



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Mohamed Khider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
**Department of English Language and Literature**

## **MASTER THESIS**

Letters and Foreign Languages

English Studies

**Sciences of the Language**

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Investigating the Use of Strategic Competence by EFL Learners to Enhance the  
Speaking Skill:

**The Case of Second Year Students of English at University of Biskra**

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**Academic Year: 2022-2023**

**Dedication**

*To the experiences I never expected*

*To the paths I redirected*

*To everyone I found along the way.*

*To my parents.*

*To the memory of our respected late teacher Salima RABHI*

*You have never been forgotten.*

### **Declaration**

I, Zineb **DOUHI** , do hereby solemnly declare that the work I presented in this thesis is my own, and has not been submitted before to any other institution or university for a degree. This work is carried out and completed at Mohamed KHEIDER University of BISKRA, ALGERIA.

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### **Acknowledgements**

*First and foremost, praise be to **Allah**, the Lord of all creations; Most Gracious, Most Merciful. I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Pr. Ramdane **MEHIRI**.*

*I owe my thanks to the Board of Examiners Mrs. Amina **MANSOURI***

*and Mrs. Sakina **BENCHAREF**.*

*I am deeply grateful to **my parents** who have been my source of inspiration and strength when I thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral and emotional support.*

*I would like to express my gratitude to **my siblings** and all my family members for their love.*

*My deepest gratitude to **my loved one**, whose ideas and enthusiasm have deeply inspired me to finish this dissertation.*

*I would like to thank my dear friends **Hana, Nadera, Aya, Malek, and Romaisa**, who shared with me their precious time and effort to encourage me.*

*Finally yet importantly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the teachers who accepted to be part in the interviews:*

*Dr. **ASSASSI**, Dr. **MEDDOUR**, Mr. **MAAMAR** and Mr. **CHENINI**.*

### **Abstract**

In an EFL context, learners strive to attain mastery in speaking, which is considered the most significant skill among the four. Nevertheless, it is a challenging endeavor. EFL students at the department of English language literature at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra (UMKB) find it difficult to be proficient in speaking, which cause communication breakdowns. Yet, students make efforts to overcome hurdles by using communication strategies. It is for this reason that the current study aimed at casting light on the speaking skill as being crucial, as well as highlighting the common speaking difficulties faced by learners. In addition, the study aimed to run an investigation into the use of strategic competence or what is known as communication strategies for the improvement of the speaking skill. To fulfil the aim of this qualitative research, the study was delimited to second-year students. A sample of 47 students was taken from 353 students, with 4 teachers of oral expression. For the data collection tools, classroom observation with the group of students was conducted in 5 sessions. During the observation, activities, teacher's prompts and peers' discussions helped in collecting significant data. Another tool was employed is the teachers' interview. A semi-structured interview of 8 questions was addressed to teachers in charge of oral expression classes. The findings showed that second year EFL students at UMKB have some problems with practicing the speaking skill, the main ones are: lack of vocabulary and lack of self-confidence. It was further revealed that the students intuitively use communication strategies which helped them in carrying on their discussions. The most used strategies are circumlocution and time-gaining strategies.

*Key words* : The Speaking Skill – Communicative Competence – Communications Strategies – Strategic Competence.

**Liste of Abbreviations :**

**CC :** Communicative Competence

**CSs :** Communication Strategies.

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching.

**EFL :** English as a Foreign Language.

**FL :** Foreign Language.

**L1 :** First Language.

**L2 :**Second Language.

**UMKB :** University of Mohamed Khider of Biskra.

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## **General introduction**

Languages are learned and used for the reason of speaking, because the amount we use the language in the spoken form is greater than the other language forms. The speaking skill is important for better performance, that is why EFL learners are interested in mastering this skill. In this regard, we add that the speaking skill is ‘a parameter to measure a person’s ability to communicate’ (Andriyani, 2015). Being able to speak and keep the talk despite the constraints is the endeavor of many students. However, EFL students find it a hard endeavor to be sustained because of the complex system of the language, lack of understanding of the real aim of language use, and more particularly, the lack of effective instructions and practical teaching methods which enhance the speaking skill. Also, the psyche and learner’s attitudes towards the language may be a further obstacle. For this reason, the notion of communicative competence has emerged as a criterion of good communicative skills. This latter is a competence that is concerned with understanding the linguistic patterns, social and cultural norms, discourse patterns, and communication strategies and put them integrally in use when speaking or communicating. As it is already mentioned that EFL learners face communication problems when their language lacks necessary resources or communicative competence components, they rely on some strategies to help them remain in the discussion and attain their communicative goal. At the end, strategic competence is largely understood as a mechanism to solve problems, yet using the types of this competence appropriately may increase the language proficiency.

## **1 Statement of the Problem**

It is commonly known that communication is one of the effective ways to reach better learning and using a second language, because it lets learners be directly exposed to the language. When we discuss communication, we address the speaking skill, which is the major dominating skill. However, most experienced teachers view this skill as being a dilemma for many learners. These learners are reluctant to participate in conversations and other linguistic interactions. They cannot connect their knowledge of the language to the communicative intent; therefore, they rely on some strategies to express their messages. As future teachers, we need to know that the students' lack of involvement is attributed to some factors as low motivation and impractical teaching methods.

Although there are some students who use communicative strategies, many face communication breakdowns. In order to overcome cases of communication breakdowns, teachers are responsible for training them to transmit a clear message or to keep a correct flow of conversation, in other words, the Strategic Competence. This latter is conceptualised as the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies which enhance the efficiency and, where necessary, enable the learners to overcome difficulties when communication breakdowns occur (Celce, Dornyei & Thrurrell, 1995).

On this point, it is evident that one of the first roles of language instructors is to provide learners with significant contexts in which they practice different linguistic forms. For this purpose, recent investigations, and several attempts have been made to provide explicit, direct and practical methods, in the field of teachability of

communicative skills. In their attempts, they suggest what is called circumlocution skill to be taught in oral classes. Circumlocution allows second language learners to express themselves when there is a gap in their linguistic knowledge, it is effective in enhancing communication ability.

## **2 Research Significance**

This study will redound to pedagogy's benefit, considering that the speaking skill and communication play a major role in EFL teaching/learning, especially at the English Department in Biskra University. Through this study, learners whom are affected by communication problems may develop their level of communication and teachers may conceive how to help with its development.

## **3 Research Aim**

The aim of this research is to bridge the gap between theory and practice by first elucidating speaking skill and communicative competence and then exploring the strategic competence.

## **4 Problematic (Main Questions)**

This thesis relies on the following questions:

**Q1-**What hinders EFL learners to communicate effectively?

**Q2-**What sort of strategies are used by EFL learners when they encounter inpredicted difficulties in communication ?

**Q3-**To what extent are communication strategies workable and teachable ?

## **5 Hypotheses (Expected Answers)**

The present research is based on three hypotheses that shall be tested and verified through.

1. We hypothesize that the lack of effective oral performance is due to personal and technical factors.
2. We hypothesize that EFL learners at Biskra University tend to message abandonment , literal translation from L1 and self-initiated repair.
3. We hypothesize that student are able to fill their lexical gaps and circumlocute better.
4. We hypothesize that strategic competence can be be taught..

## **6 Limitations**

In spite of the fact that the main objectives supporting this research study have been met, it is essential to also acknowledge its limitations.

One of the limitations that we faced when conducting this research study lies in the lack of spontaneity and objectivity regarding the students' behaviors during our observation. Being aware of our presence, the students did not act naturally, which affected the final results. Another very important limitation was the teachers' busy schedules, which prevented any free time to fully guide and contribute to this study, leading to reducing the number of teachers needed to conduct the interviews.

## **7 Structure of the Dissertation**

The present dissertation is structured as follows :

**Chapter one** provides a general overview about the speaking skill, including the importance, major problems and speaking activities. In addition, it briefly discusses the integration of the four skills.

**Chapter two** tackles the communicative competence approach and its pedagogical implications. It discusses the teachability of communication strategies.

**Chapter three** provides the rationale behind choosing the research methodology adopted in this research, population, sample and the data collection tools. In addition, data results and analysis are presented. Lastly, findings and discussion are included in the chapter.

## **Chapter one : The Speaking Skill in EFL Classrooms.**



## **Introduction**

In countries where English is spoken as a foreign language, English speakers, especially EFL learners, are eager to master or at least have a good level in the speaking skill as a means to meet the globalization and pedagogical requirements.

In this chapter, we will cast light on the speaking skill. Starting with various definitions of the skill. After that, it is worth to discuss the importance of the speaking skill, main characteristics of a successful speaking activity and major problems with speaking activities, all in EFL context. In addition, this chapter will provide teachers with some solutions to speaking problems. At the end, it will cast light on the role of integrating the four language skills in developing the use of EFL by learners.

### **1.1 Definition of the Speaking Skill**

Speaking is one of the four language skills. It is considered a productive skill next to writing. It is defined in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus as talking to someone about something; to have a conversation with someone, people speak to or with someone to try to achieve a particular goal or to tell someone to do something. Through speaking, people can deliver and exchange the thoughts in different preferable forms. Moreover, to speak always means to interact, which is not only about 'putting a message together but also the response that the listener can give to the speaker' (Bastias, et al., 2011, p.32). Thus, we can say that the first purpose of speaking is to communicate. Speaking is viewed as a crucial skill which involves producing, receiving and processing information.

## 1.2 The Importance of the Speaking Skill

A well-known proverb said by the philosopher Socrates indicates the importance of the speaking skill, he said ‘ Talk so that I could see you’. Another proverb reveals the significance of this skill says ‘ A person is hidden under his tongue’.

Correspondingly, it is noticeable that the first interest of Foreign Language (FL) learners is learning to speak, because speaking is supposed to encompass all other kinds of knowings, thusly it is considered the most important skill of all the other skills (Ur, 1996). According to Brown and Yuke (1983, as cited in Rao, 2019) “Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real-life situations.”

In this sense, learners are urged to use the target language not only in the classroom, yet in their daily life. However, even though speaking is an important skill, it is also a great challenge for learners. At this juncture, Khamkhien (2010) stated that people who learn English language, have in their minds that they like to master the goal of developing the proficiency in the speaking skill though it is a difficult task. The vital importance of the speaking skills for EFL learners lies in their need to converse with native language speakers because, as known, mastering a foreign language is measured in terms of the learners’ ability to hold a conversation in the target language. It was noted by Qureshi (2007), speaking is important for the learners and for the language itself, because without speech, language is reduced to a mere script.

### 1.3 Major Problems with the speaking skill

During the learning process of an FL, students encounter a number of barriers and problems in the four skills. Since the only skill that requires the direct exposure to the language and the audience is speaking, it is considered a real problematic for learners of low and intermediate level. Furthermore, EFL learners find speaking to be a challenging skill, as it involves a sophisticated system that encompasses the utilization of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and even cultural familiarity of the language (Koran, 2015). According to Ur (1996), the problems related to the speaking skills are:

- **Inhibition:**

Since speaking requires some degree of real-time exposure, it is the first problem that students encounter in class. They are sometimes inhibited to say what they want or to answer questions addressed to them. In other words, students may feel inhibited to express themselves in FL due to concern about making errors, fear of receiving criticism, and shyness in speaking confidently (Riadil, 2020). Moreover, Harmer (2007) believed that learners are reluctant to speak when they are asked to provide personal information or opinions .

- **Nothing to say :**

The second problem is that students sometimes complain that they are unable to remember or think of anything to say. They are unmotivated to express themselves.

- **Low or uneven participation :**

This problem appears in a class with a large number of students. It lies on the tendency of some students or participants to dominate the talk, whereas the others tend to talk very little or never speak.

- **Mother tongue use :**

When the learners share the same mother tongue, they tend to use it because it is very easy and natural for them.

