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Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of Foreign Languages

# MASTER THESIS

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Submitted and Defended by: Hadj Ali Amani

**Title:**

**Implementing the Role Play Technique to Decrease the  
EFL Learners' Speaking Anxiety**

**The case of the First Year LMD Students at Biskra University**

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A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master Degree in Sciences of  
the Language

**Broad of Examiners**

Dr. BENIDIR Samira	Chairperson	Biskra University
Dr. MEHIRI Ramdane	Supervisor	Biskra University
Ms. MANSOURI Amina	Examiner	Biskra University

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## **Dedication**

To the soul of my beloved dad who taught me how to dream, follow my dreams, and inspired me to love and believe in myself.

To my mom, Thank you for your support, affection, unconditional love, and prayers for days and nights make me able to get such success and honor.

To my sisters and brothers who supported me financially, emotionally and psychologically with motivating words and encouragement in my down moments.

To my friends Saida; Houria; Karima; Amel; Khawla; and Basma for being the best thing that ever happened to me, Thank you for making me live unforgettable memories.

## **Declaration**

I, Hadj Ali Amani, do hereby solemnly declare that the work I am going to present in this thesis is my own, and has not been submitted before to any other institution or university for a degree.

This work has been carried out and completed at Mohamed KHEIDER University of BISKRA, ALGERIA.

### **Certified:**

Ms. Hadj Ali Amani

**Master Student, English Language Branch Sciences of the Language**

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## Abstract

Speaking anxiety is one of the major psychological problems that the EFL students encounter and affects negatively their learning process. The current study aims to investigate the impact of implementing the role play technique on decreasing the EFL learners' speaking anxiety and developing their speaking skill. In addition, it aims to explore the teachers' ability to recognize their anxious learners and the strategies they use to reduce those learners' speaking anxiety. To achieve the objectives of the present study, a descriptive research was conducted at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra relying on a number of sources and different data collection instruments. A triangulation of data collection methods was used and consisted of a classroom observation, a questionnaire for the first year EFL license students, and a teachers' interview. The obtained data through those data collection methods were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of the classroom observation and the students' questionnaire revealed that the first year EFL learners at Biskra University experience a high level of speaking anxiety. Also, the female students seem to be less anxious than the male students. Accordingly, it was proved that the role play technique affects positively the decrease of the first year EFL learners' speaking anxiety and improving their speaking skill as well. Furthermore, the data obtained through the teachers' interview ensured the teachers' ability to recognize their anxious students, provided a set of strategies they use to decrease those learners' speaking anxiety, and asserted the effectiveness of the role play technique on reducing the EFL learners' speaking anxiety especially the students who encounter a low or moderate level of it.

**Key words:** The speaking skill, the speaking anxiety, the role play technique.

## **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

EFL: English as Foreign Language

LMD: License/ master/ Doctorate

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## **General introduction**

Recently, the English language has been considered as a means of communication between non-native speakers around the world. The use of the English language as a lingua franca is reflected by three main aspects: the number of native speakers of the English Language around the world; the speech communities that use the English language as a second language; and the groups that regard the English language as a foreign language. Many foreign language learners associate their success in learning a foreign language with their ability to speak that particular language fluently and accurately. Thus, they focus mainly on developing their speaking skill. However, improving the speaking skill may be difficult for them due to many challenges.

The speaking anxiety is one of the main difficulties that EFL learners encounter in their learning process. It is a psychological problem which has a negative impact on the foreign language learning process and refers mainly to the effect of it on the speaking skill.

The role play technique is increasingly used in teaching the speaking skill for EFL learners. It emphasizes utilizing real-life situations and authentic language to motivate learners and encourage them to communicate using the target language. Another aim of implementing the role play technique in the oral class is reducing the EFL learners' speaking anxiety by providing them with an opportunity to perform different characters in different contexts which will increase their self-confidence and motivate them to speak in front of others.

## **1. Statement of the problem**

Learning a foreign language fosters the ability to communicate with it easily and effectively through speaking and writing. The speaking skill is viewed as one of the most complex and important processes regarding the problems that learners face in the oral production of the language and its important role as a means of communication.

We have observed that many EFL learners at Biskra University encounter difficulties in the speaking skill which affect their oral performance negatively and prevent them from communicating using the target language such as: the feeling of being stressed, the lack of self-confidence, and anxiety.

To tackle the above mentioned problem, we have suggested the use of the role play technique which focuses on encouraging learners to use the language in different contexts, motivates them to express themselves freely in front of others, raises their self-esteem, and decreases their speaking anxiety.

## **2. Significance of the study**

The current study is intended to contribute to raising the teachers and learners' awareness of the anxiety's negative effect on the foreign language learning and especially on the speaking skill. It is also intended to provide new techniques to decrease the level of anxiety and encourage learners to develop their speaking skill.

## **3. Research aims**

This study aims at understanding the nature of anxiety, its main sources and consequences. In addition, it seeks to determine its effect on the speaking skill and to examine the effectiveness of the role play technique on reducing the EFL

learners' speaking anxiety.

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

This thesis relies on the following questions:

1. Does the role play technique decrease the EFL learners speaking anxiety?
2. Does the use of the role play technique encourage learners to improve their speaking skill?
3. Are the teachers able to recognize the anxious learners and what are the strategies they use to reduce those learners' speaking anxiety?

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

The present research is based on two hypotheses that should be tested and verified through:

1. We hypothesize that implementing the role play as a teaching technique would reduce the EFL learners' speaking anxiety and motivate them to improve their speaking skill.
2. We hypothesize that the role play would not affect positively on the decrease of the EFL learners 'speaking anxiety.

#### **6. Research methodology**

The researchers used the qualitative approach to acquire and gather data for this dissertation. Moreover, the researchers planned to derive information from any material relevant to their field of interest which is a new and a fresh area in their branch as far as they are concerned. In addition, they used the quantitative approach as well to cater for both theoretical and applied research.



The results of the questionnaire and the interview were included in the thesis.

## **7. Research Methods**

A triangulation of data collection methods was used in this research work as follows:

1. The classroom observation was used to observe closely if the first year English language students at Biskra university experience speaking anxiety. Also, to investigate the impact of implementing the role play technique on decreasing the learners' speaking anxiety.
2. The students' questionnaire was submitted to the first year English language students at Biskra University to investigate the effectiveness of the role play technique in motivating learners to improve their speaking skill.
3. The teachers' interview was utilized to explore the teachers' ability to recognize their anxious learners and the strategies they use to reduce those learners' speaking anxiety.

**Chapter One**  
**The Speaking Skill and Anxiety**

# Chapter One: The Speaking Skill and Anxiety

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## Introduction

Foreign language anxiety is one of the common difficulties that foreign language learners encounter in their learning process and especially when it comes to speaking the language. In this chapter we will try to define the speaking skill, its elements, importance, its teaching, the teacher's role while teaching it, and the problems faced by learners when speaking the English language. Subsequently, we will deal with anxiety; its definition; its types; and its impact on the EFL learners. Finally, we will focus more on speaking anxiety; its sources; effects; teacher and learners' strategies to tackle speaking anxiety.

### 1. The speaking skill

#### 1.1 Definition

The online Oxford Dictionary defined speaking as “the action of conveying information or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in spoken language” In other words, it is the process through which we communicate with others; express opinions and emotions; and share information. Focusing on the same point, Bygate (1987, p.01) believed that “It is a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning. Perhaps, then, the teaching of speaking merits more thought.” He assumed that teaching speaking requires more consideration because speaking a language helps mainly learning that particular language.

Hedge (2000, p. 261), suggested that speaking is “a skill by which they are judged while first impressions are being formed”. This means that the speaking skill is the skill through which students are going to be judged by their teachers and peers (as cited in Rebbouh, 2016, p.40).

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Celce – Murcia (2001) emphasized the role of the speaking skill as an important means of communication. Therefore, our ability to speak a particular language is equivalent to our knowledge of that language.

In the view of Brown (2004, p.140) “speaking is the product of creative construction of linguistic strings, the speaker makes choices of lexicon, structure, and discourse”. He believed that the learners construct meaning from the linguistic structure and utilize the appropriate vocabulary, form, and discourse creatively to produce their speech.

Luoma (2004, p.01) claimed that “Speaking skills are an important part of the curriculum in language teaching, and this makes them an important object of assessment as well”. He emphasized the importance of speaking skill as an aspect of language teaching and assessment.

Goh and Burns (2012) assumed that learners consider speaking as the most important skill of the foreign language skills (listening, reading and writing) and aim to develop it due to the idea that mastering a foreign language is limited mostly on being a fluent speaker of the target language.

From the previous definitions, we can conclude that the speaking skill is a productive skill that enables learners to exchange information; achieve their main aim which is effective communication using the target language as well as, express their opinions and feelings.

### **1.2 Elements of speaking**

Since speaking is one of the main skills in foreign language learning, the EFL learners are required to have knowledge about pronunciation, grammar, discourse,

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words, and their meaning in order to improve their speaking skill (Goh and Burns 2012). Supporting this idea, Harris (1974) suggested five elements of speaking (as cited in Kurniat, Eliwarti & Novitri, 2015):

### **1.2.1 Comprehension**

The learners need to understand the subject they are required to discuss orally using the target language.

### **1.2.2 Grammar**

Grammar is a crucial aspect that learners have to focus on when speaking the language. The ability to create well grammatical formed sentences aids the listeners to understand the speaker's intentions correctly as well as develops the learners' language proficiency.

### **1.2.3 Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is the set of words that a person uses to communicate effectively through speaking or writing. The Lack of vocabulary is one of the main difficulties which prevent learners from communicating with others, express their opinions and thoughts, and improve their learning process.

### **1.2.4 Pronunciation**

Pronunciation refers to how we articulate every word in the language. It contains two main elements that are: suprasegmental factors and phonemes. Pronunciations study the phonological system of sounds which indicates the way in which sounds change and appear depending on the grammatical rules. Learners should be aware of

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the important role that pronunciation plays in speaking which is facilitating the communicative process.

### **1.2.5 Fluency**

Being a fluent speaker of the language is the target aim of many EFL learners. Fluency is defined as our ability to use the target language easily, effectively, and precisely. It means that learners are capable to speak and understand the language rapidly; accurately; and without making efforts. The fluent speaker of the language is the one who decreases the use of “ums” or “ers” in speaking; this indicates that he does not face difficulty in finding the appropriate words to express the idea or convey the message.

### **1.3 The importance of the speaking skill**

The speaking skill is the core of the foreign language learning. The speech of a person is a reflection of his knowledge about the external world, self-conception, opinions, and beliefs (Luoma, 2004). In addition to that, it plays a vital role in communication with others as well as in improving and facilitating the learning process.

Speaking is accepted by everyone as an essential communicative skill, but its importance to language learners go beyond just day - to- day communication. Speaking can facilitate language acquisition and contributes to the academic development of many second language learners. (Goh & Burns, 2012, p.15)

Based on the abovementioned quote, many language learners relate their success in the learning process mainly with their ability to speak the target language effectively and fluently.

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### **1.4 Teaching the speaking skill**

The speaking skill has not always been the main focus of the foreign language teaching. Many teachers believe that the speaking skill is less important compared to the writing skill. Therefore, they focus on teaching knowledge about the language which deals with the grammatical structures and vocabulary and neglect to teach the skill by which learners are going to use the language effectively and accurately through activities and practice. Teachers should be aware of the distinction between knowledge and skill when teaching the speaking skill because being knowledgeable about the language rules is not sufficient to communicate effectively using the target language. However, utilizing different types of activities by the teacher in which learners are required to produce language will help them to develop their communicative competence as well as their speaking skill (Bygate, 1987).

### **1.5 The teacher's role while teaching the speaking skill**

Effective oral communication depends mainly on the learner as well as the teacher who is supposed to guide the learners and help them in producing accurate and effective language. Harmer (2001) believed that the teacher plays different roles when teaching the speaking skill.

Before the beginning of the oral task, the teacher plays the role of facilitator by introducing the topic to the learners by asking questions and explaining how they are going to perform the task.

Once the teacher has introduced the topic, he is supposed to organize the classroom and prepare the learners for the task for instance: divide them into pairs or groups or provide them with role cards if the task is role play. When the learners start

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preparing themselves for the oral performance, the teacher monitors them by turning around the class; ask them about the difficulties they are facing; and help them to overcome them.

During the oral presentation, the teacher prompts the learners who are presenting when he observes that they are making much effort to express themselves by providing hints or clues.

At the end of the oral task, the teacher can participate in the discussion with the learners. Also, he is required to assess the learners' performance in terms of the content and the used language and provide them with the correct feedback which highlights the positive part of their presentation.

### **1.6 Problems faced by learners when speaking the English language**

Many EFL learners encounter some problems which hinder them from improving their speaking skill and have a negative impact on the learning process. Ur (1996) identified the main difficulties that learners face in speaking the English language:

#### **1.7.1 Inhibition**

Dissimilar to the other skills, exposure to an audience is important when the learners tend to speak the English language. Moreover, they are inhibited to express themselves in the classroom using the target language due to many factors such as : being judged negatively by their peers or teacher ; fear of making mistakes ; and simply just because they are shy of being part of the conversation that takes place in the classroom.

