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The Effects of Classroom Interaction in Improving EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency

The Case of Third Year Students of English Branch at Biskra University

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Requirement for the Fulfillment of Master Degree in Sciences of Language

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

My dearest family especially my lovely Mother

I am grateful for her permanent care, support, and all her sacrifices.

My brothers Mounir and Djalel and my sister Chahra

All my friends with whom I spent the greatest moments in my life.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Students who learn English as a foreign language generally struggle to become proficient speakers and effective communicators, they learn and speak the language, but how their speaking should be is the main considerable aspect that students need to master. Classroom interaction has been a matter of interest of many researchers who claim that students' interaction is a very important factor in the process of teaching and learning foreign languages. The major idea underlying this research is to know how does interaction in classroom improves students' oral production and ability to communicate effectively in different interactive situations with both types teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction, and explore the various interactive and oral techniques the teacher may use in classroom to create that interactive atmosphere in which students practice the language and develop their abilities collaboratively. The present study aims at discovering whether classroom interaction improves learners' oral proficiency. Therefore, we hypothesize that students' oral production will improve when they interact with both the teacher and classmates in the classroom, and to investigate this issue we opted for a descriptive method. And to gather evidence we used a questionnaire as a collection data tool, the questionnaire was administered to third year students at the department of English of Biskra Mohamed kheider University with a sample of (80) students to represent the whole population. In addition to that, we conducted sessions of classroom observation with the same level. The results revealed that most of the students believe that interaction in classroom is a significant way to improve their oral abilities.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

SLA: Second Language Acquisition.

FL: Foreign Language.

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate.

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General Introduction

Interaction in the classroom refers to the conversation between teachers and students in which active participation and learning becomes vital because conversations are part of the socio-cultural activities through which students construct knowledge collaboratively.

generally most of the Algerian English learners face many difficulties when it comes to the oral production of the English language and this is simply due to a simple reason that they lack language practice in their daily life, and since classroom is the only place where they have the opportunity to experience their oral language, so it is the starting point from which they will improve their oral abilities to use the English in a proficient way in different settings outside the classroom, teachers should be more conscious about the importance of creating interactive classroom context through different activities and techniques in which students interact using the language and at the same time improve their oral abilities in a communicative environment. Mainly, there is a correlation and a relation between students' oral proficiency improvement and classroom interaction hence, students' interaction in the classroom is very important to enhance their oral competence.

1. Background of the Study

Classroom interaction has been considered one of the most important pedagogical research topics in language classrooms, mostly due to the influence of the psychological and socio-cultural theories view the act of language learning as a social activity, interactions in language classrooms are important social activities for students through which they not only construct knowledge but also build up confidence and identity as competent language users. According to the review of studies in the area of classroom interaction and language learning presented by Hall & Verplaetse (2000) interactive processes are not strictly individual or equivalent across learners and situations, language

learning is a social enterprise, jointly constructed, and intrinsically linked to learners' repeated and regular interactions in classroom. Researchers such as (Canale & Swain, 1980; Rivers, 1987; Savignon, 1983; Wells, 1981) agree that only through active interaction with the teacher or other learners in the target language within meaningful contexts, learners build up communicative competence, and therefore to be able to use the language spontaneously and competently. Interaction then, requires the involvement of learners in the dynamic process of communication, it is essentially social, and involves contact and negotiation of meanings where learners can experience how language functions in different situations.

2. Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, lot of Algerian learners face difficulties during their learning of English within the classroom environment, speaking in a fluent and accurate way is their main concern. Foreign language teachers must be aware of how to create an interactive classroom atmosphere to enable learners to practice the language. The problem raised in this work is specifically about how interaction in the classroom may improve students' oral production and their ability to communicate effectively and spontaneously using the English language in different interactive situations.

3. Aims of the Study

The present study has certain objectives and purposes that may be reached at the end of this research. This work aims at investigating the improvement of students' oral production through classroom interaction, and to explain how effective classroom interaction in EFL classes is important. Moreover, explore students' reaction towards learning in an interactional environment. Furthermore, it is important to investigate the

correlation between learners' listening and speaking and the improvement of their oral proficiency.

4. Significance of the Study

The concepts of classroom interaction and oral proficiency have been a matter of great interest for many researchers and scholars, particularly educationists of second and foreign languages. Subsequently they have done continuous researches and studies in the field of language teaching and learning investigating the subject of interaction as a conclusive goal for effective learning and teaching in the classroom. In accordance with that, the significance of this study is basically about how important and influential is classroom interaction in promoting opportunities for teachers to create an interactive learning context to enable learners to be attached and exposed more to the language because classroom interaction can facilitate students' language development by its contribution in providing target language practice opportunities. Furthermore, it helps in co- constructing learners' self and cognitive development. In the classroom the process of negotiation involved in interaction is itself to be identified with the process of language learning. As well as in classroom both teachers and learners can create the learning opportunities which motivate the students' interests and potential to communicate with others.

5. Research Questions

The questions that will be investigated throughout this study are as follows:

1-What are the different interactive techniques that can be used to improve learners' oral production?

2- Does effective interaction in the classroom improve students' oral proficiency?

6. Hypothesis

The prevalent supposition of the effect of interaction in classroom is its role to language development, it enables students to interact freely where they can explore and show their capacities. This led us to hypothesize that:

If students are fully interactive in the classroom environment, then their oral production will improve.

7. Research Methodology

To choose which method to use is determined by the nature of our research problem. The present work is qualitative, conducted through a descriptive method as a proper way to investigate our hypothesis which states that interaction is functional strategy for developing learners' oral competence. Many researchers stated that through descriptive method we can get knowledge of what actually happens. The function of this method is heavily dependent on instrumentation for measurement and observation for determining facts and getting a deep vision of current situation concerning the phenomenon of classroom interaction in Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

8. Data gathering Tools

Data are needed to make rational decisions. Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in on establish systematic manner that enables one to answer stated research questions, test and evaluate outcomes the objective of data gathering tools depends on the overall objective of our research. The data collection in this study will be through both the questionnaire used to obtain data through participants' self- reporting of their attitudes and beliefs, and the classroom observation that the researcher has used as well to support the findings of the questionnaire.

9. Population and Sampling

This study concerns third year students of English language department. Third year overall number is (340) students, divided into (10) groups, randomly we selected (80) student as a sample to give us their opinions and attitudes on the study through the use of the questionnaire, and (4) groups randomly assigned for classroom observation.

Chapter One

Classroom Interaction

Chapter One: Classroom Interaction

Introduction

In the domain of second language acquisition, classroom interaction is critical in teaching and learning foreign languages. It is a useful tool for engaging students and makes them active learners it involves the oral exchanges between them and also with their teachers. However, the teacher should be aware that the most amount of talk must be given to the learners to practice more the language since this work focus at developing the oral performance of the learners that needs the use of the language in communicative situations, but this does not mean that the teacher has no role or no talk at all. Yet his talk should be reduced to give the opportunity for the learners to speak more and develop their language capacities.

In this chapter we shall deal with the concept of interaction, starting with an overview of classroom interaction, showing some definitions given by different views, and see the important aspects or components of classroom interaction, also we will discuss the most important classroom interaction types; besides, some principles of interaction that students need to master for successful communication, in addition to some activities that create interactive classroom context, then discover the role of interaction in classroom including the role of both the teacher and the learner and finally, we will end with the importance of classroom interaction in language improvement.

1.1. An Overview of Classroom Interaction

Interaction has been considered through time a significant element in language learning. Classroom interaction went hand by hand with the theoretical shift in perspectives of learning and teaching that began to focus on the active role of the learner in language construction. During the past few years many studies has been done to analyze

the relevance of classroom interaction when learners are learning or acquiring the foreign language.

Interaction in the classroom becomes more popular especially in second and foreign language classroom. For learners who are studying English in a non-native English setting, it is very important for them to experience actual communicative situations in which they will learn how to convey their own views and opinions freely to promote their oral fluency and accuracy that are very substantial for successful foreign language communication, because the more foreign language input learners are exposed to, the greater will be their proficiency developed. According to Kumpulainen & Wray (2002), classroom interaction needs in the process of second language learning the presence of two or more learners who cooperatively fulfilling communication as well as, who share some signs and semiotic rules. Interaction then is a learning process in general and language skills development in particular.

In recent developments in education many researchers have investigated classroom communication that involves interaction (Nunan, 1992 & Slavin, 2003) focus on the role of learners in the learning process, they shifted from more traditional classes where the teacher is the predominant factor that plays the principle roles in the process of teaching and learning to more learner-centered instruction, where the learning process responsibility is given to the learners. Most researchers observe that keeping silent in the classroom without being active may affect the acquiring process of the foreign language, learners may lack the ability to communicate, whereas classroom interaction gives them multiple chances and opportunities to use and practice the language in real situations. Classroom interaction then is critical to teaching and learning, class talk offers a promising tool for helping instructors create a more interactive classroom. According to Ellis, (1994) the second language researchers are provided with three standpoints of study: the effects of

formal instruction, the comparative method studies and the classroom interaction studies and the last one that attracts the researchers' extended concern, this is due to simple reason that interaction is very crucial for second language acquisition and foreign language learning, it is a useful tool for engaging students in active learning where they can obtain comprehensible input and produce much amount of output that is essential for the incorporation of language knowledge.

1.2. The Interaction Hypothesis

There is a new widespread acceptance that oral interactions provide the main sources of second language acquisition. In the case of naturalistic acquisition, the importance of face to face interaction with other speakers of the second language is self- evident in the case of classroom acquisition. For Allwright (1984:156) interaction is "the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy…everything that happens in the classroom happens through the process of live person to person interaction". This means that everything happens in the classroom happens through a process of face to face interaction.

The interaction hypothesis advances major claims about the role of interaction in second language acquisition and learning, this can be done through simplifications and interactive modifications of the input provided to foreign language learners. The origins of these claims seen in the work of Krashen (1982) who declared that learners acquire through the active use of the language, he considers language as an outcome of participating in discourse in particular in face-to face interaction where learners construct the new language through socially mediated interaction, he argued that interaction among learners and teachers is essential to language learning. Besides, according to Long, (1985) who believed that what makes input comprehensible is modified interaction, or negotiation of meaning, that is the interaction hypothesis promotes those conversation

modifications such as comprehension checks and clarification requests that students make when they are interacting and communicating in classroom, create a comprehensible input and this in turn enhances acquisition through negotiation of meaning and contributes highly to the acquisition of a second language.

Interaction; then, provides learners with the opportunity to receive comprehensible input, feedback as well as makes changes in their own linguistic output, this may allow them to notice and discover their weak points and gaps in the language that may be corrected by language in the communicative process.