The aforementioned problems may hinder students from learning and using the target language appropriately, yet there are other problems suggested by other researchers. Along the same path, Scarcella, Oxford (1994) and Florez (1998 as cited in Abd AL Fattah Torky, 2006) state that the conflict between fluency and accuracy, lack of confidence and pronunciation confusion are remarkable constraints for speaking. Moreover, according to Thornbury, knowledge factors and skill factors are the two main areas where students encounter difficulties. The linguistic skills of the speaker that are used for oral production are referred to as the knowledge factors, whereas the skill factors mean that the learners' knowledge is not automated to ensure fluency (2005 as cited in Islam, Ahmad, & Islam, 2002).

Therefore, taking into consideration the current view of speaking as a complex skill, it is important then to consider more closely the features of effective instruction that can facilitate the acquisition of this skill EFL learners.

#### **1.4 Factors Affecting the Speaking Skill**

Speaking intuitively is the most important skill dominating the classroom. For this reason, there are some affecting factors that should be taken into consideration while teaching this skill. Performance conditions, affective factors, listening skill and

feedback are considered the main factors which influence the learners' speaking performance (Tuan & Mai, 2015).

- **Performance conditions**

The primary aspect that hinders learners' speaking performance is the conditions of performance, i.e. the external environment where the performance occurs. As believed by Nation and Newton (2009) conditions like time pressure, planning, the standards of performance and the amount of support are influential in the matter of performing the speaking skill.

- **Affective factors**

Students' psyche plays a vital role in affecting the learning process as well as speaking performance inside the classroom. Oxford affirmed that the affective side of the student is the foremost influenced (1990 as cited in Mie & Masoumeh, 2017).

- **The listening skill**

Listening ability is the third factor which affect the speaking skill. It is already known that all the four skills are interrelated, thereby speaking is closely related to listening. 'Listening supervises the performance of speaking' (Demir, 2017). Through listening to native speakers and good English speakers, learners gain vocabulary, improve pronunciation and acquire some speaking styles. Furthermore, due to the fact that listeners are at the same time speakers and speaking is performed for the aim of interaction, learners should comprehend what is uttered to them in order to have a successful conversation (Doff, 1998 as cited in Tuan & Mai, 2015).

- **Feedback**

Students are likely to receive the teacher's feedback. As attested by Harmer (2017), feedback can be contributive to the oral work; however, teachers are not obliged to deal with every single utterance of the students, Harmer also continued that the stage of the lesson, the activity, the type of mistake and the particular student who is making the mistake are what guide the teacher to react to students' performance.

### **1.5 Solutions for learners' problems**

For the high importance of speaking skill, there is a need to improve the current level of speaking among EFL learners and solve the problems that may hinder them. Ur (1996) put the teacher in charge to facilitate the process of speaking. Ur proposes that teachers can take advantage of group work. This method helps students with less self-confidence and who are unwilling to speak in front of the whole class. Even though they may make mistakes or use their mother tongue in a limited period, it remains positive. Small groups interaction give a chance to student who can not talk in front of a big group (Harmer, 2007). Another suggestion is to base the activity on easy language. It is enough if students use an easy, simple language with an essential vocabulary to achieve the communicative goal.

Furthermore, the topic choice plays an important role in motivating students to speak, thus teachers should make a careful selection of topics. It is also mentioned by Ur that some instructions or training discussion skills make students contribute to the group discussion and participate regulatory. Finally, teachers should keep students speaking the target language by reminding them and modelling the language use.

Moreover, turn taking is one of the most important component in conversation that teachers need to apply in different situations. Rivers states that, “The student who can handle turn taking better or initiates more turns gets more opportunities to interact in the target language and to practice target language skills.” (1987 as cited in Tsou, 2005, p.48)

Turn taking helps to engage the conversation and to make it progress. If the teacher directly addresses his students, they will obviously respond, after that they exchange back and forth the roles. By promoting this strategy, EFL speakers will speak and communicate the language with ease.

### **1.6 Activities for the Enhancement of the Speaking Skill**

As the speaking skill has a crucial role in nowadays EFL classrooms, teacher apply various activities to develop the skill. Because learning the grammatical rules is not enough to use the language, for this reason, learners learn to speak only by practicing speaking.

Teachers conduct several learner-focused activities which can be task-based or topic-based activities (Rao, 2018). Examples of these activities : role play, group discussion, preparing for presentations and interviews. Bastias et al (2011) go along with Rao, learners can be asked to act out scenes from plays or write dialogues then perform them.

#### **1.6.1 Characteristics of a Successful Speaking Activity**

For the practice of the speaking skill inside the classroom, there features to make the activities conducted more successful. If teachers choose the activities carefully, they

achieve the activity goals. Ur (1996) suggested four main characteristics, they are as follows :

### **Learners talk alot**

When the learners dominate the speaking activity and talk more than the teacher. Nevertheless, the teacher's talk appear few times when it is needed, for example, to indicate pause or to guide the activity.

### **Participation is even**

All students are supposed to participate in the speaking activity, not only talkative ones, yet participation must be fairly distributed. The idea that oral English classes are only for students with good level in English is wrong. Teachers have to make their students feel that no classmate should be ignored, regardless of their academic performance (Ling, 2015).

### **Motivation is high**

One of the criterions of a successful speaking activity is motivation. In other word, students' motivation. When learners are interested in a certain topic or in the way the activity is delivered, they will be motivated to perform and reach the activity objectives. Motivation is considered the most essential factor that educators can focus on to promote learning (Olson, 1997 as cited in Derakhshan, Khalili & Beheshti, 2016).

### **Language is of an acceptable level**

Valid activity is not characterised by producing excel and accurate terminology or high level of performance, yet producing simple ideas in a clear and comprehensive language is the key matter of the speaking activity in EFL classroom.



## **1.7 Approaches of Teaching Speaking in the EFL Context**

Reflecting on ways to teach productive skills in EFL classrooms is important for EFL instructors. Teaching the speaking skill has seen a huge interest in many researchers. According to Kroeker (2009) current approaches are categorised as: direct, indirect and a combination of the direct and indirect approaches.

### **1.7.1 The indirect approach**

This approach involve the direct engagement of the learners in the classroom speaking performance, such as discussions and role play. Richards defined the indirect approach as ‘ an approach in which conversational competence is seen as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction’ (1990 as cited in Bouzar, 2019, p.74). That is to say, the indirect approach is found in methods of teaching like the Audio-lingual method, Communicative Language Learning (CLL) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Burns (1998) continued that the indirect approach develops the learners’ autonomy in using the language, which is characterised by its authenticity and functionality.

In spite of this, there exists a certain hesitancy concerning the recommendation of the indirect approach. Nuan argued that the interactional activities of which are applied in the approach make learners to produce a series of utterances instead of producing relevant and purposeful statements (1999 as cited in Nazara, 2011). Moreover, this approach is appropriate for advanced learners, who have already mastered the speaking skill (Nazara, 2011).

### 1.7.2 The direct approach

On the other hand, the direct approach labeling displays its principles. This approach is based on the explicit way of teaching the speaking skill via consciousness-raising activities (Hedge, 2008, Thornbury, 2008, Richards, 1990, Thornbury&slade, 2006 as cited in Bouzar, 2019). In the same path, it is asserted by Brown that teaching speaking skill following the direct approach could be very effective through integrating practice with the explicit teaching aspects of speaking (2001 as cited in Nazara, 2011). In addition language in the direct method is purely used for speaking purpose. According to Brown, the direct approach stands on some principles, mainly :

- Correctness of grammar and pronunciation.
- Learners native language (L1) is refrained, but only the target language.
- Communicative skills are taught only through questions and answers between the teacher and student (2001 as cited in Andriyani, 2015).

Accordingly, tasks like demonstration of pictures and objects as well as questions and answers are involved as a way of teaching speaking. It is worth mentioning that the tasks are done only by using the target language or interpreting vocabulary and grammar with meaning using movements and gestures (Andriyani, 2015). Moreover, Bouzar (2019) adds that the direct approach develops the learners' awareness of nature, patterns, and systems that are important in casual conversation.

It can be concluded that the direct approach could be very effective because it creates opportunities for learners to practice the language authentically.

### **1.7.3 Combination of the direct and indirect approach**

The integration of the two approaches mentioned above comes up to be a further approach of teaching speaking. This approach includes the interactional activities based on the students' needs and abilities that the teacher has identified before the teaching/learning process states. It also combines learner centered training and language exposure activities, all along with teaching the speaking skill (Nazara, 2011). It is noted by Nazara (2011) that this approach is seems similar to some approaches accounted by different researches. For instance, Murcia et al (1997) mentioned it as Principled Communicative Approach, Willis (1996) Task Based Approach and Indirect Teaching Plus by Thornbury and Slade (2006).

In short, teachers are focusing on teaching approaches which enable students to use the English language freely, effectively and as much as possible appropriately. They tend to combine the previous approaches in order to nurture the students' speaking skills as well as communicative skills, with taken into consideration the content desired, need and abilities of the students.

## **1.8 Speaking as Fundamental Skill for Classroom Interaction**

### **Teachers' talk :**

Even though recent studies concerned with teaching/learning EFL go for learner-centered approach, yet the teachers have a crucial role in classroom interaction. Cook indicated that in the classroom interaction, the teacher speaks more than students (1991 as cited in Nurpahni, 2017). According to Krashen's input hypothesis, teachers' talk inside the classroom is characterised by the use of stress and pauses, more careful articulation, more reformed utterances, i.e. utterances are expressed in a smooth and

accurate way, as well as clear and direct language. Mulyati (2013) viewed that when the teachers talk, they invite students to talk; they prompt students' knowledge and correct their talk. In addition to oral praises, such as very good, excellent. Furthermore, teachers' language should be appropriate in terms of word collocation, grammar and pronunciation (Nurpahni, 2017). Many language teachers were taken aback by how much they during any kind of interaction inside the classroom, about 70 to 80 percent of the time spent in class was taken up with teachers' talk (Nuan, 1998 as cited in Pujiastuti, 2013).

### **Students' talk :**

Since teachers agree to learner-centered approach, EFL teaching/learning emphasises on the students' real presence in the classroom. Through teacher's motivation and prompts, learners speak and participate in the speaking activities. EFL learners should have knowledge about language structure (words and sentences).

### **1.9 The inetegration of the Four Skills**

It is said that 'The significance of speaking is indicated with the integration of the other language skills'(Mei & Masoumeh, 2017). Mastering any language requires the mastery of its four learning skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Even it is still possible to master one or two skills especially at the first level of learning the English language, it does not help the students to express themselves as they want or they can not achieve a certain level in the absence of other skills as well. It is worthy to mention that the term "integrated" refers to language acquisition in which all four skills are practiced simultaneously.

The listening skill, the speaking skill, the reading skill and the writing skill go hand in hand in terms of their importance. Harmer (2007) stated, ‘ When we are engaged in conversation ; we bound to listen as well as speak’, also added ‘Lectures frequently rely on notes they have written previously, and people listening to lectures often write notes of their own. Even reading, thought as a private activity, often provokes conversation and comments’.

Being a good listener is tied to being a fluent speaker (Nassaji, 2015). Because listening helps in understanding peoples’ talk, improve the use of intonation and pronunciation. Consequently, learning the four language skills is not an isolated process, yet all of them are interrelated in terms of language mastery and performance.

Furthermore, Nuan stated that integration of skills is a key component of language acquisition that emphasizes interaction, task continuity, real-world application, language and learning emphasis, and task outcomes (1989 as cited in Akram & Malik, 2010). According to language theories, receptive skills and productive skills are two indispensable aspects of using the language, i.e. communication where listeners, speakers, readers and writers are connected and inseparable in terms of psychological and cognitive processes as well as the transmission of information process ( Nan, 2018).