#### **1.7.2 Nothing to say**



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Apart from inhibition, learners can still face problems in speaking the language due to the lack of motivation which prevents them from thinking about what to say when they are required to speak the language.

### **1.7.3 Mother tongue use**

Most of learners find it difficult to speak using a foreign language. Consequently, they prefer to use the mother tongue instead of the target language in their learning process because it is easy and comes naturally.

### **1.7.4 Low or uneven participation**

In a large group, each participant is given a limited amount of time to speak and to be heard by others which aid some learners to dominate while others do not speak at all or speak just for a little time.

## **2. Anxiety**

### **2.1 Definition**

Several definitions were suggested by scientists to determine the meaning of anxiety and understand its nature. Spielberger (1972, p. 482) believed that anxiety is “an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry” (As cited in Kráľová 2016, p.3). In other words, it is the individuals’ subjective feelings of stress, fear, uneasiness, and pressure. Focusing on the same point, Scovel (1978) stated that anxiety is mainly related to feelings of discouragement, lack of self confidence, and worry. (As cited in brown 2007, p.161).

Steimer (2002) pointed out that both fear and anxiety are emotional states that produce the same physical and mental reactions of stress in order to stimulate the

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individual that something dangerous is about to happen. However, they are different in terms that fear is the understood, observable, and known danger of a present situation while anxiety is the unknown and imprecise threat that may take place in the future.

The American Psycholinguistic Association (2021) defines anxiety as “an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure”. However, The Cambridge Dictionary (2021) defines anxiety as “an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future”.

From the previous definitions, it is clear that anxiety is an unlikable emotional state which includes the feelings of worry; lack of motivation; stress; and pressure that come from future danger.

## **2.2 Categories of anxiety**

According to Spielberger (1983), anxiety has been divided into 3 main categories as follows (as cited in Oteir & Al-Otaibi 2019, p. 310-311):

### **2.2.1 Specific situation anxiety**

Specific anxiety occurs when someone tends to be anxious in specific situations but the feeling of anxiety is temporary and limited on those situations. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) supposed that specific anxiety is a special type of anxiety that takes place constantly in a particular situation such as: mathematic anxiety and language anxiety which takes place when students use a particular language. They also emphasized that foreign language anxiety is considered as specific situation anxiety based on the idea that learners experience anxiety through many classroom situations.

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In line with this view, the linguists stated that the type of anxiety aroused in foreign language learning is specific situation anxiety not a trait anxiety because this later is a stable type of anxiety related to all situation taking into consideration that language learners are anxious only in specific situations during their language learning process (Oxford and Ehrman, 1992).

### **2.2.2 Trait anxiety**

Trait anxiety appears when a person is generally anxious in a variety of situations. Sieber, O'Neil, and Tobias (1977) believed that trait anxiety refers to “stable personality differences in anxiety proneness” which means that it is an aspect of personality that is constant and does not change within different situations. Eysenck (1979) assumed that trait anxiety can interrupt memory and cause memory destruction.

### **2.2.3 State anxiety**

State anxiety is the emotional state which influences the attitudes, cognition, and feelings of a person. Spielberger (1972 , p. 489) defined state anxiety as “the emotional reaction or pattern of response that occurs in an individual who perceives a particular situation as personally dangerous or threatening, irrespective of the presence or absence of objective danger”. In simple words, it is a temporary response to specific stimuli which takes place when a person feels that a future threat may occur. Young (1998) believed that state anxiety is a changeable feeling of tension. An example of state anxiety is test anxiety in which learners’ anxiety increases as a result of a particular test and may change with time.

## **2.3 The impact of anxiety on the EFL learner**

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Anxiety is one of the main obstacles that many EFL learners face and impact negatively their learning process in different ways. Dörnyei (2005) provided two distinct types of anxiety which presented the negative and positive effect of anxiety in language learning: debilitating anxiety which is considered as an obstacle that EFL learners face in their learning process while facilitating anxiety refers to the type of anxiety which facilitates the language learning process.

Every person has a combination of both facilitating and debilitating anxiety; this combination motivates the learners and prepares them for any new phenomena which they may face in their learning process (Scovel, 1978). Additionally, some EFL learners are afraid of the others' judgment and negative evaluation. Consequently, they usually become anxious when it comes to public speaking and interacting with native speakers of the target language (Pertaub; Slater; & Carter, 2001).

Accordingly, some researchers (Pertaub; Slater; and Carter, 2001; Horwitz et al, 1986) claimed that even though learners are aware that anxiety is illogical, they cannot stop their feeling of anxiety which may be the reason for their disappointment, anger, and fear. This type of anxiety takes place mainly when communicating with a native speaker of the target language as well as in the foreign language learning process. Therefore, many researchers and scientists have conducted several studies in order to investigate the nature of foreign language speaking anxiety (as cited in Asyifa; Handayani; & Rizkiani, 2019).

### **3. Speaking anxiety**

#### **3.1 Definition**

Researchers suggested various definitions of speaking anxiety. Scientists (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Price, 1991; Palacios, 1998) claimed that the speaking skill is the most arousing anxiety skill

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among the four foreign language skills (as cited in Luo, 2014). In this respect, Chiu et al (2010) assumed that learners are more likely to experience anxiety in productive skills (writing and speaking) than receptive skills (reading and listening) (as cited in Atas, 2015).

Hamzah and Ting (2010) reported that some learners are unmotivated and nervous when it comes to communicating with others and expressing themselves using the target language which indicates that it is not easy for them to speak English in front of others (as cited in Mutiara , Nenden , & Rojab 2020). Speaking anxiety is categorized as one of the skill- based foreign language anxieties, it refers to the type of anxiety associated with the speaking skill (Kráľová, 2016).

Speaking anxiety is associated with the learners' self confidence which means that when the learners' are unable to speak and express themselves in front of their peers using the target language, their self confidence level increases (Asyisyifa; Handayani; & Rizkiani, 2019).

### **3.2 Causes of speaking anxiety**

Speaking anxiety is viewed as one of the main problems that learners encounter in their English language learning process which decrease their willingness of speaking in the classroom (Mutiara, Nenden, & Rojab 2020). Therefore, researchers and scholars (Wörde, 2003; Ohata, 2005; Park & Lee, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Arwan et al, 2010; Dalkıl ıç, 2013) have identified the main causes of speaking anxiety as the follows (as cited in Atas, 2015):

- The teacher error correction style
- English proficiency level
- The impact of native speaker
- Communicating orally

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- Having an oral test
- Inaccurate grammar
- Fear of negative evaluation (being laughed at)
- Fear of pronunciation mistakes
- Insufficient vocabulary
- unpreparedness and shyness
- Fear of public speaking
- Lack of self- confidence
- Fear of not being understood by others

### **3.3 Effects of speaking anxiety**

Speaking anxiety is one of main factors that influence the foreign language process in many ways. First, speaking anxiety has a negative influence of the learners especially when it comes to oral performance (Philip, 1992; Zhang, 2004; Liu, 2006, Melouh, 2013). Secondly, Spanish and Sellers (2000) claimed that speaking anxiety plays a vital role in enhancing reading anxiety.

Accordingly, Park and Lee (2004) investigated that the learners' oral performance decreases by high level of speaking anxiety and increases when learners have a high self- confidence. Also, it affects negatively and contributes to decrease the learners' oral fluency level (Onwnegbuzie, 1999; Chan & Wu, 2004).

In addition to that, Elkhafaiifi (2005) stated that learners who experience speaking anxiety are likely to be less competent in their speaking skill. It is viewed as a main reason behind the learners' lack of self confidence (Na 2007). Finally, Mahumed (2017) stated that one of the main obstacles that learners encounter in communication using the target language is speaking anxiety (as cited in Anwari, 2019).

### **3.4 Teacher and learner's strategies to tackle speaking anxiety**

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### 3.4.1 learner's strategies

Speaking anxiety is regarded as one of the main obstacles that the EFL learners face. Thus, they should be aware of some strategies in order to decrease it. Asyisyifa, Handayani, and Rizkiani (2019) presented the learners' strategies to reduce speaking anxiety:

- Pronunciation practices to ensure the accurate pronunciation.
- Build positive mindset in which the learners are required to use English to raise their motivation.
- Focus on developing self- confidence through speaking with their friends or talking in front of the mirror.
- Try to develop their vocabulary knowledge in order to be able to choose the appropriate words in the oral tasks and presentation.

### 3.4.2 Teachers' strategies

Research on speaking anxiety identified the important role that the teacher plays in order to decrease the learners' speaking anxiety. Ansari (2015) summarized the techniques used by the teacher to tackle this phenomenon as follows:

- Teachers should be aware of their negative behaviours towards learners such as comparing students with each other and embarrassing or obliging them to speak in front of the class.
- The learners' interests and their proficiency levels should be taken into consideration when choosing classroom activities.
- Use anxiety decreasing activities such as: role play activities; games; group discussion; pair work; and group work.
- Try to establish an encouraging classroom atmosphere by smiling and including sense of humor; provide learners with positive and supportive

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comments and gestures; accept them as individuals; address them by their first name; and endure their mistakes.

- Tolerate the learners' errors and correct it implicitly to avoid decreasing their self- confidence and humiliating them.
- Make learners focus on the completion of the oral task in spite of their errors.
- Teachers have to recognize learners who encounter debilitating anxiety and provide them with techniques to overcome it by focusing on their needs; support them; appreciate their efforts; and talk to them privately outside of the classroom.
- Make silent learners aware of the importance of speaking English and get them to use English through classroom activities as well as the interaction with their peers and teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The EFL learners and teachers should be aware of anxiety as a common difficulty related to the language learning process as well as its negative effect especially in association with the speaking skill. Also, they should be knowledgeable about the particular strategies in order to decrease speaking anxiety and ensure the success of the language learning process.



## **Chapter Two**

### **The role play technique**

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### **Introduction**

The role play technique is one of the preferable techniques in foreign language teaching to enhance the EFL learners speaking skill and may impact positively in reducing their speaking anxiety. This chapter will provide a theoretical background about the role play technique. First, we will deal with the definitions of role play technique; types; steps of the role play technique when using it as a classroom activity, and general guidelines to follow by the teachers when using the role play technique as a classroom activity. Secondly, we will discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of the role play techniques as well as, the reasons behind the use of the role play technique. Additionally, we will explore drama in education as well as the relationship between the role play technique and drama. Furthermore, we will shed some light on the simulation, its definition, and the distinction between the role play technique and simulation. Finally, we will consider the relationship between the role play technique and the speaking skill.

### **2.1 Definition**

Numerous definitions of the role play technique were suggested. Firstly, Ladouse (1987) stated that impersonating roles by students means that they play either their own or somebody else's part in a particular situation. On the other hand, play refers to the safe environment in which the role play occurs and students tend to be creative and full of energy.

Secondly, Sogunros (2004) assumed that the role play technique is a learning technique in which students play distinct behaviors or perspective for the purpose of gaining the required knowledge. In addition to, he emphasized that the understanding

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that the role play technique provides is a result of the others' view points (as cited in Westrup & Planander 2013).

Accordingly, Browen (2004, p. 174) believed that “role playing is a popular pedagogical activity in communicative language teaching classes. Within constraints set forth by the guidelines, it frees students to be some- what creative in their linguistic output”. In other words, it is a common and organized communicative technique used in foreign language teaching in order to help students become more competent language learners.

In the view of Thornburry (2005), the role play technique is a form of drama techniques used in the foreign language teaching and especially in teaching the speaking skill. It deals with getting the EFL learners to play different and imaginative characters in real life contexts (as cited in Adnyani, Seken, & Nitiasih, 2014).

Similarly, Grysell and Winka (2010) assumed that the role play technique is a teaching technique that highlights the importance of behaviours and emotions in particular contexts (as cited in Westrup & Planander 2013).

According to Arham, Yassi, and Arafah (2016), the role play technique focuses on stimulating students to participate in the classroom and help them to communicate effectively in different social contexts through playing various roles. Therefore, it is viewed as a main technique in teaching the speaking skill.

In the same vein, Krebt (2017) suggested that the role play technique is a teaching method that involves performing and discussing a set of roles in the frame of a real life situation by a small group of students.

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Finally, the role play technique is mainly the individual's experience of feelings and attitudes through playing a designed role in a particular context and expressing the behaviours and emotions of that role as if they were real (Chakma, 2019).

In simple words, the role play technique is a common communicative teaching technique in which learners play different roles in different authentic situations using the target language that helps them in improving their speaking skill.

### **2.2 Types of the role play technique**

According to Byrne (as cited in Davies 1990) there are two types of role play which are described as follows (as cited in Adnyani, Seken, & Nitiasih 2014):

#### **2.2.1 Scripted role play technique**

It is the type of role play in which the teacher provides students with prompts related to the scenarios which will help students in forming the desired dialogues. The scripted role play requires students to work in groups and focuses on the idea of the previous preparation of the role by students before playing it in front of the class.

