In other words, they motivate students to be active learners, and engage them in classroom interaction. And that, stories are very beneficial for teaching in general, and specially for teaching language.

2.1.5. Importance of Speaking.

Speaking is an essential skill that has to be mastered by every language learner. Its importance can be realized inside and outside the language classroom. Inside the classroom, speaking helps the learners to acquire different forms and patterns of language. Being exposed to different speaking activities, students will unconsciously learn a lot of new vocabulary and grammatical rules. Speaking activities also give students the chance to practice what they have already learnt in the classroom. On the other hand, outside the classroom, speaking provides the learners with the opportunity to experience the language

they learnt in different actual life situations. More importantly, people who speak English well are needed by almost all governments, ministries of education, employers, and also by companies and organizations which needs communication within international marketplace. Furthermore, the mastery of the spoken English is needed for finding employments and gaining promotions. Moreover, having the ability to speak in English, students can easily get access to new information in different fields of science and technology, and become very influential members in their countries economic, social, and political development (J. Baker and H. Westrup 2003: 5,6). For all that, both language teachers and learners should take into consideration the importance of speaking, and do their best to improve it.

2.2. Oral Communication

2.2.1. The Nature of Oral Communication

What is really needed in learning speaking is not only the mastery of the formation of grammatically correct sentences, but the acquisition of the ability to convey meaning, and to exchange ideas and opinions in an appropriate way. That is to say, in addition to the correctness of the language being used, one should communicate appropriately. According to Bizzell (1989), in order for learners to communicate successfully, they require more than the ability to present correct strings of language. Successful communication is ‘context-dependent’, and it is thus fixed in its specific speech community (qtd. in R. M. Mojibur 2010: 2). Thus, in a conversation, the word ‘oral communication’ is better used to describe speaking. R. M. Mojibur (2010: 3) claimed that:

Oral communication is the spoken interaction between two or more people. The interaction is far more complex than it seems. Oral communication is composed of multiple elements which, when taken as a whole, result in the success or failure of the interaction [...] oral communication is a unique and learned rhetorical skill that requires understanding what to say and how to say it.

Therefore, oral communication is a face-to-face verbal interaction that takes place in real time, and that is undertaken by two or more participants in a conversation. It is a complex skill that requires learners to acquire the ability to select the appropriate words, and to use them in an appropriate manner in accordance with the given context.

Communication is successful only when the speaker and the listener understand one another. The speaker should bear in mind that his or her sent message is just one of thousands of messages received by the listener; so that, his or her words must be clear, and easily interpreted to gain the listener's attention (Understanding the basics 2009: 2).

2.2.2. Accuracy

One basic aspect of oral communication is the ability to produce correct or accurate language. Accuracy refers to the extent to which the performance of a foreign or a second language learner deviates from a norm. Deviations from the norm refers to the errors the learner makes while producing language (Hammerly 1990 qtd. in A. Housen et al. 2012: 4) . Accuracy can also be defined as the degree to which the language learner cares about the usage of language (A. Trosborg 1994: 456; J. Baker and H. Westrup 2003: 7). Simply stated, accuracy is the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences and expressions.

That is, we can say about a person an accurate speaker when he or she does not make any errors in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

2.2.3. Fluency

Another important aspect of speaking or oral communication is fluency. According to A. Housen and M. Pierrad (2005: 12), fluency is “the degree and distribution of hesitation markers (pauses, incomplete words, repairs) in the learners’ utterances”. In other words, it is the ability to produce the target language with native-like rapidity, pausing, hesitation, or reformulation (Ellis 2003 qtd. in A. Housen et al. 2012: 2). Therefore, fluency is the speaker’s ability to produce a natural speech using stress, rhythm, pausing, intonation, as well as interjections and interruptions.

Research about accuracy and fluency traces its origins at least to 1970. A clear distinction was made in research on L2 pedagogy between these two concepts to examine learners’ communicative proficiency in classroom contexts. Brumfit (1979) was the first who differentiated between accuracy and fluency as a starting point to his communicative methodology. At that time, accuracy and fluency were given their working definitions that are still used today (A. Trosborg 1994: 456; J. Hunter 2011: 2; A. Housen et al. 2012: 2).

Many teachers think that accuracy and fluency are opposites. J. Hunter (2011: 1) claimed that teachers find a difficulty in finding the suitable way for developing students’ accuracy and fluency because each one of them come at the expense of the other. However, researchers argued that they are not opposites, but they are complementary, and are both needed to be learned by students. Brumfit (1984), for instance, claimed that accuracy and fluency do not contrast, but complete each other , and what makes them seem

different are the materials and activities used in the language classroom, as well as the dominance of the teacher or the learner. That is, accuracy is teacher-dominated because it is largely related to the form of language, while fluency is student-dominated because it is related to meaning (qtd. in D. Nunan 1989: 63, 64; A. Trosborg 1994: 456).

2.2.4. Communicative Competence

In order for oral communication to be much more effective and successful, one needs to be communicatively competent. Communicative competence refers to the speakers' ability not only to produce grammatically correct utterances, but also to use those utterances appropriately in a given speech community. According to Hymes (1971), communicative competence is the most general term that includes all the speaking and hearing abilities of an individual, and that depends on two things: "tacit passive knowledge and the ability for use" (qtd. in J. Flood et al. 2003: 887). That is, communicative competence reflects the person's knowledge and ability to interpret other speakers' utterances and intentions, and to use the language in an appropriate way.

The term communicative competence was coined by the American linguist Dell Hymes in 1960 as a reaction to Chomsky's theory of competence and performance to argue that the knowledge of grammar is insufficient for speaking and communicating in a particular language. He emphasized that Chomsky's linguistic-competence theory could not serve as a relevant component in a theory of real-life communication. Dell Hymes related his view of communicative competence not only to theoretical, but also to practical needs, and instead of the dichotomy of competence and performance, Hymes (1972) suggested that for an effective communication, the user of language should consider

whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible, feasible, appropriate in relation to its context, and actually performed (G. Rickheit and H. Strohner 2008: 17).

Canale and Swain (1980) classified communicative competence into four categories: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

2.2.4.1. Grammatical Competence

Grammatical or linguistic competence is the ability to recognize and produce different grammatical forms and structures, and to use them effectively in communication. It is also the acquisition of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic rules, as well as lexical items. That is to say, communicative competence is the speakers' knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and semantics of a language (Y. Yano 2003: 77; J. C. Richard and R. Schmidt 2002: 90).

2.2.4.2. Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence is the speaker's ability to interpret and use language with the appropriate social meaning in a particular context. In other words, sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the relationship between language and its social context, knowing how to use and react appropriately to different speech acts such as requests, apologies, thanks, and invitations, and knowing how to deal with different people in different situations (J. C. Richard and R. Schmidt 2002: 90). According to Y. Yano (2003: 77), sociolinguistic competence is the learning of cultural values, norms, and other socio-cultural conventions in social contexts. That is, the learner is required to know about, and to respect the norms of the speech community.

2.2.4.3. Discourse Competence

Discourse competence is the knowledge of how to begin and end conversations. It is the knowledge of rules of cohesion and coherence of various types of discourse. Canale and Swain argued that sociolinguistic rules of use and rules of discourse are very important to understand utterances for social meaning, particularly when the speaker's intention is not easily understood through the literal meaning of his or her utterance (Y. Yano 2003: 78; J. C. Richard and R. Schmidt 2002: 91).

2.2.4.4. Strategic Competence

Strategic competence refers to the knowledge of communication strategies that the speaker uses for compensating and correcting speech deficiencies and problems. In other words, strategic competence is the knowledge of verbal and nonverbal strategies to compensate for breakdowns, and to improve the effectiveness of communication (ibid).

Conclusion

In short, this chapter revealed that speaking is a very important skill that each language learner has to master, and that every language teacher should do his or her best to improve in his or her classroom through exposing students to different types of speaking activities. It also showed that speaking changes according to the speaker's intention and purpose, as well as the situation where this task takes place. Another important aspect of oral production that was discussed in this chapter is oral communication as a more practical and realized aspect of speaking since this latter usually occurs between two or more people. Moreover, this chapter emphasized that in order for the learner to communicate effectively, he or she needs to be able to produce an accurate language with

the adequate speed and smoothness, in addition to the ability to use this language appropriately in a particular speech community.

Introduction

Communication games are a type of games that the teacher can use as a technique to provoke communication in his or her language classroom. This kind of activity is in itself composed of different types of games such as combining games, searching games, and matching games. It was proved that communication games are very useful activities which not only entertain students, but also involve them in classroom verbal interaction and, therefore, improve their communication proficiency. To be successfully used or played, communication games require the teacher to go through some steps or stages that help him or her to achieve better results. These are the main points that this chapter tries to highlight, in addition to some illustrating examples, as well as some practical consideration that the teacher should be aware of while using communication games.

3.1. Definition of Communication Games

Communication games were defined by many scholars as activities which can be used by teachers to increase interaction and communication among students. According to Gibbons (1993), communication games are:

Activities set up in the classroom to create opportunities and purposes for verbal communication practice. Many times the purpose of communication in these games is to convey information or cause something to occur as a result of the activity. Some of the games provide practice in the use of a particular language function such as giving direction or asking questions. Other games require students to work together and communicate to solve a problem. (qtd. in A. Herrell and M. Jordan 2008: 87).

Therefore, communication games are a type of classroom activities that gives students the opportunity to communicate orally using the target language, and that are usually practiced to learn some language functions, or to communicate with each other.

According to W. R. Lee (1986: 3), communication is usually complicated, and takes a long time; however, this does not mean that communication games are necessarily long and complex, but, they lead to communication. That is, communication is the aim of this type of games, and when communication starts, the game comes to an end. Moreover, even if it is doubtful, and maybe not believed, all games, if not all forms of language learning activity, must be communicative to help language learners to experience communication.

3.2. Types of Communication Games

Various types of communication games can be included in teaching to stimulate students' talking and involvement in the classroom interactive communication. J. Hadfield (1990: vi) stated ten types of communication games:

3.2.1. Information Gap Activities

In information gap activities, one student has access to some information that another student does not know. The latter must find or know that piece of information to complete a task successfully. Or, both students have information that they must gather to solve a problem. This type of games can be played in pairs, or in small groups where each member has some information.

3.2.2. Guessing Games

Guessing games are not much different from information gap activities, and it may be one of its variants. In this game, the student who has the information does not reveal it, while other students or players guess what this information might be.

3.2.3. Search Games

This game may also be a variant of information gap game. It is a game in which every student in the class has a one particular piece of information. Players must gather as much as possible information to fill in a questionnaire or to solve a particular problem. Thus, each student is at the same time a giver and a collector of information.

3.2.4. Matching Games

They are activities in which in which students match pairs of similar cards or pictures. This kind of games can be played either as a whole class activity where students keep calculating until they find a partner with a corresponding card or picture; or as a pair work or small group activity where learners choose cards or pictures from a selection, and match them by their partners from the same selection.

3.2.5. Matching-up Games

They are activities which are based on 'jigsaw' or 'fitting together' principle. In matching-up games, each participant has a group of opinions, wants, possibilities, and preferences which he or she uses as arguments while discussing with the rest of the group until they arrive to an agreement.

3.2.6. Exchanging Games

Exchanging games are activities based on ‘barter’ principle. In these games, students exchange ideas, articles, or cards in order to make a satisfactory exchange to both sides.

3.2.7. Exchanging and Collecting Games

They are an extension of exchanging games. In these games students have particular cards and articles that they exchange with other players for completing a set. Exchanging and collecting games can be played as a whole class activity where students exchange and calculate cards or articles at random; or an inter-group activity in which every small group collect a set of cards or articles, and then exchange them with other groups.

3.2.8. Combining Games

In combining games, players arrange themselves in groups such as families or a group of people spending holidays, and act on a certain information.

3.2.9. Arranging Games

Arranging games are also called sequencing games or ordering games. They are games in which learners act on particular information in order to arrange items such as picture cards, events in a narrative, or players themselves in a specific order.

3.2.10. Board Games and Card Games

They are very common and familiar games in which the aim is round the board. Players can start by gathering most cards, or get rid of unnecessary cards first. The cards

and squares exposed on the board are used for motivating students to communicate.

The above games may include puzzle-solving, role-play, or simulations. Puzzle-solving activities take place where students share or gather information in order to solve a problem. Role-play, on the other hand, occurs when players are given the name and some features of an imaginative character; but these are not role-plays in their true sense. Other games may include simulation. This occurs when the classroom becomes like a real life situation such as a street, a hospital, or a hotel (ibid).

C. Elgood (1996: 46) had another view concerning the division of types of communication games. He suggested that communication games should be divided according to their nature and aim into five categories: 1) games that focus on an accurate description and the limitations of the spoken word; 2) games showing the need for preparation and planning of communication; 3) games about the psychological aspects of communication; 4) games about the organizational aspects of communication; and 5) games about the cultural aspects of communication.

3.3. Advantages of Communication Games

It has been proved by many scholars that communication games and language games in general have a great importance in facilitating language teaching. They are not just activities to which learners are exposed for entertainment or passing the time, but they are main activities for language teaching. According to W. R. Lee (1986: 3) games should not be considered as ‘marginal activities’ used when the class have nothing important to do. Rather, communication games are:

3.3.1. Motivating and Enjoyable

Communication games are very motivating and stimulating activities for language learning. According to A. Wright, D. Betteridge, and M. Buckby (2006:2), games motivate and make the learners more interested in what they do in the classroom. Motivation and making the learning process more stimulating and enjoyable, as Z. Dornyei (2001: 72) declared, are key factors that maintain learners involvement. So that, being funny and enjoying, games guarantee the students' engagement and participation in such a kind of classroom activities.