Negotiated Meaning

Comprehensible Input

Language Acquisition
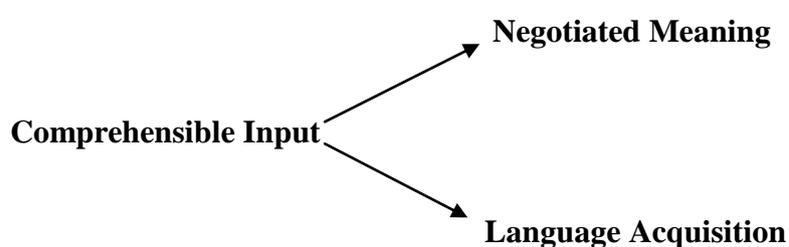
Figure 1: An Alternative Model of the relationship between Negotiated Interaction and Language Acquisition (Allwright & Baily, 1991:123)

This model shows the possibility that comprehensible input may help speakers to develop second language acquisition, so meaning negotiation is particular way of modifying interaction it can accomplish a great deal by helping learners make input comprehensible and modifying their own output by providing opportunities for them to access second language in both form and meaning.

1.3. Definition of Classroom Interaction

Two main implications can be viewed in a functional classroom is an enjoyable classroom environment based on friendly relationship between learners and teachers of the learning process, and the stimulation of students' ability to be orally competent. Interaction

is significant in the classroom; therefore, it is an important part in learning and teaching of the foreign language. Johnson (2008:79) defined interaction as "a concept which involves both input and output". Hence, a person receives an input and tries to transfer it as a message of output, another definition given to this term by Thomas (1987:7) who said "interaction means acting reciprocally, acting upon each other".

Therefore, is more than action followed by reaction it includes acting reciprocally, acting upon each other, this what lead Allwright & Bailey (1991) to conclude that interaction is something that people do together i.e. collectively.

Wagner (1994:8) declared that interaction is a "reciprocal events that require at least two actions, interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another". This means, interaction occurs from two sides, there must be a mutual influence also, interaction consists of "sharing ideas and opinions, collaborating toward signal goal, or competing to achieve individual goals". This according to Pica et, al (1993, cited in Nassaji, 2000:245) that is during interaction learners may notice things about them that they do not notice by themselves that are considered important in developing the ability to use the language.

1.4. The Components of Classroom Interaction

For Runmei (2008) three main components are involved in classroom interaction: collaborative dialogue, negotiation and co-construction. These elements are really needed for successful learning through interaction and contributes not only to language improvement and building learners' self and cognitive development, but also for awaken a variety of internal developmental process of learners that are activated only when they are cooperative with each other.

1.4.1. Collaborative Dialogue

Collaborative dialogue occurs effectively between two speakers, in classroom context learners are the most favorable elements concerned with this concept. Dialogue interaction is the outcome of the learner and other members of this socio-cultural environment such as his classmates and his teacher. According to Vygotskys' theory, learning is an integral activity of learners' self and adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers.

Swain (2000,cited in Runmei:48) said that collaborative dialogue is "where language use and language learning can co-occur, it is language use mediating language learning, it is cognitive activity and it is social activity". In this sense collaborative dialogue helps learners to construct linguistic knowledge of the language and use it at the same time in a social context in which learners go beyond their mental process of language learning.

So classroom interaction should take the role of collaborative dialogues do for its significance in communicative language teaching and learning; also, it accelerates the development of the learners' language if the classroom settings play an effective role as social settings.

1.4.2. Negotiation for Meaning

The most important element of second and foreign language learning is the need to negotiate meaning in any language learning occasions and situations. The concept of negotiation of meaning is very familiar in cognitivey approaches in second language acquisition it is generally defined as "discussion to reach agreement" According to Allwright, (1985) interactive negotiation should be person to person communication, negotiation then is seen as a type of real life language use that is relevant to the learning purpose of the learners, and a target language skills for the learners to develop in the classroom through simulated negotiation can be seen also in terms of negotiation of

meaning that is defined by Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005:166-167) as "the conversational exchanges that arise when interlocutors seeks to prevent a communication impasse that has arisen". In other words it is verbal expressions they use in order to prevent communication breakdowns. i.e. when it is not understood what is has been said, then the quality of the input produced by the learners should be clear and understandable for learners who engage themselves in the interaction.

Negotiation of meaning plays a significant role in classroom interaction, students will achieve more in communication when they are more exposed to negotiated situations and chances. Also, it refers to some expressions that learners may use in the classroom used by speakers to ask for clarification when participants do not understand what has been said.

Negotiated interaction then is very important for input to become understood and comprehensible, and this will appear when speakers interact and communicate with each other, they modify their speech in order to be helpful for other participants to participate more in any communicative situation.

1.4.3. Co-construction

Co-construction is defined as "The joint creation of form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion or other culturally related meaning reality". This is according to Jacoby & Ochs (1995,cited in Runmei:49), that is international competence includes the language knowledge co-created by participants in interaction including their active participation, skills, feelings, and the cultural knowledge. In classroom interaction second language (L2) learners are responsible for the construction of an effective interaction; thus, the negotiation of meaning is cooperatively co-constructed in social context, learners build up their ability of developing self-regulation, awareness, progressively from dialogue interaction when they are negotiating with each other.

1.5. Types of Classroom Interaction

According to Thurmond, (2003) four existing types of interaction can be viewed in the classroom context, the learners' course content interaction, learner-learner interaction, learner-teacher interaction and learner-technology interaction. In this research the focus will be only on two main types which are: teacher-learner interaction, learner-learner interaction.

1.5.1. Teacher-Learner Interaction

In this type of interaction the teacher takes the role of the leader or the controller, when the teacher refers to the whole class but expecting just one learner or group of learners to react or interact, there would be a negotiation explored by the teacher with his students about different points concerning the content of the course, asking questions and waiting for students responses and interventions, consequently, students will learn how to be competent communicator by taking an idea of their teacher how well to interact in an effective and appropriate manner. During teacher-learner interaction, students are aiming to improve their oral performance besides their listening as well, the teacher then should be aware and careful about the kind and the quality of the language he uses including voice, tone, and intonation because the teacher speech is considered as a resource for students.

Successful interaction is the basis of positive human relationships among people, teachers here can take a variety of roles besides being an instructor, but also as a consultant or co-communicator. Classroom organization can be one-to-one or group-work arrangement to encourage peer interaction; furthermore, can be more effective if various teacher and student talk is applied in the classroom, students may be encouraged to start conversation more, instead of just responding to the teacher.

1.5.2. Learner-Learner Interaction

Many of studies and theories of learning states that different skills and abilities are improved through interaction between students. Paula (2002:128) claimed that "talking students with their peers about the content is a powerful way for them to reinforce what they have learned". So teachers should encourage interaction among students to make them active participants in the learning process, and to provide them with much opportunities to practice and deal with the foreign language, learners here can use the language freely and at the same time they adjust their weaknesses and to have a clear idea about their levels and on what they need to concentrate on, moreover, try to improve and correct these errors to reinforce their abilities in using the language.

Woolfolk (2004) emphasizes the importance of learners' interaction with their peers, in order to receive feedback to be challenged and to observe how others work out problems, collaboration itself is seen as a uniquely powerful learning method and to promote interaction among students, teachers should encourage cooperation rather than competition, because students learn from each other.

1.6. Principles of verbal Interaction

Since classroom is considered as a proper setting where the foreign language learners may have the favorable conditions to practice the language with each other, it provides them with a set of principles in order to communicate in English in real and interactional environment. In this work we shall deal with some significant principles:

1.6.1. Adjacency Pairs

McCarthy (1991:119) defines them as "pairs of utterances in talk are mutually dependent". It means are a set of utterances that usually occurs together; in other words, an adjacency pair is a two-part exchange in which the second utterance is functionally dependent on the first, and why they are adjacent that is the first immediately follows the second. As exhibited in a conversational greeting, question/answer, offer/accept…etc. It is considered as a type of turn-taking and generally is the smallest unit conversational interchange; for example, someone says "Hi" and then the other replays in the same manner or with another similar pair. Adjacency pair can be regarded as the starting point of a conversation between learners.

1.6.2. Exchanges

According to McCarthy (1999) exchanges are the major units in any conversation, or in any interactive talk, they are independently observable entities, and we may find adjacency pairs within their boundaries, in traditional classrooms the manner of the moves of exchanges where students were restricted to responding moves, whereas the great role of talk was performed by the teacher, for this reason learners were not able and have an idea about how to start or end a conversation. Today the teacher should be aware of the significance of this step to facilitate students' language improvement, and try to encourage their learners to practice combined opening, answering and follow up strategies through designing speaking activities to meet this goal. One particular range of socio-cultural research of classroom interaction has been the work of Mercer (1995) and his cooperators who viewed at learning processes in both peer interactions and in interactions between teachers and learners, about peer interaction Mercer el al., (1995) coined the distinction between three types of exchanges:

- ➢ Dispositional talk: In which learners compete to find solutions to their problems.

- ➢ Cumulative talk: Where students build upon each others' proposed solutions.

- ➢ Exploratory talk: In which critical and constructive responses are produced by learners. Mercer (1995:146) called these types of exchange "the social modes of thinking". That is learners engage together with each others' ideas.

1.6.3. Turn-Taking

Turn-taking deals with "me and you" the standard of communicative interaction and tests how speakers organize themselves to take turns and participate in a conversation because whenever a conversation occurs, some techniques are involved concerning how taking a turn, Agar (1994:172) expresses one of the most popular perceptions of how turn taking in conversation works: "someone talks, and I lie back and listen and let them roll for a while when they are done, there will be pause that will flash like a green light to announce that someone else can have the floor". That is, a successful communication characterized by the smooth exchange of turns among participants, in this view participants in a conversation wait for the person who is actually speaking to stop, and leave the turn to someone else to speak. Ellis (2005:201) said "This phenomenon refers to both the construction and the distribution of turns". That is, construction is the time when the speaker is talking, and distribution is the turn taking i.e. knowing when to start and finish a turn in a conversation. Turn taking is a way where learners can help each other when talking in classroom by predicting once' utterances and seek to complete them for others.

1.6.4. Transactions and Topics

McCarthy (1991:130) said that transactions are "concerned with how speakers manage longer stretches of talk". Which means how well learners are aware of the markers exists in a conversation, topics on the other hand can be defined as stretches of talk and the ideas given by several learners in the classroom, and they are strings of relevant utterances, in language teaching topics are considered as the titles for the subject matter of the speech, in addition to that, the choice of the topic should be linked to the students' needs and interests, that is effective choice topic encourage students to feel competent and able to participate. So topic is a crucial factor and considered as the basis for any interaction to take place. McCarthy (1991) points that many questions arise about the topic term: how it is opened, developed, changed and closed. Whenever students do not participate in classroom because of the topic, the teachers have to change it or ask them to select the topic they want to be discussed.

To sum up, through interaction between students in the classroom, they obviously will be more familiar with the different principles of the oral production of the language usage, in order to be able and more proficient when using the language in communicative situations.