#### **2.2.2 Unscripted role play technique**

Unlike the scripted role play, the unscripted role play involves playing the role in front of the class spontaneously by students based on the provided prompts and without relying on the previous preparation or writing the role down.

### **2.3 Steps of the role play technique when using it as a classroom activity**

Since the role play technique is a pedagogical technique, it follows an organized structure. Joyce and Weil (1980) suggested the following nine steps of the role play technique (as cited in Chakma, 2019):

#### **2.3.1 Warming up the stage:**

It is the initial step of the role play activity that deals with establishing the

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problematic situation. In this stage, the teacher and students work together to create a problem that occurs in the classroom situation.

### **2.3.2 Selection of role player:**

It deals with assigning roles for students by the teachers taking into consideration the demands of the situations. The teacher at this level attempts to provide students with instructions and tries to maintain classroom discipline.

### **2.3.3 Setting the stage for the role playing**

The teacher and students try to arrange the classroom setting and make it suitable for the role playing activity.

### **2.3.4 Preparing of the observer**

The teacher participates in the role playing activity through playing the role of the observer by observing closely the role playing process.

### **2.3.5 Enacting role, story, and situation**

At this stage, both the teacher and students are required to act their assigned roles in the role playing activity. They should take into consideration the story of the role play activity as well as the classroom context when enacting their roles.

### **2.3.6 Discussion and Evaluation**

By the end of the role playing activity, the teacher allows students to discuss the role playing process in terms of their assigned roles, the difficulties that they face when playing their roles, the new knowledge learned from the role play activity, and how they can critically judge their roles.

### **2.3.7 Enacting again**

Taking into consideration the suggested points in the stage of the discussion and the evaluation which deals with the lacks and weaknesses of the role play activity, the teacher needs to provide a new opportunity for students to replay their roles to ensure

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the effectiveness of the role playing activity.

### **2.3.8 Redirection and evaluation**

It focuses on the discussion and evaluation of the re-acting roles considering the aims of the role play activity. This stage is associated with creating responses, discussing the assigned role, and extracting new knowledge which may be used to build up new educational experience.

### **2.3.9 Deriving generalization**

The final step of the role play activity refers to the knowledge and lessons related to the real life contexts learned from the role playing activity which may help teachers in managing discipline in the classroom, raising their awareness about the importance of discipline in the classroom, and identifying skills that can be used in managing discipline.

## **2.4 General Guidelines to follow by the teacher when using the role play as a classroom activity**

Using the role play technique as a classroom activity depends mainly on the teacher who should be aware of some crucial points to follow in order to organize the role play activity as well as to ensure its effectiveness. Howell (1992) provided basic guidelines to follow by the teacher when using the role play technique as a classroom activity:

### **2.4.1 Before the beginning of the role play activity**

At this stage, the teacher needs to decide on some crucial points such as:

- The main objectives of the role play
- The time needed for the role play
- The way to make the role play suitable for the preceding and following parts of the session.
- The required materials (role cards, papers, and props).

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- The kind of readings that learners need to be provided with in order to perform the desired roles.
- The number of roles and the needed role play groups.

### **2.4.2 During the role play activity**

Once the role play takes place in the classroom, the teacher has to ensure the following:

- Make the classroom environment suitable for the role play.
- Clarify the context, aim, and limited time for the role play.
- Assign roles for students and select the role play groups.
- Provide students with role cards that contain a description of the role and the role play context.
- Ensure the students' correct understanding of the role play.
- Check that the role play is going on as planned through moving around the groups.

### **2.4.3 After the role play activity**

By the end of the role play, the teacher should take into consideration the under mentioned points:

- Open the door for feedback by asking students to provide their opinions and outcomes of the roles and role play activity in general.
- Select some points to be discussed in the classroom.
- Find an appropriate way to associate the role play with the preceding and the following parts of the session.
- Provide students with further reading to reinforce the knowledge that comes from the role play activity.

Harbour and Connick (2005) provided basic guidelines for teachers when using role

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play activities as follows (as cited in Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, 2012):

- Initiate simple and brief role play by the beginning of the semester to train student and prepare them to play more complicated and large roles especially if the role playing may be used to assess the students' performance.
- Inform students that the role play aims at their ability to communicate a message about a particular topic rather than emphasizing on them playing their designed roles.
- Select the role play considering the educational objectives to help students relate it with the content of the course.
- Break down the content into small parts in order to represent it effectively in the role play.
- Provide learners with general principles of the role play in terms of presentation aspects( body language, facial expression, gestures, tone) ; using props; the used of content related language; avoiding the use of informal language.
- Assign different roles for the students and choose one of them to play the role of the observer.
- Inform students about the possibility of having a chance to replay their assigned roles.
- Allow discussion and feedback by the end of the role play activity.

### **2.5 Reasons behind the use of the role play technique**

The role play technique is considered to be one of the most common and effective teaching techniques. Ladouse (1987) suggested the following reasons behind the use of the role play technique. Firstly, the role play technique provides a wide range of experiences and contexts in which students meet new social occasions, lexicon, and



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forms which help them in improving their speaking skill.

Secondly, it helps in developing the learners' communicative and social skills that seem to be neglected in the language teaching syllabuses through getting them into various contexts in which they create linguistic forms that carry out a social function.

Additionally, the nature of the role play technique as a self-hiding activity may aid the shy learners and those who face difficulty in playing the role with their real identity by getting them to play the roles of other characters.

Also, the role play technique contains a great deal of fun and enjoyment because it opens the door for the learners' imagination and gets them beyond the ordinary traditional way of learning to a creative learning environment.

As well, it can be very beneficial for the learners who study the English language for specific purposes such as studying or working abroad through providing them with real-life experiences in the classroom safe environment as well as improving their ability to interact and communicate in various authentic contexts.

Finally, the role play technique contributes to the development of the learners' fluency and raises their level of motivation. In addition, it promotes interaction between students and encourages them to rely on themselves instead of relying on the teacher in their learning process.

Williams (2019) proposed several reasons for utilizing the role play technique in the classroom. First, the role play technique improves the students' reading comprehension as well as their communicative skills. Secondly, it is considered to be an effective technique that can be used in many disciplines besides language such as mathematics in which it develop the student ability to solve problems.

However, it provides students a better understanding of the complicated processes in science through viewing and analyzing the concept from the characters' perspective.

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Furthermore, the role play as an active learning technique aids different students to engage in the learning process by regarding their learning styles.

Additionally, the role play technique is a perfect way to create a healthy and comfortable classroom environment in which learners tend to be more creative, confident, and free to express themselves while playing the role of other characters.

Finally, the role play technique adds joy and excitement to the learning process and offers unforgettable memories.

### **2.6 The advantages and the disadvantages of the role play technique**

#### **2.6.1 The advantages of the role play technique**

The role play technique is regarded as one of the widely used techniques in language teaching due to the advantages that it holds. Harmer (1999) proposed the following advantages of the role play technique. First of all, it enables students to utilize the content in related real life situation. Secondly, it gets the students to think deeply and beyond the borders of the classroom context.

In addition, the role play technique makes students aware of how important is to associate the knowledge learned in the classroom with real world contexts.

Furthermore, the enjoyment and joy that students experience in the role play activity make it easy to remember the process of the role play even after a long time.

Moreover, it develops the learners' ability to make decisions that can free them from their self- limitation and the imposed confines. Besides, the role play technique offers a free discussion between the teacher and students in the light of their understanding of the content.

Finally, when the teacher decides to use the role play technique in the classroom, he may develop beneficial sceneries to use in the role play if the original ones are unavailable (as cited in Matkarimova, 2019).

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### 2.6.2 The disadvantages of the role play technique

Even though the role play technique is an effective communication teaching technique, it still has some disadvantages that make it impractical to use in the classroom and decreases its effectiveness as a teaching technique. Chakma (2019) suggested the following drawbacks of the role play technique.

First, the effectiveness of the role play technique depends mainly on how truly the teachers and students believe in the story that they are performing in the activity.

Secondly, the students' lack of understanding of the role play problem may impact negatively on the success of the role play activity.

Thirdly, not all students can play their assigned roles effectively is considered as an obstacle to the success of the role play activity.

Fourthly, the role of the teacher in the role play technique is highly emphasized in terms of creating a real life situation; prepare for the role play activity; assign the roles to students; observe the role-playing process to ensure that it achieves the desired objectives.

## 2.7 The role play technique, drama and simulation

### 2.7.1 Drama in Education

Drama is as old as humanity and plays a vital role in the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, drama was defined and explained by scholars highlighting its relationship with education. According to Meyer (1994), drama refers to representing and visualizing the different human concepts by linking them with the linguistic features (words, tone) and the paralinguistic features (gestures, body language, facial expressions). He also believed that drama is an effective teaching technique that should be used in all levels of education due to the joy and fun that it adds to the learning and teaching processes (as cited in Mugumya, 2012). The term “drama in education “refers

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to using drama in the field of education (Heikkinen, 2004); Heikkinen (2005) stated the explanation of this term by John Somers (1997) as the umbrella that includes all the classroom activities intended to teach drama (as cited in Eskelinen, 2017).

Additionally, Schellin (2006) believed that students have to follow the script word by word when performing their roles in drama (as cited in Haruyama, 2010). In line with this view, researchers (Miccoli, 2003; Conejeros & Fernandez, 2008; Gorjian et al., 2010) stated that drama establishes a relaxing and encouraging classroom environment in which students can express themselves and effectively learn and acquire knowledge (as cited in Atas, 2015). Supporting this idea, Ulas (2008) and Albalawi (2014) assumed that the drama technique has the benefit of encouraging students to improve their speaking and communicative abilities (as cited in Uguma & Obiekezie, 2018).

In the same vein, Jingyun Ong (2011) supposed that drama in nature emphasizes interaction; i.e. visualize abstract notions. Hence, it is a perfect strategy to engage different learners by considering their learning styles. In addition, he stated that drama enables learners to acquire new knowledge by representing past events in a safe environment (as cited in Eskelinen, 2017).

### **2.7.2 The role play technique and drama**

Many researchers and scientists were interested in investigating the relationship between the role play technique and drama techniques. Kakita (1979) stated that the role play technique and drama have some similarities such as the target objectives and the steps. However, they are different in terms of length, the time needed, the level of creativity, and flexibility. In addition, Kakita supposed that the role play technique and drama do not target the same level of students; the role play technique is perfect for average learners. On the other hand, those learners may face difficulty in understanding

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and taking a part in dramatization. He also recommended the use of both the role play technique and drama together to engage learners and encourage them to use the target language in similar situations (as cited in Haruyama, 2010).

Additionally, Moore (2004) referred to the role play technique as one approach to integrating drama in the classroom. Supporting the same idea, Barbu and Lucia (2007) stated that drama involves implementing the role play technique by creating a story and present it to the class by students. Also, the role-play technique and drama encourage students to develop their speaking skills and increase their academic achievement (as cited in Uguma & Obiekezie, 2018).

Focusing the same point, Blatner (2009) emphasized the idea that drama and the role play technique complete each other in terms that drama can be integrated in teaching different subject such as science, history, and literature while the role play technique encourage students and heighten such educational experiences. He also defined the role play technique as a part of the sociodrama that deal with identifying problems that take place in different social contexts.

In the view of Do & Nguyen (2017), drama deals with using the oral form of the language to transmit a particular message through incorporating role play. According to Heinrich (2018), the role play technique is considered as one of the main figures of drama. He introduced in his book the term “role play drama” as an educational technique that represents real life contexts in an organized and structured manner. The role play drama is a range of strategies that enables the learners to get deeper in the role play world to solve potential problems.

### **2.7.3 Definition of simulation**

Several definitions of the simulation were proposed by many scholars. Kipper and Evan (1984) considered simulation as a strategy used to draw out behaviours by

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managing the external context. Focusing on the same point, Ur (1996) referred to simulation as the process in which the individuals interact and behave as themselves within imaginative group role, context, and problematic.

In the view of Uchegbu (2006), simulation is a teaching technique that involves a set of tasks that represent authentic contexts or past events to engage students and help them in better understanding those contexts and events ( as cited in Uguma & Obiekezie, 2018). In the view of Sauv , Renaud, Kaufman, and Marquis (2007), simulation is a simple, active, and precise reality pattern that may be used in the learning process.

Accordingly, Britannica (2016) defined simulation as a teaching strategy through which we recreate real life events under particular test conditions. Finally, the Cambridge dictionary (2021) defined simulation as “ a situation or event that seems real but is not real, used especially in order to help people deal with such situations or events”. This means that in simulation, students personify their roles in a particular situation and event derived from real life in order to learn how to behave in those situations.

In a simpler version, simulation is a procedure of teaching models that deals mainly with establishing real life situations, authentic contexts, and particular events to help students in understanding and coping with those situations and events.