3.3.2. Involving

Communication games encourage students to get easily involved in classroom discussions. W. R. Lee (1986: 4) claimed that communication games encourage and increase the learners' active involvement. Students' engagement and participation can be either within small groups during the process of the game, or with the whole class after the game. Communication games are particularly important for those learners who suffer from self-consciousness because they encourage them to overcome this problem through creating opportunities for less conscious participation (T. Bond 1986: 13).

3.3.3. Flexible and Relevant

Communication games encourage and create an opportunity for language learners to reveal and contribute their own experiences and skills. This makes each group uses the game at its own level and way. That is why we find that the same game is differently used or dealt with by each group. This ensures that communication games are flexible and relevant activities that accept changes and belong to its users (ibid 14).

3.3.4. Opportunity to Experience Language

Communication games offer students the opportunity not only to study the language, but also to experience it. They create contexts for meaningful communication and for the use of language, and therefore, students find themselves obliged to understand what other classmates say, and to speak or use the language to express their ideas and points of view (A. Wright, D. Betteridge, and M. Buckby 2006: 2).

3.3.5. Opportunity to Learn New Language Items

In communication games many items are repeated, so that learners can learn them automatically. According to A. Wright, D. Betteridge, and M. Buckby (2006: 2), many games are similar to drill exercises because they provide repeated occurrence and use of specific language structures. However, games are probably better than drills because they contain emotions and language meaning.

3.3.6. Facilitate Learning

Learning is a very hard task because it is a complex process that requires the learner to do many things at the same time. The learner is obliged to concentrate understand, think, repeat, adapt, and use the new knowledge in different situations. Communication games help them to overcome boredom, and to keep interested in learning (A. Wright, D. Betteridge, and M. Buckby 2006: 2; W. R. Lee 1986: 1).

3.3.7. Teach Responsibility

Communication games teach responsibility and self-reliance. While playing a game

within a group, the leader is no longer the only one who is most powerful and ‘knows it all’ as he or she usually be in other group works. Rather, each member of the group is obliged to accept some responsibility to take part in the activity, especially when the group is well organized and the leadership is shared between all the participants (T. Bond 1986: 13, 14).

3.3.8. Sustain Receptiveness

Because of their funny and enjoying nature, communication games create an atmosphere of fun and entertainment. They, therefore, decrease anxiety among students and help them to be more receptive because they don’t feel defensive. Receptiveness refers to the students’ ability to hear and listen to what is said by other classmates (ibid).

3.3.9. Encourage Group Cohesiveness

Communication games encourage group cohesiveness because they encourage cooperation among students (ibid). W. R. Lee (1986: 1) claimed that games encourage the active co-operation of learners with one another. Through playing games, the learner can help his or her group members to surpass other groups, and this can also increase rivalry among students.

3.3.10. Offer Framework and Structure

Communication games offer framework and structure. That is, they take place in an organized group led by a leader who works within his or her own limitations of experience and skill. However, this does not mean that games are leader-proofed against all committed mistakes, or that they go without some preparation and supervision.

structure help learners who do not feel at ease when working in unstructured groups (T. Bond 1986: 14).

3.4. Steps of Communication Games

Being a type of games, communication games have almost the same steps of other kinds of language games. T. Bond (1986: 24) suggested six steps for dealing with language games:

3.4.1. Introducing the Game

The first step that the teacher is required to start with is to introduce the game to his or her students. He or she should firstly explain the instructions clearly to the learners or to give them a general idea about the game. Then, the teacher should allocate the roles in order to make the learners aware of the tasks they are going to tackle. After that, he or she should refer to the ground rules. That is to say, the rules or the laws of the game that the students have to follow should be clearly stated.

3.4.2. Activity

At the level of this step or stage, the teacher becomes an active participant in the game. That is, he or she participates with his or her students in performing the game instructions. Before asking students to start performing the task, the teacher can, for example, use his or her own participation as a model for others. The teacher may also help students to adopt and develop the game in accordance with their own interests and needs. Here, the game may be exposed to some changes that will later be negotiated for planning other activities.

3.4.3. Discussion

In discussion stage, as a leader of activity, the teacher has a very important role to play. He or she firstly assists formation of the discussion groups. That is, he or she helps learners to organize themselves for discussion. Then he or she structures or plans the discussion. After that, the teacher summarizes the discussion, and encourages students to take advantages and put into application the new skills and insights learnt from the participants.

3.4.4. Work outside the Group

In this step, the teacher encourages his or her students to request. That is he or she gives his or her students the opportunity to tell about their needs concerning the game.

3.4.5. Reporting back

Here, the teacher reinforces success achieved by students. In other words, the teacher praises the students who succeeded in playing the game. On the other hand, he or she reviews the goal setting for students who did not achieve good results or failed in performing the game instructions. Moreover, the teacher encourages planning for progress. That is to say, he or she motivates students' attempts to achieve better results.

3.4.6. Review of Your Role as a Leader

In the last step, the teacher reviews his or her role as a leader of group undertaking the game by being open to feedback.

Some researchers have had different view point concerning the steps the teacher should follow in order to deal with communication games. In this respect, A. Herrell and M. Jordan (2008: 89) identified five steps for teaching language games: 1) Identifying a language need, 2) modeling the game, 3) organizing the pairs or groups, 4) guiding the practice, and 5) talking about the experience. In the same path, A. Wright, D. Betteridge , and M. Buckby (2006: 4) Proposed seven different steps for introducing games to language learners. For them, after making the students familiar to the group work, the teacher should : 1) explain the game to the class, 2) demonstrate the parts of the game with the help of some students, 3) ask one group to try the game in front of the class, 4) write the game instructions an key language on the board, 5)make a group do a first ‘try out’, 6) erase key language and instructions from the board, and then 7) continue the game with the students.

3.5. Examples of Communication Games

Communication games or games that can be used by teachers to provoke communication in their language classrooms, and to have their students involved in classroom interaction are numerous and various. Here are some examples of such a kind of games:

3.5.1. What Would You Do?

It is a game that lasts for 45-60 minutes, and which contains at least four sections. Materials needed in this activity include post-it notes, pen or pencil for each group, communication styles handout, and four pieces of poster-size paper (each of which contains a situation). Each section constitutes a small problem, so that players imagine that

they are in a given situation and are looking for a way to get out of this difficult situation through asking the question: What would you do?. For example, a student imagines that he has been asked to prepare a one-hour presentation. A day before the presentation, a colleague came to him, and said that he has just ten minutes for the presentation. Hence, he feels frustrated because of the sudden change. So, what would he do?. The objectives of this game are to describe a range of appropriate responses in a given scenario, and more importantly, to explore the different communication styles in a group (D. M. Stringer and P. A. Cassidy 2009: 31).

3.5.2. The Three Wishes Game

It is an information search game that can be played in groups of three or four. Each group receives one set of picture cards and cuts them up. Those picture cards must be gathered in a pile and put in the center of the group. The first player takes the top card and looks at it without showing it to his or her colleagues. He or she, instead, makes them guess what the card may contain. After that, he or she gives them a definition for the person, object, or place included in the card. The first player who guesses it correctly, he or she gets the card, and if no one guesses the player holding the card can keep it. At the end of the game, the one who collect the largest number of cards is the winner (J. Hadfield 1990: x).

3.5.3. Parent Power

In this game, it is best to divide students into groups of about 8-10 people. Every student in the class should be given one copy of a questionnaire. After filling in the

questionnaires, students will be put into groups, and will be asked to line themselves up in order, according to who has the strictest parents (ibid xvii).

3.5.4. It Wasn't Me, Officer

It is a game that can be played with any number of students. The teacher should give every student in the class one role card. This latter must be either a thief card or a police card. The number of thief cards must correspond to the number of police cards. When distributing the cards, the teacher should not mention the word thief or police to his or her students, but simply say that they are at a party in which they know some people, and they introduce themselves making polite conversation about their hobbies, interests, and so on. Therefore, the police can identify their suspects among the present people. At the end of the game, the teacher asks the students with the police cards to come and identify their suspects, with reason. Thieves must confess if they are correctly identified (ibid).

3.5.5. Suggestive Shapes

It is a game that can be played in pairs. Every student in the class should have one copied sheet of pictures. In each pair, one student takes an intact sheet of pictures, while the other takes cut up pictures. Student A looks at the intact sheet, without showing it to his or her partner, and describes each of the pictures in order by saying what it resembles, for instance, it looks like a witch's hat, etc. According to student A description, student B should select and arrange the pictures he or she has in the right order (ibid xxi).

3.6. Some Practical Considerations for Integrating Communication Games

In order for communication games to be successfully played, the teacher should make a careful preparation taking into account some basic practical considerations that can help him or her to obtain better results:

3.6.1. Classroom organization

For facilitating the work in groups and pairs, the classroom should be well organized and rearranged. According to P. Watcyn-Jones (1995: v), traditional front-facing rows of desks can be useful; in pair work, players can join students sitting next, behind, or in front of them, while in group work, two students can turn their chairs round facing the two other ones behind them. The teacher can also join three students instead of two when the number of the class is uneven. In this case, two students play against a third one. On the other hand, J. Hadfield (1990: vi) claimed that it is much better to arrange the desks in a U-shape where the students can work with the other students sitting next to them for pair work, and for group work, some students can move their chairs inside the U to face the other students belonging to the same group.

According to W. R. Lee (1986: 4, 5), organizing and dividing students into groups in each occasion is a waste of time, and may cause problems of belonging to some students. Thus, it is better for learners to stay in the same group throughout the whole year. In this case, change is acceptable only if some members are absent, or they are all weak when there is a point-scoring. Moreover, it is enough for each group to contain four or five students in order for the teacher to get from one group to another easily. However, if the classroom is overcrowded, it is better to divide students into teams rather than groups or pairs. A team is larger than a group, and it may contain more than twelve members.

Besides that, if the teacher decides to name the groups, he or she had better choose a suitable and pleasant name for each group or team such as the group of Lions, the team of Tigers, etc. Colors and letters may also be used to name groups.

3.6.2. Time Limits

The notion of time is also important in practicing communication games. J. Hadfield (1990: vii) argued that the average time that must be devoted to most games is from twenty to thirty minutes for each game, depending on the players' number. On the other hand, P. Watcyn-Jones (1995: vi) claimed that even if it is undesirable, it is better for the teacher to put a time limit for the majority of games, and to stop students even if they have not yet finished because, in addition to the obvious difficulties of students finishing at different times, the teacher will have some difficulties in checking each group in isolation. So that, he or she had better limit the game time, and check the whole class at once.

3.6.3. The Role of the Teacher

In these activities or games, the teacher can work as a coordinator who is mainly responsible of preparing materials, explaining the task or the activity, and checking the students' answers at the end of the activity. The teacher can also act as a listener and a monitor who goes round the classroom and checks the progress of the game, and who interferes only when it is so necessary because when the game starts, students depend on themselves to carry out the task (ibid). J. Hadfield (1990: vii) also claimed that the teacher can act as a resource and a monitor who moves from one group to another in order to provide students with the necessary language, and to note errors without interrupting or correcting in order not to distribute and hinder fluency.

3.6.4. Storing Materials

In communication games, two types of photocopied material may be used: papers or handouts which students write on while answering the game, and others which they use but do not write on. The latter type may be reused for several times, so that, it should be kept durable. One way of doing so is to use thin cards that can be easily stored in isolated envelopes after use (P. Watcyn-Jones 1995: vi).

3.6.5. Students' Participation

One of the most occurring problems that teachers face when integrating games in their classrooms is that of students' refusal to participate in such a type of activities. This may be the result of shyness, lack of self-esteem, or any other factor. Whatever the causes might be, teachers should look for the appropriate ways to overcome this problem and provoke students' involvement and communication.

According to W. R. Lee (1986: 10, 11), there are several ways the teacher may use to make his or her students participate in games. Some of them are: giving students few minutes to think and to prepare themselves, writing some words or phrases that may help them to remember, whispering suggestions or writing some words on a sheet of paper and passing it to students who do not know what to say, distributing attention to the whole class and not only to good students and giving hints to shy or slow-to-speak students, asking students to play the game again, and encouraging shared or mutual help within the class, team, or group.

3.6.6. Scoring

Scoring is the most motivating part in a game because it stimulates students to participate, to get involved, and to do their best for achieving better results. According to W. R. Lee (1986: 7, 8, 9), it is better for teachers to use different methods of scoring, and two give points for right or successful answers than taking them from failed ones.

There are several ways of scoring which are mainly divided into two types: visual scores and non-visual scores. In visual scores, the teacher can use images or things to represent the scores. For example, he or she can use symbols such as simple trees, ducks, fish, or fruit for each point along a horizontal line. Those symbols increase as the scores increase. On the other hand, in non-visual scores, the teacher can drop stones, marbles, or peas into bags; place nuts, beads, or beans into bowls; or lay sticks in bundles. In games where there are only winners, the teacher can for example represent the score by a house or a tower built up stone by stone on the board, each stone represents one point, and the winner is the one who has the biggest or the highest building (ibid).

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we infer that communication games are very useful tools that can be used by the teacher to increase his or her students' participation, involvement, and thus, oral communication. For doing so, he or she has some stages to follow, and some practical considerations to take into account. Being multiple and various, communication games give the teacher the opportunity to choose the types that he or she prefers, and to change the activities to avoid boredom.

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the description and analysis of the teachers' and students' questionnaires concerning the usefulness of communication games in developing students' speaking skill. We assumed that both teachers' and students' opinions are of great importance in providing data about this issue; therefore, two questionnaires were administered to ten teachers of oral expression and some of their first year students in order to verify the credibility of our hypothesis which assumes that the use of communication games may enhance students' speaking skill.