1.7. Activities to Promote Interaction and Communication

English language learners at all proficiency levels need to speak and understand and spoken English for a variety of reasons especially for the improvement of their oral proficiency. So learners can communicate and appreciate being encouraged and challenged to further their skills.

1.7.1. Communicative Activities

Generally communicative activities include any activity that encourages and requires a learner to speak and listen to other learners, as well as with people in community.

Communicative activities have certain and significant purposes for the learners such as to find information, break down barriers, talk about self, and learn about the culture. Even when a lesson is focused on developing reading and writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson. In addition to that, researches on second language learning suggest that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher-centered-classes. Moss & Ross (2003) we may shed light here on some important activities:

1.7.1.1. Conversation Grid

The power of using these activities is that learners are involved in authentic, independent and cooperative conversation without direct teacher involvement, these grids can be used with any topic as teaching or assessment activities. Learners usually enjoy them greatly. Through these activities, learners practice and increase their knowledge of language structure such as (what, where, when, and why questions and their questions) and also develop their vocabulary and cultural aspect of the particular discussed topic as well as they ask questions and listen to answers by recording information on the grid.

1.7.1.2. Line Dialogue

It is an activity where students collaborate to compose a dialogue which can be later performed for the entire class this activity gets learners out of their chairs, interacting with everyone is the class. One benefit of this activity it is an extremely student-centered giving

the opportunity to students to create their materials for speaking and listening, in addition to, this type of activity gives students a chance of being creative, throughout this activity peer teaching and friendly conversation can occur, the main aim of this activity is to make learners get intensive (repeated many times) practice using the target language in short dialogues; besides, learners may get to know one another in an atmosphere where peer teaching is naturally supported.

1.7.1.3. Drama Activities

Drama is essentially social and useful tool in teaching and learning as a form of entertainment, drama is a useful activity that can be used by teachers in the classroom context, because it is an educational and an interactional activity as well as, it gives the learners opportunities to interact with others, explore their ideas and emotions through interaction.

Using drama activities in classrooms as an interactive technique, is a good way to give learners chances to improve their own abilities and communicative skills in an interactive context guided by the teacher who provides them with appropriate knowledge that helps them to make progress in their skills and language abilities. It makes teachers give more focus on their learners by giving them opportunities to participate in producing the target language with their peers.

Drama activity involves contact and communication of meaning and gives the students a space to experience how language functions and used in different situations by verbally and non-verbally manner taking part in creative imaginative world, several researchers have emphasized the social rules of language use as more important than a mere linguistic interaction in the target language, they point out that many communicative activities in language classrooms, that provide useful practice in the manipulation of

linguistic forms. Drama activities require the involvement of learners in the dynamic and interactive process of communication, so they are no longer the passive receivers of formal knowledge about the target language conveyed by the teacher. On the contrary, they are encouraged to actively participate in activities that are designed to explore their needs and interests.

Drama therefore, gives the students a virtual experience to practice the language, they will have to verbally express their ideas, also facilitate students' cognitive development in creative thinking, problem solving, questioning, and negotiating. Stern (1980) said that drama activities in foreign language classroom promotes the learners with a variety of benefits and advantages concerning the development of their skills, which can be directly and interactively improved through communicative situations Some of these elements can be summarized as follows:

> It increases the students' participation and motivation.
> It provides the learners with chances to increase their self confidence and fluency in using the English language.
> It makes the students' more productive when using the language to express their ideas and thoughts in a creative and imaginative manner.
> It provides opportunities for students to express themselves individually and in groups.
> Using these drama activities in the classroom with learners is a good technique to make them use the language in real situations, it makes them participate and experience the English language in real environment.
> It helps to reinforce and extend learners' vocabulary and imagination when using the language.

So, these kinds of interactive activities can be used as a strategy to make learners work and interact together in the classroom context which as result, help them to improve their oral proficiency as well as, to develop their knowledge about how to use the language in any interactive situations.

1.8. The role of Interaction in the Classroom

The interactive process generally involves two or more speakers communicate with each other, sharing maybe the same knowledge and the same culture and even when they do not belong to the same community, they come together and interact in a given situation about a given topic.

For the production of comprehensible output Swain (1985) claimed that learners need to practice different resources of the language that they have obtained so far. Getting feedback from both the teacher and other learners in the class assist learners to test their knowledge development of the language they use mainly the language system. It was claimed that pushing learners to produce in the language requires them to manage their language knowledge gaps, by trying to make their output understood, such as speaking in a slowly manner or using other clear words to clarify their ideas, this is what is called negotiation of meaning. Interaction then imposes learners to produce more appropriate language.

Similarly Brown (2001:165) defined interaction as being a "collaborative exchanges of thoughts, feelings or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effort on each other". Therefore, interaction usually occurs from different sides, it means it is something that people do collaboratively, when expressing their ideas and opinions to the interlocutor in a way that makes the hearer understands the message, and be able to

negotiate the meaning in manner that is comprehensible to the other speaker who becomes a hearer, and this will lead spontaneously to the development of the conversation.

The communicative language teaching approach sustain that interaction in the classroom environment has a great role since it is a crucial part in learning and teaching the second or the foreign language. From this perspective, many researchers established several principles which are needed in any interaction, and can be simply developed through it. Some of these important principles can be summarized as follows:

1.8.1. Motivation

Lot of attempts have been made in the field of second language acquisition to explain and define the term motivation, also to explore its relationship with the learners' English language achievement since this concept considered as one of the main problems in education. Many investigations have been done in this regard to determine the nature and the factors behind increasing this motivation integrated in learners' process of language learning, to help them develop their capacities in the language proficiency essentially in the classroom context.

The term motivation, generally seen as the needs, desires, and reasons characterized by students' curiosity, interest, and actions since learners are the most concerned with this term, to achieve certain goals and to fulfill better results and outcomes, this is what is meant by Guay et al., (2010,cited in Emily:4) by giving their definition to the term by saying: motivation refers to "The reasons underlying behavior". It means that motivation is behavior. Besides, various approaches to motivation focus on the cognitive behaviors such as monitoring and strategy use, which can be termed as intrinsic motivation in which the learners themselves determined and internally motivated, regulated by enjoyment and satisfaction. In addition to non-cognitive aspects which are regulated by external,

identified, and integrated styles given by the teacher in the classroom. The teacher then should be well trained he must monitor the learning process and give accurate and stimulating content in order to encourage the students and make them more interested and have the desire to be involved to participate and take part and responsibility of their language development; for example, he may expose them to more speaking competence activities.

To conclude, in classroom environment the teacher has to pay attention to motivate his students to participate and interact with him and with their peers, because the teacher is suggested to be the biggest source of the external motivation in the classroom role of the teacher in this case may have either a positive or a negative effect on the learners' motivation and oral production.

1.8.2. Self- Confidence

The term self-confidence is speakers' belief in their abilities and capacities, in other words is when a person believes that he is able to do his best and take risks. Students in classroom can reach beyond their abilities through self- confidence by being not afraid to make mistakes when using the English language to express, control and inform. Self confidence is not something that students learn, but it comes from inside their positive thinking and daily practice of using language and speaking with others.

Many researchers in second and foreign language learning have made a correlation between self esteem or self-confidence of students and their successful oral production that is when students have high perception and self- confidence of themselves in classroom they will show their willingness to talk and explore their oral abilities to be more improved. Then, teachers should pay attention and try to minimize students' anxiety and build student's self confidence to communicate more in English in a proficient manner.

1.9. What roles can Teachers and Learners play in Communicative Classroom?

After all teaching and Learning are the core business of classrooms, and the most important question should be how this business in brought off? The concept of the 'role' has become very popular in English language teaching (ELT) that designates the teacher's functions and learner's performance in the classroom.

In fact this work is based on the socio-cultural theory of learning originally formulated by Vygotsky (1987) who sees learning as a social process in which the interaction between the learner and other members of the core of the learning process, learners are able to do tasks that they are not capable of doing themselves, unless they are supported by others such as the teacher or their peers in the classroom, so the learner can achieve and perform better when he interacts with others.

1.9.1. The role of the Teacher

When it comes to the concept of learner-centered learning, it appears that the teacher have no role, however this means that the role of the teacher is less dominant but not less important. Generally the teacher may perform two main roles: as viewed in communicative language teaching is seen as a facilitator of communicative process, s/he may facilitate the communicative process in the classroom by promoting and establishing interactive situations. Hedge (2000:26) identified some important role that might be performed by the teacher:

> "As a controller is in eliciting nationality words, as assessor of accuracy as students try to pronounce the words; as corrector of pronunciation, as organizer in giving instructions of the pair work, initiating it, monitoring it, and organizing feedback, as prompter while students are working together; and as a resource

if students need help with words and structures during
the pair work."

1.9.1.1. The teacher as a Controller

When speaking about the control it means appropriate degree of control, this is may appear in different activities some teachers use terms such as controlled practice, half controlled practice , and free controlled practice to indicate where control is needed and in what degree.

1.9.1.2. The teacher as an Assessor

Generally is a major part of the teacher's responsibility to assess the students' work, the teacher as an assessor does two things that is correcting errors and organizing feedback. Harmer (1983:201) focuses that correcting should be done in an appropriate manner when he said: "gentle correcting involves showing that incorrectness has occurred, but not making a big fuss about it". So the teacher corrects students' mistakes but not emphasizing too much on them.

1.9.1.3. The teacher as a Corrector

The teacher should know when and where to use correction also he should be careful when correcting pronunciation mistakes when learners are producing an output during classroom interaction, because these problems are acquired from the teacher.

1.9.1.4. The teacher as an Organizer

The most important and difficult role that the teacher has to play is to be an organizer, so the teacher's major tasks is to design and organize activities that learners can carry out in the class, the way he organizing pairs and group works, in giving instructions all depends on good organization.

1.1.9.1.5. The teacher as a Prompter

The teacher should encourage and motivate learners to participate, and gives them suggestions about how they may proceed in an activity by assessing them only when it is necessary. Learners sometimes lose the thread or become unsure how to proceed; the teacher in this regard can prompt but in a supportive way.

1.9.1.6. The teacher as a Resource

The teacher may provide learners with whatever language they lack when they are performing communicative activities. Also the teacher should make her/himself available when the learner needs him in necessary situations. For example, when s/he is looking for the meaning of a word or how to say it, he may go back to the teacher as a resource of information.

The teacher also need to be an observer in his classroom, because observation is an important step towards changing teaching practices, daily observation reveals wealth for information about learners, their competencies and skills, as well as about their week points that they should work on through appropriate design activities.

1.9.2. The role of the Learner

Learners are required to use language in the classroom, to interact with each other not only with the teacher. Learners have to participate in classroom activities that are based on cooperative rather than on individualistic procedure, learners are engaged in various activities that require real communication, meaningful interaction and dynamic learning where they practice the language in natural communicative context. Larson and Freeman (1986:131) sate:

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

It means that, learners have the ability of being interactive, and also can be naturally engaged in a conversation in order to communicate and negotiate what they want to say to the hearer, by a way that is comprehensible for the receiver of his message. And sometimes the speaker does not have the enough knowledge about the used language, but he tries in a way to transfer his message communicatively, because students in this case are more responsible of the follow and the development of their learning process.