### **2.7.4 The distinction between the role play technique and simulation**

The terms simulation and role play are often used interchangeably. Thus, many researchers attempted to highlight the differences between the role play technique and simulation. Ladouse (1987) assumed that simulation is a complicated, continuous, and inflexible event while the role play is a simple, adaptable, and concise technique, Even

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though the role play is different from simulation, it is still considered as a part of simulation.

In the same vein, Bonwell and Eison (1991) suggested that simulation and role play are quite similar. However, simulation is a more structured event; requires more time; contains different roles; facilitative relationships; follows particular principles.

Additionally, Mckeachie (1986) believed that simulation represents models of real-life situations while the role play technique mainly deals with imaginative situations (as cited in Deneve & Heppner, 1997).

With this respect, Schellin (2006) claimed that students in simulation are supposed to play roles with their real identity. However, in the role play technique they personify the roles of other characters and express those characters' thoughts; opinions; and feelings as if they were theirs. Also, according to him simulation is a longer process than the role play (as cited in Haruyama, 2010).

Emphasizing the same idea, Harmer (2007) supposed that simulation is called role play only when students tend to play roles with their real character while every role play is considered to be a simulation. He supposed that in simulation students simulate a real life problem or situation and represent their roles according to that particular situation or problem. Also, when the teacher decides on using the role play technique; he should only provide students with some information to know what they have to do in the role play. Yet, simulation does not only require the background information but also the teacher and students should create the desired environment for the simulation to take place in the classroom. Accordingly, Blatner (2009) defined the role play technique as a less complicated aspect of simulation.

### **2.8 The role play technique and the speaking skill**

Research recognized the use of the role play technique in teaching and improving

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the speaking skill. Firstly, Harmer (1984) presented the role play technique as one of the main techniques in teaching the speaking skill. He believed that the role play technique contains several interactional roles within different social situations and emphasizes the role of the teacher which is creating situations as well as getting learners to think and feel just like those characters in their designed roles( as cited in Krebt, 2017).

Secondly, Scientists (Ladouse, 1987; Browen, 2004; Harmer, 2007) assumed that the role play technique has a positive impact on improving the EFL learners' fluency.

Also, Budden (2006) referred to the role play technique as any speaking task in which learners assume the role of another persons or take a part in an imaginative situation (as cited in Suryani, 2015).

Furthermore, Hand (2011) claimed that the effective implementation of the role play technique may add the elements of excitement and joy to the classroom atmosphere; encourage creative thinking; increase the learners' willingness to practice the target language; motivate learners to engage in the speaking activity and improve their speaking skill (as cited in Arifin, Nurbaya, & Salam, 2016).

Additionally, Suryani (2015) investigated the effective use of the role play technique in teaching the speaking skill for EFL learners. She considered the role play technique as one of the fundamental tools of developing the learners' speaking ability.

Finally, Arifin, Nurbaya, and Salam (2016) identified the effects of utilizing the role play technique in the language classroom in terms of improving the EFL learners' linguistic competence, encourage them to speak using the target language, increase the classroom interaction, establish a joyful learning environment in which learners are required to learn and perform effectively.



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### **Conclusion**

This chapter has established a fundamental overview of the role play technique for the purpose of raising the EFL teachers' awareness of the use of the role play technique in the foreign language teaching and especially in teaching the speaking skill. Therefore, it may have a positive impact on decreasing the EFL learners' speaking anxiety and encourage learners to improve their speaking ability.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Statistical data analysis and findings**

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### **Introduction**

This study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of implementing the role play technique on decreasing the EFL learners speaking anxiety as well as on developing their speaking skill. In addition, it aims to examine the ability of the teachers to recognize their anxious learners and the strategies they use reduce those learners' speaking anxiety. Therefore, this chapter tends to collect data that would help the researcher to achieve the desired aims; answers the research questions; and suggests a solution for the research problem.

### **3.1 Methodology and data collection methods**

#### **3.1.1 Review of the present research methodology Literature**

- **Definition of research methodology**

Several definitions of research methodology were suggested. Leedy & Ormrod (2001) defined research methodology as the basic approach that the researcher considers when constructing his research (as cited in Carrie, 2017). In this line, Kothari (2004) claimed that research methodology is the scientific and systematic way to solve the research problem. It aims to understand the way of conducting research by referring to the scientific procedures. Research methodology contains the main stages that the researcher follows when investigating his research problem and the reasons behind using them.

Similarly, Igwenagu (2016) defined research methodology as a group of systematic strategies that aim to guide the researcher when conducting the research. It deals with describing and analyzing the research methods, emphasizing the study limitations and sources, shedding light on hypotheses and conclusions, and associating the potentiality of those aspects with knowledge.

- **Definition of the research method**

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Researchers and scientists proposed different definitions of research method. Kothari (2004, p.07) defined the research method as “all the behaviours and the instruments used in selecting and constructing research technique”. In other words, it is a set of actions and tools which the researcher utilizes in establishing the suitable research technique. He identifies three categories of research methods. The first category refers to the methods used by the researcher to collect data for his research. The second category deals with the statistical strategies that are mainly used to identify the nature of the relationship between the data and the unknown. The third category contains a set of techniques that attempt to evaluate to what extent the findings are accurate, credible, and reliable.

In the same vein, Walliman (2011) claimed that research methods are a variety of tools that are utilized according to different types of investigations. He also assumed that the selection of the most suitable research methods regarding the nature of the research is very important to achieve the desired aims and solve the research problem.

According to Igwenagu (2016), research methods are the strategies, technical approaches, and instruments employed by the researcher to attain his desired objectives.

- **The distinction between research methodology and research methods**

The distinction between research methodology and research methods was made by many researchers to avoid the misinterpretation of these two terms. Kothari (2004) believed that research methodology is the broad framework of a study which contains the research methods in addition to the reasons behind choosing those particular methods concerning the context and the nature of the research.

Additionally, McGregor and Murnane (2010) believed that research methods are the technical processes utilized to investigate a particular issue. However, research

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methodology is the philosophy that determines the variety of methods and procedures that frame the research work to gain reasonable and reliable findings. Also, they stated that research methods are involved and identified by the research methodology.

### **3.1.2 Research methodology**

The researchers have obtained the use of a mixed method approach as the most suitable approach to address the main research objectives in terms of collecting statistical data and providing explanations and descriptions of the previously raised issue. We consider the use of a qualitative method through the classroom observation to investigate the impact of implementing the role play technique on reducing the speaking anxiety of the first year student of English at Biskra University and a teachers' interview to explore teachers' ability to recognize their anxious learners in addition to the strategies they consider to decrease those learners' speaking anxiety. Additionally, the quantitative method was used as well to gather data through utilizing a students' questionnaire to examine the effectiveness of the role play technique on improving the students' speaking skill.

### **3.1.3 Research variables**

The present research involves two variables: the dependent variable (the speaking skill and anxiety) and the independent variable (the role play technique). The main aim is to investigate the effect of implementing the role play technique on decreasing the EFL learners speaking anxiety.

### **3.1.4 Population and sample**

The researchers chose as a population for this study the first year LMD students of English language at Biskra University during the academic year 2020/2021. The reason behind choosing this population is that the first year is considered as the initial

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step in the students' academic carrier as EFL learners. Thus, they are most likely to encounter speaking anxiety than the EFL students at the others levels. They are divided into 12 groups and group 08 was selected as a convenient sample for this study.

### **3.1.5 Data collection methods**

The researchers attempted to use a triangulation of data collection tools in terms of the classroom observation, the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' interview.

#### **3.1.5.1 Literature review of the data collection methods**

##### **3.1.5.1.1 The classroom Observation**

- **Definition of the classroom observation**

Researchers and scholars proposed numerous definitions of the classroom observation each one from his perspective. Zaare (2012) suggested that the classroom observation is one of the commonly used methods in teachers' assessment.

In the view of Hora and Ferrare (2013), the classroom observation is a direct method of observing the teaching process in authentic contexts based on taking notes, recording lessons as videos, and coding classroom behaviours.

In addition, O'leary (2016) referred to the classroom observation as a scientific strategy obtained by the researcher to collect data in the classroom context. It is based mainly on the researcher' capacity to observe, collects, and evaluates data by using his senses.

- **The advantages of the classroom observation**

The classroom observation is considered as one of the main data gathering techniques regarding the benefits that it holds. Zaare (2012) suggested the advantages of the classroom observation, among others as follows:

- It allows the researchers to investigate the educational processes in natural and

holistic contexts.

- It supplies more reliable and precise evidence comparing to the other data collection instruments.
- It provides an opportunity to change, prompt, evaluate, and verify the changes that may take place in the classroom and effectively observe the instructional processes to build reliable, accurate, and reasonable body of knowledge.

- **The disadvantages of the classroom observation**

Although the classroom observation has many advantages, it also has received some criticism. Halim, Wahid, and Halim (2018) provided the disadvantages of the classroom observation as follows:

- The classroom observation emphasizes on observing the present behavior without taking into consideration the preceded and followed up behaviours that are interrelated with the behavior under observation.
- The effect of the observer may lead to changes in the students and teacher's behaviours.
- The classroom observation is an effective formative evaluation instrument and cannot be used when taking summative decisions.

### 3.1.5.1.2 The questionnaire

- **Definition of the questionnaire**

Many researchers and scientists were interested in defining the questionnaire. Roopa & Rani (2012) believed that the questionnaire is a set of questions submitted to particular respondents to gather statistical information about a particular issue. It is one of the main instruments to collect data from a wide range of individuals regarding the accurate construction of questions and the appropriate submission of the questionnaire.

Furthermore, McLeod (2018) defined the questionnaire as a data collection method

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that involves a sequence of questions for obtaining information from individuals to be used in a particular research study. He referred to the questionnaire as a written form of the interview. It is accomplished through telephone, computer, online post, and face to face meeting.

Additionally, Aryal (2020) stated that the questionnaire is a written document that involves several questions and different types of items to collect accurate data to be analyzed in research work. He supposed that the questionnaire is an interview on paper and that both the questionnaire and the interview follow the same structure of questions. The researcher needs to ensure clarity and careful construction when designing the questionnaire. Also, adding multiple options questions is required to gather rich data.

He identified two types of questionnaire. The structured questionnaire involves close-ended questions. The respondents are required to choose one of the previously determined answers. On the other hand, the structured questionnaire contains open-ended questions. The respondents provide answers to the questions using their own words.

- **The strengths of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire is a unique and widely used data collection tool because it backs up the research work with accurate and valid data. McLeod (2018) proposed some of the strengths of the questionnaire as follows:

- It is an economical way to collect rich data.
- It provides easily converted and analyzed type of data (numerical data).
- It is an effective instrument to measure the attitudes, opinions, and behaviours of a large number of respondents.
- The semi structured questionnaire is considered as a practical and reliable tool



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of gathering data in qualitative and quantitative researches.

- **The weaknesses of the questionnaire**

Even though the questionnaire has many advantages as a data collection method, it still has some drawbacks. Debois (2019) suggested some weaknesses of the questionnaire as follows:

- The respondents may ignore or skip some questions which make the questionnaire insufficient to gather the required data.
- It offers the risk of the misinterpretation of the question by the respondents which leads them to provide confusing or irrelevant answers.
- The questionnaire with many open-ended questions consumes time and effort because in the open-ended questions the answers come as long descriptions that are difficult to analyze by the researcher.
- Some respondents may answer the questionnaire without reading fully and understanding the questions and this affects the reliability of the findings.

### 3.1.5.1.3 The interview

- **Definition of the interview**

According to Lambert and Loiselle (2007) the interview is an increasingly used qualitative data collection instrument to obtain information about the individuals' beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and opinions toward a particular phenomenon (as cited in Frances, Coughlan, & Cronin, 2009).

In this respect, researchers (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2014) categorized the interview into three types. Firstly, the structured interview is considered as a verbal version of a questionnaire that involves a set of pre-identified or closed-ended questions that require detailed answers. In this type of interviews the participants cannot ignore or skip any question in the interview.

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Secondly, the unstructured interview depends on asking the participants open-ended questions in which they need to answer using their own words. Thus, the participants may find this kind of interview unhelpful and confusing.

Thirdly, the semi structured interview refers to a combination of the structured and unstructured interviews. It involves both open-ended and close-ended questions which make it an effective tool to collect and explore information from the participants by providing them with a sort of guidance and an opportunity to express their ideas freely in the same time.

- **The merits of the interview**

Many researchers consider the use of the interview to collect data and information for their researches due to the benefits that it provides as a data collection method. With this respect, the Business Communication (2021) proposed the merits of the interview as follows:

- It offers an easy correction of any mistake or misunderstanding that may occur when having the interview because both the interviewer and the interviewee are present in the same setting.
- It creates and strengthens the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee.
- It is an effective strategy to gain new and authentic data.
- It allows the interviewer to collect sufficient data required in his research by asking a set of questions to the interviewee.
- It offers a deep analysis of the data related to the individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.