4.1. Research Methodology

4.1.1. Choice of the Method

For investigating our hypothesis which states that the use of communication games may enhance students' speaking skill, we have adopted a descriptive method as an appropriate way for dealing with and describing classroom situations and phenomena that take place there.

4.1.2. Population of the Study

The target population of this study are first year students of English and their teachers of oral expression at Mohammed khaidher University of Biskra for the academic year 2012/2013. Since it is so difficult to conduct the study with the whole population, only a sample of students and another of oral-expression teachers were randomly selected to hold the investigation.

4.1.3. Data Gathering Tools

In this study, two similar questionnaires were administered to eighty first year students and to ten teachers of oral expression in order to investigate their attitudes towards the use of communication games for developing students' speaking proficiency. Their answers will be analyzed, and then interpreted and used as an evidence to support our claim.

4.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

4.2.1. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to collect data about the teachers' attitudes towards the usefulness of communication games in improving students' speaking skill. It consists of sixteen multiple-choice and open-ended questions assembled in three sections. The first section is devoted to teachers' background information; their gender, degree of qualifications, and the length of their teaching experience at the university. The second section concerns teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of speaking skill. Questions included in this section are all about the teachers' experience in teaching the module of oral expression as a most appropriate context for practicing speaking. Teachers were mainly asked about the length of their experience in teaching oral expression module, whether they like teaching it or not, the challenges they faced since they started teaching it, and the skill that must be given much more importance in teaching, in addition to some questions about the level of their students, whether they are satisfied with it or not, whether they encourage them to improve it, and whether they have sufficient time to do so. On the other hand, the third section is devoted to teachers' attitudes towards the use of communication games; whether they use communication games or not and how often they

do so, whether these games are effective or not especially in teaching speaking. Teachers are also asked about the other activities they include in teaching oral expression. The last question in this section is devoted to teachers' comments concerning the topic under investigation.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' responses were counted, analyzed, and interpreted in order to have some results about the effectiveness of communication games as a technique for developing their students' speaking proficiency.

Section One: Background Information

Item 01: Teachers' Gender

Option	Number	Percentage
Male	4	40%
Female	6	60%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.1: Teachers' Gender

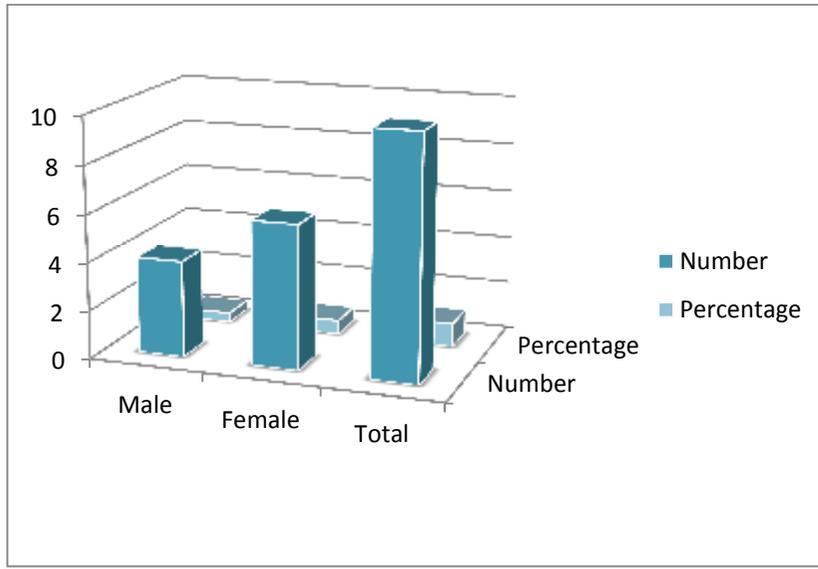


Figure 4.1: Teachers' Gender

The table and the graph above represent teachers' gender. It is noticeable that the majority (60%) of teachers are females, while only (40%) of them are males. In fact, the teachers' gender would not affect our results since they all teach oral expression in almost the same conditions.

Item 02: Degree of Qualifications

Option	Number	Percentage
License	2	20%
Magister/Master	8	80%
Doctorate	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.2: Degree of Qualifications

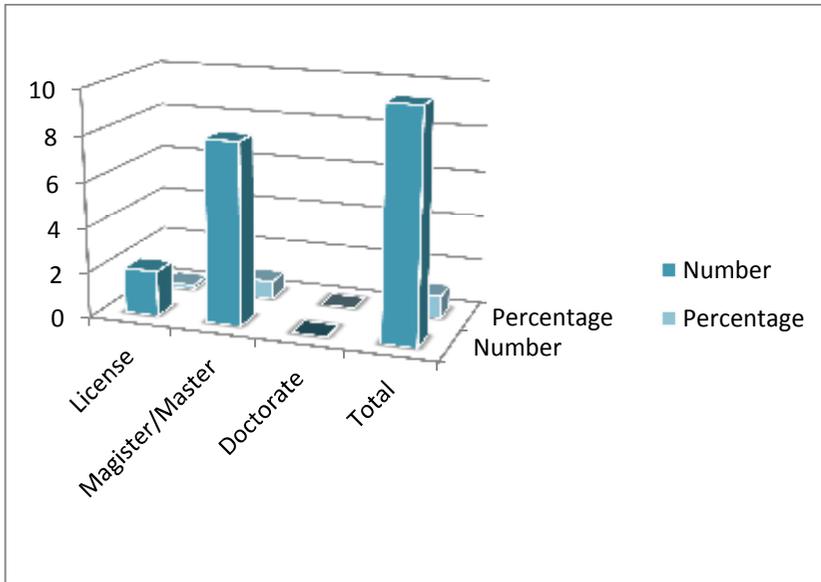


Figure 4.2: Degree of Qualifications

As indicated in the table and the graph, two teachers (20%) have the License degree, while the majority of teachers (80%) have the second degree, that is, Magister degree. No one of them has a Doctorate degree.

Item 03: Period of Teaching at the University

Teaching experience differs from one teacher to another. Four teachers exceeded seven years in teaching at the university. One of them has taught for eighteen years. This indicates that their teaching experience at the university is long. On the other hand, two teachers spent six years in teaching at the university, while the rest of teachers do not have much experience in teaching, they taught for few years (from 1 to 3 years).

Section Two: Attitudes towards Teaching Speaking

Item 04: Period of Teaching Oral Expression

Concerning oral-expression teaching, one teacher taught it for ten years, another for seven years, whereas three teachers taught it four six years. This indicates that they are experienced in teaching oral-expression course. The other teachers are not much experienced, they spent less than three years in doing so.

Item 05: Attitudes towards Teaching Oral Expression

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.3: Attitudes towards Teaching Oral Expression

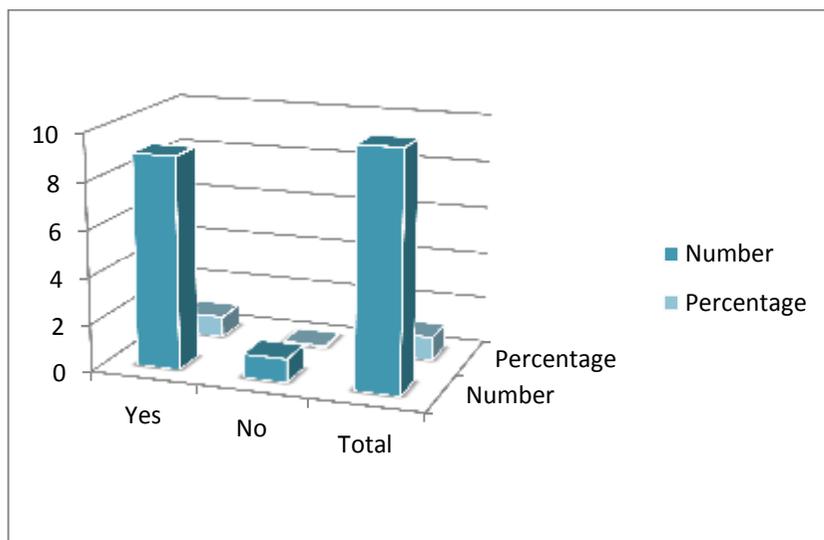


Figure 4.3: Attitudes towards Teaching Oral Expression

As indicated in the table and graph above, almost all the teachers (90%) like teaching oral expression. Only one teacher dislikes it because, as he/she said, it is hard and needs a skilled teacher. Reasons given by those who like it are that oral expression is challenging, and full of experiences. In addition, it is motivating, so that, it helps students to improve

their speaking skill by making them overcome their shyness and anxiety. Oral-expression course is also the only lecture where both teachers and students feel free to express themselves, and in which teachers are free to use the activities that suit their students' level, needs, and interests because there is no official or imposed program in teaching it. Other teachers agreed on the idea that oral-expression course gives them the opportunity to interact closely with their students to get in touch with them, and to know about their abilities and interests.

Item 06: Teachers' Main Challenges

The main challenges that teachers have faced since they have started teaching oral expression can be summarized as follows:

- Lack of motivation: most of teachers claimed that their main challenge in teaching oral expression is that students are not motivated to speak.
- Shyness, anxiety, and lack of self-esteem: most of students are shy and anxious, and are usually afraid of making mistakes.
- Lack of vocabulary and deficiencies in grammar: this hinders students to convey their messages correctly.
- Overcrowded classes: Teachers find a difficulty to manage such classes. In addition, overcrowded classes decrease the opportunity for each student to speak.
- Lack of materials, especially language laboratories.
- Difficulty in choosing appropriate materials and best topics for discussion.
- Difficulties in finding the right activities and tasks that correspond to students' level.
- No curriculum: some teachers feel lost because there is no official curriculum for teaching oral-expression course.

➤Lack of cooperation from other teachers: less experienced teachers suffer from this problem.

Item 07: the Most Important Skill

Option	Number	Percentage
Listening	6	60%
Speaking	8	80%
Writing	3	30%
Reading	6	60%

Table 4.4: The Most Important Skill

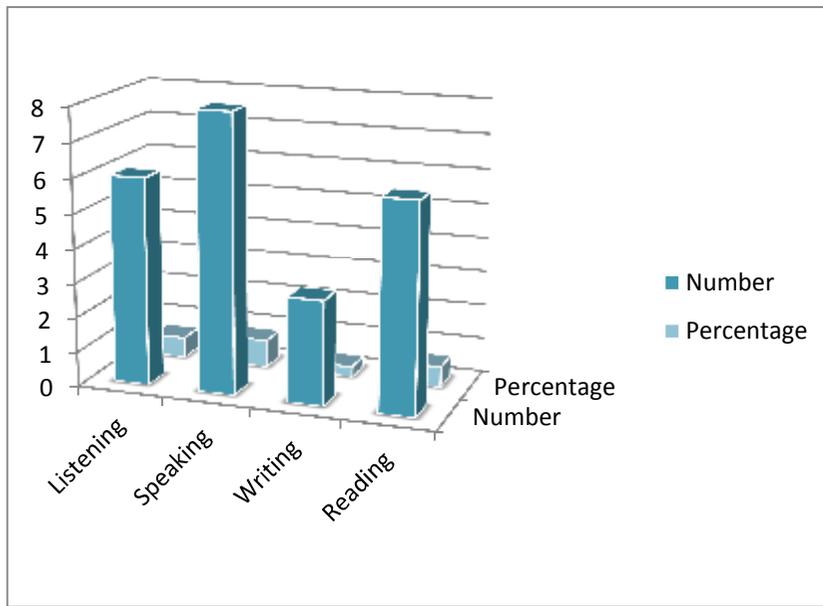


Figure 4.4: The Most Important Skill

In this question, teachers had the chance to select more than one choice. Their answers revealed that speaking should be given much more importance in language teaching because, in their opinions, English is a language, and language equals tongue, so that students must first master the ability to speak. Speaking is also the primary skill that

allows students to express themselves, and to communicate their ideas with other people. It also allows them to practice all the language features they have already learnt. Moreover, a learner of a language is supposed to be a good speaker. The second priority is given to listening and reading since they are both important in enriching students' vocabulary and background knowledge. Writing is given the last priority because it depends on the other skills to be mastered.

Item 08: Satisfaction with Students' Speaking Level

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	40%
No	6	60%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.5: Satisfaction with Students' Speaking Level

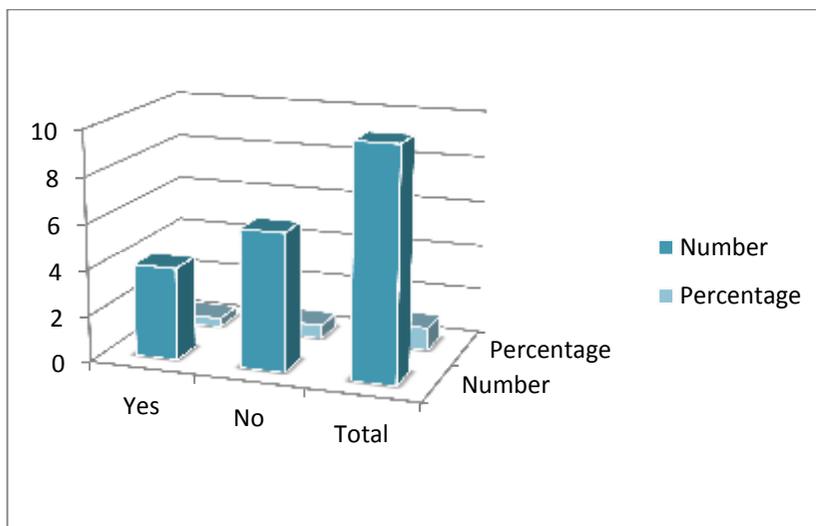


Figure 4.5: Satisfaction with Students' Speaking Level

According to the information given in the table and the graph, most of the teachers (60%) are not satisfied with their students' level of speaking, while the rest of teachers (40%) are satisfied with it. This indicates that most of students are not good at speaking.