1.10. The Significance of Classroom Interaction

Classroom is the adequate place where learners think to practice the language, take risks and realize progressions and classroom interaction is seen as a productive teaching technique. According to Allwright, (1984) classroom interaction is the process by which language learning is managed. The classroom demonstrates the comfortable environment that facilitates not only language development but also learners' development. In fact not all the forms of classroom interaction are similarly productive for language development, for this reason interaction must involve serious and meaningful concerns for the benefits of the learners, and therefore to stimulate communication among them.

Ellis (2003:103) stated that "the general goal of learning is the fluent, accurate, and pragmatically effective use of the target language". That is the fluency and the accuracy in using the language and being able to communicate effectively is the most important about

learning, even foreign language learners regard their oral proficiency as the most relevant skill to be improved and progressed through interactive atmosphere as a special communicative context with a much adjusted patterns of communicative behavior that are effectively negotiated between learners and teachers. Many patterns of classroom interaction can be viewed such as: group work, closed-ended teacher questioning, full class interaction and so on. Johnson (1995) argued when second language students enter classroom, they inter into a communicative context in which the norms of participation and to be established by the teacher, so the teacher responsibility is to promote the learners' ability to use the language in different interactive purposes; moreover, the teacher should take into consideration the fact that speaking in the classroom is speaking in an academic context, where learners engage in speech exchanges which resembles daily conversations, but are limited by institutional rules.

Nunan (1989) claimed that interaction helps learners their thinking in terms of interpreting, analyzing, and manipulating information; in addition to that, successful classroom is the one where learners collaborate in creating its events. Hall & Verplaetse (2000) stated that classroom interaction is a way that increases the development of two significant skills which are speaking and listening and it helps the learners to think critically and share their views among their peers. Hence through classroom interaction the learners will be able to get themselves involved in concepts, ideas and other dimensions of the language learning.

Conclusion

Classroom interaction involves face-to face learners who collaborate in the classroom to practice and use the language in real situations, this depends mainly on the fact that second and foreign language learning is highly an interactive process this interaction have a substantial effect on language learning and skills development. At the same time it allows learners to negotiate meaning to understand what others say and to make themselves understood in the process of communication; moreover, it provides students with more chances to maximize their talk through different activities that enable them to know how to communicate fluently and accurately.

So interaction is considered as a key factor for successful communication and for better improvement of learners' oral proficiency, it is a way of learning in general and improving language skills in particular. And both learners and teachers will not be able to achieve progress and improvement without this interaction, it gives learners the chance to be aware about how to initiate, respond and ends a conversation in a proficient manner.

Chapter Two

Oral Proficiency

Chapter Two: Oral Proficiency

Introduction

Recent studies in foreign language learning have treated different subjects concerning the oral proficiency of learners. However, the problem that most of foreign language learners encounter is that responding orally in the target language fluently and accurately. Foreign English language learners are often preoccupied with improving their oral production more than any other language skills, and have a strong desire to become fluent and accurate speakers since language is mainly concerned with communication and most of the communication process is performed through speech because language can not be acquired and developed if it is not used.

In this chapter, we will deal with the concept of oral proficiency in relation to listening since they are interrelated when communicating in the language, giving some definitions to the key terms of speaking, oral proficiency, listening, and the relationship between the two skills. Besides, the different aspects of the oral production and introducing some oral communicative strategies and techniques that may be explored in the classroom which help learners to be more interactive and to develop several competences especially the oral competence.

2.1. What is the Speaking Skill?

Speaking is one of the main skills required to start communication in any language, it is one of the productive skills of the oral mode that non native speakers need to develop, it is not a simple skill its complete mastery that requires some experience and practice, speaking involves not only pronouncing words but also the ability of producing and receiving information. As Luoma (2004:1) expresses it "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult, and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop." That is, being a

competent speaker means knowing knowledge of the language system including sounds, vocabulary and the ability to use them through utterances appropriately in a specific and different situations, Speaking occurs almost without any remarkable efforts because it is an activity which most of us spend a great deal of time engaged in apparently without any efforts and with not very much thought.

Another definition given by Widowsen (1978:59) he says: "speaking is part of reciprocal exchange in which both reception and production play apart, in this sense the skill of speaking involves both receptive and productive participation". Thus, through speaking and listening, students learn concepts and develop their vocabulary, moreover, speaking links individuals and enable them to communicate with each other so oral proficiency includes the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language, since speaking means to communicate with others, but when talking about speaking it does not mean teaching learners to speak, instead is promoting their ability to communicate using the language.

2.2. What is the Listening Skill?

Listening is a complex and difficult issue to be investigated, which means that it is not easy to give a simple and a direct definition, from this point of view Rost (1994:1) defined listening by saying "listening is less directly observed and less noticeable in both its development and its everyday use". That is students have to take their responsibility when listening in order to develop their listening skill, they need to be aware of the importance of listening in language learning because speaking a language depends on listening.

Students often find difficulties while they are listening to the language they are learning, in their learning practice learners are saddened by the inability to comprehend recorded dialogues or songs even if the elements of stress and intonation are slowly

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enunciated and it is established that listening is a basic language skill prior to other language skills. Taylor (1973:6) defines listening as:

> "The process of becoming aware of sound sequences, in listening to speech, the person first identifies the component sounds and then recognizes sound sequences as known words through the avenues of auditory analysis, mental reorganization, and/or association of meaning."

That is the listener has to know a series of sounds that are played sequentially and distinguishes the different elements of sound, and to realize and organizes them into perceptually meaningful elements.

2.3. Definition of Oral Proficiency

Different sources have been used to establish the meaning of the word "oral proficiency" and their explanations have similar character. However, in this work the word 'skill' will demonstrate the meaning of the word proficiency and oral proficiency focuses on the students' oral skill.

Language proficiency refers to the degree of skill or the extents to which learners can use a language to write, read, and speak or understand a language effectively. The concept of language proficiency would likely represent the ability to use competence, so speakers who are regarded as proficient are often characterized as "good" "fluent" "knowledgeable" "competent" and so on, in addition to some other researchers who suggested that oral proficiency determined by vocabulary and grammar, accent and fluency.

According to Taylor, (1983:166) the term proficiency designates something like "the ability to make use of competence." Performance then, is what occurs when proficiency is put to use, competence can be regarded as a static concept having to do with structure,

state, or form; whereas, proficiency is a dynamic concept it has to do with the process of function, this shows that language users who know the same language (the static sense of competence) can use this language (the dynamic sense of competence) and, as a result show their proficiency in performance.

So, a general definition of oral proficiency can be given as the learners' ability to speak, listen, as well as to use English in actual communication with the interlocutors without problems or obstacles, and this implies that there is a close relationship between speaking and listening, these two skills are interrelated since both falls within the oral mode of language. A proficient speaker of English in this case the learner, is the one who effectively asks or responds to questions, understands, expresses his/herself easily and accurately and tends to interact more with an interlocutor, also is capable of using oral language appropriately and in a skilled way because of practice.

Speaking is a fundamental skill that language learners need to master, it is defined as a complex process of sending and receiving messages via verbal expressions. According to oxford dictionary of current English (2000) speaking is the action of conveying information or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in spoken language, in fact speaking is the most commonly used form of communication. Also, it includes non verbal forms such as: gestures and facial expressions. According to Brown, (2001) speaking is the primary tool for communicating; it involves producing, receiving, and processing information, so it is an interactive process its meaning and form depends on the context where it occurs including participants, their sharing knowledge and the purpose of speaking. Hedge (2000:261) considers speaking as "a skill by which they (people) are judged while first impressions are being formed". This means that speaking is regarded as the most important proficiency that learners of foreign language require in order to be able to reflect upon their thoughts and experiences when they are using the language.

2.4. The relationship between Listening and Oral Production

Inside the classroom listening and speaking are the most often used skills. Brown (1994) claimed that listening and speaking are reorganized as critical for functioning in English language context, especially by the learners who seek to improve their oral production. So a part for learners for being proficient speakers, is listening to oral language and understanding what is said, as Redmond & Vrchota (2000:120) claimed "speakers are at the mercy of the listeners." That is the speaker is in necessity to the listener, and the same matter for the listener, because both of them are rarely carried in isolation. And for interaction or in the process of communication that takes place in the classroom environment, learners both as speakers or listeners must take a part in it through interacting and negotiating verbally.

Foreign language skills are said to be complementary to each other. Speaking usually relies on listening since listening is a receptive skill that enables learners to understand what others say in order to communicate or respond to them correctly. So this speaking skill rarely works in isolation, because the oral production is particularly related more to listening. Anderson & Lynch (2000:15) claim:

> "For the L2 learners to be a proficient partner in conversation, he needs to be skilled as both speaker and listener. However, this interdependence has not always been appreciated by language teachers and course writers, who have often separated off "listening" and "speaking" as discrete parts of language competence. Learners need to be given opportunities to practice both sets of skills and to integrate them in conversation."

Hence, speaking and listening are parts of language competence and they are required to be integrated together for successful conversation also, speaking and listening make a conversation more effective since effective speaking depends on correct listening for second language (L2). Bahns (1995) said that teaching listening aims for preparing learners for oral communication, he defended this idea when he said "it is imperative that developing listening is seen in combination with developing speaking". (cited in Lynch 2009:110). Thus, speaking requires to be practiced in relation with listening and the same idea was suggested by Harmer (2007:267) who stated that "the act of speaking involves the listening activity as well, because it would be impossible to complete a task successfully in one skill without involving other skill as least". It means that the process of communication demands from people who are communicating to listen to each other in order to respond verbally through utterances or speech. For that Brown (2001:275) said that "there is a natural link between speaking and listening". So teachers need to take into consideration the integration between listening and speaking when selecting classroom activities since oral language activities develop the English oral proficiency. Avery& Ehrlich (1992) distinguished between "reciprocal" and "non- reciprocal" listening, the latter refers to tasks such as listening to the radio for instance or formal lectures where the transfer of information is in one direction only from the speaker to the listener. However, the reciprocal listening refers to those listening tasks where there is an opportunity for the listener to interact with the speaker and to negotiate the content of interaction.

2.5. Developing Listening ability in the Classroom

Students' oral proficiency needs to be developed through the active use of both listening and speaking. Students have to focus on the listening skill which is an active process, and they must employ their active thinking in order to understand what is said in different situations, for this reason they need to be exposed to a great deal of spoken

language where they activate their listening skill. Some principles and guidelines for listening improvement can be summarized in the following points:

➢ Face-to-face interaction helps learners to develop their listening ability because they will have the chance in each time to learn new vocabulary, since face-to-face interaction encourages them to active their listening to realize how words are really pronounced.