### **1.10 The Relationship between Productive and receptive skills**

Speaking and writing belong to productive skills, because the language user produces two forms of language; written form and spoken form. Speaking demonstrates students’ linguistic proficiency, pragmatic proficiency, and ability to use these two kinds of proficiency rapidly and correctly under duress. Vocabulary, grammatical rules,

rhythm, and intonation are all used in speaking (Nan, 2018). Alternatively, writing involves aspects like handwriting, spelling, punctuation. Writing and speaking are similar in some aspects such as generating and organizing ideas, however, in speaking, these aspects appear genuinely. Speakers have less time to think, unlike writers who can manage their time. Speaking and writing are connected and benefit from one another. The development of writing abilities alone does not guarantee better writing, but speaking indirectly activates writing. Zhu point out that ‘Oral acquisition of language also can help the improvement of writing’ (1997 as cited in Nan, 2018).

On the other hand, listening and reading are receptive skills. EFL learners are supposed to master these skills because their core objective is developing the linguistic comprehension. Listening skill enhance the concentration of EFL learners through focusing on sounds, phonemics, intonations as well as the variety of accents and vocabulary. Additionally, reading go along with listening, it increases the level of concentration on spelling, writing genres, different sentence structures and vocabulary. These two skills are developed through a cognitive process which involves understanding what is said or written.

Again, considerable studies proved that listening and speaking have a tight relationship, especially when the mere purpose of using the language is to communicate. Hence, speakers are listeners and they exchange roles following techniques of turn allocation. Listening is the key to good speaking. It is said that good speakers are good listeners. EFL learners should have good or average level of listening to native speakers, in order to be able to effectively listen and understand non natives. Eventually they can respond, i.e speak. Nan (2018) believed that listening allows one to

assess the accuracy of their speech, fix their pronunciation, and determine whether their use of lexicon is appropriate.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, although speaking is regarded as a challenging skill for EFL learners, it remains a crucial skill for the learning process. Problems which EFL learners face in speaking skill can be decreased unless the teachers apply the suitable interaction activities and students themselves can enhance their speaking skill through engaging in various real-life conversations and debates outside the classroom. It is important to mention that integrating the four skills in teaching and learning is useful not only to teach them all but also to build every skill in particular.

## **Chapter two : Communicative Competence.**



## **Introduction**

In the present day, English has become the language of globalization and international communication. For this, effective communication skills are required to compete in the modern life. The present chapter aims to get across the concept of communicative competence by providing several definitions and the dominant models that come to develop the concept. Then, it presents the concept of communicative language teaching. CLT origins, features and importance are highlighted in this chapter. Finally, this chapter endeavors to emphasise the importance of communication strategies in EFL teaching.

### **2.1 Communicative Competence**

Communication plays a major role in humans' life, for natives and non-native language users. It is embedded in everything we do as individuals or as parts of a social structure. Nowadays, people communicate with each other all across the world using the English language, Miller (1963) said ' Communication is pervasively important in all walks of life that every branch of social sciences is concerned with it, studies it, and adds to the general fund of knowledge about it'. For this reason, EFL learners are supposed to be communicatively competent.

First, communication is assessing and conveying meaning in order to create mutual understanding (Santandreu et al., 2013). The researchers also added that in order to complete the process of communication, one must possess a vast range of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal communication, such as listening, observing, speaking,

questioning, analyzing and evaluating. In order to achieve a successful communication, communicative competence is needed.

Contemporary applied linguistics has given importance to the concept of 'communicative competence' (henceforth CC). The term has been coined by the anthropological linguist Dell Hymes (1972). Hymes argued that besides the linguistic forms, one needs to learn when, how, and to who it is appropriate to use these forms. Other scholars, such as (Canale and Swain (1980); Canale, 1983, and Celce-Murcia (1995), brought their contribution to the development of the term. Furthermore, Hymes model of CC was one reaction to Chomsky's linguistic competence whose perception of competence was insufficient to explain humans' language use.

In the definitions of CC, scholars and linguists agreed on the same understanding of the concept. CC is viewed by Hymes as the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistics, sociocultural, and probabilistic systems of competence. That is to say, CC is the umbrella that covers all aspects and that can affect the language in use. Contrary to Chomsky's understanding of competence, Hymes claimed again that 'There are grammar rules that would be useless without rules of language use' (1972 as cited in Canale & Swain, 1980). In addition, CC is a concept that is relative, not static, it takes all the individual's qualities, the partners' features, and the environment to determine an individual's communicative competence (Light, 1989). Grammar is not the only element in communication, the way in which something is said influences its meaning. Consequently, communication is affected as well (Hymes, 1986 as cited in Fauziati, 2015). On the other hand, CC implies the language users' capacity and competency to connect the knowledge about language to the world beyond. From this

perspective, the concept of Hymes believed that being a competent language user means to know when, where, and how to perform the spoken language appropriately.

## **2.2 Existing Models of Communicative Competence**

### **2.2.1 Canale and Swain's Model**

Hymes concept of CC was later expanded by Canale and Swain in 1980. Their model refers to ‘ the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar’ (Canale & Swain, 1980, p.7). The scholars continued emphasizing that the knowledge of grammar rules is not an essential component of CC. As a matter of fact, native speakers will tend to focus more on how language is used than on grammar during their normal conversation.

Canale and Swain's model consists of 3 components. They are :

- Grammatical competence : According Canale and Swain (1980) grammatical competence is less important in terms of succeeding a communication. It is concerned with the level of grammar accuracy required to communicate. That is to say, the knowledge about the code which includes grammar rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling... etc.
- Sociolinguistic competence : Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to produce and comprehend language in various social settings or topics. Approximate application of vocabulary, register, politeness and level of formality. These aspects are taken into consideration in this competence.
- Strategic competence : It is defined as ‘ the compensatory communication strategies to be used when there is a breakdown in one of the other

competencies' (Canale & Swain, 1980). Thus, the knowledge of verbal and nonverbal strategies is needed to overcome communication difficulties.

With the simplicity and accessibility of Canale and Swain's model of CC, their ideas about the model have been widely accepted and used in the field of EFL teaching since the emergence of the approach ( Furko, 2016 as cited in Abdulrahman & Abu-Ayyash, 2019).

### **2.2.2 Bachman's model**

Another model of CC has been proposed by Bachman in 1990. Bachman's model was an attempt to elaborate on the linguistic ability of Canale and Swain. The researcher replaced the term 'communication skill' with the term 'communicative language ability. It is believed by Bachman that communicative language ability consists of knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in suitable, contextualized language use (Bachman, 1990 as cited in Trifoni, 2013). This theoretical framework of communicative language ability comprises three components :

- Language competence : language competence or language knowledge includes two further competencies :
  - Organizational competence : Refers to the knowledge of components involved in structuring the language. For instance, grammar correctness, coherence and cohesion.
  - Pragmatic competence : Refers to the capacity for understanding, creating, and communicating meanings that are correct and suitable for the social and cultural contexts in which communication takes place (Deda, 2013). Illocutionary (functional) competence and sociolinguistic

competence are two abilities that make-up pragmatic competence (Fouly, Bachman,& Cziko, 1990). The former means using and interpreting speech acts for specific functions of the language. Whereas the latter is concerned with knowledge of dialects, register, social norms and cultural references (Fouziati, 2015).

- Strategic competence : strategic competence, according to Bachman's model, is the major dimension of communicative language ability. This competence is viewed as a non- linguistic skill. Littlemore and Low (2006) stated skills such as evaluating a given situation, deciding whether to make a response, and organizing what to say can be involved in strategic competence.
- Psycho-physiological mechanisms : 'Mechanisms include the means and the way the ability is implemented (Trifoni, 2013). This framework is noteworthy for its consideration of neurological and psychological elements in language. Accordingly, Bachman referred to these mechanisms as the neurological and psychological activities necessary to actualize language in a physical form (1990 as cited in Fouziati, 2015).

### **2.2.3 Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell's model**

More recently, Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1995) propped another model of CC as completion of Canale and Swain's model. The group of authors suggested that it should be part of CC to have the ability to interpret and understand all significant speech acts and their sets (Soler & Jorda, 2007). By this assertion, they refer to the actional competence, which is the additional competence. This model includes :

- Actional competence : Actional competence is considered as the ability to engage in different speech acts and language functions, perceive and interpret direct or indirect acts. As well as the ability to respond appropriately. Mart (2017) mentioned this competence as the ability to comprehend and perform communicative intentions.
- Discourse competence : This type of competence concerns the combination of words, structures, and phrases to achieve a unified spoken or written discourse. Cohesion, coherence, deixis, generic structure and the conversational structure are sub-areas that CC relies on.
- Socio-cultural competence : the knowledge of social and cultural factors which affect language, and the ability of how to implement this knowledge. Scholars of this model agreed with the perspective of Van Ek and Trim (1991) concerning socio-cultural knowledge. They believe that understanding the customs and lifestyle of the target speech community is necessary for effective communication.
- Strategic competence
- Linguistic competence

### **2.2.3.1 Terminological differences between Celce-Murcia, et al., Model and Canale and Swain's model**

- Linguistic competence instead of grammatical competence.
- Socio-cultural competence instead on socio-linguistic competence.

Unlike grammatical competence, Mart (2017) stated that linguistic competence connotes syntax, morphology, phonology, and lexis. Second, the term socio-cultural

competence was used in place of socio-linguistic competence to distinguish it from actional competence and emphasize that resources in language encompass actional, discourse and linguistic competencies. In contrast, socio-cultural knowledge is necessary for the use of language resources in other components.

#### **2.2.4 Littlewood model**

The final and recent model of CC is that of Littlewood (2011). Littlewood also endeavored to develop Canale and Swain's model by introducing a further component and changing some terms. Littlewood's model comprises five aspects of competencies ; they are : linguistic competence, discourse competence, pragmatic competence, socio-linguistic competence and socio-cultural competence. Parallel to the aforementioned CC competencies, Littlewood's model aspects have the same definitions. In addition, the scholar indicated that socio-cultural competence has a prominent significance because it uses the cultural knowledge awareness along with assumptions which are important in the intercultural communication. Pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence in this model is a separate and independent competence.

In summary, one can assert that communication is the core function of language use. Bearing in mind that in order to achieve communication goals, one should be communicatively competent. This competence is realized through understanding and use of the previous components effectively. Furthermore, we can say that despite the slight terminological differences between the model, they share clear similarities and relationship. Thus, integrating them in any kind of interaction leads to enhance the CC.

### 2.3 Communicative Language Teaching

Due to the fact that the demand for English communication is ever-growing, the need for teaching and learning good communication skills is also high. Today, millions of people all over the world seek to improve their knowledge and usage of the English language. In this sense, the term communicative competence (CC) has been in existence for approximately forty years and has been used extensively in validations and explications of communicative language teaching (henceforth CLT) (Soler & Jorda, 2007).

CLT is an approach to language teaching/learning that highlights communication and interaction as the main objective of language use. Concentrating more on being able to use the language in real-life situations rather than just learning grammar rules and memorizing vocabulary. According to Bataineh, Bataineh and Thabet (2011), CLT never abandoned principles such as continuous drilling, prohibiting the use of first language (L1) and immediate error correction, which have proved ineffective for teaching and learning. But rather, added a communicative dimension to them. They continued, in CLT, drilling is used when necessary, the mother tongue is used to facilitate learning, and errors are tolerated as a natural aspect of language learning.

Back to defining the CLT approach, Richards (2006) claimed that CLT is a set of principles that encompass the objectives of language learning, the method of language learning, the effective activities and the duties of teachers and students in the classroom. In CLT, teachers concentrate on creating activities and assignments that duplicate real-world communication and situations. Savignon added that CLT provides a ground to



develop practical language skills for engaging in communicative situations. Consequently, CLT draws from multiple disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, philosophy, psychology and education research (2007 as cited in Mart,2017).