Item 09: Encouraging Students to Speak

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.6: Encouraging Students to Speak

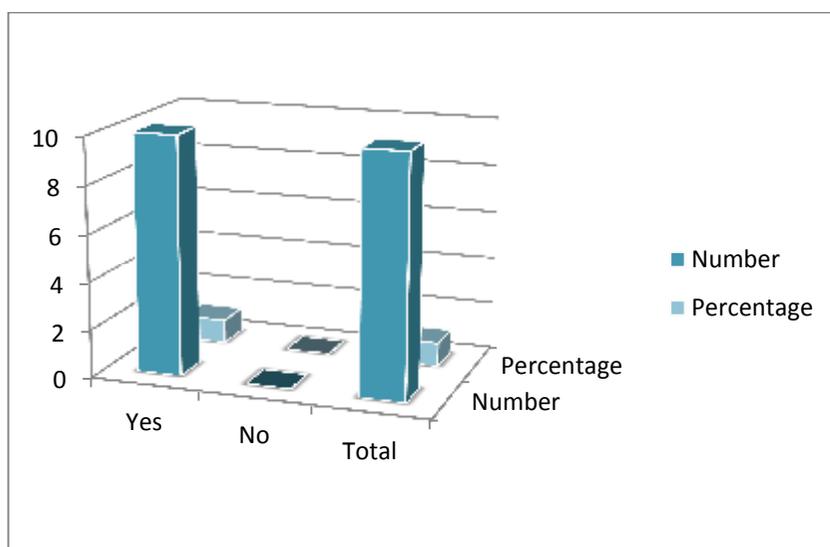


Figure 4.6: Encouraging Students to Speak

From the table and the graph above, we can infer that all oral expression teachers encourage their students to speak.

-Ways of encouraging students: answering this question, teachers mentioned different ways of encouraging students to speak:

- Using tasks that help them to be implicitly engaged such as role-plays.
- Asking them tricky questions, and sharing with them personal information.
- Giving them the chance to choose topics that interest them.
- Varying activities and tasks.
- Motivating them to speak by praising and rewarding them.
- Motivating them by inviting them to speak, and involving, guiding, helping, and supporting them.
- Making them feel free to express themselves and their ideas in the way they feel suitable to do so.
- Increasing their self-confidence and making them speak without the fear of making mistakes.
- Using authentic materials (e.g. videos, songs).

Item 10: Time Sufficiency for Teaching Oral Expression

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	2	20%
No	8	80%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.7: Time Sufficiency for Teaching Oral Expression

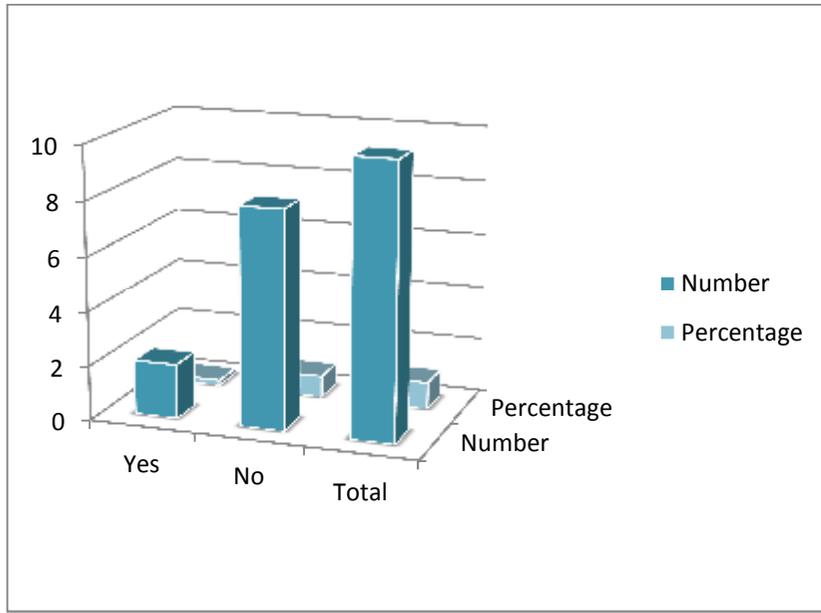


Figure 4.7: Time Sufficiency for Teaching Oral Expression

As shown in the table and the graph above, most of the teachers (80%) see that time allocated to oral-expression course is insufficient for achieving the objectives of the course, while only few of them (20%) think that it is sufficient. This indicates that students do not have enough time for expressing themselves.

Section Three: Attitudes towards Communication Games

Item 11: The Use of Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.8: The Use of Communication Games

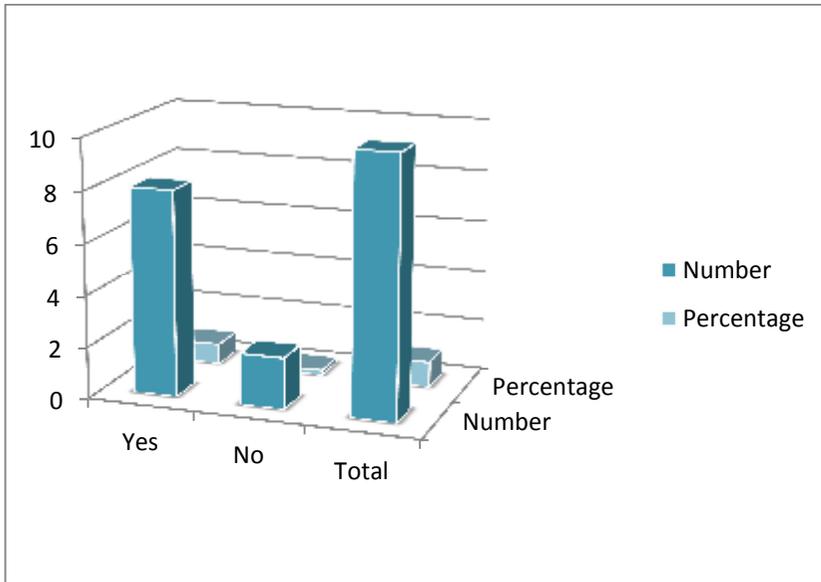


Figure 4.8: The Use of Communication Games

According to what is indicated above, most of the teachers (80%) use communication games in teaching oral expression. Only two teachers (20%) do not use them. This indicates that almost all the teachers are aware of them and of the way to use them.

Item 12: Frequency of Using Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Often	2	20%
Sometimes	6	60%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.9: Frequency of Using Communication Games

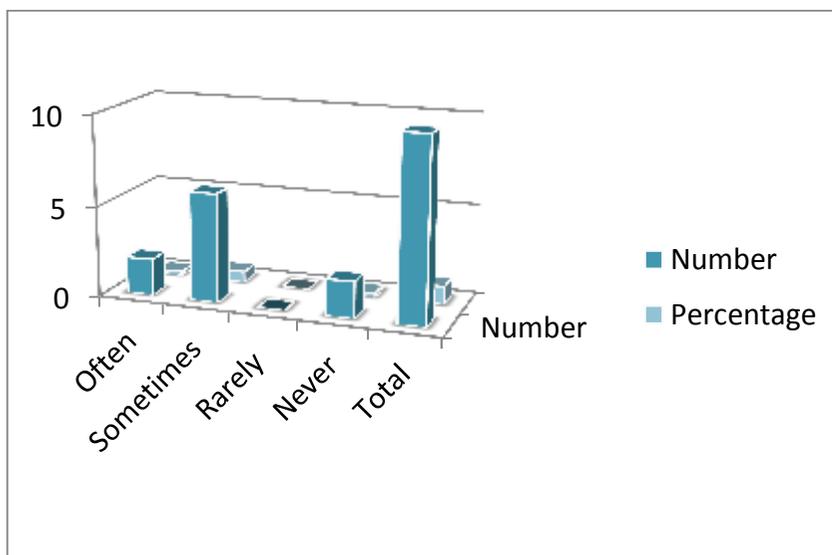


Figure 4.9: Frequency of Using Communication Games

From the table and the graph, we can remark that 20% of teachers often use communication games. 60% of them use those games sometimes. And, 20% of teachers do not use them at all. No one of them selected ‘rarely’. This indicates that teachers that include communication games in teaching oral expression frequently use them.

Item 13: The Effectiveness of Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	8	80%
No	0	0%
I don't know	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.10: The Effectiveness of Using Communication Games

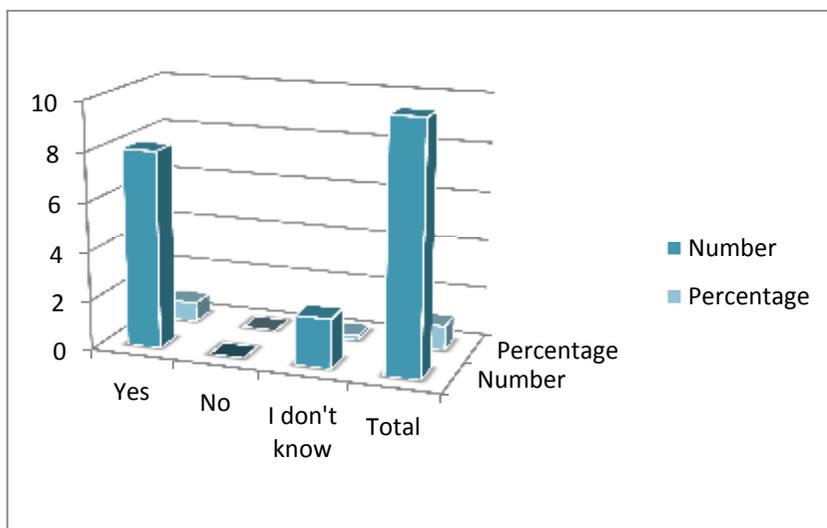


Figure 4.10: The Effectiveness of Using Communication Games

80% of the teachers claimed that communication games are an effective technique. 20% of them said that they do not know because they have never experienced it. No one said that it is ineffective. What is remarkable is that all the teachers who use communication games consider that they are effective.

Teachers supported their claim by saying that communication games are entertaining, and make students use the language effectively through having fun. They also motivate students to talk and interact with each other, and they encourage them to communicate their feelings and thoughts because they create a stress-free atmosphere for learning.

Item 14: Other Activities for Teaching Oral Expression

Option	Number	Percentage
Storytelling	5	50%
Role-play	9	90%
Topic discussion	9	90%

Table 4.11: Other Activities for Teaching Oral Expression

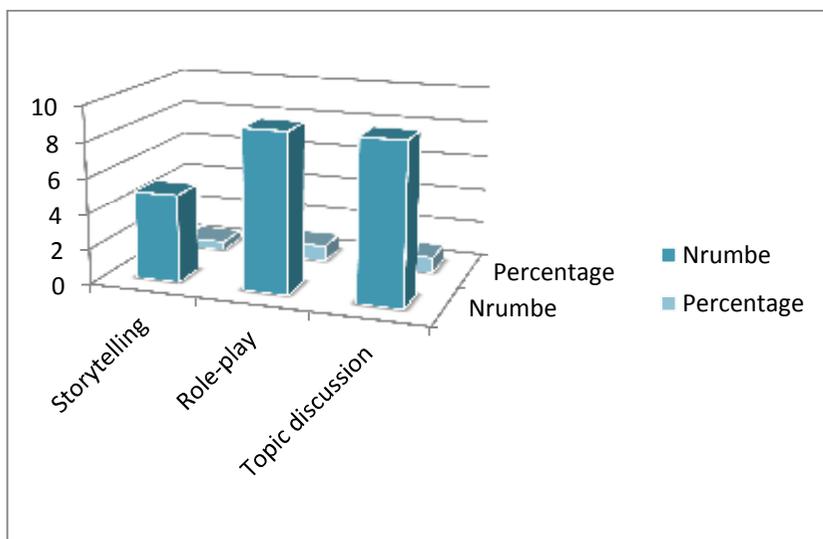


Figure 4.11: Other Activities for Teaching Oral Expression.

In this question, teachers could choose more than one answer. Most of them selected more than one activity. According to what is represented in the table and the graph, topic discussion and role-play are the most used technique, whereas storytelling activity is not frequently used by teachers of oral expression.

To know about other techniques used for teaching oral-expression course, we have asked those teachers about other types of activity they use in their classrooms. Only three teachers proposed other activity types which are: quizzes, oral presentations, listening to songs, and singing.

Item 15: The Effectiveness of Communication Games in Developing Speaking

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	8	80%
No	0	0%
I don't know	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 4.12: The Effectiveness of Communication Games in Developing Speaking

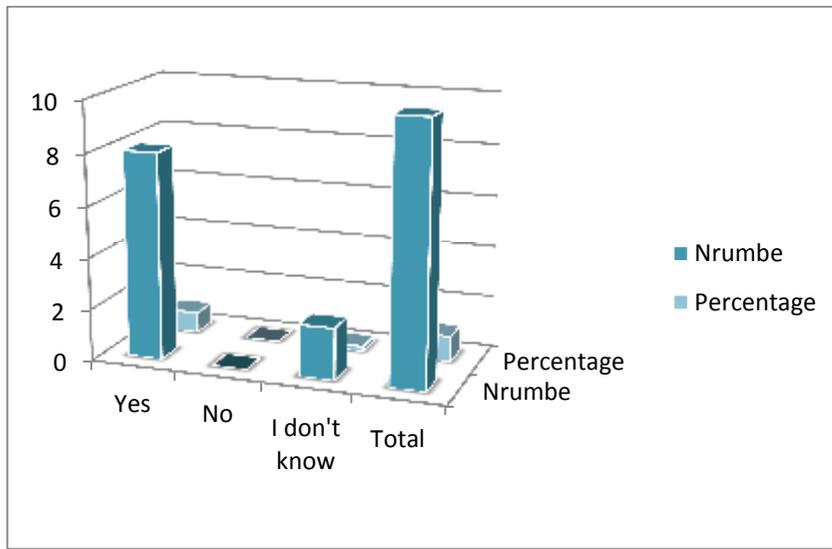


Figure 4.12: The Effectiveness of Communication Games in Developing Speaking

Most of the teachers (80%) agreed on the idea that communication games are an effective technique that develops students' speaking skill. Two teachers (20%) said that they do not know because they have never used it. No one of the teachers (0%) rejected its effectiveness.