➢ By organizing both the linguistic and non linguistic abilities learners can develop their understanding of the exact meaning of the target language content by focusing on the real reasons of using the language itself.

➢ Comprehension activities help developing listening ability. Learners here can evaluate themselves by having a well defined series of comprehension activities method that helps achieving a good listening ability.

➢ Giving attention to accuracy goes hand by hand with developing listening ability because learning how to produce correct sounds will make students have a great progress in spelling correctly which works on developing other things such being confident when using the language.

2.6. Aspects of Oral Production

Recently in teaching language, many approaches have been giving attention and more focus on classroom activities that emphasize the improvement of students' oral production.

In the communicative approach, the main criteria of speech which are complements of each other are fluency and accuracy. Hedge (2000:61) makes the emphasis on certain elements in saying that "the communicative approach somehow excuses teachers and learners from a consideration of how to develop high levels of accuracy in the use of

grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary". From this claim, learners should know how the language system works in a correct and appropriate way through the combination of fluency, accuracy, grammar and vocabulary because they are very important to accomplish appropriate speaking output. Therefore, the oral proficiency is multi-component concept, it involves several aspects which have been mentioned above. William et al., (2008, cited in Fred Genesee, 2006:14) claim that:

> "Developing proficiency in oral English involves acquiring vocabulary, gaining control over grammar, and developing an understanding of the subtle semantics of English. At the same time, acquiring proficiency in English involves learning how to use the language to interact successfully with other speakers of the language."

Therefore, anyone who wants to be a proficient speaker needs to have the necessary amount of words to accomplish the act of speaking, in addition to the correct use of grammar, and the ability to understand the hidden meaning and content behind the surface language, also the proficient speaker has to be able to communicate effectively with others through language.

2.6.1. Fluency

The main goal of English foreign language (EFL) teachers and learners is the achievement of fluency when producing the language since speaking is the main skill that learners are judged by when using and performing in the language. Segalowitz (2003:384) defines the term 'fluency' as the "ability in the second language to produce or comprehend utterances smoothly, rapidly, and accurately". So fluency is mainly a matter of concern because it is related to the effectiveness of communication, and for speech to be functional

and effective depends on the speaker ability to access words and phrases sufficiently fast, it is does not only "improve the quality of performance" it also "facilitates communication". (ibid:384).

Lennon (1990b, cited in David, 2010:11) defines fluency as an "impression on the listeners that the psycholinguistic process of speech planning and speech production is functioning easily and efficiently". In a narrow sense, fluency can be considered a component of oral proficiency, which is often used in assessing candidates' oral language skills in language testing.

Fluency is reflected in the rate of delivery and transmission of the flow of the speech, the rate of delivery can be divided into speed, and what might be termed "regularity" meaning the amount and distribution of pausing. Speed of delivery is also measured in terms of number of syllables per-minute, and speed is considered as a facet of fluency, there is also a matter of how pausing is distributed through the speech, because the speaker has to take breath and pause from time to time in order to give the opportunity for the interlocutor to catch what he is saying.

To achieve fluency, it is crucial to have control of the linguistic process in real time and to pay attention to relevant and appropriate information, in fact the key difference between fluent and no-fluent speakers is claimed to be the ability to formulate utterances smoothly under time pressure, nevertheless, everybody seems to agree that fluency is important, it concerns the learners' capability to produce language in real time without induce pausing or hesitation. So, oral fluency refers to those aspects of oral performance having to do with the fluidity or smoothness of language use.

2.6.2. Accuracy

Foreign language learners (EFL) seek to be fluent when they speak in the target language but, they neglect being accurate. Accuracy in speech and in producing utterances is very important in producing the language since it makes the speaker appears or sounds more comprehensible to his interlocutors. Skehan (1996b, cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005:139) defines accuracy as referring to "how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language". Thus, accuracy is the grammar structures that learners need to develop besides vocabulary and pronunciation. "Accuracy is concerned with a learner's capacity to handle whatever level of inter-language complexity s/he has currently attained. Complexity, and its attendant process, restructuring, relates to the stage and elaboration of the underlying inter-language system". (ibid.139).

Skehan shows the way in which accuracy is achieved by the organization of complex target language features that is complexity is the extent to which produce elaborated language, and that fluency is a result of a descend development of the inter-language system by means of accuracy.

2.6.3. Grammar

According to Hughes, (2002) the grammatical accuracy refers to the range of the appropriate use of the learners' grammatical structure that involves the length and the complexity of the utterances. The grammar of speech has its own constructional principles it is organized differently from writing. Spoken English has its own discourse markers too, for example: frequent non-casual units (eg: Mmm, uh, yeah) a variety of tags not found in written style such as question tags.

2.6.4. Vocabulary

In order to achieve accuracy in terms of vocabulary it depends on the appropriate selection of words while speaking. The problem that most of foreign language learners face when they speak, is mainly the lack of the right vocabulary they need to use to express what they want to say, also in the case of using synonyms which do not carry the same meaning of words in all communicative situations, because of the verbal nature of most classroom activities especially those of interaction, knowledge of words and ability to use the language are essential to succeed in these activities, this makes learners involved in such activities by exploring different words, and at the same time they learn about new words from their interaction with other peers, so this will make learners appear more fluent and accurate and well performed.

2.6.5. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the most important and the difficult problem that non-native English learners face when learning and using the English language. Incorrect pronunciation can lead to negative impression, misunderstanding and ineffective communication. Remond & Vrchota (2007:104) argue that "it is imperative that you can use the correct words in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation, pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood". So, if the pronunciation is not correct, the speaker will not be understood and accuracy is not achieved. In fact there are different aspects under this concept of pronunciation which are very important for the pronunciation of the words uttered by the speakers in order to convey their messages in an effective manner, and the interlocutor can understand what is really meant by what has been said.

2.6.5.1. Aspects of Pronunciation

Since pronunciation has occupied quite an important place in the field of language teaching and learning, much research have been conducted in this area, generally the non-native speaker or the learners in particular are not aware of the existence of phonetics, the teacher of the foreign language on the other hand is aware of this, but teachers face difficulties in teaching pronunciation as a subject in itself, or integrating it in the language class with other aspects. In this regard some aspects can be taking into consideration such as intonation, stress, and speech rate.

2.6.5.1.1. Intonation

A simple definition given by Crutteden (1999:7) for the term intonation when he said "intonation involves the occurrence of recurring pitch patterns, each of which is used with a set of relatively consistent meaning, either on single, or on groups of words of varying length". That is intonation is when pitch occurs and clearly noticed in speech to convey different meanings.

Intonation obviously is important for meaning in many different ways since it has many different functions, intonation is also used to convey emotions, involvement, and empathy. For example when asking a question like: what's going on? Here the speaker may start at quite a high pitch, it shows that the speaker is really surprised or frightened, on the other hand, if the speaker says the same question at a low pitch with a fairly flat intonation tune, so then it shows that the speaker is not concerned at the answer that the listener will get. Furthermore, intonation can indicate different types of utterances, such as statements and questions: when there is a fall rise of voice, this means that a question, and when the voice only falls so that it is a statement. Also it gives the listener lot of information about what is being said by the speaker, his attitudes and emotions.

2.6.5.1.2. Stress

Stress is an integral part of word shape, is the key of the word pronunciation. It is related to the value given to certain words in an utterance, these focus words are stressed in order to convey: the overall rhythm of the utterance, and its most meaningful parts. Stress then is very important because its position can change the meaning or the function of the words uttered by the speaker, so learners need to pay attention and take this concept into consideration when they are communicating with others. Jones (1991:511) defines stress as "a property of syllables which makes them stand out more noticeable than others; it is a stronger muscular effort both respiratory and articulatory, which we can feel in relation with some syllables as opposed to others". So it is something that we observe in oral speech used when the speaker wants to make more emphasize on certain words and most important things he need to focus on.

2.6.5.1.3. Speech Rate

Speaking rate has been found to be related to many factors: individual, demographic, cultural, linguistic, psychological and physiological. Speech rate can be defined as how fast and slow a person speaks and communicates with others in a given situation, rate is part of the paralanguage of speech and it accompanies all of the spoken language that the speaker use when conveying a message, attitudes and emotions. The speaker can vary and change the rate of his speech depending on his emotions and feelings or the type of the message he is communicating. For example, if the person shows excitement and joy, he will speaks at a fast rate comparing to another one who is expressing sad and bad status, he will speaks in a slow way using a few words, so the different elements that accompanies the speech of the speakers are very important for the learners to pay attention to, in order

be proficient speaker and to have the ability also to keep the proceeding of the conversation.

2.7. Oral Communication Strategies

For successful communication, students require more than the formal ability to represent a well and a range of formulaic expressions, Successful communication is context dependent and therefore, embedded in its particular discourse community, this is according to what Bizzell (1989) have been claimed.

As Halliday (1978:139) explains communication is more than merely exchange of words between parties it is a "… sociological encounter" and through exchange of meaning in the communication process, social reality is "created, maintained, and modified". Such capacity of language is also evident in Austin's earlier work (1962, cited in Clyne, 1994:2) on speech act theory where language and thus communication is an "…instrument of action". That is language is used to express on an activity or a behavior. Speech act theory, concerned with the communicative effect, that is the function and effect of utterances, divided an utterance into three components: the actual utterance (the locution) the act performed by the utterance (the illocution) and the effect of the act that has on the hearer (the per- locution).

Communication then, is a dynamic interactive process, which involves the effective transmission of facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and values. It is not passive, and does not just happen the speakers actively and consciously engage in communication in order to develop information and understanding required for effective group functioning. At this basic level, oral communication is the spoken interaction between two or more speakers, and to function successfully and professionally, one need to learn effective oral communication skills, for instance oral communication can take many forms, ranging from

informal conversation that occurs spontaneously, and in most cases, for which the content does not be planned, to participation in meetings, which occurs in structured environment. Oral communication skills are essential both within the classroom and society.

Accordingly, there are problems that learners and teachers face, but there are also ways to help students explore different ways of communicating. The most important aim of learning a second language in classroom context is mainly the acquisition and the improvement or the oral competence, which means when learners are able to communicate effectively and appropriately. Based on that, most of the learners face difficulties when it comes in taking parts in interactions.

Some researchers in this domain claims that, the most appropriate way of overcoming these issues that learners meet when communicating with each other, is through communicative strategies. Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005:170-171) define communicative strategies as "speakers-oriented; that is they are used by learners to compensate for lack of L2 knowledge or their inability to access the L2 knowledge they have". So these strategies help learners to cope with communication breakdowns, also to avoid oral communication problems when interacting with others. Hughes (2002) defines this term as the ability of the learners to manipulate a conversation and negotiate interaction in an effective way. Successful language learners have been reportedly adopting certain strategies to help themselves overcome with their problems in their learning process, in fact there is a strong connection between the learners with higher proficiency and the use of their learning strategies. So such strategies are important when facing problems of communication and expression.