- **The demerits of the interview**

Similarly to the other data collections instruments, the interview has been criticized

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by many scholars and scientists. Mwaikusa (2015) suggested the following demerits of the interview:

- The transcription and the analysis of the descriptive data obtained by the interview require time and effort from the interviewer.
- The interviewees may hesitate or even refuse to participate in the interview when it is audio or video recorded.
- Some interviewees may consider the interview as an invasion of their privacy.

### **3.2 Statistical data analysis**

#### **3.2.1 The classroom observation data analysis**

##### **3.2.1.1 Description of the classroom observation**

We have used the classroom observation to observe if the first- year students of English language at Biskra University encounter speaking anxiety as well as to explore the effect of using the role play technique on decreasing the level of speaking anxiety of the anxious students. The classroom observation was accomplished into two sessions:

##### **➤ The first session**

It was on Monday, April, 04<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 11.00h to 12.00h, we used a checklist that was adopted from Tadjouri (2017. P 101) and contains the different psychological and physical symptoms of speaking anxiety in a form of 15 items to observe about the students' oral performance by choosing a topic to discuss in the session (future plans) and getting them to speak individually in front of the class in order to recognize the anxious learners.

##### **➤ The second session**

It was on Thursday, April 06<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 13.00h to 14.00h, we made a checklist that involves 8 items to observe about the role play technique and speaking anxiety. Students were provided with the role play sheet paper under the title “eating out at the

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freaky fast food restaurant” (Arroway, 2021) which involves the role play location (a fast food restaurant that happens to serve truly unusual food and somewhat disgusting food) and the necessary preparation (set up a table as in a restaurant, or maybe an order counter as in a burger place). They were asked to choose one of the following personalities: “a couple of friends on a vacation to an exotic country”, “a native presenting a foreign guest to local cuisine” , “owners of a competing freaky fast food restaurant checking out the fare”. Moreover, they were asked to select one of the role play situations which are: “reading the menu together and reacting or trying to decide”, “asking the waiter to describe dishes that have ambiguous names”, “sending plates back to the kitchen”. After explaining the role play activity by the teacher, the students were required to divide themselves into groups, choose the personalities and the situation, develop the role play scripts, prepare the classroom for the role playing, and perform the role play in front of the class. The researcher intended to observe the student’s oral performance and their speaking anxiety level during the role play activity.

### **3.2.1.2 The analysis and the interpretation of the classroom observation**

#### **➤ The first session**

**Course: Oral Expression**

**Date: 03.04. 2021**

**Group: 08**

**The activity:** Students were asked to prepare a presentation during the session about their future plans and present it in front of the class.

#### **➤ The analysis and the interpretation of the first session**

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The researcher has observed eleven from fifteen symptoms of speaking anxiety. Some symptoms were associated with both genders for instance: speaking with a calm and shaking voice; moving around; speaking without raising hands; hiding oneself.

Furthermore, they intended to escape from the speaking situation by making excuses, trying to waste time, and delaying their oral presentation to the next session in order to have an opportunity to prepare themselves more at home. They also preferred to write what they were going to say on paper instead of speaking spontaneously in front of the class.

Additionally, the researcher has observed that the female student attempted to continue their oral task even though they lost control sometimes during their oral presentation.

Unlike the female students, the male students often made pauses when speaking the English language. Once the male students made a pause of utterances, they immediately got distracted and stopped the speech due to the feeling of embarrassment. Therefore, we can conclude that the first year EFL students at Biskra University encounter a high level of anxiety. In addition, the male students seem to be more anxious than the female students.

### ➤ **The second session**

**Module: Oral Expression**

**Date: 06.04. 2021**

**Group: 08**

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**The activity:** students were required to divide themselves into groups, choose the personalities and the situation, develop the role play scripts, prepare the classroom for the role playing, and perform the role play in front of the class.

### ➤ **The analysis and the interpretation of the second session**

The researcher has observed that both genders were to some extent confident to speak in front of the class without hesitation. Moreover, most of them intended to select appropriately their words and grammar structures.

The students succeeded in including the paralinguistic aspects such as body language; gestures; and eye contact. Besides, they delivered their speech while performing their roles clearly and continuously.

It was observed that the female students seemed to be so interested and involved in the role playing activity either as performers of the role play or as an audience, i.e. when their classmates represented their roles in front of them. On the other hand, the male students were more passive than the female students and were not involved in the role playing activity. They were motivated while playing their roles. However, they did not pay attention or focused when their peers performed their roles and participated only in the discussion of their roles.

The role play technique decreases to a high level the first year female students' speaking anxiety. Yet, it affects in reducing the male students' speaking anxiety to some degree for the reason that the male students seem to be more anxious speakers of the English language than the female students. To sum up, we can say that the role play technique affects positively in decreasing the EFL learners' speaking anxiety.

### ➤ **Summary of the classroom observation data analysis**

The data collected through the classroom observation showed that the first year English students at Biskra University encounter a high level of speaking anxiety.

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Furthermore, the female students are less anxious than the male students. We have ensured that the role play technique is an effective strategy to reduce the speaking anxiety. It reduced to a high level the female students' speaking anxiety and helped to some degree in decreasing the male students' speaking anxiety because the male students seem to be more anxious than the female students.

### **3.2.2 The Students' Questionnaire data analysis**

#### **3.2.2.1 The Description of the students' questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire was used to examine the effect of the role play technique on improving the students' speaking skill. The researcher distributed the semi-structured questionnaire to 40 first year students of English at Biskra University who were conveniently selected. The students' questionnaire involves 12 questions divided into three sections:

##### **➤ The first section**

It deals with the general information of the respondent and contains two questions that determined the gender of the respondent and his/her choice of studying English language at the university.

##### **➤ The second section**

It focuses mainly on the speaking skill and comprised 5 questions. The first question is about the students' attitude towards the Oral Expression session. The second question deals with selecting the most important skill among the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). In the third question, the respondent is required to describe his/her level of speaking in terms of (excellent, good, average, or less than average). The fourth question focuses on selecting the most preferable activity in the Oral Expression from the following options (pair work, role play,

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discussion, others). The last question emphasizes the respondent' degree of participation in the oral expression session opting for (always, often, rarely, or never) and it is followed by a justification of the selected answer.

### ➤ **The third section**

It emphasizes the role play technique and contains 5 questions as well. The first question is about the respondent's opinion of the role play technique as either a demotivating or a motivating technique. The second question is used to identify the extent to which the role play technique is beneficial according to the respondent (very much, to some extent, not that much, I do not know). In the third question, the respondent is required to determine the side or the aspect that he/she believes that the role play technique is useful at by selecting one option from the following (vocabulary acquisition, improving pronunciation, authentic language use). The fourth question is used to determine the preferable kind of role play for the respondent (selected by the teachers or the respondent's choice). The last question is about the respondent's opinion of the effect of the role play technique on developing the speaking skill, it is followed by a justification of the selected answer.

### 3.2.2.2 The analysis of the students' questionnaire

#### ➤ **The first section: General information**

##### **Item 01: Gender**



**Figure 01: Pie chart of the participants' gender distribution**



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The above figure shows that 82.5% of the participants in this questionnaire are female students. However, 17.5% of the respondents are male students.

**Item 02:** Your choice of studying English at the University was?

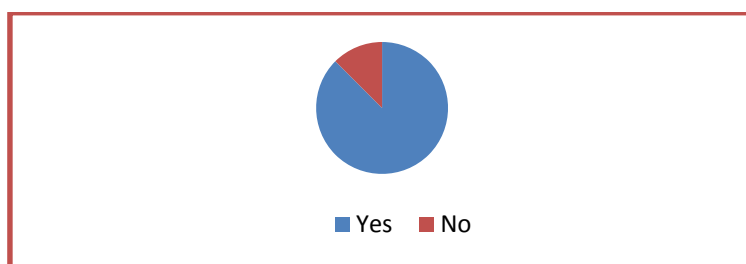
Participants	Responses	Percentages
Personal	37	92.5%
Parental	3	7.5%

**Table 01: The participants' choice of studying the English language**

The previously- mentioned figure indicates that most of the students (92.5%) choose to study the English language. Nevertheless, some of them (7.5%) are studying the English language because it is the choice of their parents.

- **The second section : The Speaking skill**

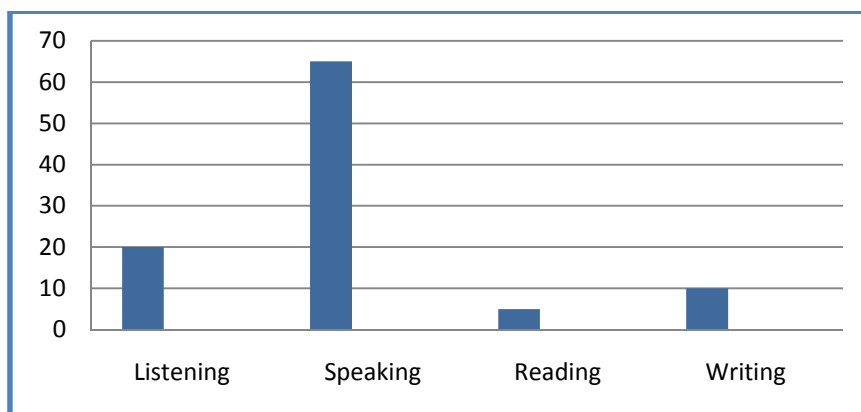
**Item 01:** Do you like to attend your oral English session?



**Figure 02: The participants' attitudes towards the oral English session**

The participants' answers to this question point out that 87.5% of the students enjoy the English oral session. However, only 12.5% of the students stated that they do not like to attend the oral expression session.

**Item 02:** Among the following skills, which one do you think is the most important?



**Figure 03: Rates of the students' most important skill among the four language skills**

The results of this question indicate that 26% of the students believed that the speaking skill is the most important skill among the four language skills. On the other hand, the listening skill takes the second rank regarding its importance according to 20% of the students. Furthermore, 10% of the students assumed that the writing skill is more important than the other skills. Finally, the reading skill is considered as the less important skills for the reason that only 5% of the students chose it as the most important skill.

**Item 03:** How do you describe your level of speaking?

Responses	Participants	Percentages
Excellent	8	20%
Good	22	55%
Average	9	22.5%
Less than average	1	2.5%

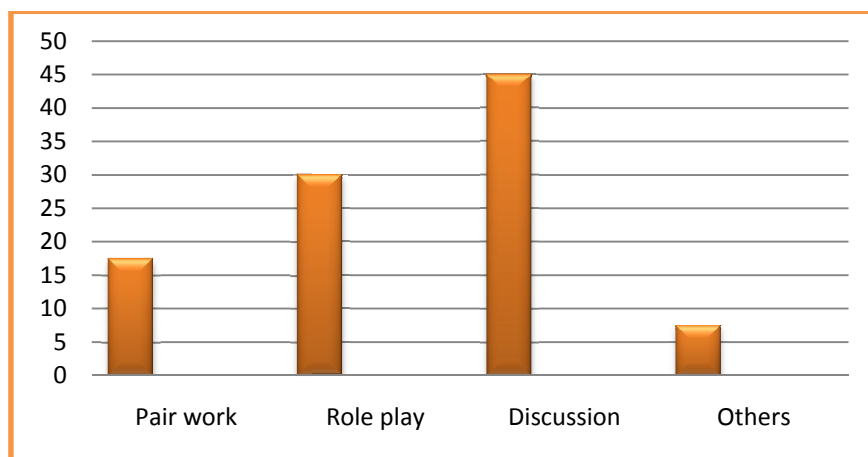
**Table 02: The students' description of their speaking level**

The questionnaire findings show that 20% of students have an excellent level of speaking while more than half of the participants (55%) said that they consider themselves as good speakers of the English language. Also, we found that 22.5% of

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students have an average level of speaking. On the other hand, only 2.5% of the students described their speaking level as less than average.

**Item 04:** Which of the following activities do you like the most in oral expression?

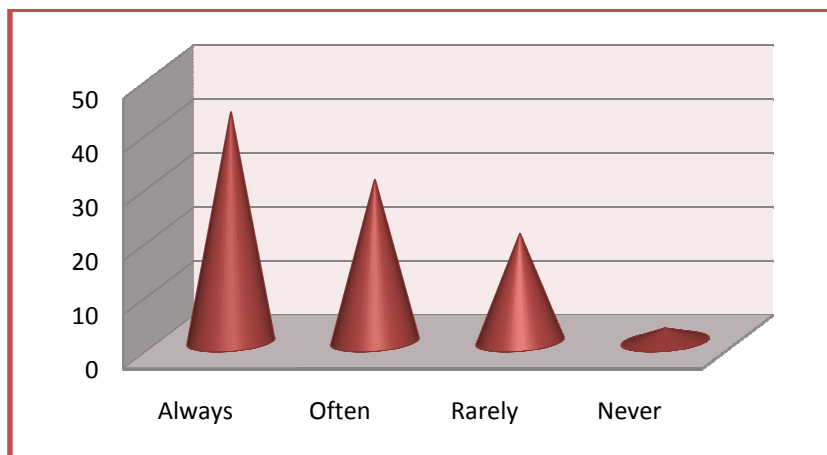


**Figure 04:** Rates of the students' preferable activity in the oral expression

The researcher asked this question to identify if the students like practicing the role play technique in the oral expression session. The participants' answers are represented in the above figure. Most of the students (45%) referred to the discussion as the most likeable activity in oral expression. Others (30%) prefer role play. Besides, 17.5% of the students chose pair work as the most enjoyable activity in the oral expression session. However, 7.5% of the students did not pick up any of the previous options, but they claimed to like practicing other activities.