According to teachers' answers, communication games develop students' speaking skill through diminishing learning anxiety, making them speak informally, giving them more chances to talk, improving their fluency, stimulating their thinking, and enriching their vocabulary repertoire.

Item 16: Teachers' Comments

To have more insights about this issue, we have invited our teachers to comment on it. Ideas proposed by some of them can be summarized as follows:

- Communication games are an effective technique that should be used by all teachers.

- Communication games should be selected according to students' level.
- Communication games should also be used for second year students.
- Smallish classes should be encouraged.
- Teachers should receive some training.
- Teachers should encourage students to be autonomous and to take some responsibility of their learning. Becoming fluent speakers of English cannot be realized only by communicating with others outside the official setting.

4.2.3 Summary of Results and Findings from the Teachers' Questionnaire

Results from the teachers' questionnaire have shown that most of the participants are females, and that most of them have a magister degree. Some of them are experienced teachers while others are not. However, they almost all like teaching oral-expression course in spite of the challenges they have faced in this domain, especially in making students speak and participate in classroom activities. According to teachers answers, speaking is the most prior skill that must be given much more emphasis in the language classroom. It is so because it is the skill that determines whether a learner masters the language. Most of the teachers revealed that they are not satisfied with their students' speaking, but they all said that they encourage them to speak. Ways of encouragement differ from one teacher to another depending on the teacher himself or herself. Concerning the time allocated to teaching oral expression, almost all the teachers claimed that it is insufficient. Results have also shown that most of the teachers use communication games, and that they are aware of its effectiveness in teaching. In addition to communication games, teachers use other activities such as storytelling, role-play, topic discussions, quizzes, oral presentations, etc. Almost all the teachers argued that communication games

develop students' speaking skill. At the end of the questionnaire, some teachers gave some comments concerning the issue under investigation.

4. 3. Students' Questionnaire

4.3.1. Description of the Students' Questionnaire:

A similar questionnaire was administered to eighty first year students in order to have an idea about their attitudes towards the use of communication games as a technique for developing their speaking skill. Students' questionnaire consists of three sections containing twenty multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The first section is designed to gather some background information about the participants. The second section is intended to gather some of students' attitudes towards learning speaking, and towards the course of oral expression. On the other hand, the third section is devoted to students' attitudes towards the use of communication games, and whether those latter should be considered as an effective technique that develops their speaking proficiency.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire:

Answers from the students' questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted in order to have some results concerning the usefulness of communication games in improving their speaking skill.

Section one: Background Information

Item 01: Students' Gender

Option	Number	Percentage
Male	10	12,50%
Female	70	87,50%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.13: Students' Gender

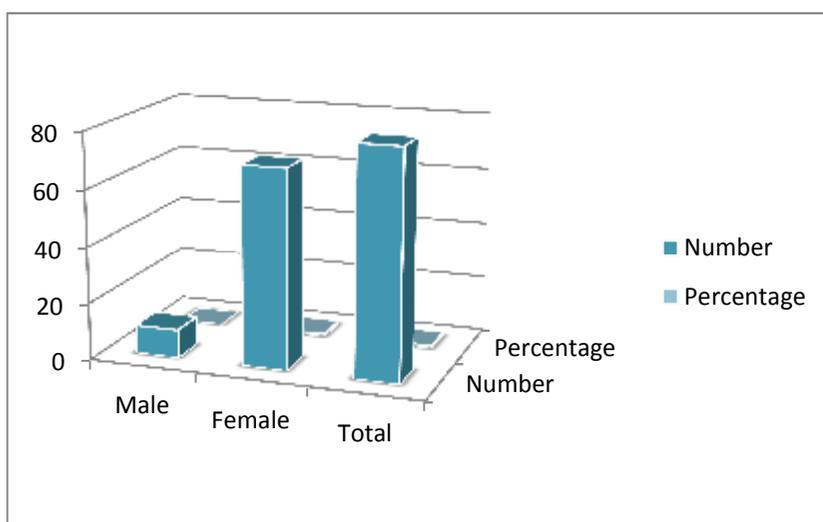


Figure 4.13: Students' Gender

The table and graph above indicates that most of the students (87, 5%) are females, whereas only (12, 5%) are males.

Item 02: Age

Concerning the students' age, it varies between 18 and 23 years. Four students are aged 18 year, twenty-nine students are aged 19, Thirty-one students are aged 20 years, and nine students are aged 21 years. Only two students are aged 22 years, and other two are 23 years old. There are three students who exceeded the age of 25 years.

Item 03: Type of Bacculaureate

Option	Number	Percentage
Languages	10	12,50%
Letters	36	45
Science	34	42,50%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.14: Type of Bacculaureate

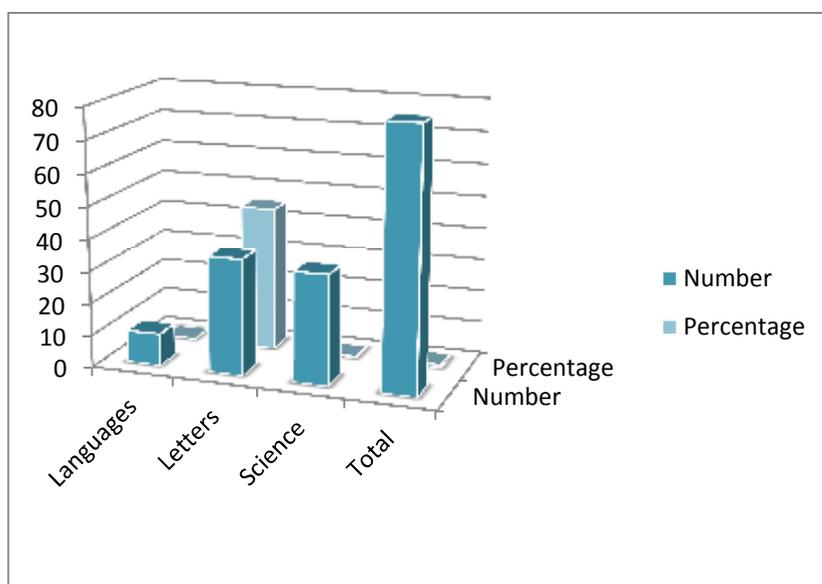


Figure 4.14: Type of Bacculaureate

As indicated in the table and the graph, 45% of students hold a Letter bacculaureate, 42, 5 % of them hold a scientific Bacculaureate, whereas only 12, 5 hold a bacculaureate of languages. This indicates that most of the students used to study or to be exposed to English for more than three hours a week.

Item 04: Choice to Study English

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	72	90%
No	8	10%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.15: Choice to Study English

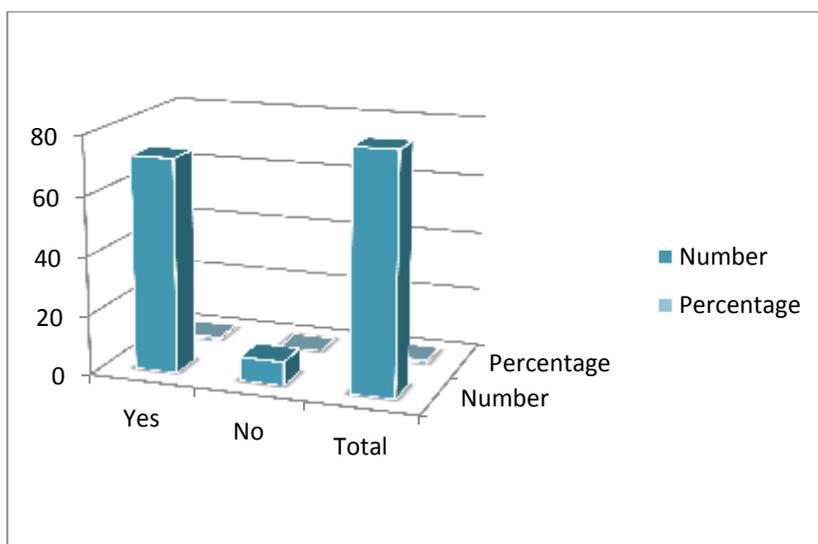


Figure 4.15: Choice to Study English

90% of students were free to choose English as a specialty. On the other hand, only eight students (10%) were obliged to study it. This indicates that most of students like English and want to develop their ability to speak it.

- Reasons for choosing English as a specialty:

Being asked about the reasons for choosing English as a branch at the university, students gave different answers. Students' answers can be summarized in the following points:

- They like it, and like to speak it.

- It is the language of the world.
- Their dream is to be teachers of English.
- They want to speak English with other people.
- They can easily find jobs in this domain.
- They want to travel abroad in the future.
- They are interested in the English culture.
- For some students, it was their second choice.
- For others, they find it easy to understand in comparison to other foreign languages.
- One of the students wants to be the first Arabic journalist who reports the news on BBC channel.

What is surprising in students' answers is that almost all of them need to speak the language. This indicates that speaking is the primary skill that students need to master.

Section two: Attitudes towards Learning Speaking

Item 05: Students' Spoken English

Option	Number	Percentage
Very good	5	6,25%
Good	48	60%
Not so good	27	33,75%
Bad	0	0%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.16: Students' Spoken English

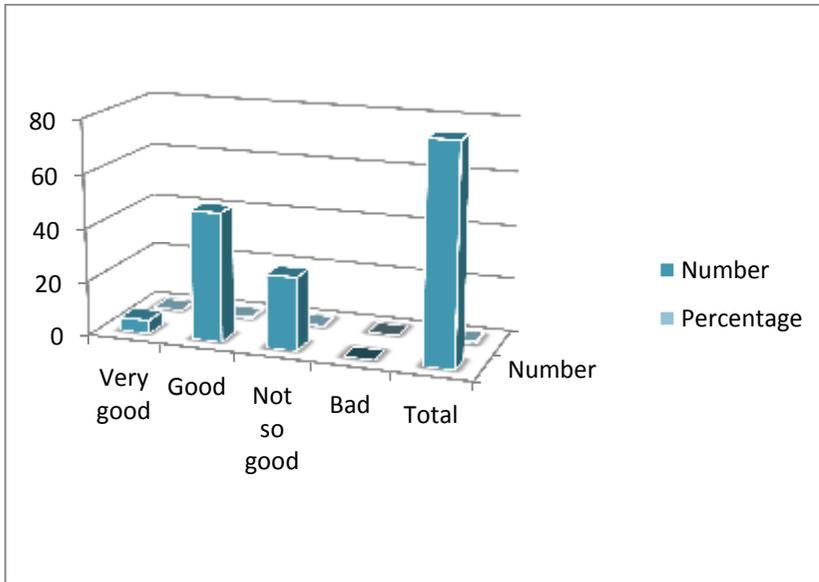


Figure 4.16: Students' Spoken English

According to the data represented in the table and the graph above, students evaluated their spoken English as follows: 6, 25% of them speak a very good English, 60% of them speak a good English, 33,75% of students speak a not-so-good English. None of them speaks English badly. This indicates that most of students have the ability to speak in English.

Item 06: Students' Preferable Course

Option	Number	Percentage
Written expression	50	62,50%
Oral expression	30	37,50%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.17: Students' Preferable Course

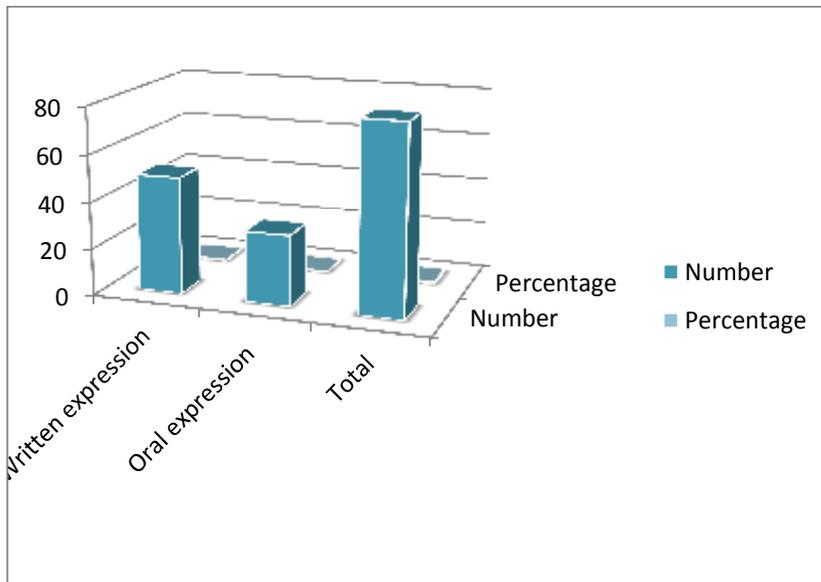


Figure 4.17: Students' Preferable Course

As indicated above, most of the students (62, 5%) prefer the written-expression course, while only (37, 5%) of them like the course of oral expression. Here, we can infer that most students prefer to write rather than to speak in English.