Two main types of communicative strategies are classified by Bygate (1987) as follows: First, achievement strategies which include guessing strategies, paraphrase

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strategies, and cooperative strategies. Second, reduction strategies involving avoidance strategies.

2.7.1. Achievement Strategies

Students use such strategies to compensate for language gap by using a substitute; where they try to find a way to convey their messages such as replacing a word by another one about which they feel it fits more in a given communicative situation. And these strategies include the following sub-strategies:

2.7.1.1. Guessing Strategies

Generally this type of strategies is used in oral expression courses. Students use these strategies to replace a word that they are unsure about or they do not know, by other ones. Different types of guessing strategies can be used in different situations according to the learners' needs. Some of them can be mentioned such as:

2.7.1.1.1. Foreignzing

Where the learner may use a word from his/her mother tongue, and try to pronounce it as it belongs to the target language. For example a learner may foreignize an Arabic word to feel more successful in conveying his meaning, for instance when he pronounce the word "Saudi" as it is pronounced in Arabic.

2.7.1.1.2. Borrowing

Students may use this strategy to borrow; that it means loan or extract a word from their mother tongue and say it as it is, without changing it and hope that the listener will get it. As an example a French man saying "café" as it pronounced in his mother language

when talking with an English man, and consequently this man will understand it because it has nearly the same pronunciation in his English language.

2.7.1.1.3. Literal Translation

Learners in this strategy translate words from their mother tongue in order to overcome the difficulties that face when speaking. For example a Spanish man may say "does" instead of "two" translated from his mother tongue. "Dos"

2.7.1.1.4. Coining

Learners may create a new target language word based on what they already know, for instance "air ball" instead of "balloon"

2.7.2. Paraphrasing Strategies

This type of strategy involves seeking for an alternative to the needed word, the learner probes for a word or expression to replace the missing words by:

2.7.2.1. Substitution Strategy

In this strategy, the learner may replace a word by its synonym or by a more general word to cover the intended meaning.

2.7.2.2. Circumlocution

Here the learner may explain a word or a concept by making some sorts of phrases to express his meaning.

2.7.2.3. Co-operative Strategies

The learner uses such strategy when s/he gets help from other interlocutors. It means when the interlocutor helps him/her to say a word. The speaker then can point for

something that s/he does not know its name, or asks for the word through using it in the mother tongue and the listener helps him to find it in the target language.

2.7.4. Reduction Strategies

Learners may reduce their communicative objectives through abandoning what they want to say or altering their message by another one where they can speak effectively and confidently.

2.7.4.1. Avoidance Strategy

Students may find themselves in situations where they are not able to convey their meaning to their listeners, namely saying some sounds such as 'tr', 'th' in English, or repeated 'r' sound in French Bygate (1987) In this case, they use such strategies to avoid various kinds of problems they may face. For instance, students may avoid some difficulties in expressing their ideas because of the lack of vocabulary.

All the above strategies are very important to make students have the ability to use language effectively, and to be more proficient speakers when dealing with different communicative situations.

2.8. Techniques to Improve Oral Proficiency

Teachers should use techniques to encourage learners to use the language as much as possible in the classroom context. And the reason behind learning English as a foreign language for learners, is mainly to speak and communicate effectively and appropriately with each other for example, learning how to interact productively with their peers, speaking in an active and productive skill.

(EFL) teachers should use some techniques such as group work, role play and discussion which promote learners to take communicative initiatives. Thus, they provide them with a wide range of practicing the language.

2.8.1. Group work

Group work has been characterized as an interactional technique or dynamics for language classroom. A group work is classroom situation where learners are working within smaller unites or groups through interacting with each other in groups, learners can have the opportunity to oral exchanges, because these groups involves learners engaging in short, informal discussions and the teacher might aim from this method to get students involved in oral interaction, asking and answering questions. For example when the teacher asks his learners to predict the content of reading a text of five paragraphs then, they are divided into small groups, and each group chooses a paragraph of the text and scans it for detailed comprehension and formulates questions to test the comprehension of the other groups.

Oral interaction in groups is based on teal purpose to find a collaborative solution to problems. Moreover, in group work, learners focus on meaningful negotiation and information exchanges, learners are supposed to talk, practice, and use new features of the target language, as well as group work involves communicative tasks that are essential to develop learners' oral proficiency, because it demands learners' participation in orally purposeful activity, for this reason learners should be familiar with the topic of the discussion, and here it comes the role of the teacher which is get the students talk and stimulate their interest and imagination.

So group work allows students to work at certain piece together, and the teacher is not considered as the only source of information, but students learn from each other as well.

This creates opportunities for students' knowledge to be shared and developed of course with the teacher permanent support. Therefore it helps them to build up their independence and confidence.

2.8.2. Role-plays

Role-play is an authentic technique that involves language use in real interaction context. It involves format for using elements of real life conversation and communication. Revell (1979:60) sees role-play as an "individuals' spontaneous behavior reacting to others in hypothetical situation." this means that role- play invites students to speak through a fictions identity in an imagined situation. Also in terms of social interaction and cultural awareness role-play has effective effects since they bring the outside world into the classroom, as Porter (1987:6) states: "The overall aim of role-play is to train students to deal with the unpredictable nature of language". Moreover it encourages and promotes spontaneous aural exchanges between students, so it creates a sense of active participation among them. The teacher then, has not only to identify the situation which will stimulate the discussion, but also gives them the role that matches the requirement of their personalities, and role- play topics should be taken form learners' current interest and anticipated experiences such as designing an activity that ranges from telling a story to acting out a situation where participants have to improvise and create. This will increase the learners' self confidence as a speaker and motivates him to participate more.

So role- play can often be fun and entertaining way of getting the class to practice the second or the foreign language, and help them learn to be creative, and imaginative.

2.8.3. Discussions

Discussions can be seen as an exchange of ideas and opinions, and classroom discussions enable students to invent, create, imagine, and take risks, they take place only in a climate in which learners feel safe to offer their ideas, or within a context of a group with students talking among themselves. It is a technique for developing oral production through the exchange of ideas, opinions, and viewpoints. This mainly student- directed and teacher guided discussion, for instance, the teacher asks his learners to read a short story in order to discuss it in a given session, and while this discussion, learners may increase their level of comprehension, and improve listening as well, which is an important part of developing the oral production. Teachers have to keep in mind that topic for discussion are not selected randomly, the teacher has to respect the following points for successful discussion:

> ➤ Provide the students with a variety of input sources such as video- recording, short stories or simply texts, based on them they will discuss and debate.

> ➤ Discussions do not always have to be about serious issues, learners are likely to be more motivated to participate if they are familiar with the topic and they have what to say.

> ➤ Using small groups instead of the whole class discussion because it makes the participation difficult and maybe not all the learners are going to have a chance to participate.

> ➤ At the end of the discussion the teacher may do a report to show the learners the main results of the discussion concerning different points such as: give them feedback on grammar and pronunciation problems, in order to be corrected with the whole class, to avoid individual correction that may discourage students to take a part of the participation other time.

2.8.4. Problem Solving

Generally the term problem solving can be explained as an activity or a technique that requires learners to find solutions to problems of different kinds. This type of activity promotes more interaction among learners in the classroom environment, thus students will become more involved to achieve and realize their goals.

In other words, learners in problem solving task, are supposed to collect the necessary information to solve certain problems, through oral expression, in addition to negotiation of meaning in which they make themselves understood by others by using comprehensible input. due to the fact that, this kind of cooperative activity demands learners to make suggestions, give arguments and reasons to support and defend their opinions and ideas, at the same time negotiate, and modify the different suggestions given by others.

All in all, this activity provides learners to use language a range of communicative situations, which allows them to produce the language using a variety of words and expressions according to the topic of discussion, and this will help and give them chances to learn new vocabulary, also to learn how to be fluent and accurate when using the language, to make conversation more functional, and to develop their oral skills for managing interactions without finding breakdowns.

So role-play is a direct interactive method, is considered as an authentic technique for language use in interactive context, its main goal is train students for different interactive skills which are assumed to be developed through oral use of language, besides it promotes spontaneous oral exchanges between participants.

Conclusion

In today's foreign language classroom, lot of studies have promoted an emphasis on the oral production and mainly the oral proficiency of the learners. As a strong deal of evidence that suggests the more foreign language input learners are exposed to, the greater will be their proficiency. and there is no doubt that foreign language learners and teachers need to be aware of the fact that foreign language proficiency involves both the integration of listening and speaking not just speaking alone, because a better oral production depends on the effective listening of the participants. So throughout this chapter we have focused on for the improvement of the student's oral production, teachers should provide learners with effective oral practice through the adaptation of a range of techniques and procedures through which their oral proficiency may develop, and these techniques also are considered to be a way of creating an interactive classroom context in which students may improve and develop their abilities since it involves them in real communication.

Chapter Three

Filed Work

Chapter Three: Field Work

Introduction

The two previous theoretical chapters have shown the contribution and the effect of interaction among learners in the classroom on their oral production and language proficiency focusing on the importance of classroom activities that may create an interactive context in which students develop their oral abilities.

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and the analysis of the data obtained through the implementation of the present research which aims to see whether classroom interaction improves learners' oral proficiency or not through various techniques that can be used in the classroom in which students may improve their oral performance. This study is conducted through two research instruments a questionnaire which is one of the most common tools in collecting data that have gained considerable attention in the social sciences. Its goal is to find out answers to questions in a systematic way, the questionnaire administered to English third year students of Mohamed Kheider University to test the hypothesis, besides using classroom observation to obtain life information about the study this section includes: aim, population, description, administration, and analysis of the gathered data and finally the results' interpretation and pedagogical recommendations.

3.1. Students' Questionnaire

3.2. Aims of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is mainly designed to obtain information about students' attitudes and opinions concerning classroom interaction, and to test our hypothesis whether interaction among learners in the classroom has an effect and role in helping them improving their oral proficiency level.

3.3. Population and Sampling

The population investigated in this study concerns a sample of third year students in the department of English at the university of Biskra Mohamed kheider, their overall number is about (340) divided into ten (10) groups, and the sample consists of (80) students, randomly assigned for the investigation of the study.

3.4. Description of the Questionnaire

Along with the design of the current structured questionnaire it contains twenty (20) questions arranged in a logical way, they require closed questions and multiple choice asking students to choose one answer from different choices, or answering by 'yes' or 'no' and sometimes by giving their justification.

Section One: General information (Item 1 to Item 3)

This section looks for general information about students' gender and their English language level.

Section Two: Students' interaction in the classroom context (Item 4 to Item 14)

This section investigates students' attitudes about classroom interaction and its effectiveness using different activities.

Section Three: Students' oral proficiency in classroom context (Item 14 to Item 20)

This section probes students' opinions about improving their oral production through classroom interaction.