**Item 05:** How often do you participate in English oral session?

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**Figure 05: The students' rate of participation in the English oral session**

The data collected through this question revealed that 42.5% of the students always participate in the English oral session. In addition, 35% of the participants claimed that they often participate in the oral expression session; whereas, 20% of them assumed that their participation in the oral expression module is rare. 2.5% of our sample stated that they are passive because they never get involved or participate in the English oral session.

**Item 06:** please explain why?

In the previous item, the participants were asked to describe the extent to which they participate in the English oral session by choosing one of the provided options. In this item they were required to justify their answers.

Participants	Justifications
02 participants	No justification.
03 participants	To improve their speaking skill.
03 participants	To express themselves freely.

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03 participants	Students enjoy speaking in the oral session
01 participant	It is the best way to learn the English language.
01 participant	Because student is using it everyday
02 participants	To show their teacher and classmates that they have a good accent and to be more social
02 participants	Because the teacher helps them to get rude of their fear of speaking the English language and makes them fell free.

**Table 03: The students' justification of the answer "Always".**

Participants	Justifications
03 participants	No justification
03 participants	Students often speak because they like the oral expression session
02 participants	Students often speak either do not know or they are not sure about their answers
02 participants	Students often speak only when they have an idea about the topic and find it interesting.

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01 participants	The student often speaks depending on his mood.
01 participant	The student often speaks when he can find the right words.
01 participant	The student often speaks to build the self confidence and improve his pronunciation
01 participant	The student does not always speak because of shyness and he prefers to work alone on paper without talking.

**Table 04: The students' justification of the answer "often".**

**Table 05:** the following table indicates the justification of some students who chose the answer "Rarely":

Participants	Justifications
02 participants	No justification
01 participant	The student speaks rarely because he is afraid in front of his classmates.
02 participants	Students speak rarely because they do not have time and they cannot find someone to talk to using the English language.

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01 participant	The student speaks rarely because of shyness.
01 participant	The student speaks rarely because he thinks that the writing skill is more important than the speaking skill.
01 participant	The student speaks rarely because he feels like he is obliged to speak.

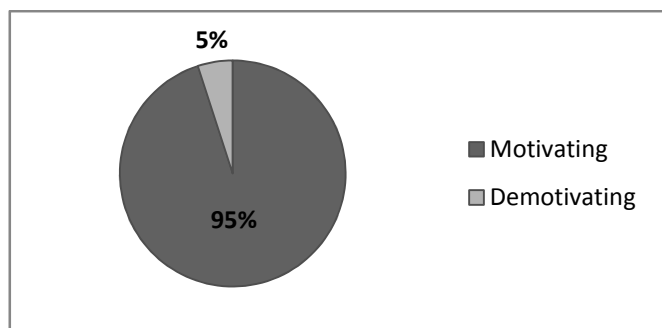
**Table 05: The students' justification of the answer "Rarely".**

Participants	Justifications
01 participant	The student never speaks the English language because he does not know how to speak it.

**Table 06: The students' justification of the answer "Never".**

- **The third section: The role play technique**

**Item 01:** Do you think practicing the role play technique is?

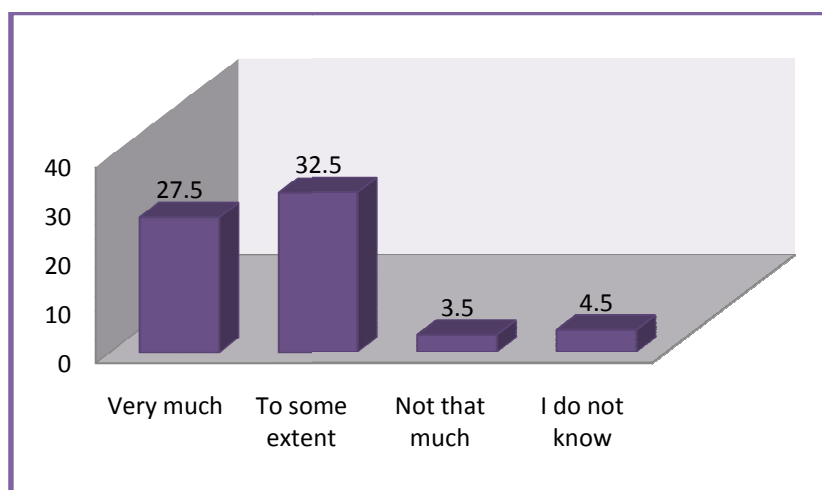


**Figure 06: The students' attitude towards the role play technique.**

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Most of the students reacted positively to this question in terms that 95% of them reported that the role play technique is a motivating technique. On the other hand, the rest of our sample assumed that the role play technique is a demotivating teaching technique.

**Item 02:** According to you, to which extent role play is beneficial?



**Figure 07:** The extent of the benefit driven from role play technique

The data collected through this question indicate that 27.5 % of the participants believe that the role play technique is very beneficial while 32.5 of them stated that the role play technique is useful to some extent. According to 10% of our sample, the role play technique is not that beneficial while 30% of the students said that they do not know whether the role play technique is an effective teaching technique.

**Item 03:** From which side/ aspect do you see/ find the role play technique beneficial?

Responses	Participants	Percentages
Vocabulary acquisition	09	22.5%
Improving pronunciation	22	55%



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Authentic language use	09	22.5%
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**Table 07: The aspects in which role play is beneficial**

This question aims at identifying the aspects at which students believe that the role-play technique is effective. According to 55% of the students, the role-play technique improves pronunciation while 22.5% claimed that the role-play technique allows them to learn and acquire new vocabulary. However, 22.5% of the respondents stated that role play is beneficial in using authentic language.

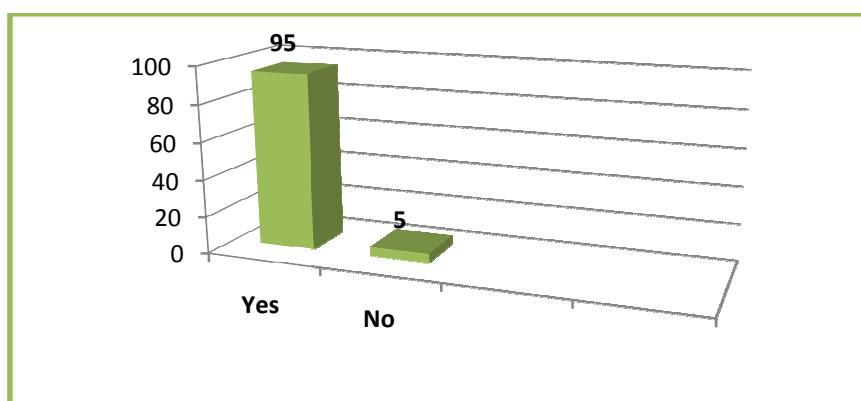
Item 04: Do you prefer to play a role which is?

Responses	Participants	Percentages
Selected by the teacher	04	10%
Your choice	36	90%

**Table 08: The students' preferable role to play**

The finding of this question reveals that 90% of the participants like to play a role of their choice while 10% prefer to play a role which is selected by the teacher.

Item 04: Do you think that the role play helps you in developing your speaking skill?



**Figure 08: The students' opinions about the effectiveness of the role play in improving their speaking skill.**

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The majority of the students (95%) have a positive attitude towards the effectiveness of the role play technique in improving their speaking skill. However, some of them (05%) consider it unbeneficial in developing their speaking skill.

**Item 06:** please explain how?

In the previous item, students were asked to determine whether the role play technique helps them in improving their speaking skill. In this item, they are required to justify their answers.

**Table 09:** the following table represents the justification of the students who answered the previous question by “Yes”:

Participants	Justifications
07 participants	No justification.
04 participants	It get them to use language in different situations, develop new ideas, and learn new things
03 participants	It helps them in improving their pronunciation.
04 participants	It helps them to learn new vocabulary.
02 participant	It provides them with opportunities to practice the English language.
01 participant	It gets student to speak freely and improve their self confidence.

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01 participants	It helps the student to impress his teacher and classmates by playing the role in a good way
02 participants	It aids them to speak without making mistakes.
02 participants	It is the best way to improve their speaking skill.
02 participants	It helps students to improve themselves as foreign language learners
03 participants	It helps students in improving pronunciation as well as in learning new words.
01 participant	The student enjoys playing roles with others. Thus he improves his speaking skill.
02 participants	It helps students to be fluent speakers of the English language and to have a native speakers' accent.
02 participants	It helps students to learn new words from their peers as well as discussing and exchanging ideas.
01 participant	It helps the student to reduce his speaking anxiety and to improve his speaking skill.

**Table 09: The students' justification of the answer "Yes".**

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Participants	Justifications
01 participant	The role play is usually imposed to students and selected and roles are selected by the teacher.
01 participant	Speaking skill can be improved only by speaking.

**Table 10: The students' justification of the answer "No".**

### 3.2.2.2 The interpretation the students 'questionnaire

The analysis of the students' questionnaire indicates that the speaking skill is considered as the most important skill according to students. Thus, they focus more on improving their oral performance due to their belief that in order to succeed in learning a foreign language, they need only to be able to speak that particular language fluently and accurately.

Focusing on the same point, most students always try to be involved and active in the oral expression session because they are aware that they need to speak in order to learn the foreign language. The teacher's support and his effort to create a healthy and motivated atmosphere in the classroom help in engaging students and encouraging them to speak and express themselves freely. In addition, when the teacher allows students to select topics according to their interest they feel motivated to speak and participate in the session. On the other hand, some students claimed that they cannot speak because they are afraid of getting embarrassed in front of their peers or when they cannot find the right words to express their ideas. Also, the introvert students tend to be shy and prefer to write their answers instead of sharing them with their peers in the classroom. Another reason behind the students' unwillingness to speak and participate in the oral

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expression session is that they usually feel that they are obliged to speak which make them stressed and uncomfortable.

Students referred to the discussion and role play as the most two preferable activities in the oral session probably because both of those activities require them to work together in groups in which they share responsibility with each other and add excitement and joy to the session. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents reported that the role play technique is a motivating teaching technique. They stated the role play technique helps them to improve their pronunciation in the first place. Also, it plays a vital role in enriching their vocabulary and gets them to use authentic language. Emphasizing the same point, most students prefer to play a role of their own choice instead of a role selected by the teacher because when they do not like the role which the teacher assigns for them, they cannot perform it in a good way.

Approximately, all students asserted that the role play technique helps them in improving their speaking skill for many reasons such as: first, the role play technique gets them to practice the language in different situations and develop new ideas. Secondly, it enriches their vocabulary and develops their pronunciation and provides them with opportunities to practice their English language and helps them in developing speaking skill as well. Thirdly, the role play technique helps them to speak without making mistakes and to develop themselves as foreign language learners.

### ➤ **Summary of the students' questionnaire data analysis**

The data gathered through the students' questionnaire emphasized that students attempted to always get engaged in the oral expression course due to their awareness of the importance of the speaking skill. Additionally, they shaded some light on the vital role of the teacher in motivating and supporting them to speak in the Oral Expression

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session. They also referred to the role play technique as one of the favorite techniques in the Oral Expression session and ensured its positive impact on improving their speaking skill because of many reasons. Firstly, the role play technique aids them to avoid making mistakes while speaking. Secondly, it offers an opportunity to explore new ideas and utilize the language in different situations. Thirdly, the role play technique helps in developing vocabulary and pronunciation. Finally, it decreases the fear that students face when speaking in front of others.

### **3.2.3 The teachers' interview data analysis**

#### **3.2.3.1 The description of the teachers' interview**

The teachers' interview was designed by the researchers to investigate the teachers' ability to recognize anxious students and to explore the strategies used by them to reduce those students' speaking anxiety. The researchers submitted the interview to 4 oral course teachers of the first-year students at Biskra University during the academic year 2020/2021 as well as when only one teacher who used to teach the oral expression module for first-year students at Biskra University. The researcher used a semi-structured interview that comprises 8 carefully selected questions. The first and the second questions are about the interviewee academic degree and their experience in teaching the English language at university.

The third question deals with the interviewee's opinion about the difficulty of teaching the oral expression course. The fourth question focuses on the background of the interviewee about the speaking anxiety.

The fifth question is used to identify whether the interviewee is able to recognize the anxious learners as well as a justification of his/her answer. The sixth question is devoted to the strategies considered by the interviewee to decrease the speaking

anxiety.