- If oral expression, why?

Students said that they prefer oral expression because:

- They feel free to express themselves and their ideas.
- They interact closely with their teacher.
- They learn new things and information.
- It is a chance to improve their pronunciation.
- It is a chance to improve their skills.
- They evaluate their level of speaking and ameliorate it.
- They can express their feeling freely without any limitations such as punctuation, and use of formal language.

- It improves their speaking.
- They can develop their fluency.
- They learn the language spontaneously, and know about the culture of other people.

Item 07: Speaking English outside the Classroom

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	45	56,25%
No	35	43,75%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.18: Speaking English outside the Classroom

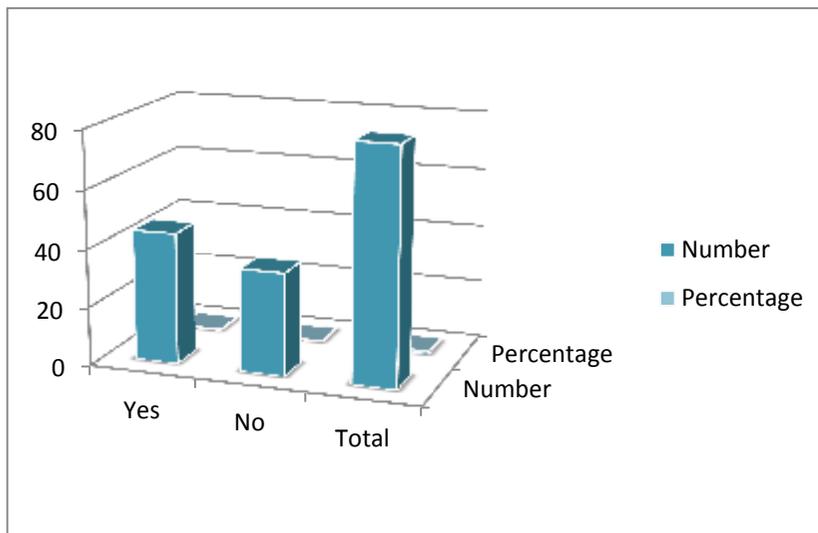


Figure 4.18: Speaking English outside the Classroom

56, 25% of students use or speak in English outside the classroom. 43, 75% of them do not speak in it outside. That is, most of students depend on themselves in developing their speaking skill. This can be very helpful to teachers and to students themselves to improve their speaking proficiency.

Item 08: Importance of Speaking

To know about the importance of speaking in learning the language, we asked students about that. Students' answers were summarized as follows:

- Speaking helps them to acquire new words and expressions, and to understand the language better.
- It helps them to be fluent like native speakers.
- When they practice the language, they learn more.
- It is so important in learning how to communicate using the language.
- It improves their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.
- It helps them to be more familiar with the language.
- It helps them to improve their receptive skills.
- It helps them to develop their level when they speak with native speakers.
- Its mastery increases their self-confidence while using the language.

Item 09: The Nature of Speaking

Option	Number	Percentage
The ability to produce a correct language	51	63,75%
The ability to speak fluently and rapidly	26	32,50%
Both	3	3,75%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.19: The Nature of Speaking

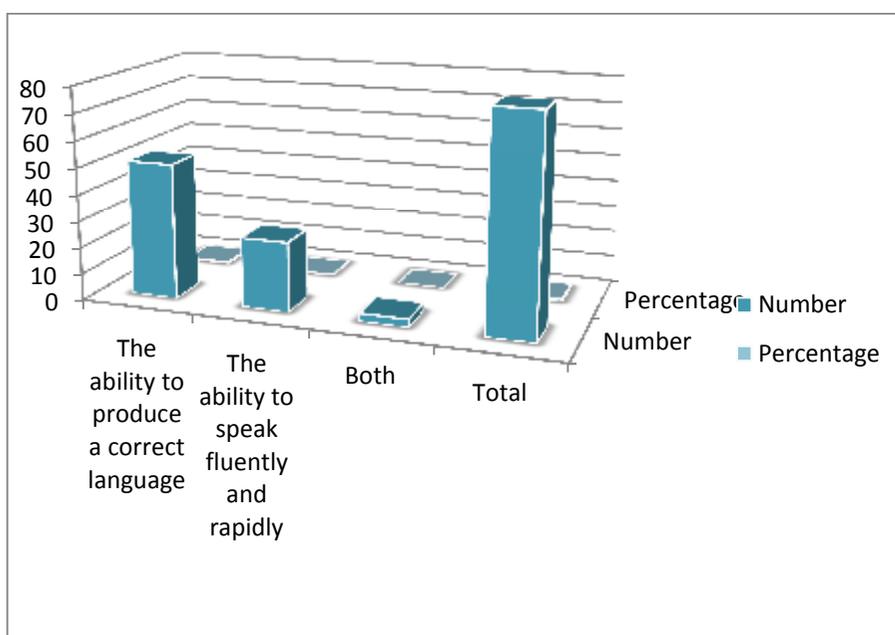


Figure 4.19: The Nature of Speaking

The table and the graph above indicate that most of the students (63, 75%) consider speaking as being the ability to produce a correct language, while 32, 50% of them view it as an ability to speak fluently and rapidly. Only three students (3, 75%) have opted for the two choices together, that is, they see that speaking includes both the ability to produce a correct language with the appropriate speed and smoothness. This indicates that most of the students care about accuracy rather than fluency.

Item 10: Students’ Satisfaction with the Method of Teaching

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	50	62,50%
No	30	37,50%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.20: Students’ Satisfaction with the Method of Teaching

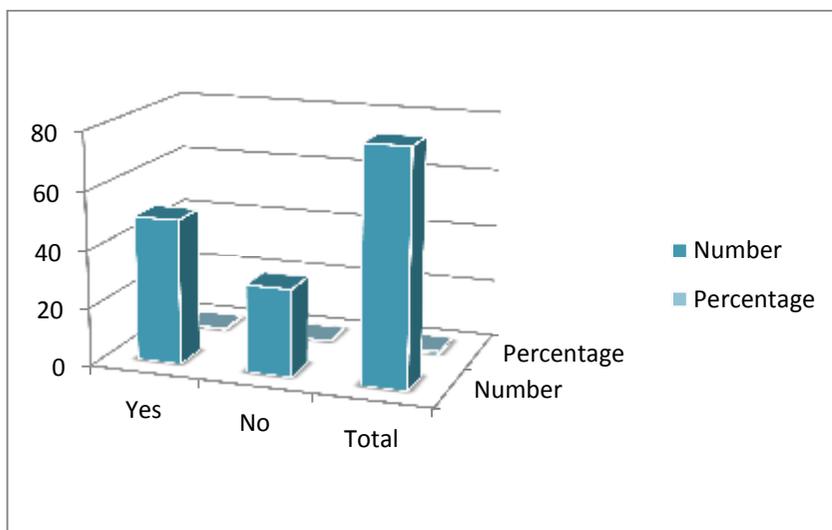


Figure 4.20: Students' Satisfaction with the Method of Teaching

According to the information given in the table and the graph, most students (62, 5%) are satisfied with the way they are taught oral expression. The rest (37, 5%) are not satisfied with their teachers' method.

- If 'no', why or what do you propose?

Students claimed that they dislike the method of their oral-expression teacher because:

- Some of them do not like the teacher himself or herself.
- They feel bored because the teacher does not motivate them.
- The course is boring because the teacher always uses role-play technique.
- The teacher does not give them the opportunity to speak freely.
- They lack materials.
- The teacher repeats the same type of activities, they need to change from time to time.
- They need more discussions and dialogues.
- They need new techniques such as singing.
- They need more activities that motivate them to speak.

- They need more videos and games.
- They need more opportunities to speak.

Item 11: Encouragement to Speak

Option	Number	Percentage
Often	28	35%
Sometimes	40	50%
Rarely	5	6,25%
Never	7	8,75%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.21: Encouragement to Speak

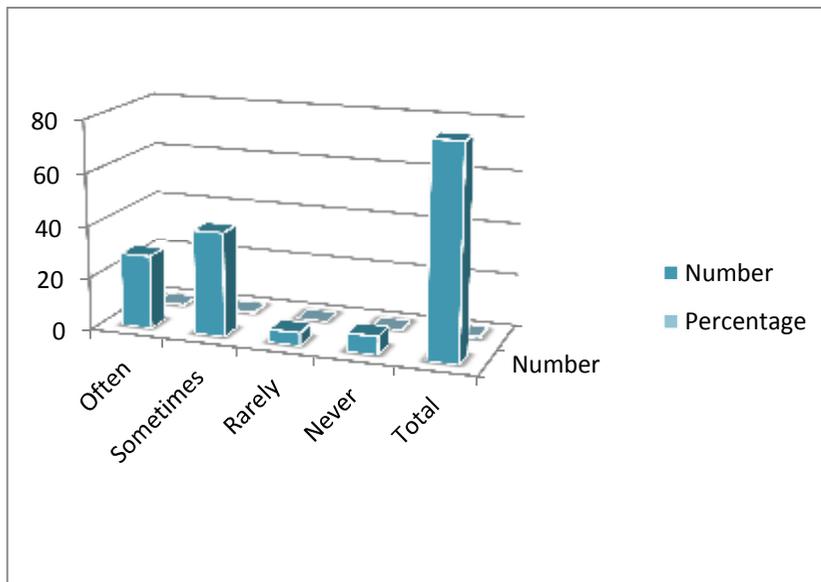


Figure 4.21: Encouragement to Speak

As indicated above, most of the students revealed that their teachers do encourage them to speak. 35% of them claimed that they are often encouraged by their teachers. 50% of them are sometimes encouraged. 6, 25 % opted for the third choice, that is, they are rarely encouraged to speak inside the classroom. However, only 8, 75 of students said that their oral expression teacher never encourages them to speak.

Item 12: Speaking in the Classroom

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	47	58,75
No	33	41,25%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.22: Speaking in the Classroom

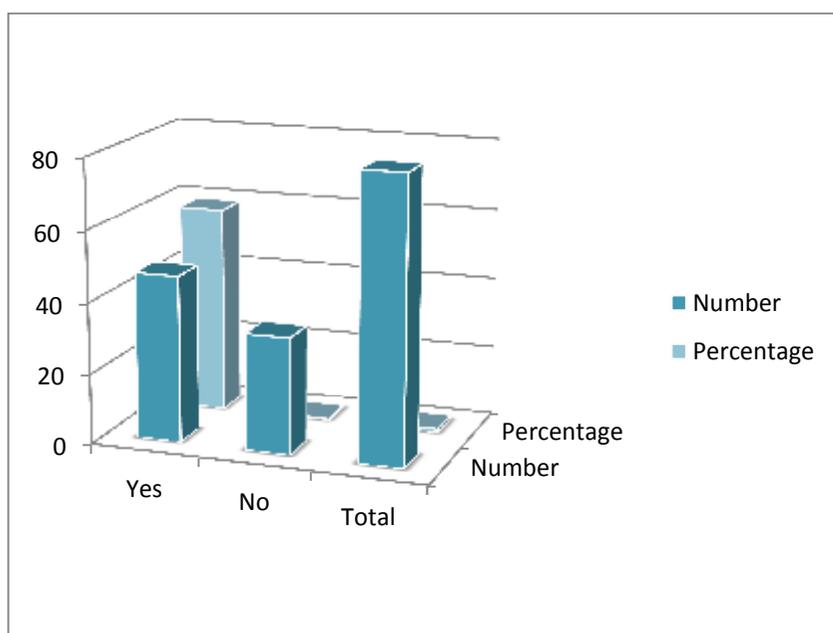


Figure 4.22: Speaking in the Classroom

58, 75% of students take the advantage of every chance given to them to speak, that is, they participate in the classroom. On the other hand, 41, 25% of them do not speak in the classroom. This indicates that most of students are ready to use the language if they are stimulated by their teachers. The rest are not ready to speak because of some problems identified in the following table and graph.

- **Reasons for not Speaking:**

Option	Number	Percentage
Topics are usually not interesting	1	3,03%
The teacher does not motivate you	4	12,12%
You fear making mistakes	13	39,39%
You are very shy	15	45,45%
Total	33	100%

Table 4.23: Reasons for not Speaking

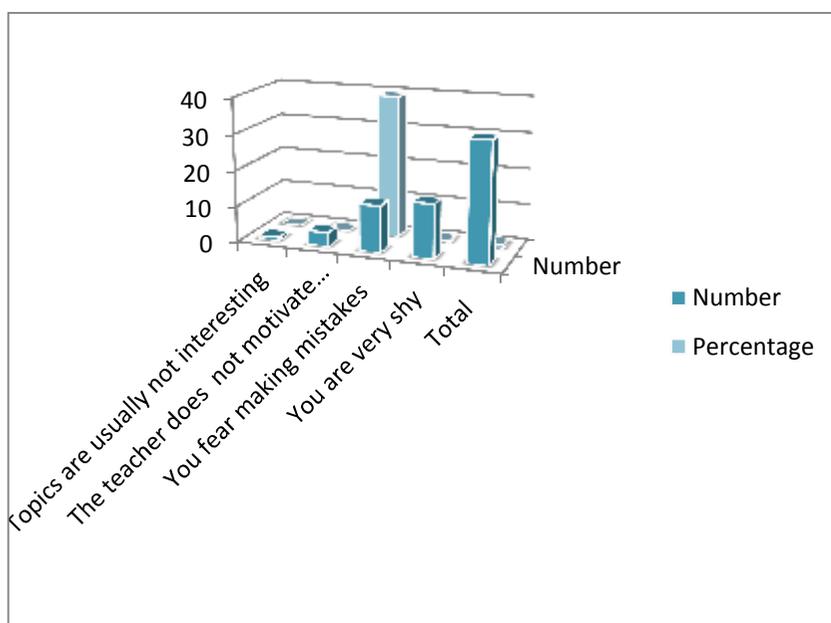


Figure 4.23: Reasons for not Speaking

To know about the main problems that hinder students to speak in the classroom, we proposed four main problems, and we asked them to opt for the one they feel most appropriate to their case. Students' answers were as follows: only 3, 03% of students opted for the first suggestion, they said that they do not speak because the topics chosen by their teacher are usually uninteresting. 12, 12% of students claimed that their problem is that the teacher does not motivate them to speak. The third group of students which represents 39,

39% of them do not speak because of fear of making mistakes. Most of students (45, 45%) have the problem of shyness as a crucial obstacle that hinders them to express themselves inside the classroom.