### **2.3.1 The Origin of Communicative Language Teaching Approach**

The roots of the CLT approach are traced back to the modifications made to language teaching in Britain dating from the late 1960s. CLT was widely used in English as a second language classroom around the world. This shift made British linguists recognize the deficiencies of second language teaching, which led them to doubt its theoretical assumptions. Scholars of that epoch later understood that communicative language teaching should take precedence over language (Ju, 2013).

When a number of linguists argued that in spite of their usual rigorous comprehension of language mainly grammar and vocabulary and their considerable practice in language structures for instance, the audio-lingual language teaching, were not successful in using language effectively (Hunston & Oakey, 2009). An important part of CLT since this period has been the comprehension of the notion of communication and how it should influence language teaching.

### **2.3.2 Some Key Characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching**

CLT is an instructional approach that focuses on fostering communication and language skills for real-life situations. Some of the main features of CLT include :

- All the activities done in the classroom are done with a communicative intent. In CLT approach, learners gain proficiency in communication through practical

applications of language that is deemed socially accepted (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

- CLT approach view second language teaching as learner-centred and experienced-based processes ( Richards & Rodgers,1986 as cited in Lui, 2015).
- CLT is essentially progressive rather than traditional ( Wright,2000 as cited in Thamarana, 2015).

### **2.3.3 Importance of Communicative Language Teaching Approach**

CLT has become an important approach to language teaching due to its emphasis on the communication and the development of language skills in real-life situations. The implementation of this approach in English language instruction has brought a lot of benefits. Littlewood debated that CLT considers both the structural and functional elements of language, combining them to create a more comprehensive form of communication (1984 as cited in Panhwar, Baloch, & Khan, 2017). Moreover, its emphasis on fluency in the target language boosts students' motivation to improve their skills in English (Thamarana, 2015). Denoting that CLT arrange students by assignments and activities that help them to strengthen their understanding of different topics as well as conveying their thoughts appropriately. This gives learners confidence to engage in conversations with other people (Brown,2000 as cited in Thamarana, 2015). In this light, since the CLT approach seeks to enhance the learners' CC in both pedagogical context or real-life situations, it establishes a good relationship between the teacher and his students, and peers as well.

## 2.4 Communication Strategies

Foreign language learners may face speaking or communication hurdles due to linguistic or cultural deficiencies. When they are confronted with the hurdles during interaction, they tend to use what is called ‘ Communication Strategies’ (henceforth CSs) to achieve their communicative goal in the target language. A number of scholars and researchers went to define CSs from a close perspective. CSs are most clearly defined as a collaborative effort between two interlocutors to reach a consensus on a meaning when necessary meaning structures are not shared (Tarone, 1998 as cited in Binhayearong, 2009).

From a general perspective, CSs refer to the compensatory strategies and techniques used to deliver a message, information, or to carry on a conversation in an effective way. Recently, CSs have been categorized into two major types: achievement strategies and compensatory strategies (Nakatani, 2006 as cited in Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009). Achievement strategies can be called interactional strategies, which are used in Littlemore’s (2003) point of view ‘ To manipulate the conversation and negotiate meaning’. Aligned with this idea, Nakatani and Gho (2007) perceived that CSs not merely served as a method to solve communication challenges, but also a way to strengthen communication through pragmatic discourse functions. On the other hand, compensatory strategies are used for the reason of filling gaps or compensating for missing knowledge (Zhang & Ya-Ni, 2007). All in all, it is notable that talking about CSs refers to the CC component, which is strategic competence.

## **2.5 Strategic Competence**

As it is mentioned earlier, CSs are important to better learning of EFL because it involves the direct, authentic and immediate use of language. These strategies make EFL learners and speakers able to communicate conveying their words effectively and appropriately. However, there are cases in which communication does not progress smoothly or faces break downs. The ability to overcome breakdowns in communications requires using CC components in an integral manner. Strategic competence is identified as having the decisive role among all the competencies.

## **2.6 Definition of strategic competence**

Strategic competence is a broad concept that encompasses the correct understanding and application of CSs. For Canale, strategic competence is the knowledge of communicative strategies to overcome communication break downs (1983 as cited in Campillo, 2006). Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995) stated that :

‘Strategic competence, an ever-present potentially usable inventory of skills that allows a strategically competent speaker to negotiate messages and resolve problems or compensate for deficiencies in other underlying competence’.

Likewise, Savignon in defining strategic competence said that learners’ communicative success depends on their ability to communicate within restrictions. In simpler words, in order to make a successful conversation, FL learners should be able to continue speaking despite the hurdles they confront.

## 2.7 Typology of Strategic Competence

Strategic competence involves a range of skills and competencies that can be organized into various categories or dimensions. It is important to note that there exist several typologies proposed by different scholars which are doable and significant in certain ways. However, scholars propose and put forth new taxonomies, which make it impossible to be standardized. Here is a well-known typology adopted by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995) to describe strategic competence main parts :

- Avoidance strategies : Involving adjusting one's message to their available resource, which could include substituting, omitting, or discarding the message. Furthermore, Brown said that these strategies can be sub-divided into: phonological avoidance, systematic or lexical avoidance and topic avoidance (2000 as cited in Zhang & Ya-Ni, 2007). Topic avoidance may be the most commonly used technique among students.
- Achievement or compensatory strategies : Involve using available language to reach a communicative purpose, which may include compensating for linguistic gaps. Achievement strategies include :
  - Circumlocution : It is a strategy used to express an idea indirectly when the exact term or phrase is unknown or forgotten. Oweis (2013) stated that circumlocution strategy is about describing or exemplifying the target object such as the thing you open bottles with corkscrew. This technique is particularly useful in contexts that necessitate exact terminology. By providing contextual clues or using synonyms, EFL learners can communicate despite the difficulties they face.

- Approximation : Oweis (2013) continued to examine strategic competence types. The author defined the approximation strategy by ‘..using alternative terms which express the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible’. In Hua, Nor, and Jaradat (2012) this strategy is conceptualized as generalization, which refers to the learner’s application of a second language which is semantically common with the target lexical item.
- All-purpose words : All purpose words strategy refers to using words that can be used flexibly to fulfil different communication goals. It is mentioned by Oweis (2013) that learners use this strategy to extend a broad, empty item in situations when the specific word is forgotten (e.g.: the overuse of thing, stuff, what-do-you call-it, thinggie).
- Non-linguistic means : Mime, gesture, facial expression, or intonation all are means to facilitate the communication process.
- Restructuring : Restructuring phrases or sentences by using memorizing stock phrases, for example: the bus was very... there were a lot of people on it (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell, 1995).
- Word coinage : Creating non existing words in the target language based on a supposed rule (Oweis, 2013) (e.g.: vegetarianist instead of vegetarian).
- Literal translation from L1 : When EFL learners can not remember a word or an idiom or do not know it, they tend to translate it into their native language. This strategy is used when the interlocutors share the same mother tongue.
- Foreignizing: Foreignizing is using an L1 word with FL or L2 phonological and morphological adjustment.

- Code switching : Code switching is a strategy that involves alternating between two or more languages or dialects within a single conversation.
- Stalling or Time-gaining strategies : This type of strategies are used to delay or gain more time to think during the interaction. These tactics are used to generate thoughts, formulate answers or understand. Here are some strategies as proposed by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995) :
  - Fillers, hesitation devices and gambits : Hesitation devices are used to create pauses, maintain conversation and even conveying intended meaning, unsaid meanings (e.g., um, uh... etc.). Fillers words like well, actually, where was I?, are used to give time to both the listener and speaker and show proficiency.
  - Self and other-repetition : It is a strategy involving repeating thoughts or making the speaker repeat his words in order to grasp what was said.
- Self-monitoring strategies : Refer to the techniques that the learners or speakers employ to assess and control their communication. Self-monitoring strategies include :
  - Self-initiated repair : Such as ; I mean....., That is to say ....etc.
  - Self-rephrasing : Paraphrasing one's words to convey intended meaning (e.g : This is for students...pupils...when you are at school).
- Interactional strategies : Interactional strategies refer to the individuals' tactics to overcome communication difficulties as well as to ensure its effectiveness. Strategies of interaction may occur as :

- Appeals for help : EFL learners can ask for help during interaction. Appealing for assistance can be direct such as what do you call ...?, or indirect like I do not know the word in English..., also puzzled expression are used.
- Meaning negotiation : Meaning negotiation strategies encompass an interactive process through which speakers collaborate to establish common understanding. Some of these strategies can include indicators of misunderstanding, for example: pardon, what do you mean by that.?.. etc. As well as comprehension checks such as am I making sense ?.

## **2.8 The Teachability of Communication Strategies**

The place of CSs in language use has been a source of interest for many EFL instructors and applied linguistics scholars. Among the already mentioned strategies, strategic competence has received attention as an integral component of language competency. Despite the fact that CSs are important in both real-life and pedagogical contexts, the teachability of these strategies to EFL learners is a matter of controversy. Bataineh, Al-Bzour, and Baniabdelrahman (2017) mentioned the scholars advocated CSs instruction, such as (Albakhshi, 2001; Dewael, 2005; Dornyei, 1995; Lam, 2005... etc). Other scholars contradict the theory of teaching CSs.

On the one hand, scholars concurred that the development of strategic competence in the first language of the learner is automatically transferrable to target language use (Dornyei, 1995). In this context, Kellerman concluded that ‘ There is no justification for providing’ training in compensatory strategies in the classroom... teach the learner more



language and let the strategies look after themselves' (1991, p.158, as cited in Dornyei, 1995). Moreover, Dornyei backed up his study with several opinions. He stated the argument of Bialystok (1990) which claimed that the concentrating on surface structure will not improve communication strategies because in fact, these strategies are psychological processes. In addition, it is said that when learners know more about the language, they become more flexible and able to adjust their language whenever it is needed. Furthermore, Nijmegen university studies (as cited in Russell & Loschky, 1998) claimed that both native and FL/L2 communication strategies involve the same general cognitive process. Thus, using CSs is the same. What is more, CSs are more likely to be developed through real-world communication, rather than in a classroom setting (Canale & Swain, 1980). As a result, it is unnecessary to teach CSs .

On the other hand, there are scholars who are in favor of teaching strategic competence. Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995) believed that apologies and requests strategies, for instance, can have a place in language teaching syllabi. The scholars provided several aspects which might be involved in teaching strategic competence. They are as follows:

- a) Stimulating learners to take risks in implementing CSs.
- b) Offering models illustrating the use of certain CSs.
- c) Demonstrating the distinction in using CSs between cultures.
- d) Teaching CSs procedures by providing learners with language tools to verbalize them.
- e) Giving chances to participate.

In addition, Mali (2007) pointed out that language teaching materials integrated with CSs can bring about a radical improvement of language education. Mali continued that practice and drilling are effective in enhancing student's performance and proficiency. As it was shown by the supporters of the theory, CSs are teachable and learners can develop their strategic competence in communication through learning, training and practice. Correspondingly, student who receive instructions in CSs increase their strategic competence compared to those who do not. Therefore, teaching students communication skills may cause effective CSs use (Yule & Tarone, 1997 as cited in Bataineh et al., 2017). Again, Maleki (2010) proved his opinion about teaching CSs by saying that the best way to produce language is through interaction, hence, improving strategic competence relies on teaching CSs.

In short, although there are researchers refused the theory of teaching CSs or develop students' strategic competence, many advocations for the theory were manifested by known scholars to consolidate their opinions on the necessity of teaching these strategies. Dornyei (1995) in his observation to the contradictions, highlighted that ' Most arguments concerning the teachability issue are based on indirect inclusive evidence, but still must be noted that some of these data actually appear to confirm the validity of strategy training'.