The seventh question focuses mainly on determining the strategies used by the interviewee as an oral teacher to reduce the students' speaking anxiety. The last question is about the opinion of the interviewee about the effect of the role play technique on decreasing the students' speaking anxiety.

### 3.2.3.2 The analysis and the interpretation of the teachers' interview

**Item 01:** what is your academic degree?

Responses	interviewees	Percentages
Magister	04	80%
Doctorate	01	20%

**Table 11: The teachers' academic degree.**

The researcher has initiated the interview by this question to identify the academic degree/level of teachers. The results show that five of them have a Magister degree while only one teacher has a PHD degree.

**Item 02:** How long have you been teaching EFL at the University?

The aim of asking this question is to determine the professional experience of the interviewees. Three teachers have been teaching English for six years. However, one teacher has been teaching English for seven years. On the other hand, the last interviewee has been teaching the English language for three years only.

**Item 03:** Do you think that oral expression is a difficult course to teach?

The researcher has asked this question to explore the teacher's opinions about the difficulty of the oral expression course considering that they are teaching it at present. All of the teachers asserted that teaching the oral expression course is challenging.

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**Item 04:** what can you say about speaking anxiety?

The teachers have answered this question as follows:

**Teacher 01:** “It is a psychological problem rather than/ more than an academic problem. In fact, it is related to the psyche of the learner. He has inner fear, a fear which is buried within him, a fear towards the other. This other could be the teacher or the other colleges, the pre-judgments they can give. We can find excellent students actually who face anxiety. It is not related to the academic achievement or the level of the student but to his inner psyche.”

**Teacher 02:** “I think it is some psychological inhibitor that prevents students from speaking fluently and even accurately. It includes stress. The students feel stress. They feel unable to express themselves and it shows even physically on their faces on their body language too.”

**Teacher 03:** “well speaking anxiety is one of the major problems we have with our learners. I think it is not the only problem there are other problems but I think one of the main problem is the speaking or anxiety in learning the foreign language or performing the language.”

**Teacher 04:** “ Anxiety is where students fell like anxious and they do not like really to speak because they get afraid from you know like their classmates, maybe they do not have words to say and things like that.”

**Teacher 05:** “anxiety may be generated by many things but lack of vocabulary is the main cause. When the student has no words to use, how is he going to express himself?”



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This question aims at determining if the teachers are aware of the nature of the speaking anxiety. All of the teachers referred to the speaking anxiety as one of the main psychological problems that students face, and which impacts the speaking skill negatively and prevents students from expressing themselves using the target language. According to them, the students feel anxious due to fear of being judged either by the teacher or their classmates. Another reason behind the students' speaking anxiety is the lack of vocabulary. When the students cannot find the right words to say, they feel uncomfortable, stressful, and unable to speak using the English language. Moreover, the teachers assumed that the speaking anxiety has nothing to do with the students' academic level but with their psychological state.

**Item 05:** Are you able to recognize your anxious learners?

Responses	Interviewees	Percentages
Yes	05	100%
No	00	0%

**Table 12: The teachers' ability to recognize their anxious learners**

The researchers used this question to identify the teachers' ability to recognize their anxious learners. The above table shows that all teachers confirmed their ability to identify their anxious students.

✚ If yes, please explain how?

In the previous item, the teachers were asked about their ability to recognize their anxious learners. This item is directed to the teachers who choose yes as an answer to the previous item. In this item, they are required to provide a justification for their answers.

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### **The teachers' justifications**

**Teacher 01:** “Generally anxious students choice to sit on the back of the class. They are always silent, not only silent but they have a fear; a gloomy face you know. They are fearful to respond to questions or to receive from their teachers. Always nodding their heads, hiding themselves, avoiding the teacher and their colleges’ pre- judgments and generally the first question is a kind of puzzle for them and it can resemble problems for them. The first question even if it is the simplest question can block them. So, this is anxious learners.”

**Teacher 02:** “The first indicator would be their body language because they tend to have some I don’t know stressful nervous action like checking their legs and playing with their rings. It even shows on their faces I mean sometimes they have red faces. They tend to sweaty sometimes. The body language also when they I do not know they touch their faces. They use their hands. Well using hands is normally something natural. However, the excessive use of their hands I think it is an indicator of an anxious speaker let us say an anxious learner.”

**Teacher 03:** “You can see it in their faces that they are a little bit confused or something like this. You can see it yes. Of course, there are students who are mostly passive which means they do not participate. They do not show their anxiety but you can see it more when you ask them to do something. It means when they try to speak, when they try to answer, or when you force them because since they do not want to show up inside of the classroom so you can see it by I do not know. They do not have smooth flow of the language. You can see that they are..., they seem to be confused. They commit many mistakes. So, these are the main signs of anxiety.”

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**Teacher 04:** “You can recognize them from their body you know like gestures, when they speak and I have already one who does not want to speak in front of her classmates. She gets anxious and said that no, I do not want to speak and even if it is an exam mark you know like an examination and she does not want to present I do not know okay.”

**Teacher 05:** “His hardship in breathing and reluctance to stand up in front of other students.”

The objective of this question is to explore the ways through which the teachers can observe that their learners are experiencing speaking anxiety. They identified a number of physical and psychological symptoms. Body language is one of the main indicators of speaking anxiety. Thus, anxious students tend to be quite, shake their legs, play with their rings, have a red face, and get sweaty.

Furthermore, they seem confused, stressed, uncomfortable, and cannot control the rhythm of their breath. They often try to hide themselves from the teacher by sitting at the back of the class to avoid having an eye contact with him/her as well as to lose the opportunity of answering a question or speak in the classroom.

Anxious students always attempt to hide their speaking anxiety. However, it shows up when the teacher obliges them to speak in the classroom or when they cannot escape from being involved in an oral task or an oral examination.

Anxious students get frustrated once the teacher asks them to answer a question or take part in an oral exercise not necessarily because they do not know the answer. These negative pre-judgments damage their self- confidence and make them believe

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that they are unable to speak or participate in the oral sessions even if they are good speaker of the language.

**Item 06:** Do you consider any technique to decrease speaking anxiety?

**Teacher 01:** “One of those techniques is to grade students in group work. A group work that includes both categories of students, it means good students, good speakers, risk takers and shy and anxious students. When they collaborate together they will learn from each other. In addition of learning from each other, this collaboration, pair work or group work will reduce the level of anxiety. In fact, they will speak with each other. They will enjoy the work with each other. Group work will change the students or the introverts students to a sociable or extrovert students at least to reduce anxiety.”

**Teacher 02:** “Well, the first thing that I try to do in the classroom is to set a healthy and comfortable environment in which students feel free to express themselves. I always encourage mistakes. I think when the student is speaking in front of their classmates and they have these moments of anxiety. I try to step up and help them especially when you feel like this anxiety is preventing their flow of thoughts or words. I also always tell them that speaking anxiety is a part of speaking and it is not only foreign language related.

**Teacher 03:** “Well for techniques I think you have to push learners to speak because in oral expression for example when we use presentations, monologs, role play, games ...etc. They have to include a certain type of oral performance but mostly help to include all learners because we know that if we bring something like open discussion, it is a technique that i use an open discussion with others concerning a topic. You will find that the same learners or the same students are participating while the others do not

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actually engage. So, you have to engage them and help them to be really engaged in the process.”

**Teacher 04:** “Yes, of course. I try to make them feel at ease okay, to not get afraid. I really played on the emotional factors of the students so that they feel at ease while presenting or while they are speaking. I say it is okay when making mistakes. We try to do our best in fact with our students. I wish they really consider that.”

**Teacher 05:** “being easy going with the students, inviting them to consider the audience as a family, motivating them to have recurs to the simplest vocabulary.”

The findings of this question indicate that teachers consider several techniques to decrease the learners’ speaking anxiety such as:

- Group work, pair work, monologs, and roles play.
- Establish a supportive atmosphere in the classroom where students feel comfortable.
- Tolerate making mistakes and consider them as a part of the learning process.
- Support students and help them when it is needed.
- Try to involve students in the oral session and motivate them to speak.
- Use the open discussion technique and try to prompt the anxious students to get involved in the discussion.
- Encourage students to be familiar with the audience and to use simple vocabulary.

Item 07: As an oral expression teacher, what are the strategies you use to decrease the students’ speaking anxiety?

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**Teacher 01:** “Group work is one of the strategies. We have brain storming race when students compete with each others, the introvert and anxious learner find himself obliged to speak. Involve them in conversation and role play or in a reading session. So, all these strategies help the anxious learners to speak and to increase the psychological problem.”

**Teacher 02:** “they are the same ones in question six”

**Teacher 03:** “First, this year I do not teach oral expression but yeah I used to teach it. Oral expression I think most of the time I try to be pick topics that are interesting to my learners or my students because I cannot pick something that I like or something that I feel it is important. Second, I try to use more group work because group work is the first step that helps those learners or the passive learners to be engaged in the process. Of course with group work comes we call we try to divide tasks. It means I do not go to group or use a group work that I find that only one member of the group is working so in that group work I try to divide tasks and of course I rely more on individual work like anything that can be actually provided orally be it a record, story, argument, a role play, games.. etc. all of these things are very important as long as they can perform language.”

**Teacher 04:** “I try to do the social strategies in fact where they can work in groups with their classmate so that they feel at ease first of all. Also, to get prepared you know like they prepared previously before really presenting so that they have the words and they know what to say. I do not ask you know like surprising questions and I give them time to think and to ask questions and things like that okay. Working in pairs and in groups.”

**Teacher 05:** “Sometimes making slights and short digressions.”

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The researcher has asked this question to point out the strategies used by the oral expression teachers in order to reduce the students' speaking anxiety. They stated some of the techniques which they use as follows:

- Make students take a part in a conversation or a role play.
- Engage students in reading sessions.
- Select topics according to the students' interests.
- Utilize voice recorded, storytelling, argument discussing, and pair work.
- Allow the previous preparation of the oral presentations.
- Provide student with time to think before answering questions.

**Item 08:** Do you think the role – play decreases the learners' speaking anxiety?

Responses	Interviewees	Percentages
Yes	02	80%
No	00	00%
Somehow	03	20%

**Table 13: The teachers' attitudes toward the effect of the role play technique on decreasing the student' speaking anxiety.**

This question emphasizes on discovering the teachers' opinions about the impact of the role play technique on reducing the learners' speaking anxiety. Three teachers assumed that the role play technique somehow decreases the students' speaking anxiety. However, two teachers said that the role play technique is an effective way to reduce the speaking anxiety of EFL learners.

🌈 Please, explain why?

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In the preview items, teachers were asked about their attitudes towards the effect of the role play technique on decreasing the learners' speaking anxiety. In this item they were asked to provide the justification of their answers.

**Teacher 01:** “When we integrate the learner in a role that we expected he will learn before depicting it. It means he will revise it different times at home and maybe he is the person who created the role so here he will be so confident because he is the person who wrote his role and depicted it at the same time so this will give him a kind of self- esteem to present in front of people. Role play integrates shy and anxious students with group of students that he/ she likes working with. This category of groups helps them to react positively and to reduce speaking anxiety.”

**Teacher 02:** “Actually I have used role play with this group that you have observed last time. When they adopted another character, they were more comfortable. So, they are not afraid of being judged. This activity needed some sort of natural talk and here I felt that they were a bit anxious to shows these aspects of natural talk. They like to speak in moutons way and for the extremely anxious learners nothing changed.”

**Teacher 03:** “the most important thing we need to remember it is well-designed. It means the topic is interesting to them. The role play can push them. It can help them hide their true identity like use a different identity. I think this can be very helpful to decrease anxiety”.

**Teacher 04:** “Because they have already memorized what they say. They have already also play the roles with their classmates before coming to the classroom so they feel at ease while presenting and because they are working in group, role play needs group. They won't say that we are because we have different roles and they do not take the responsibility of everything.”



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**Teacher 05:** “Because the student is performing with his mates who help him just by being beside him.”

The researcher has asked this question to gain a clear understanding of the relationship between the role play technique and the speaking anxiety from the perspective of the oral expression teachers. When the teacher decides on using the role playing in the classroom, he should chose a topic according to the students’ interests and ensure that the role play is well designed.

The role play technique helps students to reduce their speaking anxiety because it offers an opportunity to hide their real identity and express themselves by referring to the character they are acting in the role playing task. Furthermore, role playing requires students to work in groups that contain a variety of anxious learners and good language speakers, this combination helps the anxious students to learn from their peers and make them feel more relaxed because they do not take the whole responsibility of the task. Also, allowing students to form groups with their friends may be very helpful because working with friends or with familiar people can be supportive and encourage students to act naturally and diminish their feeling of tension.

The previous preparation is also needed in the role playing activity. It reduces the feeling of stress and nervousness; it improves their self-confidence, and makes them more comfortable when performing the role in front of the class.