Item 13: Students' Favorite Activities

Option	Number	Percentage
Communication games	23	28,75%
Topic discussions	16	20,00%
Role-plays	35	43,75%
Telling stories	20	25,00%

Table 4.24: Students' Favorite Activities

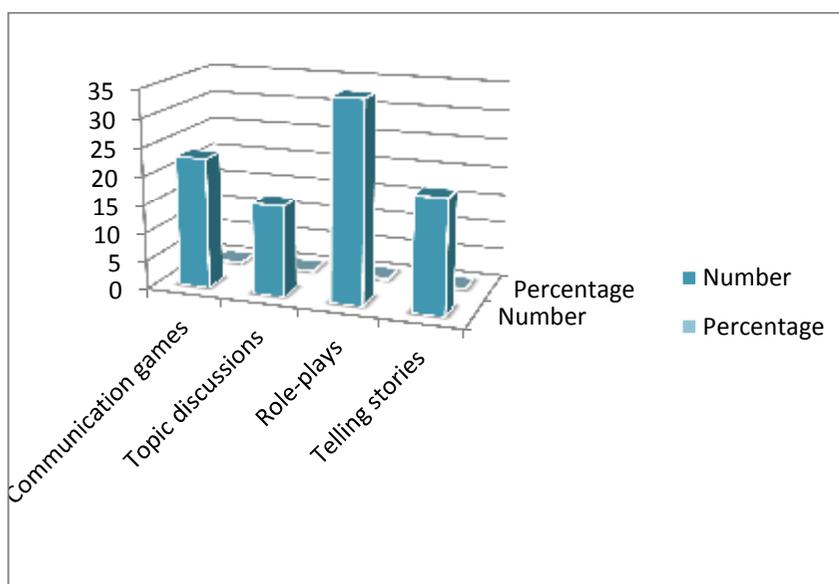


Figure 4.24: Students' Favorite Activities

In this question, students were given the chance to select more than one activity they prefer to practice in the classroom. The first priority is given to role-play technique, the second to communication games, the third to the activity of storytelling, and the least priority is given to topic discussions.

Section Three: Attitudes towards Communication Games

Item 14: Background Knowledge on Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	44	55%
No	36	45%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.25: Background Knowledge on Communication Games

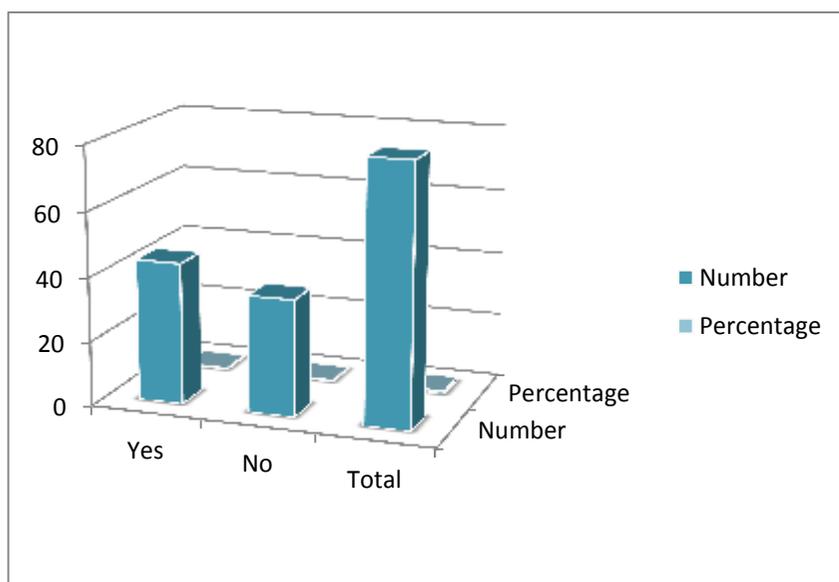


Figure 4.25: Background Knowledge on Communication Games

According to what is given in the table and the graph above, 55% of students practiced communication games before they came to the university. However, 45% of them did not practice them before. This indicates that most of the students have a prior idea on communication games.

Item 15: Using Communication Games in the Classroom

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	52	65%
No	28	35%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.26: Using Communication Games in the Classroom

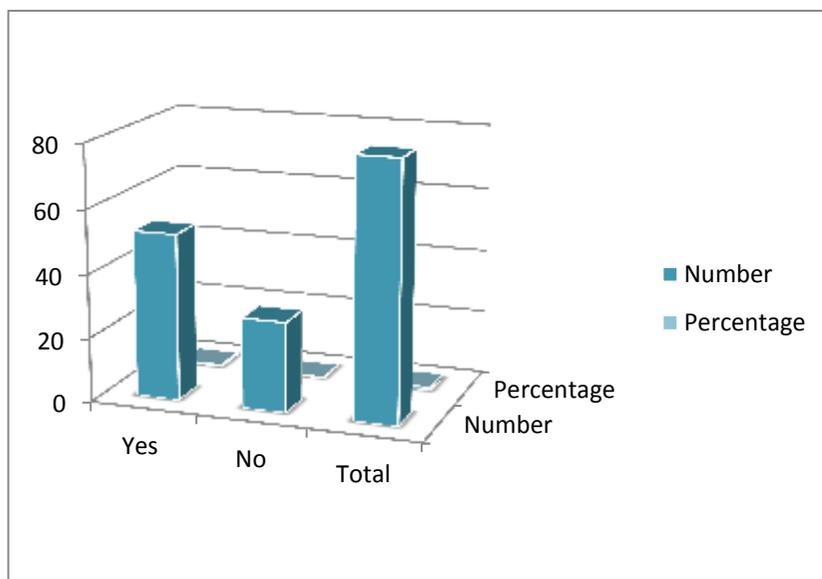


Figure 4.26: Using Communication Games in the Classroom

According to the information from the table and the graph, 65% of students claimed that they practice communication games in their classrooms. Only 35% of students said that they do not use them. This indicates that most students are exposed to such a type of activity.

Item 16: Frequency of Using Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Often	10	19,23%
Sometimes	32	61,53%
Rarely	10	19,23%
Never	0	0%
Total	52	100%

Table 4.27: Frequency of Using Communication Games

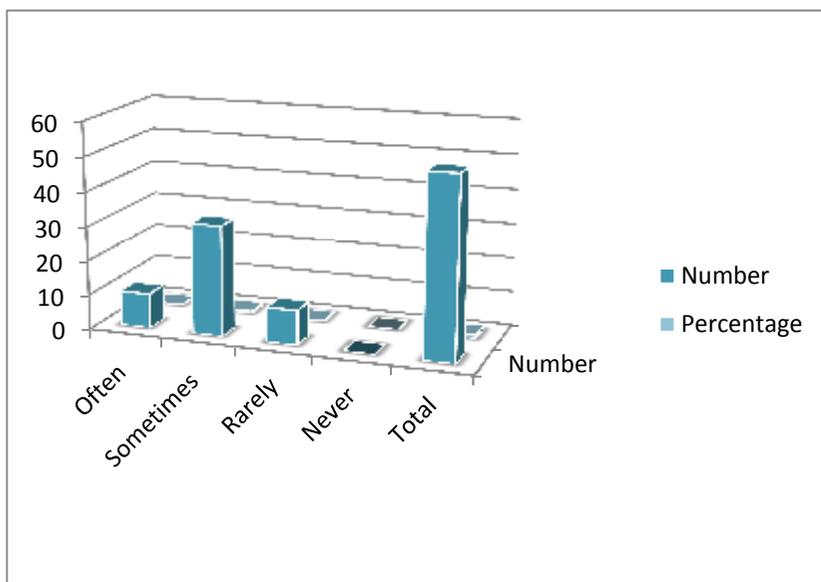


Figure 4.27: Frequency of Using Communication Games

To know to what extent teachers depend on communication games as a technique for stimulating students to speak, we asked students about how often these activities are used by their oral expression teacher. 19, 23% of students revealed that their teachers often use this technique. 61, 53% of them said that their teachers sometimes use it. And, 19, 23% of students said that their teachers rarely use those activities. This indicates that this technique is frequently used by most of oral expression teachers.

Item 17: Participation in Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	50	62,50%
No	30	37,50%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.28: Participation in Communication Games

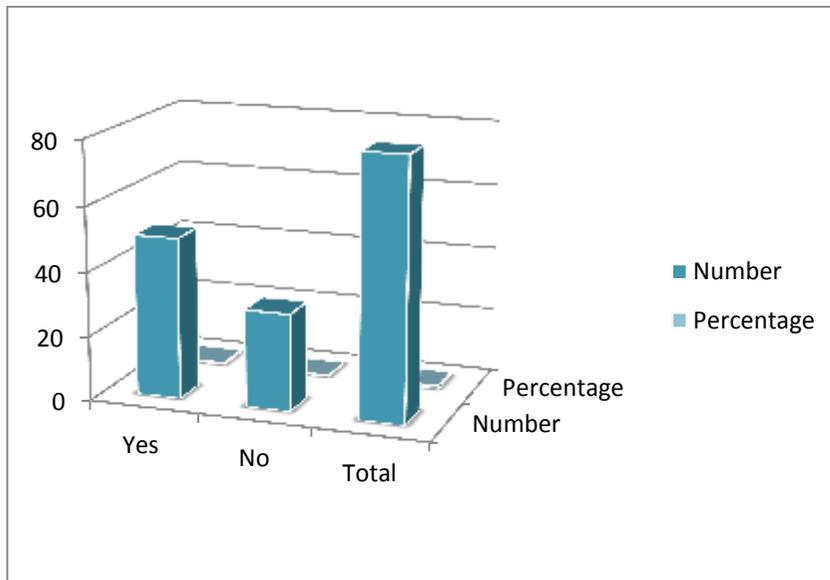


Figure 4.28: Participation in Communication Games

The table and the graph above show that most of the students (62, 50%) participate in communication games practiced in the classroom, and that only 37, 50% of the students do not participate in them. This indicates that communication games involve students in classroom verbal interaction.

Item 18: Enjoying Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	47	94%
No	3	6%
Total	50	100%

Table 4.29: Enjoying Communication Games

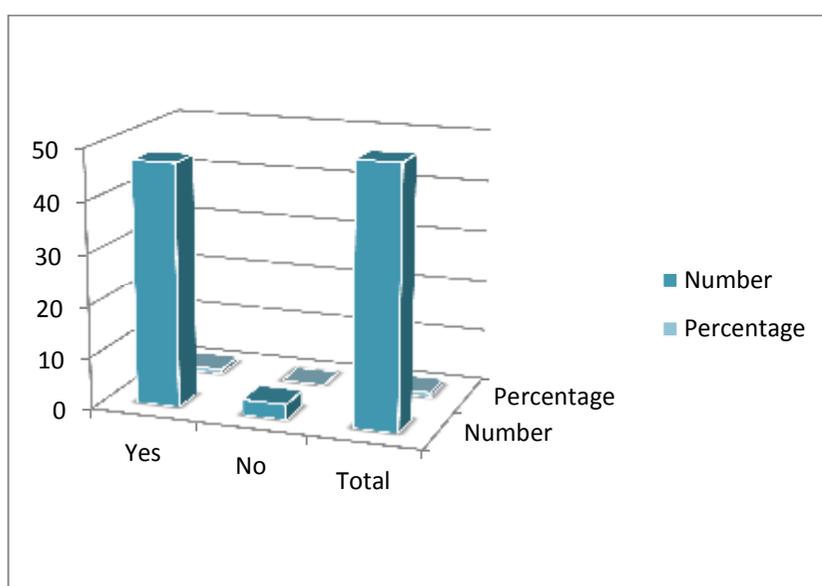


Figure 4.29: Enjoying Communication Games

According to what is shown in the table and the graph, 94% of students who participate in communication games enjoy practicing them. Only 6% of students do not do so. This indicates that communication games motivate and stimulate students to speak.