### **Conclusion**

We can not ignore the fact that English is the international language, and any language is first spoken, then written. Therefore, speaking in the English language rather, being competent in communication is a crucial skill which needs to be developed by EFL learners. Communication strategies are techniques to be used in order to

facilitate communication and to overcome breakdowns which occur because of the lack of language mastery. These strategies could be effective if the learners understand and use them appropriately. For this reason, the theory of teaching CSs emerged in order to make a room for developing strategic competence of the learners.

**Chapter Three : The Research Methodology, Data  
Analysis and Results.**

## **Introduction**

It is important to think of the main difficulties encountered by EFL learners in the speaking skill, more precisely, during interaction. This study intends to explore the learners' speaking problems as well as the communication strategies used by them to overcome these challenges. To achieve the objective of the study, the current chapter presents the methodology used in the study, data collection tools that serve for this investigation and the rationale behind choosing them. Followed by the data results and analysis of each tool. Discussions and summaries are provided in this chapter.

### **3.1 Review of the Methodology**

Due to the descriptive nature of the current study, the researcher adopted the qualitative method to explore the dominant problems with the speaking skill faced by EFL students at the level of 2<sup>nd</sup> year at UMKB. In addition, investigating their strategic competence during classroom interaction. This method is considered the appropriate one for the present study because it endeavors to comprehend and local meaning, recognize data as collected, and it may produce knowledge to give more comprehension (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The term qualitative research is used to describe research that depends on descriptive data and does not rely on statistical procedures (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The population of interest was represented by 2<sup>nd</sup> year EFL learners from UMKB in the academic year 2022/2023. From the whole number of the population (n=353), a convenience sample of (n=47) students was concerned with the classroom observation. The researcher has chosen this sample purposefully. 2<sup>nd</sup> year students are

neither beginners nor advanced. At this level, students start to cope with the setting of university, which makes it easy to join their sessions as an observer.

For more details, among EFL oral expressions' teachers of 2<sup>nd</sup> year, (n=4) teachers were selected to answer an online/face to face interview. The selected teachers have previous experience in teaching oral expression module to 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. This sample allowed the researcher to figure out valid and significant results. The choice of this sample was adequate for the research questions that this study wants to answer.

### **3.3 Data collection tools**

To enrich and support the qualitative data, a classroom observation was employed as the first tool. Besides, this research relied on an interview with the teachers of oral expression. The rationale for using classroom observation was to clearly observe students' problems while speaking and to provide valid insights into teaching, students' interaction and the dynamic of the classroom. Furthermore, the interview with the teachers was useful to get more information concerning their students' skills in communication. Through this tool, the researcher also figured out the teachers' point of view about teaching communication strategies.

#### **3.3.1 Classroom Observation**

In order to gather significant data for this study, the researcher constructed an observation checklist, which is sub-divided into three aspects. Each aspect contains eight questions, whereas the third one contains three elements to be observed. Classroom observation is a valuable data collection instrument, commonly used in descriptive research. It involves observing and documenting behaviours and interactions that occur in real-life situations or classroom setting. Mason referred to observation as ‘

methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersion (himself or herself) in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationship, actions, events, and so on, within it' (1996, p.60 as cited in Mackey & Gass,2005). Mackey and Gass (2005) highlighted that the usefulness of observation lies in the fact that it allows the researcher to gather a vast amount of detailed data on the participants' behaviours within a specific context.

In observing, the researcher was supposed to attend five sessions of oral expression with different groups, but because of some constraints, observing one group was sufficient to gain the needed data. It is worth mentioning that all the five sessions were dedicated for oral presentation followed by teacher- peers discussions, as already proposed by their teacher.

### **3.3.1.1 Results and Analysis of the Classroom Observation**

The classroom observation is used to provide rich data and thick description. The researcher could observe students' speaking problems that occur naturally in using the English language. Moreover, strategies, techniques, and the teachers' involvement in compensating the learners' deficiencies were noticed.

- **Aspect one : Communication/speaking problems**

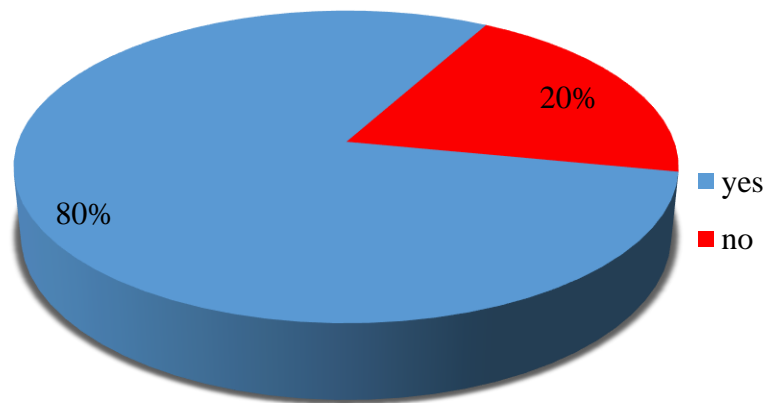
**Q1: Do the students manage to say what the want?**

Figure : 1 Students' management to express themselves.

Through the five sessions of observation, it was noticed that students made efforts in order to deliver their messages. Even though it was hard for them, 80% managed to say what they wanted. This was achieved by using some communication tactics. 20% could not convey meanings and interact neither with the classmates nor the teacher.



**Q2: Do students manage to clear-up  
problems/misunderstanding without using their L1?**

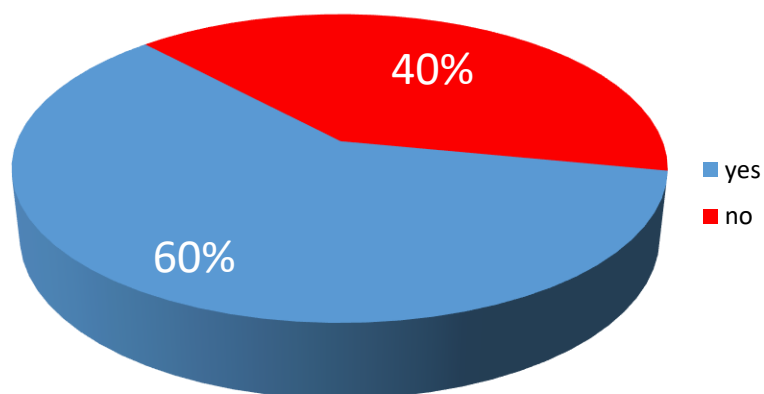


Figure : 2 Problems- solving whitout using L1.

The sample selected was quite good at using communication techniques like approximation and circumlocution during the classroom interaction in order to sustain their speech without relying on their mother tongue. However, 40% were using their L1 in small communication between classmates.

**Q3: Does the lack of vocabulary make it difficult to speak in English?**

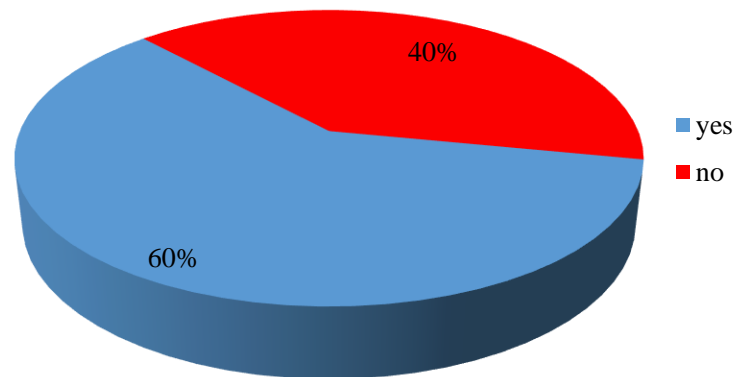


Figure 3: Lack of vocabulary

As observed, vocabulary is a problem for most students. The observation showed 60% vocabulary problems. Students struggle to find the appropriate vocabulary when speaking in English.

**Q4: Does the lack of self-confidence and fear make it difficult to speak in English?**

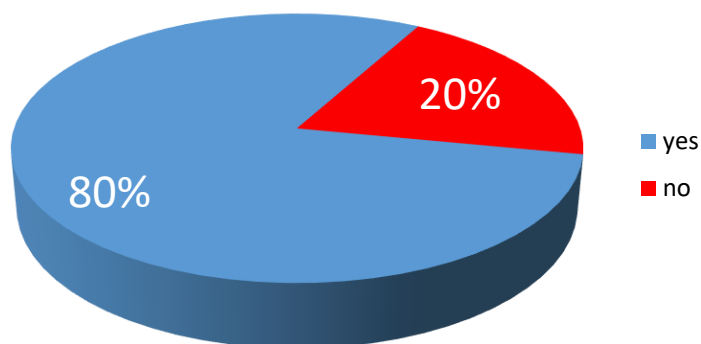


Figure 4: Lack of self-confidence and fear

Students have problems with their confidence. With the percentage 80% low self confidence was remarked. Students feared making mistakes or to be judged by the teacher, peers, or even the observer. Shyness when students speak individually was also observed. High self confidence existed with percentage 20% , these students made mistake and use the L1.

**Q5: Are there dominant students in the speaking or classroom communication?**

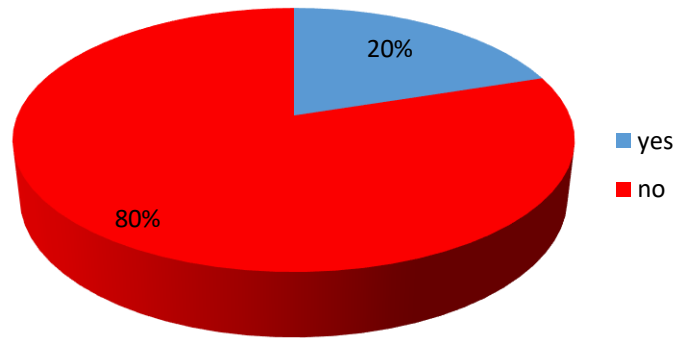


Figure : 5 Students' dominance.

From the five sessions, students' dominance was observed with a percentage of 20%. Therefore, with a total percentage of 80%, participation was fairly distributed between students. Almost all the students interact with each other and with the teacher as well.

**Q6: Are students motivated to speak in English?**

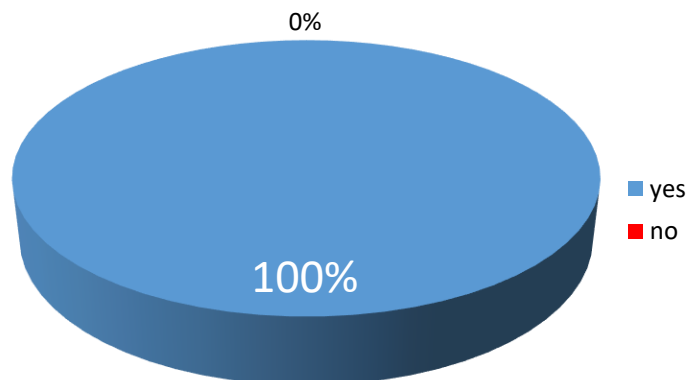


Figure : 6 Students' motivation.

Students' participation was remarkable. This is because of their high motivation. With a total percentage of 100%, students of different language problems and level of proficiency seemed to be motivated to engage and interact. The interesting topics and teacher's vibes were the source of motivation.