### ➤ **Summary of the teachers’ interview data analysis**

The data gained through the teachers’ interview indicated that the speaking anxiety is a psychological problem that affects negatively the students’ oral performance in learning a particular language. Teachers said that they can identify their anxious

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students through different characteristics which are: hiding by sitting at the back of the class, avoiding eye contact with the teacher, shaking their legs, moving around, getting afraid of the others' negative judgments, getting frustrated when the teacher asks them to speak, nodding their faces, and losing their capacity to control their breath. They proposed several techniques that were previously mentioned under items 6 and 7. Accordingly, Teachers ensured the effectiveness of the role play technique in reducing the speaking anxiety. They believe that it is more efficient for a low or moderate anxious speaker than the extremely anxious speakers.

### 3.2.4 General discussion

This research was conducted to discover the effect of the role play technique on decreasing the speaking anxiety of the first year EFL students at Biskra University. The researchers obtained the use of the classroom observation to gain authentic information from the classroom context about the impact of using the role play on reducing the learners' speaking anxiety. The findings of the classroom observation revealed that the first year English students at Biskra University encounter a high level of speaking anxiety. Also, the female students are less anxious than the male students. In addition, it was proved that the role play technique is successful on decreasing the speaking anxiety. The role play technique reduces to a high level the female students' speaking anxiety. However, it contributes to decrease the male learners' speaking anxiety to some extent because the male learners are more anxious than the female learners.

The second aim of this study is to explore the effect of the role play technique on developing the learners speaking skill. A questionnaire was submitted to the first year students of English at Biskra University for the purpose of collecting data about their attitudes toward the impact of the role play technique on improving their speaking skill. The results of the questionnaire showed that learners are aware of the importance of the

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speaking skill in their learning process. Therefore, they always try to participate and get engaged in the oral expression sessions. Also, they emphasized the role of the teacher's attitudes, support, and tolerance in pushing and motivating them to participate in the oral expression session. Students identified the role play technique as one of the most preferable techniques in the oral session and asserted its effectiveness in developing their speaking skill because it provides them with an opportunity to use the language in various contexts, develop new ideas, enrich their language storage, improve their fluency and pronunciation, help them to speak without making mistakes, and reduce their fear to speak in front of others.

In addition to the classroom observation and the students' questionnaire, the researchers have used a teachers' interview which addressed with the oral expression teachers of the first year students at Biskra University. The teachers referred to the speaking anxiety as a psychological illness that prevents the student from expressing themselves, performing the language, and hinders their learning process. They stated that they are able to recognize their anxious learners by observing the number of symptoms such as: trying to avoid eye contact with their teacher, sitting at the back of the class and hiding themselves, nodding their faces, moving and shaking their legs, getting sweaty and stressful when the teacher pushes them to speak, getting afraid of being negatively judged by others, and losing the ability to control their breath. The teachers identified a set of strategies were earlier mentioned under items 6 and 7.

Moreover, the teachers believe that the role play technique is very beneficial to decrease the students' speaking anxiety when they encounter a low or moderate level of it. On the other hand, it can help to some extent when learners are facing a high level of speaking anxiety.

### **Conclusion**

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This chapter has presented the analysis of the qualitative and the quantitative data collected through the triangulation of the used data collection methods: the classroom observation, the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' interview. The findings of this study identified the role play technique as an effective strategy to decrease the speaking anxiety of the first year EFL learners at Biskra University as well as to develop their speaking skill. In addition, it revealed the ability of the teachers to recognize their anxious students and identified the techniques they use to decrease those learners speaking anxiety.

## Recommendations

By the end of this study, the researcher proposes some suggestions to reduce the EFL learners' speaking anxiety and encourage them to develop their speaking skill as follows:

- Teachers should raise the students' awareness of the importance of the speaking skill, motivate them to speak in the classroom, and involve them in various tasks.
- Teachers should use different oral activities to engage students and make the oral session interesting.
- Teachers should focus on the authentic use of the language by getting students to assume different roles in different real-life contexts.
- Teachers should maintain a good relationship with the learners and establish a healthy and comfortable classroom environment where students feel free to express themselves.
- Teachers should consider the use of techniques that contribute to decreasing the students' speaking anxiety such as group work and the role play technique.
- Students should be aware that making mistakes is an essential part of their learning process.
- Students should bear in mind that speaking anxiety is a natural aspect of speaking either in a native or a foreign language.
- Students should be aware of the importance of the speaking skill in their learning process.

## **General conclusion**

Speaking using the English language is very important for EFL learners to communicate accurately, effectively, and to achieve their academic and professional aims as well. In this respect, the EFL learners need to develop this skill. Improving their speaking ability may not be very easy for them due to many difficulties which may prevent their oral production such as anxiety. Anxiety is one of the main obstacles that EFL learners usually face during their learning process and affects negatively their performance of the English language.

The present research suggested the use of the role play technique as a potential solution for the raised issue. It investigated the effect of implementing the role play technique on reducing the speaking anxiety of the first-year English language learners at Biskra University during the academic year 2020/2021. Also, it aimed to discover the teachers' ability to recognize their anxious learners and the strategies they consider to decrease those learners' speaking anxiety by using a triangulation of data collection methods which consisted in the classroom observation, the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' interview.

The findings of our study asserted the previously mentioned hypothesis which claimed that the role play technique would reduce the EFL learners' speaking anxiety and encourage them to develop their speaking skill. The data collected through the classroom observation ensured that the first year EFL learners at Biskra University experience a high level of speaking anxiety and the female learners seem to be less anxious than the male learners. Accordingly, it was confirmed that the role play technique is effective in decreasing those learners speaking anxiety. However, it is more efficient for the learners with low or moderate level of speaking anxiety (female learners) than the learners with a high level of speaking anxiety (male learners).

In this vein, the data generated through the students' questionnaire indicated that they always try to be active in the oral session because they are aware that the speaking skill is very essential for their success as EFL learners. They focused on the importance of the teacher's support to be engaged and speak freely in the classroom. Students assumed that the role play technique is one of the main preferable tasks in the oral expression session and ensured its effectiveness in motivating them to improve their speaking skill through several aspects such as: helping them to speak without committing mistakes, improving their vocabulary and pronunciation, getting them to use the English language in various situations, enabling them to discover new ideas, and reducing their fear of speaking in front of others.

Additionally, the data collected through the teachers' interview showed that speaking anxiety a psychological factor has a negative impact on the learners' speaking skill and their learning process in general. Teachers assumed that they can identify the learners, who experience speaking anxiety by a set of symptoms like trying to hide by sitting at the back of the class, avoiding eye contact with the teacher, getting stressed when the teacher asks them to answer a question or speak, moving, shaking their legs, getting afraid of the others' negative judgments, cannot control the rhythm of their breathing, and nodding their faces. Also, teachers confirmed that the role play technique is effective in reducing the speaking anxiety especially for the learners who encounter a low or moderate level of it. However, it can be helpful to some degree for the extremely anxious learners. Focusing on the same point, they suggested a number of strategies they use in order to decrease the learners' speaking anxiety.

The current study comes across some difficulties that limit the research achievements. Some teachers of the oral expression course during the academic year

2020/2021 refused to participate in the interview because they were busy while others preferred to make a written interview rather than a recorded one. Thus, the researcher conducted the interview with the teachers who taught the oral expression course previously for the First year English students at Biskra University.

To conclude, Anxiety is one of the most remarkable difficulties that EFL learners may face in their learning process. Therefore, this subject is very important and it requires further researches to verify the results and suggest other techniques that may contribute to help the EFL learners in controlling the impact of anxiety not only on the speaking skill, but also on the other language skills (listening, reading, and writing).



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## Appendix (1): The classroom observation check-lists

### The first session check-list

**Course: Oral Expression**

**Date: 03.04. 2021**

**Group: 08**

**The activity:** Students were asked to prepare a presentation during the session about their future plans and present it in front of the class

- **Symptoms of speaking anxiety (Tadjouri, 2017. P 101)**

Items to observe	Female		Male	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Having red face				
Quivering voice				
Moving				
Avoiding eye contact				
Using hand				
Speaking quietly				
Speaking without raising hands				
Speaking briefly and quickly				
Losing control but continuing the speech				
Losing control and stopping the speech				
Hiding oneself				
Making stops of utterances				
Escaping from the speaking situation				

Writing what they are going to say in papers				
Breathing faster				

### The second session check-list

**Course: Oral Expression**

**Date: 06.04. 2021**

**Group: 08**

**The activity:** students were required to divide themselves into groups, choose the personalities and the situation, develop the role play scripts, prepare the classroom for the role playing, and perform the role play in front of the class.

- **Role play and speaking anxiety**

Items to observe	Female		Male	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
The students speak without hesitating				
The students are motivated				
The students use correct grammar and appropriate word choice				
The students speak spontaneously				
The students' speech is clear and continuous				
The students participate in the presentation and the discussion of the role play.				

The students use eye contact, gestures, and body language.				
The students are involved in the role play.				

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## Appendix (2): The Students' Questionnaire

### The questionnaire for First Year students of English at Biskra University

Dear students

This questionnaire is one of the data collection methods used in our master dissertation research. It aims to investigate the impact of the role play technique in developing the speaking skill. Please read each question carefully and pick the right answer, write your answers in the spaces provided.

#### First Section: General Information

1. Gender:                    a- male                                        b- female
2. Your choice of studying English at the University was  
a- Personal                                        b- Parental

#### Second Section: Speaking skill

1. Do you like to attend your oral English session?  
a- Yes                                        b- No
2. Among the following skills, which one do you think is the most important?  
a- Listening                                        b- Speaking                                        c- Reading                      
d- Writing
3. How do you describe your level of speaking?  
a- Excellent                                        b- Good                                        c- Average                      
d- Less than average
4. Which of the following activities do you like most in oral expression?  
a- Pair work                                        b- Role-Play                                        c- Discussion                      
d- Others
5. How often do you participate in English oral session?





### **Appendix (3): The Teachers' Interview**

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Department of letters and foreign languages

Division of English

#### **Teachers' Interview**

##### **Dear Teachers**

This interview is designed as a tool to collect data for my master dissertation. It aims to examine teachers' ability to recognize anxious learners, in addition to the strategies used by them to reduce those learners' speaking anxiety. The information provided in this interview is highly necessary for my research. Consequently, I would be grateful if you answer the following questions.

**Thank you in advance for your time and collaboration**

**Designed by: Hadj Ali Amani**

**Supervised by: Dr. MEHIRI. Ramdane**

**Academic Year: 2020/2021**

1. What is your academic degree?

a- License       b- Magister/ Master       c- Doctorate

2. How long have you been teaching EFL in the University?

.....  
.....

3. Do you think that oral expression is a difficult module to teach?

a- Yes       b- No       c- Somehow

4. What can you say about speaking anxiety?

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

5. Are you able to recognize your anxious learners?

a- Yes       b- No       c- Somehow

- If yes, please explain how?

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

6. Do you consider any techniques to decrease speaking anxiety?

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

7. As an oral expression teacher, what are the strategies you use to decrease the students' speaking anxiety?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. Do you think the role - play decreases the learners' speaking anxiety?

a- Yes       b- No       c- Somehow

- Please, explain why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

يعد القلق من التحدث أحد المشاكل النفسية الرئيسية التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ويؤثر سلبيًا على عملية التعلم الخاصة بهم. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في تأثير تنفيذ أسلوب لعب الأدوار على تقليل القلق من التحدث لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وتطوير مهارات التحدث لديهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تهدف إلى استكشاف قدرة المعلمين على التعرف على المتعلمين القلقين والاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمونها لتقليل قلق هؤلاء المتعلمين من التحدث. لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة الحالية ، تم إجراء بحث وصفي في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة بالاعتماد على عدد من المصادر وأدوات جمع البيانات المختلفة. تم استخدام طرق جمع البيانات المثلثة وتتألف من ملاحظة الفصل الدراسي ، استبيان لطلاب السنة الأولى في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، ومقابلة مع المعلمين. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها من خلال طرق جمع البيانات هذه نوعيًا وكميًا. كشفت نتائج المراقبة الصفية واستبيان الطلاب أن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السنة الأولى في جامعة بسكرة يعانون من مستوى عالٍ من القلق أثناء التحدث. أيضًا، يبدو أن الطالبات أقل قلقًا من الطلاب الذكور. وبناءً على ذلك ، فقد ثبت أن أسلوب لعب الأدوار يؤثر بشكل إيجابي على انخفاض قلق التحدث لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السنة الأولى وتحسين مهارة التحدث لديهم أيضًا. علاوة على ذلك ، وضمت البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها من خلال مقابلة المعلمين قدرة المعلمين على التعرف على طلابهم القلقين ، وقدمت مجموعة من الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمونها لتقليل قلق هؤلاء المتعلمين من التحدث ، وأكدت فعالية أسلوب لعب الأدوار في تخفيض قلق التحدث لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية خاصة الطلاب الذين يواجهون مستوى منخفضًا أو متوسطًا منه.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** مهارة التحدث , قلق التحدث , أسلوب لعب الأدوار.