Item 19: Students' Attitudes towards the Continuous Use of Communication Games

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	58	73%
No	22	27,5
Total	80	100%

Table 4.30: Students' Attitudes towards the Continuous Use of Communication Games

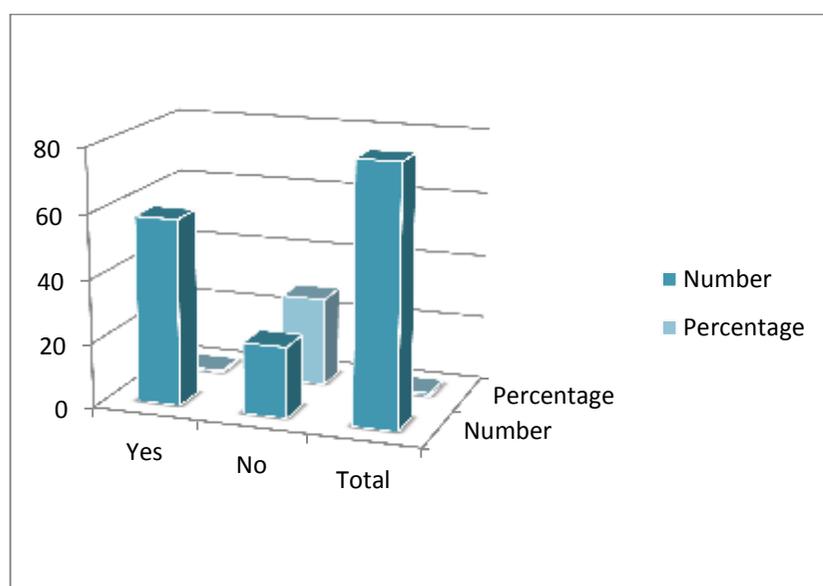


Figure 4.30: Students' Attitudes towards the Continuous Use of Communication Games

Games

From the table and the graph above, we notice that 73% of students think that their teachers of oral expression should always use communication games, whereas only 27, 5 of them think that those activities should not be always be used. This indicates that most of students like practicing communication games.

- If 'yes', why?

Students said that their teachers should always use communication games because those activities:

- Make them interested in learning.
- Are funny and enjoyable.
- Encourage them to use the language.
- Help them to learn quickly and easily because of concentration.
- Help them speak without fear.
- Are entertaining and make them participating.
- Help them improve their speaking skill.
- Improve their fluency because they give them an opportunity to speak freely using informal language.
- Help them to be active students.
- Help them to be good communicators.
- Make the relationship between the teacher and students closer.
- Improve their pronunciation.
- Give them the opportunity to share their ideas with each other.
- Give the opportunity to all students to participate.
- Enrich their vocabulary.

- **If 'no', why?**

Other students think that the teacher of oral expression should not always use communication games because:

- The teacher should change the technique from time to time.
- They will be boring if they are always used.

- They do not suit all the students.
- They waste time, the teacher should focus on more important things.

Students' answers reveal that even those who said that the teacher should not always use communication games are not against communication games, but against the overuse of these activities.

Item 20: The Effectiveness of Communication Games in Developing Students'

Speaking

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	60	75%
No	20	25%
Total	80	100%

Table 4.31: The Effectiveness of Communication Games in Developing Students'

Speaking

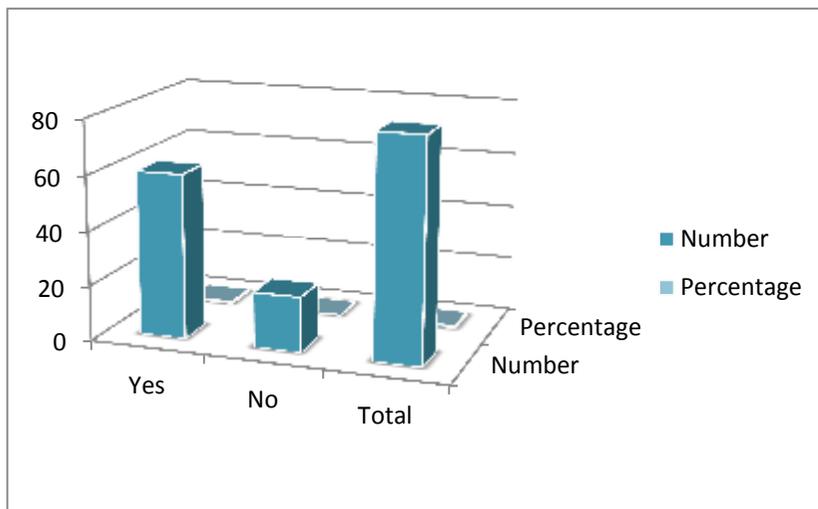


Figure 4.31: The Effectiveness of Communication Games in Developing Students'

Speaking

As shown in the table and the graph above, 75% of students, that is most of them, think that communication games develop their speaking skill. However, only 25% of students think that they do not.

- **If 'yes', how?**

Students claimed that communication games can develop students' speaking skill through:

- Practicing speaking while playing them.
- Giving them the opportunity to evaluate their speaking level, and to improve it.
- Involving them in classroom interaction.
- Decreasing their anxiety, and increasing their self-confidence.
- Helping them to overcome their fear of making mistakes because they speak spontaneously.
- Developing their vocabulary and pronunciation.
- Developing their fluency.
- Making them good communicators.
- Teaching them the manner of expressing thoughts.
- Developing their thinking.

4.2.3 Summary of Results and Findings from the Students' Questionnaire

Results obtained from the students' questionnaire have shown that most of the participants are females, while only ten of them are males. Their ages varies from 18 to 23 years old. Concerning their pre-university studies, most of them hold a Letters baccalaureate. Almost all of them have chosen to study English at the University. In spite of the fact that the majority of them speak good English, most students prefer written

expression course rather than the oral one. A large number of our participants speak English outside the classroom, and are aware of the importance of speaking in learning a language. However, they differ in viewing this skill; most of them consider speaking as the ability to produce a correct language, that is, they aim at developing their accuracy rather than fluency. Only few of them want to develop both of them. Concerning their attitudes towards the course of oral expression, most of the students are satisfied with the way they are taught this course, the rest claimed that they need more new and motivating activities. Moreover, most of them said that their teachers encourage them to speak, and that they take advantage of those chances. The main problem of the rest of students who do not practice speaking in the classroom is shyness and fear of making mistakes. Students' most favorite activities are role-play, while communication games take the second priority. Results have also revealed that most of students have already experienced communication games before coming to the university, and that this technique is sometimes used by their oral-expression teacher at the university. Furthermore, it has been proved through this questionnaire that most of students participate in those activities, and that they enjoy them and want them to be frequently used by their teacher. Even those who are against the continuous use of communication games are not against those games, but against their overuse in order not to be bored with them. Finally, almost of students are aware of the usefulness of communication games in developing their speaking skill.

Conclusion

Questionnaires administered to first year students and their teachers of oral expression have both shown that speaking is a very important skill in language learning that needs to be mastered by all language students, and that it must be given much emphasis by teachers and students. More importantly, this questionnaire proved that

communication games are a very effective technique that makes students participating in the classroom, and that improves their speaking skill. Therefore, this study has confirmed our hypothesis which claimed that the use of communication games may develop students' speaking skill.

General Conclusion

This study was intended to investigate the usefulness of communication games in improving students' speaking skill. We have noticed that speaking in English for most students is the hardest task to do, and the most difficult skill to master. This leads them to hating the language, and to avoiding any occasion where they may be given the chance to speak. In an attempt to help students to overcome this problem, we conducted this research which investigated the role of communication games as technique that can be used by oral expression teachers to develop students' speaking skill. The study was conducted through two questionnaires administered to a sample of eighty first year students, and ten teachers of oral expression at the department of English. The study was not made on the whole population because of time limitation. The results from those questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted in order to have some insights about the issue. It has been proved from the outcomes that those activities have a significant role in improving students' speaking skill.

Pedagogical Implementations

Some of the pedagogical recommendations were obtained from the teachers' and students' questionnaires:

- ✓ Teacher ought to change the type of activities from time to time in order to avoid students' boredom.
- ✓ Teachers ought to encourage their students to speak in English outside the classroom.
- ✓ Teachers are advisable to include new activities.
- ✓ Teachers ought to focus on developing their students' accuracy and fluency.
- ✓ Teachers are advisable to emphasize developing students' communicative competence.
- ✓ Teachers ought to ask their students about their needs and interests.
- ✓ Smallish classes should be encouraged.
- ✓ Green teachers should receive some training.
- ✓ Communication games should be selected according to the students' level.
- ✓ More time should be allocated to the course of oral expression.

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5. Do you like teaching oral expression?

a- Yes

b- No

Why?.....

.....

.....

6. What have been your main challenges since you have started teaching oral expression?

a-

.....

b-

.....

c-

.....

7. Which skill you think must be given much more importance in teaching?

a- Listening

c- Writing

b- Speaking

d- Reading

Why?.....

.....

.....

8. Are you satisfied with your students' level of speaking?

a- Yes

b- No

9. Do you encourage your students to speak?

a- Yes

b- No

If 'yes', will you please say how?.....

.....

.....

10. Do you think the time allocated to the oral-expression course is sufficient for helping students to develop their speaking proficiency?
- a- Yes b- No

Section Three: Attitudes towards Communication Games

11. Do you use communication games in teaching oral expression?
- a- Yes b- No
12. How often do you use them?
- a- Often c- Rarely
- b- Sometimes d- never
13. Do you think that communication games are an effective technique?
- a- Yes b- No
- c- I don't know

If 'yes', please say how?.....
.....
.....

14. What are the other activities you usually include or use in teaching oral expression?
- a- Story telling
- b- Role-plays
- c- Topic discussions

Others, please specify.....
.....

15. Do you think that communication games can develop your students' speaking skill?
- a- Yes b- No

c- I don't know

If 'yes', how?.....

.....

.....

.....

Will you please add any comments you consider important for this issue

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you very much for taking time to complete
this questionnaire.*

Questionnaire to Students

Dear students,

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about the role of using Communication Games in developing students' speaking skill. Your contribution will be of great help to achieve the objectives of this research. Be sure that your responses will be kept anonymous, and that they will be used only for the research work.

Would you please tick (✓) in the appropriate box or give full answers whenever necessary.

Section One: Background information

1. Gender: a- Male b- Female

2. Age:years old.

3. What type of baccalaureate do you hold?

a- Languages

b- Letters

c- Science

Others, please specify.....

4. Is it your choice to study English?

a- Yes b- No

If 'yes', why?
.....

Section two: Attitudes towards Learning Speaking

5. How good is your spoken English?

a- Very good

c- Not so good

b- Good

d- Bad

6. Which course do you prefer?

a- Written expression

b- Oral expression

If 'oral expression', why?
.....
.....

7. Do you speak in English outside the classroom?

a- Yes

b- No

8. In your opinion, how speaking is important in learning English? (give one or two reasons)

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

9. According to you, speaking means

a- The ability to produce a correct language

b- The ability to speak fluently and rapidly

c- both

10. Are you satisfied with the way you are taught oral expression?

a- Yes

b- No

If 'no', why or what do you propose?

.....

.....

.....

11. How often does your oral-expression teacher encourage you or give you the opportunity to speak?

a- Often

c- Rarely

b- Sometimes

d- Never

12. Do you take the advantage of every chance given to you to speak in the classroom?

a- Yes

b- No

If 'no', is it because:

a- The topics are usually not interesting

b- The teacher does not motivate you

c- You fear making mistakes

d- You are very shy

13. What are your favorite activities during the lecture of oral expression?

a- Playing communication games c- Role plays

b- Topic discussions d- Telling stories

Section Three: Attitudes towards Communication Game

14. Have you ever practiced classroom (communication) games before you come to the University? a- Yes b- No

15. Does your teacher of oral expression use communication games in the classroom? a- Yes b- No

16. How often does he or she use them? a- Often c- Rarely
b- Sometimes d- Never

17. Do you participate in communication games practiced in the classroom? a- Yes b- No

18. Do you enjoy practicing communication games in the classroom? a- Yes b- No

19. Do you think that your oral-expression teacher should always use this technique? a- Yes b- No

Why?.....
.....
.....

20. Do you think that communication games help you to develop your speaking skill? a- Yes b- No

If 'yes', how?
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for you.

Résumé

Cette recherche est menée afin d'évaluer l'utilité des jeux de communication dans l'amélioration de la compétence orale des élèves. Un des problèmes les plus connus que les élèves sont confrontés lors de l'apprentissage d'une langue est leur incapacité à parler. Dans une tentative de trouver une solution à ce problème, nous avons décidé à mener cette étude qui exploite des jeux de communication comme une technique qui peut être utilisée pour les apprenants de la langue. Ainsi, nous avons supposé que l'utilisation des jeux de communication peut améliorer la compétence verbal des élèves par les impliquant dans l'interaction en classe. Nous avons adopté une méthodologie descriptive de l'enquête qui se compose de deux questionnaires administrés aux élèves de première année et leurs professeurs d'expression orale au département d'anglais. Les résultats les plus significatifs de notre recherche sont la conscience des élèves et les enseignants de l'utilité et de l'efficacité des activités proposées et leur volonté de les mettre en application. Par conséquent, il est devenu évident que ses jeux de communication jouent un rôle important dans l'amélioration de la compétence de langue des élèves.

ملخص

يتطرق هذا البحث لدراسة مدى فاعلية الألعاب التواصلية في تطوير مهارة التحدث عند الطلبة. إن من أبرز المشاكل التي يواجهها معظم الطلاب عند تعلم اللغة الانجليزية هو عدم قدرتهم على التحدث بها. في محاولة لإيجاد حل لهذه المشكلة قررنا إجراء هذه الدراسة والتي تتعامل مع الألعاب التواصلية كتقنية تواصلية يمكن استخدامها في تدريس اللغات الأجنبية. وبالتالي فقد افترضنا أن استخدام الألعاب التواصلية من شأنه تعزيز مهارة التحدث عند الطلبة من خلال إشراكهم في التفاعل مع زملائهم في القسم. اعتمدنا في هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي من خلال توزيع استنبيابين لكل من طلاب السنة الأولى وأساتذة التعبير الشفهي في قسم الإنجليزية ' أهم النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها من خلال هذا البحث هي إدراك الطلاب والأساتذة لفائدة وفاعلية الأنشطة المقترحة واستعدادهم لوضعها موضع التطبيق. لذلك أصبح من الواضح أن الألعاب التواصلية تلعب دورا هاما في تحسين مهارة التحدث لدى الطلبة.