**Q7: Is the class setting suitable fo the topic being communicated?**

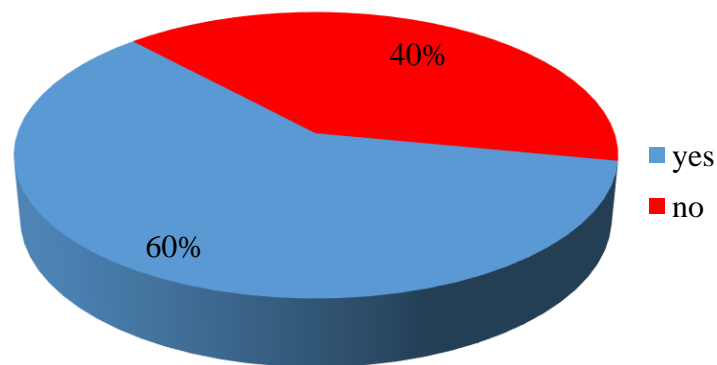


Figure : 7 The suitability of setting.

With the percentage of 60%, setting was suitable for the classroom communication. Students brought audio-visual materials, put their tables in the "U" form of which made them feel comfortable to speak. Yet, in some sessions (40%) setting hindered the communication.

**Q8: Does the teacher immediately intervene when student fail to express themselves?**

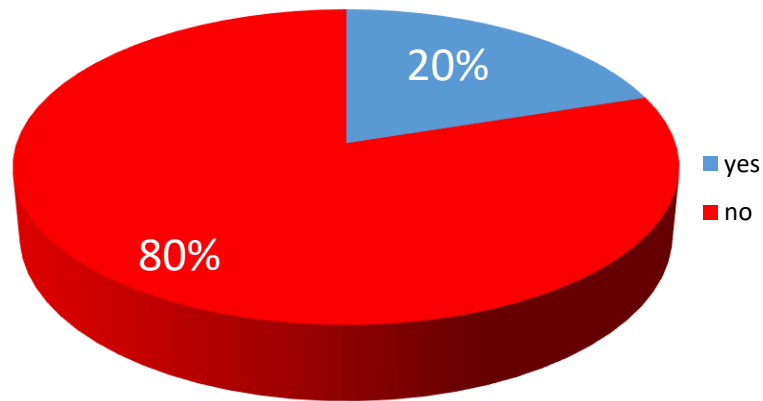


Figure : 8 The teacher's intervention

The observation data reveal that the teacher gives opportunities for students to overcome difficulties by themselves. With the percentage 80%, the teacher did not intervene when students struggle to say something. However, the teacher intervened by giving cues and hints so that the students could express their thoughts with a percentage of 20%.

- **Aspect two : Communication Strategies**

Options	Communication Strategies	%
1	Overcoming breakdowns	100%
2	Appeal for assistance	20%
3	Circumlocution	100%
4	Literal translation	60%
5	Approximation	80%
6	Non-linguistic means	80%
7	Self-repair	80%
8	Time-gaining strategies	100%

Table 1 : CSs used by students

**Option1** : Along the five sessions, with a total percentage 100%, students were able to overcome communication breakdowns and keep the flow of communication despite the hurdles they encountered.

**Option2** :It was observed that learners do not ask for assistance when they face a difficulty while speaking. With a percentage of 80%, asking for help was rare. They rely on themselves using some communication techniques. Also, they do not ask for help because when they struggle to say something, their classmates immediately and voluntarily help. Yet with a percentage of 20% students asked their teacher to provide them with specific lexis.

**Option3 :** Circumlocution is the most frequent strategy used by students to overcome communication breakdowns. 100% circumlocution strategy was employed in a better manner than the other strategies.

**Option4 :** As shown in the results, the literal translation strategy was frequent, with a total percentage 60%. Cases in which learners did not know a term of an idiom, they tend to think then translate from their L1 into the target language. 40%, students did not employ this strategy because they were aware it may mislead the understanding of listeners.

**Option5 :** Approximation seems to be a dominant strategy. Students use more approximate words that are semantically in common with the target lexis. With the percentage 80%, approximation strategy was employed and workable for the learners.

**Option6 :** Non-linguistic or meta-linguistic means were used with a percentage of 80% in order to fill the linguistic gaps. Students used mimics, gestures, and face expressions which were helpful in achieving their communication goal.

**Option7 :** Students self-initiated to reconstruct and paraphrase when misunderstanding occurred or when they could not transmit their thought by the first attempt. This strategy was observed over the five sessions with a percentage of 80%.

**Option8 :** A lot of time gaining strategies were clearly observed during the five sessions. In 100% of the cases where students were about to face communication breakdowns, they resorted time gaining techniques. For instance, students were going back to their PCs so that they gain time to think of what to say and to grasp meanings.



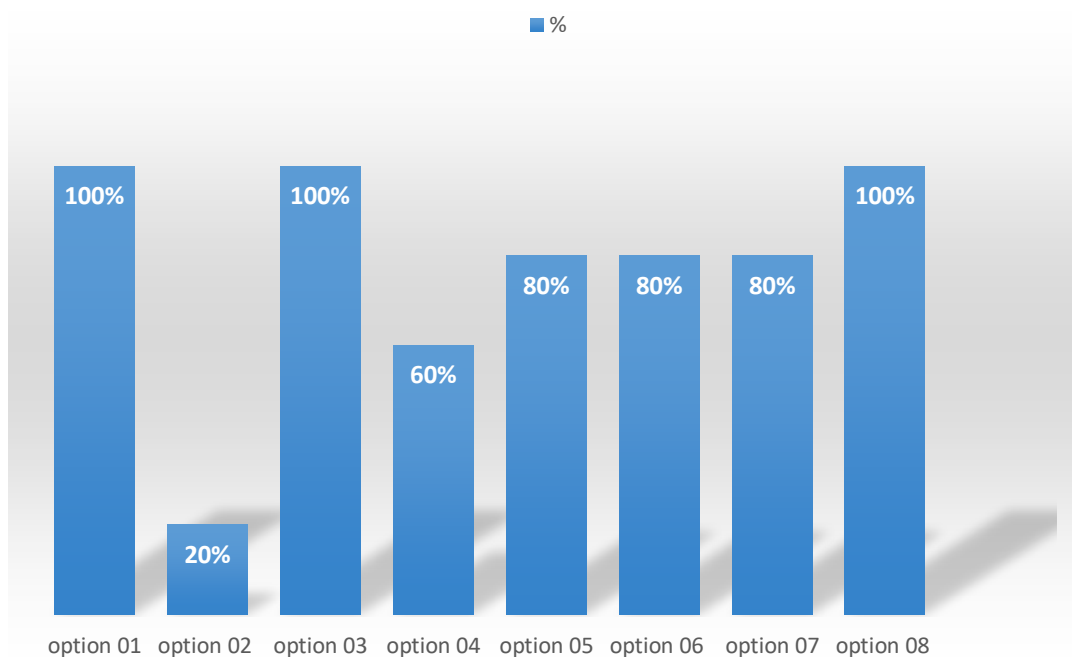


Figure : 9 CSs used by students

- **Aspect three : Different Teacher's Actions**

**Option one :** The teacher initiates the classroom communication.

Along the five sessions, the teacher started the classroom communication. By suggesting an initial topic to open the discussion with, then students engage in other related topics.

**Option two :** The teacher teach some communication strategies.

With the percentage of 60%, the teacher did not teach communication strategies. As have been observed, the teacher wanted to develop the students' self consciousness and let them recognize their mistakes and difficulties by themselves. With a percentage of 40% and because of the nature of some tasks, the teacher provided instruction concerning the use of communication strategies.

**Option three :** Activities to support Learner's oral language proficiency are included in the lesson.

Activities to support the oral language proficiency of the students were included with a percentage of 40%. The teacher asked the students to prepare presentations, then they performed them orally. However, with the percentage 60% communication and interaction inside the classroom took place naturally.

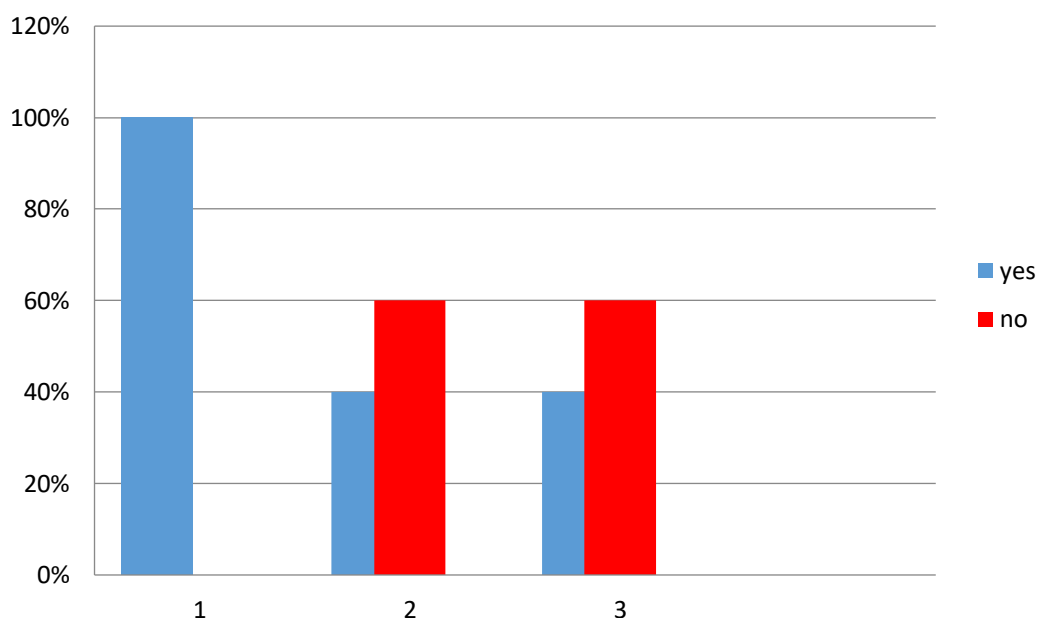


Figure : 10 Teacher's actions

### 3.3.1.2 Summary

This descriptive study is set out to investigate speaking problems which hinder the learners from performing the speaking skill. Also, exploring the use of strategic competence by these students to enhance and overcome communication problems.

From the overall results displayed in the research data, we can say that speaking problems face by the students of this sample lie mainly in lack of vocabulary and self

confidence. This is endorsed by Ali et al., (2000) whose study results revealed that insufficient linguistic competence is a hindrance to effective English speaking. Even though low motivation is taken into consideration as a huge issue in many researches, yet the sample in this study showed the opposite. Thus, we can deduce the students do not have issues with motivation. We can attribute this to the teacher's vibes and the topics being discussed. Setting and dominance of students' issues existed but with a low percentage, which does not make it an obstacle. It can also be seen that the teacher did not intervene in most discussions to correct students' mistakes or to fill their linguistic gaps. This can be attributed to their efforts in raising their students' awareness and self-reliance in problem-solving. However, sometimes, the teacher corrected the pronunciation and asked questions to make shy students interact.

The results of the study showed a large percentage of circumlocution use. Student circumlocute easily using simple words. Consequently, they could achieve their communicative goal. Approximation, self-repair, and non-linguistic means also were used with an equal percentage after circumlocution and time gaining strategies. These results accord with a study conducted by Scullen and Jourdain (2000) in which the author emphasised that 'circumlocution is a skill that students find particularly relevant'. A noteworthy deduction is that students employ CSs intuitively without being taught when and how to use them.

### **3.3.2 The teachers' interview**

One of the most important instruments of data collection in qualitative research is the interview. It is used in this study to gain extra information and knowledge on the teachers' perspective. The interview sought to answer questions which can not be

answered by another tool. Interviews are conducted with the aim of exploring and understanding individuals' perspectives and interpretations of a particular phenomenon. Researchers may employ this tool as a method to explore phenomena that are not directly observed (Mackey & Gass, 2005). This study opted for the interview for its importance, Mackey and Gass (2005) pointed out that due to the interactive nature of the interview, researchers can obtain further information if the initial responses are vague, incomplete, irrelevant or imprecise. It is worth mentioning that there exist a number of interview methods, the most known are semi-structured, structured and unstructured. This research relied on semi-structured interview.