3.5. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to third year (LMD) students of English language at the University of Mohamed kheider Biskra. The selection of the population is based on the consideration that students of third year have already experienced the term interaction with their teachers and peers in the classroom, which allows them to interact and practice the language in the classroom. This questionnaire was distributed to (80) students which represents the whole population of (340) students at the beginning of the session and collected at the end of the session.

3.6. Analysis of the Results

Section One: Background Information

Item 1: Gender
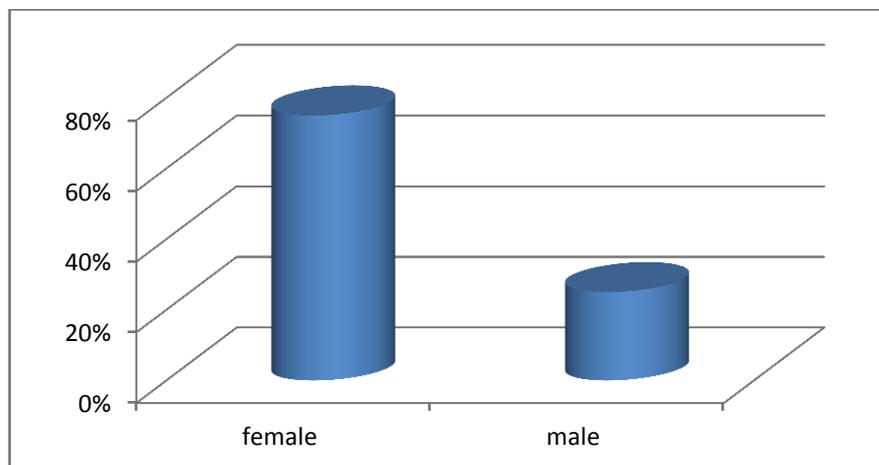
Graph 3.1: Students' gender

This graph shows that the majority of the respondents are females (75%) whereas the male number is only (25%) this mainly can be interpreted by the fact that females are tend to learn the English language more than males, in addition females are likely more interested to learn foreign languages in comparison to males, because the majority of them are looking are looking to gain job as teachers for instance which is not males interest. On

the other hand, this shows that females are more helpful and cooperative in answering this questionnaire and the rest of males they did not like to answer.

**Item 2:** Which language skills do you need to improve most?
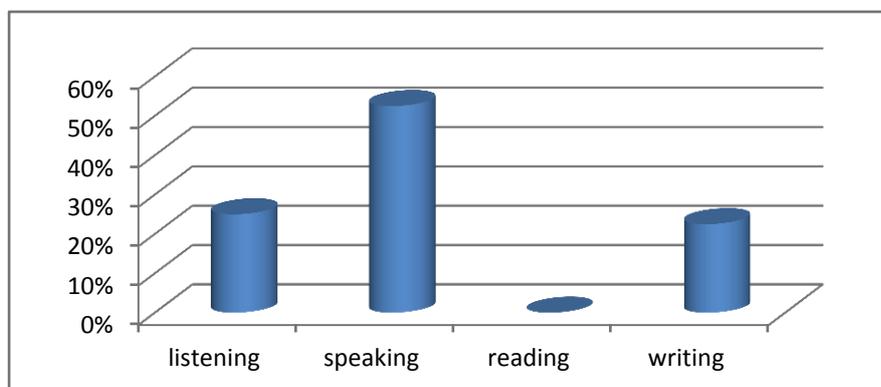
Graph 3.2: The most needed skill to be developed

For this question students were asked to tell us which language skills they really want to improve. The results demonstrate that (52.5%) of the students have answered by choosing speaking in the first place followed by (20%) of the respondents picked the listening skill in the second place, then the rest of the students (18%) put writing as their needed choice, however, reading skill have not been chosen by anyone (0%).

The final classification of the responses is as follows: the speaking skill first, the listening skill second, the writing skill third, and finally the reading skill. The main goal of this question is to find the most skills needed to be developed by students and since the first choice was given to speaking followed by listening, this gives an impression that the majority of students are attempt to improve their oral production speaking and listening which they go together. Form this results we conclude that the main aim of learning a foreign language is to be able to speak it appropriately and proficiently besides listening which takes place before speaking.

Item 3: How would you assess your level in English?
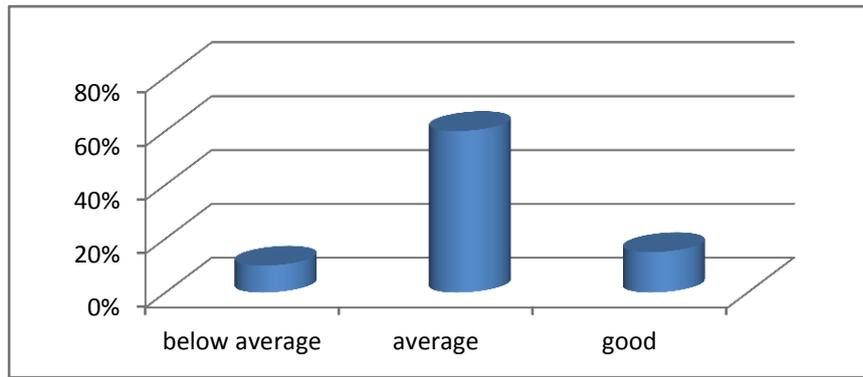
Graph 3.3: Students' level of English speaking

In this question students are asked to describe their speaking ability in the English language, to answer this question students were required to rank their level of oral production from below average to good. We have recorded (60%) of students who have answered by average, and (15%) said that their level is good, besides (10%) who claimed that their level is below average. So, the most given responses was for the average and good. This shows that the majority of students evaluate their level of using the English language between average and good.

Section Two: Students' interaction in the classroom context

Item 4: Which course do you interact more in? Justify please.
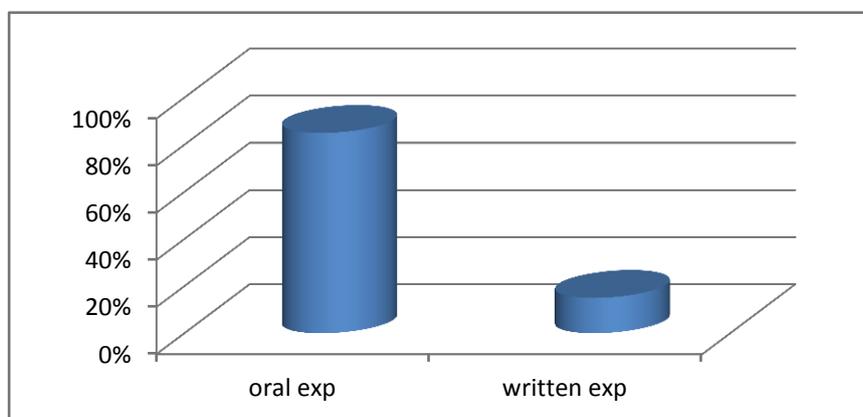
Graph 3.4: The course of more interaction

This question requires learners to indicate in which language course they do interact more in. (85%) of the students have said oral expression course and (15%) have chosen written expression.

Students who have said they interact more in oral expression course justified their answer by saying that in oral classes they speak more than in written expression, and others said that they feel free to express their ideas and opinions orally which allows them to have more chances to be engaged in oral communicative situations, in addition to others who said is almost the only opportunity given to them to communicate using the English language because they do not practice it outside the classroom. Moreover, there are some others who claimed that during the oral session they are exposed more to the language and they practice it as much as they can, which gives them chances to improve their pronunciation and learning how to be accurate and fluent. Concerning those who have answered by saying oral expression they are aiming to develop their writing more than speaking.

Item 5: Does your teacher give you the opportunity to interact in the classroom with your peers?
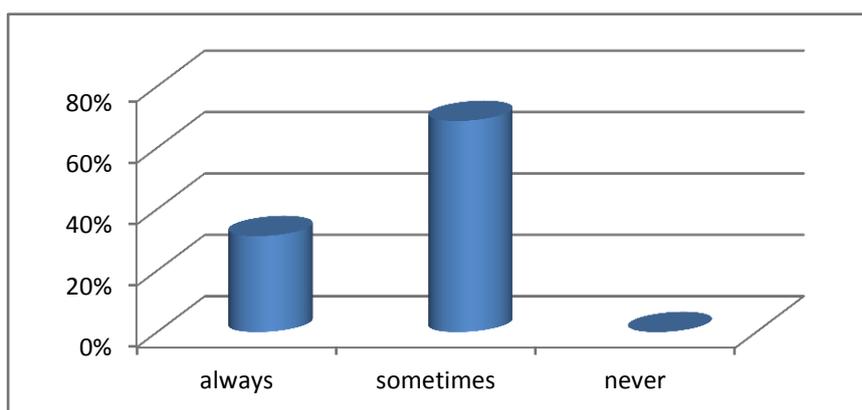

Graph 3.5: Students' interaction opportunities

In this question students have been asked whether their teachers give them opportunities to interact with each other in the classroom. (31.25%) of the students answered by saying always (68.75%) said sometimes and no one has answered with never

that is (0%). Unfortunately, the results give us an idea that the majority of the teachers do not give their students enough opportunities to interact and communicate with each other in the classroom context.

Item 6: Which types of classroom interaction do you prefer?
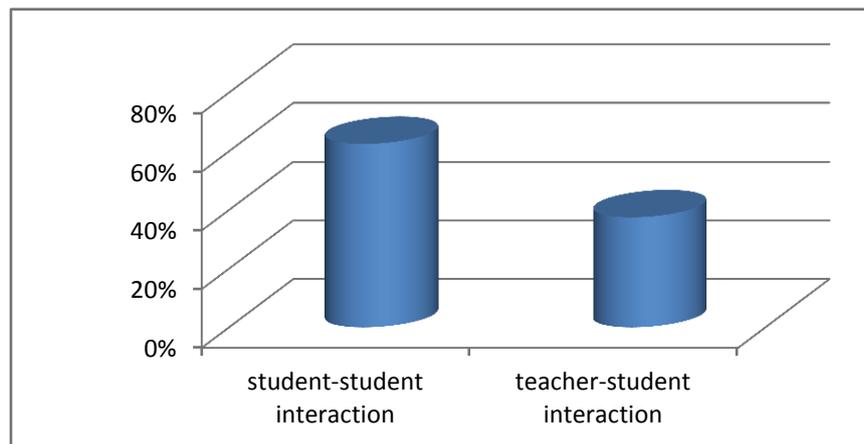
Graph 3.6: Students' preferred type of classroom interaction

As the graph above shows (37.5%) of students declared that the prefer teacher-students interaction, and (62.5%) who have preferred student- student interaction. The results gained demonstrate that student- student interaction is the most favorable and preferable type of interaction in the classroom which gives an impression that they want to interact and communicate more with their peers because they feel free and comfortable. Others who said they want teacher- student interaction maybe they want to have more contact with their teacher, which is their biggest source of knowledge.