The purpose of teachers' interview is to gather data from the teachers' experience in teaching oral expression and the way they deal with classroom interaction in terms of students' difficulties and communication strategies. A semi-structured interview was conducted with (n=4) teachers. The researcher took advantage of this tool through online and face to face interview, because both of these methods are useful. Online or written interview give the interviewee more time to answer the questions thoughtfully and appropriately (Leavy, 2017). Whereas, face to face interview helps the interviewer to capture physical cues and expressions. The teachers were asked seven open ended questions and one close ended question.

### **3.3.2.1 Results and analysis of the teachers' interview**

- **Q1 : In the field of teaching EFL, what are in your view (some) teachers' assumptions regarding Communication Strategies?**

**Teacher 1 :** 'The first assumption is that language is a tool for communication (it is not only a set of rules to be memorized and applied). The second is that the learner of

the language is active agent as he/she has to actively be involved in real-life situations to sustain the act of communication in an interactive mode. As a teacher, I also assume that language should be taught according to certain need, interests and objectives of the learner to make sense of his/her learning’.

**Teacher 2 :** ‘There are various assumptions that teachers may have regarding communicative strategies in EFL. Some teachers believe that teaching communication strategies can help learners become more willing to communicate in the classroom. Strategic competence, otherwise known as communication strategies (CSs), is considered as one component of communicative competence. There are contrasting points of view among teachers about the pedagogical effectiveness of the teaching of communication strategies. Some EFL teachers recommend and support the teaching of communication strategies’.

**Teacher 3 :** ‘Well, language is communicative by nature, therefore if language teaching doesn't promote communication then it is a waste of time and energy. Concerning the communication strategies used in the class room I can say that it depends on the context in which language is used and the nature and level of learners. Sometimes and ue to some exceptional circumstances you cannot employ such strategies’.

**Teacher 4 :** ‘Communicative strategies help language learners be more efficient in communication and reach communicative objectives in a shorter period of time and with less effort. As for students and their field of socialism, this might be more important as they need not only to be communicatively competent, but also teach communicative competence’.

To open the interview questions, the researcher asked the teachers about their assumptions regarding the concept of CSs. This question was asked to see whether they have the background of this component of communicative competence theory. In addition, the question sought to bring insights about what happens inside the classroom in terms of using these strategies. According to the answers they provide, it appears that the teachers' knowledge about strategic competence is limited. Their answers are somehow vague and unprecise in regard with the question aim teacher. They did not talk about the tactics that are involved in this competence. Teacher 3 started by stating that there is no need for teaching CSs. Focusing on the pedagogical involvement is not the key matter of the first question. However, teachers from 1 to 4 provided interesting points of view, especially teacher 3. This latter said that students employ CSs depending on the context and their level. What the interviewee wanted to say is that the student's level of the language governs their choice or usage of strategies.

**Q2 : What would you do if there was a breakdown in communication in the classroom ?**

**Teacher 1 :** 'If the breakdown is due to the students misunderstanding or comprehension-related issue, I need to ensure clarification via paraphrasing the instruction, prompting further questions, using non-verbal communication. Alternatively, I can seek help in peer or pair work to make students support each other as they may understand each other better than the teacher. Simplifying the instruction and accommodating the tasks to level of the students may help them overcome the breakdown'.

**Teacher 2 :** ‘If there was a breakdown in communication in the classroom, there are several strategies a teacher could use to tackle the issue. One approach is to explicitly talk with students about what good communication looks like for a given context. A teacher can create a classroom culture that values and actively develops students’ communication skills by proposing a set of discussion guidelines with their students. Another strategy is to ensure that all students are included in discussions and those students that are more confident have a responsibility to ensure that everyone is heard from. Effective communication between teachers and students is extremely important as it allows teachers to perform their job well, with positive results for their students’.

**Teacher 3 :** ‘Here the teacher takes the role of the facilitator and tries to encourage the learners to use some compensation strategies to overcome communication breakdowns. I usually try to serve as a language resource to help the learner continue talking’.

**Teacher 4 :** ‘If I am the cause i will need to rectify the situation and use different strategies to make sure we get back on track. Strategies such as paraphrasing and code switching might be more suitable with undergraduate students. If it is between students I will sort to letting them figure it out by themselves or offer them hints on strategies so they can apply them and resume their conversation’.

All the teachers agreed on the role of facilitator. As said by teacher 1 and 2, they use compensatory strategies to solve the communication failure. Pair-work is also proposed to make peers help each other. In addition, an important point mentioned by teacher 4 is about letting students to discover their problem and handle it by themselves.

Another crucial role stated by teacher 2 is to provide discussion guidelines in order to avoid the breakdowns before the communication takes place.

**Q3 : In your opinion, what causes these breakdowns?**

**Teacher 1 :** ‘Limited language proficiency (lack of vocabulary, grammar and other language items) alongside with anxiety and lack of self-competence. In other cases, the non-encouraging environment and the challenging communicative tasks may hinder students to effectively communicate in the classroom. Some teachers ask students to accomplish goals beyond their language and intellectual capacities. Teachers’ perceptions of the role of the language in the classroom may also contribute into this breakdown, besides their methods of teaching and dealing with students’ concerns and fears regarding communication’.

**Teacher 2 :** ‘Several factors can cause communication breakdowns in the classroom. Some common causes include misunderstandings due to language differences, perceptual differences, not paying attention, distractions and noise, different personal backgrounds, misinformation, speech impediments, and emotional reactions. Other factors that can contribute to communication breakdowns include focusing on personal tasks, experiencing information overload, criticizing the speaker, getting distracted by emotional noise or external noise, and experiencing physical difficulty’.

**Teacher 3 :** ‘Mostly the lack of vocabulary, knowledge about the topic being discussed, and the weak mastery of the foreign language. Also, there's a room for psychological aspects’.



**Teacher 4 :** ‘Usually inability to organize ideas or to find suitable expressions to explain a specific notion. Students may also have issues with lack of information . Stress and anxiety may cause breakdown of communication’.

The third question sought to identify the reasons behind speaking problems, more specifically communication breakdowns. The answers to this question are full of interesting insights. Starting by teacher 1 who stated that besides the common problems related to language proficiency, the teacher's knowledge about the role of the language inside the classroom increases the possibility of breakdown occurrence. For teacher 2, external factors are taken into consideration. The rest of teachers addressed these breakdowns to language proficiency and psychological aspect.

**Q4 : Could you give some examples that demonstrate students’ speaking problems?**

**Teacher 1 :** ‘Deficit in vocabulary and grammar, along with listening and comprehension obstacles (linguistic problems). Low self-confidence, anxiety, stress and other psychological and affective problems. Unfamiliarity with communicative strategies (clarification, paraphrasing, asking for repetition, negotiating meaning, etc). many students can not manifest properly these strategies as they are not knowledgeable about them or they improperly use them’.

**Teacher 2 :** ‘There are several examples of speaking problems that students may face. Some common problems include making grammar mistakes while speaking, lack of confidence, shyness, fear of making mistakes, lack of motivation, and nervousness when speaking in public. Other problems that may appear in students speaking include lack of self-confidence and anxiety. They may confront certain

feelings that affect their English speaking such as being unconfident, shy, anxious, nervous, and worried’.

**Teacher 3 :** ‘Well, class debates and discussions, oral presentations, and roleplay activities’.

**Teacher 4 :** ‘Casually students cannot improvise and sort communicative issues by their own as they prefer an organized and memorized presentations. This is a huge issue Based on the answers of teachers, one can say the most the dominant speaking problems face second-year student are linguistic gaps and psychological factors. Another problem noticed by teacher 4 is that students can not improvise due to the theory of memorizing. That is to say, when students are asked to present something orally, they tend to memorize their speech before the activity, thus they do not improvise. The teacher considers this latter as a huge issue. However, teacher 3 talked about the activities which reveal the students’ problems in speaking, the answer was not followed by an illustration of the problems’.

**Q5 : How would you rate your 2nd year students' communicative level (from 1 to 10). Do you find their level satisfactory?**

**Teacher 1 :** ‘From 1 to 10, students vary in their communicative level, yet I may rate the overall level as 6. I find their level fairly satisfactory that needs further improvement’.

**Teacher 2 :** ‘Effective communication between teachers and students is extremely important as it allows teachers to perform their job well, with positive results for their pupils. All students should be included in discussions and the level is hard to

set because of the class that is of heterogeneous aspect, but in general terms, it may vary between 04 to 08 and excellent students are counted on the fingers of one hand’.

**Teacher 3 :** ‘The majority of them are below average, I can say 4’.

**Teacher 4 :** ‘Somehow satisfactory but needs more and more work’.

Rating the students’ level of communication seemed to be hard because of the variety of students’ capacities inside the classroom. As it was said by teacher 2, the heterogeneous nature of the classroom hardens determining student’s level. Nevertheless, as declared by the teachers, students’ level does not accede 8 out of 10. The minimal rate for teacher 3 is 4 out of 10. Satisfaction is likely to be less because all of them indicated that more work on the communication level of the students is needed.

**Q6 : How would you go about simplifying or explaining a complex idea to your students?**

**Teacher 1 :** ‘Using simple vocabulary, rephrasing the concept, and using students’ background knowledge to stimulate understanding complex concepts. Techniques as mind mapping, listening, brainstorming and using graphics (visuals) to simplify the complex elements in a concept’.

**Teacher 2 :** ‘Actually, it is difficult endeavour to simplify complex ideas to students because of the diverse mechanisms of their receptive mindsets; however, teachers should try to use techniques and tools like visual aids and other materials to help students understand complex ideas. They may also use simple language and avoid jargon when explaining complex ideas to students’.

**Teacher 3 :** ‘There are so many ways and techniques that go with the level of the learner and the degree of complexity of the idea itself. Sometimes it works when the teacher adopts a substitution method where he tries to replace complex vocabulary and expressions with their simpler equivalents and those that are close in meaning. In addition to providing example that would facilitate understanding’.

**Teacher 4 :** ‘Exemplifying and adding extra information can be helpful’.

The sixth question was put in order to see the procedures followed by teachers in explaining complex idea. Teachers from 1 to 4 agreed on simplifying the idea and paraphrasing. Also, visual aids were emphasized by teacher 1 and 2 .

#### **Q7 : Do you help your students in improving their speaking skill ?**

**Teacher 1 :** ‘This is what I often do. A teacher is a facilitator of instruction, so I do everything that can help students improve their language proficiency, particularly speaking skill’.

**Teacher 2 :** ‘There are several ways to improve communication skills in students. One way is to start by talking explicitly with your students about what good communication looks like for a given context. Another way is to encourage students to practice active listening skills by asking them to paraphrase what they have heard or summarize what they have learned. You can also encourage students to practice their communication skills by participating in group discussions and debates. Finally, you can provide feedback on students communication skills by giving them specific feedback on their speaking and listening skills’.

**Teacher 3 :** ‘I suggest and recommend some tips for them’.

**Teacher 4 :** 'It is a must yes'.

Through this question, the researcher wanted to know whether the teachers focus on teaching and developing the speaking skill of their student or they focus on teaching the language structure. From their answers we can deduce that improving the speaking skill is their endeavor. All the teachers facilitate, organize activities, and recommend tips.

**Q8 : What do you think of providing the students with instructions on communication strategies to participate in classroom discussion?**

**Teacher 1 :** 'Students must be aware of these strategies to cope with their communication-related issues. Therefore, teachers can implicitly or even explicitly integrate instructions stressing on the communication strategies in a meaningful way that eases the attainment of objectives and makes students' able to handle, sustain and complete a communicative act without breakdowns'.

**Teacher 2 :** 'Providing students with instructions on communication strategies to participate in classroom discussions can be very helpful. It can help students to develop their communication skills and become more confident in expressing their ideas and4 opinions. It can also help them to learn how to listen actively and respond appropriately to others'.

**Teacher 3 :** 'We usually refer to them as recommendations and suggestions and not instructions because if they were instructions then students are obliged to follow them and the teacher is required to note down his learners' achievement. But suggestions and recommendations means the students are free not to adopt them if they believe they don't work for them'.

**Teacher 4 :** ‘It would be very important and for me it is highly required as oral expression is a very important course’.

According to the researcher, the last question is the pivotal question in this interview. In accordance to what previous studies stated concerning the teachability of CSs, from opponents to supportives. Teachers of this sample indicated teachers are in charge of making students be able to sustain communication strategies. Through integrating instructions that focus on CSs meaningfully. On the other hand, teacher 3 mentioned that when it comes to CSs, it is not suitable to say instructions, yet recommendations and suggestions because students can use them only in some cases.

### **3.3.2.2 Summary**

Overall, the data gathered from the teachers’ interview helped more in finding answers to the research questions. The qualitative description of the data provides a sufficient understanding of students’ speaking problems and the use of CSs. To start with, the teachers have few assumptions about strategic competence as a component of CC theory. However, teacher 1 made a noteworthy assumption is that language serves as a communication tool, and the learner must actively engage in real-life situations to maintain interactive communication. In addition, teacher 2 mentioned that CSs are employed depending on the context and the learner’s level of proficiency. We can validate this assumption through the sessions of observation, which revealed that the students use different CSs in different manners. This goes in line with a similar study conducted by Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009), in which the researchers figured out that ‘ high ability group employed risk taking strategies like circumlocution, fluency-oriented and help-seeking strategies, while low-ability group used time gaining

strategies more frequently'. Moreover, according to the answers of the four teachers, the teacher plays the role of facilitator of the language which students need. That is to say, when students can not find appropriate vocabularies to express themselves, the teacher asks them simple questions to make them restructure the sentences, they have a chance to produce what they want in another form. We can also say that during tasks or classroom communication, complex and unfamiliar concepts may appear, which obliges the teacher to be a language facilitator. Furthermore, concerning communication breakdowns, it was stated by teacher 4 that even teacher may cause communication breakdowns, so using compensatory strategies like paraphrasing and code switching may be useful.

The results showed that besides the lack of language proficiency, EFL students' communication problems lie in psychological factors, also, the teachers' lack of knowledge about the core role of language use may be a reason. Another factor was pointed out is memorization, i, e., students memorize some language structures in order to fulfil improvisational activities, they may later use these structures in the wrong context. In this vein, the teachers announced that the communication level of 2nd year EFL students does not exceed 8 out of 10, thus more work on developing communicative competence is needed. According to the teachers, organizing activities and recommending tips to develop the speaking skill in particular and communication in general. Finally, and in line with the latter issue of developing communication, only one teacher argued against teaching CSs. The teacher's point of view contradicts with Campillo's (2006) perspective, which claims that language teaching should prioritize strategic competence. By instructing this type of competence, we can assist our students

in employing tactics to overcome inhibitions or resistance when confronting unfamiliar lexical items.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to the field work. Initially, research approach, population and sample, and the data collection tools employed in this study were discussed. Next, the data corresponding to each tool was thematically analysed to reveal the reality of the speaking skill and CSs inside 2<sup>nd</sup> year EFL students. Lastly, expressive discussions were provided in the chapter.



### **General conclusion :**

There is no doubt that the the pivotal skill that needs focus and consideration for efficient communication is the speaking skill. Because of the high need of performing skills are needed nowadays, EFL learners eager to master these skills not only to achieve good scores but also to maintain good social and functional relationships. However, the issue to acquire speaking proficiency is problematic for EFL learners. Learners often struggle when they engage in interactions inside or outside the classroom due to various problems. It is for this reason, the current study aimed at highlighting the major problems that 2<sup>nd</sup> year EFL student encounter during performing this skill, as well as determining the CSs used by the students to overcome communication breakdowns.

The first chapter shed light on the speaking skill. The discussion started with a range of definitions of the skill, subsequently highlighting the crucial role of the speaking skill, outlining key attributes of an efficacious speaking activity, and identifying major hurdles commonly encountered in speaking activities, particularly in an EFL setting. Moreover, the chapter equipped teachers with various solutions to speaking problems. At the end, it highlighted the role of integrating the four language skills in developing the use of EFL by learners.

The primary aim of the second chapter was to convey the idea of communicative competence by presenting multiple definitions and the principal models that contributed to its development. Subsequently, the concept of communicative language teaching was introduced, with emphasis placed on CLT's origins, characteristics, and significance

outlined in this chapter. Finally, this chapter endeavored to emphasise the importance of communication strategies in EFL teaching.

In order to accomplish the practical part of this research work and investigate the problem at hand, a qualitative research approach was employed, as it was the most suitable approach regarding our research questions and aims. A sample of 47 students was selected out of 353 students of 2<sup>nd</sup> year at UMKB. 4 teachers were the second sample which was concerned with interview. Accordingly, classroom observation and semi-structured interview were used to gather data to attain the objectives of this study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive method and thematic analysis which constitute qualitative data analysis procedures.

The results indicated that 2nd year EFL students at UMKB have some problems with practicing the speaking skill, the main ones are: lack of vocabulary and lack of self-confidence. It was further revealed that the students intuitively use communication strategies which helped them in carrying on their discussions. The most used strategies are circumlocution and time-gaining strategies.

### **Recommendations**

After carrying out this study, with taking into consideration its results, the student researcher's recommendations are as follows :

- For future researchers : as mentioned in the theoretical part of this study, the teachability of CSs is a source of considerable controversy. Some studies reject teaching these strategies to learners because, as they believe are transferable from L1 to L2/FL. It would be interesting to compare the use of CSs between

native and non-native speakers in order to figure out whether their use of CSs is the same.

- For oral expression teachers : In order to develop the speaking skill of the students, it would be useful to provide authentic materials that include interactions at least once a week, because these materials provide more exposure to students.

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### Appendices

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Time</i>
22/03/2023	Douhi Zineb	2 <sup>nd</sup> year Licence	Oral expression	To

#### Appendix 1

#### Observation Checklist

Aspects		Yes	No	Additional notes
Communication/ Speaking Problems	Do the students manage to say what they want ?			
	Do students manage to clear-up problems/ misunderstanding without using their L1 ?			
	Does the lack of vocabulary make it difficult to speak in English ?			
	Does the lack of self confidence and fear make it difficult to speak in English ?			
	Are there dominant students in the speaking or classroom communication ?			
	Are students motivated to speak in English ?			
	Is the class setting suitable for the topic being communicated ?			
	Does the teacher immediately intervene when students fail to express themselves ?			
	Do the students manage to overcome communication breakdowns and keep the talk going smoothly ?			
	Do the students ask for help when they encounter a difficulty? ( appeal for			

Communication Strategies	assisstance)			
	Do the students describe the action or object instead of using the right term ?(circumlocution)			
	Do students literally translate a word or structure from L1 into FL ? ( literal translation)			
	Do students use approximate words semantically in common with the target lexical ? (approximation)			
	Do the students use non-linguistics means to fill their vocabulary gaps ? (mimics..)			
	Do they self initiate in reconstructing their speech when the first attempt fails ? (self-repair)(..I mean..)			
	Do they use time gaining strategies to gain time to think ?			
Different teacher actions	The teacher initiates the classroom communication.			
	The teacher teach some communication strategies.			
	Activities to support Learner's oral language proficiency are included in the lesson.			

**Appendix 2**

## Interview Consent Form

### Teachers' Interview

---

Investigating the use of Strategic Competence by EFL learners  
to enhance the speaking skill.

**The Case of** second year students of English at university of Biskra.

Dear teacher,

You are kindly asked for a face to face interview. This interview is conducted in order to collect data concerning the use of Communication Strategies in the EFL classroom to enhance the student's speaking skill. Your responses will be anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. Your contribution to this work is highly appreciated.

*The  
researcher.*

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Douhi Zineb.

Email: zinebmanardouhi@gmail.com

University Mohamed Khider of Biskra.

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages .

Department of Foreign Languages and English Literature.

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I have read and clearly understood the researcher's request. I consent to the participation in a recorded interview for the research work undertaken by Ms. Douhi Zineb.

**Background Information on the Expert:**

Name: .....

Present Occupation: Teacher of English- Oral Expression

Degree: .....

Email Adress: .....

Signature: .....



**Appendix 3**

## The Interview Questions

---

1. In the field of teaching EFL, what are in your view (some) teachers' assumptions regarding Communicative Strategies?

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

2. What would you do if there was a breakdown in communication in the classroom ?

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

3. In your opinion, what causes these breakdowns?

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

4. Could you give some examples that demonstrate students' speaking problems?

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

5. How would you rate your 2nd year students' communicative level (from 1 to 10). Do you find their level satisfactory?

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

6. How would you go about simplifying or explaining a complex idea to your students?

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

7. Do you help your students in improving their speaking skill ?

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

8. What do you think of providing the students with instructions on communication strategies to participate in classroom discussion?

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

*Thank you.*

### ملخص الدراسة

في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، يسعى المتعلمون إلى إتقان المهارة التحدثية ، والذي تعتبر أهم مهارة بين الأربعة . يجد طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم أدب اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة (UMKB) صعوبة في إتقان هذه المهارة ، مما يتسبب لهم في انقطاع التواصل . مع ذلك ، يبذل الطلاب جهوداً للتغلب على العقبات باستخدام استراتيجيات التواصل . لهذا السبب ، تم إجراء الدراسة الحالية من أجل إلقاء الضوء على المهارة التحدثية باعتبارها مهمة ، بالإضافة إلى تسليط الضوء على صعوبات التحدث الشائعة التي يواجهها الطلاب . بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، هدفت الدراسة إلى إجراء تحقيق في استخدام الكفاءة الإستراتيجية أو ما يعرف باستراتيجيات التواصل لتحسين المهارة التحدثية . لتحقيق الهدف من هذا البحث النوعي، تم اختيار عيّنتين للدراسة متمثلة في طلاب السنة الثانية للغة الانجليزية و معلمين التعبير الشفهي، حيث تم تطبيقها على 47 طالب من اصل 353 طالبا ، و4 معلمين لصفوف التعبير الشفهي . بالنسبة لأدوات جمع البيانات تم استخدام اداتين :الملاحظة والمقابلة بانواعها . حيث تم إجراء الملاحظة الصفية مع الطلاب في 5 حصص . من خلال الملاحظة تبين ان الانشطة و تحفيزات المعلم و المناقشة و الحوار بين الطلاب اثناء الحصة ، ساعدت على جمع البيانات المهمة للدراسة . اما بالنسبة لأداة المقابلة فتم استخدامها بنوعها مع المعلمين ، حيث تناولت اسئلة المقابلة سؤال 1 منظم و7 اسئلة غير منظمة موجهة للمعلمين المسؤولين على فصول التعبير الشفهي . اظهرت نتائج الدراسة ان طلاب السنة الثانية من اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة لديهم صعوبات في ممارسة المهارة التحدثية ، المتمثلة اهمها في :نقص المفردات وقلة الثقة بالنفس . كما تم الكشف عن الطلاب يستخدمون بشكل بديهي استراتيجيات التواصل التي سهلت عملية المناقشة و الحوار فيما بينهم ، ومن اهم الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة بشكل كبير هي الاحاطة وكسب الوقت .