Item 7: When you interact with your peers in the classroom, do you give priority to:
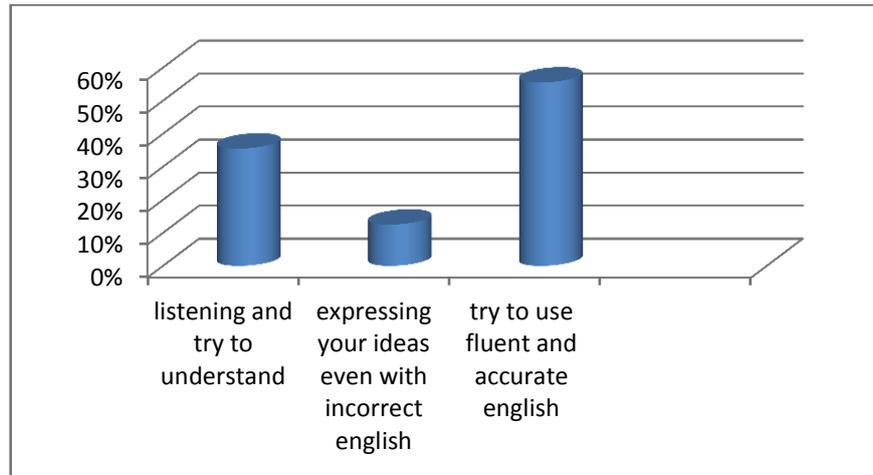
Graph 3.7: Students' priorities in interaction

When students interact and communicate with each other in classroom each student has his own needs and goals from using the English language. The purpose behind this question is to discover the most important things for students and which things they give priority to when it comes to the use of the English language in the interactive classroom context. The results show that (55%) of students give priority to try to use fluent and accurate English, and (32.5%) said they prefer to listen and try to understand and the rest of the students have said the most important thing for them is to express their ideas even with incorrect English.

From the above results, one conclusion can be deduced that is the majority of students want to practice the English language as much as they can by trying to be fluent and accurate, besides improving their listening skill, which is needed for better understanding and better acquirement of any language because listening comes before speaking those students want to improve their listening first in order to be able to speak well. For (12.5%) of students who said they want to speak and express their ideas even in

incorrect manner; this means they want just to speak and produce the English language in fact this will help them to develop and improve their oral production.

Item 8: What kinds of classroom activities are helpful to improve your oral production?
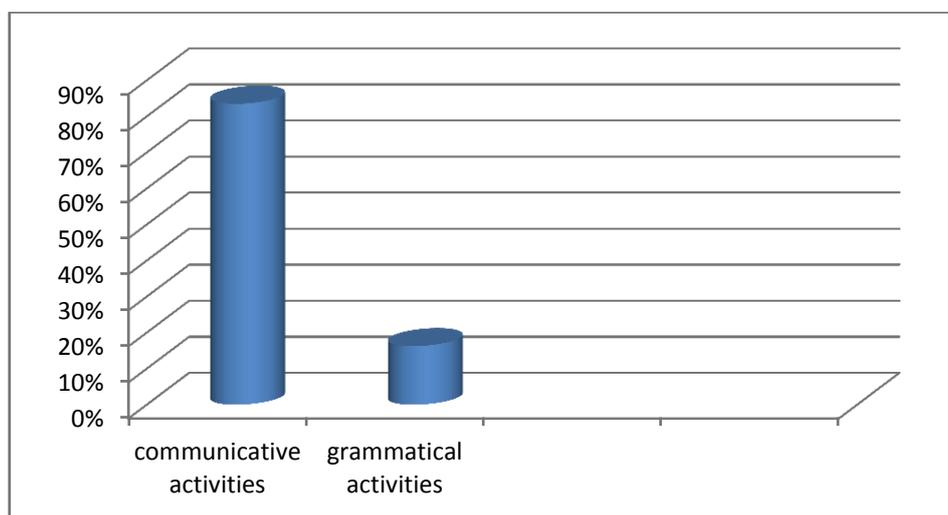
Graph 3.8: Classroom activities

The reason behind this question is, to know which type of classroom activities they prefer to improve their oral production. Based on the above results (83.75%) stated that their favorable activities are that communicative activities and (16.25%) of students who have chosen grammatical activities in order to improve their oral production.

From these results, we can deduce that most of the students prefer type of activities which are based more on the use and the practice of the English language, this is clear that they want to be more familiar with how to use the language to interact and communicate, which means they focus more improving their oral production through maximum provided communicative situations, Since these activities provide them with opportunities to develop different aspect of the language including grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects.

The other students who said they prefer the kind of grammatical activities, it means they need to develop their use of grammar when producing the language because grammar

is very important when using any language, this gives us an idea about the needs and interests of the different students, the majority of students want to further their skills to be communicative and orally proficient speakers, and others want just to know how to use appropriate grammar sentences.

Item 9: Do you think classroom interaction activities are useful to improve your oral production? Justify please.
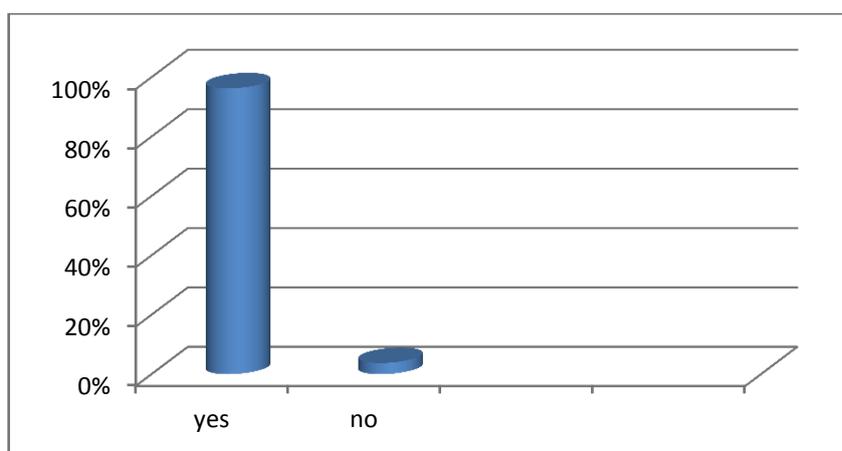
Graph 3.9: Students' opinions about classroom interaction activities

The main goal behind addressing this question is, to know whether classroom interaction activities which means activities that promote interaction among students in classroom help them to improve their oral proficiency or not by justifying their answers.

In fact (96.25%) of the students have been answered by 'Yes' against just (3.75%) who answered by 'No'. This implies that students who answered by 'yes' they find these activities useful and helpful, the majority of them justified their answer by saying during their interaction with their peers and their teacher in classroom through the use of different activities they feel their level of oral performance is being developed in each time because they practice the English language in an interactive context, which gives them chances to develop their skills including vocabulary, pronunciation, how to be accurate and fluent,

and how to negotiate meaning of different topics, also they learn how to take turns from one speaker to another and how to deal with conversation breakdowns.

The other students who said 'no' they claimed that they do not like the type of the activities given by their teacher because they are not motivational activities that make them encourage interacting and speaking.

Item 10: Which amount of talk do you think should be maximized?
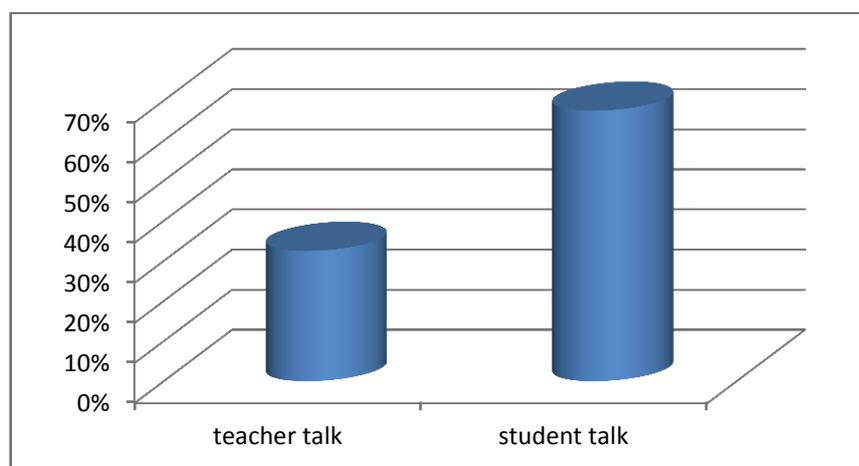
Graph 3.10: The most needed amount of talking

This question was addressed to students to see their views about the most amount of talk or speaking they prefer to be more practiced and maximized in the classroom. From the responses given by them, student talk have received the highest proportion of students as number of (67.5%) and (32.5%) of the remaining students have answered by choosing the teacher talk. These results means that the majority of students want to have as much as they can chances and opportunities to talk and practice the English language in the classroom, whether with their teacher or with their peers, and here comes the teachers' responsibility to provide the space for his students to take the big part of classroom talk.

Item 11: In the classroom context, you are interested more in:
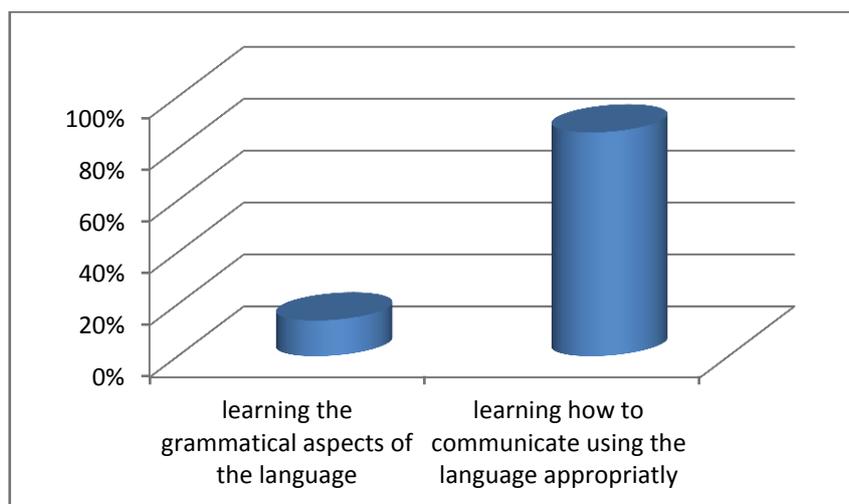
Graph 3.11: Students' interests

The reason behind asking students this question is to know their main interest and concern when learning the English language in the classroom context. The results shown by the graph implies that (86.25%) of students answered by saying they are interested more in learning how to communicate using the language. And (13.75%) of the students are interested in learning the grammatical aspects of the language.

The interpretation that can be made is that most of students want to be communicatively competent and proficient speakers they are aiming to be able to use the English language appropriately in a given communicative situations, their goal is to have the ability to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and opinions correctly and proficiently since interaction and communication involves asking for something, requesting or any other needs. So these students are looking to know how to use language when they are interacting with other people it means they are not looking to learn the English language superficially but, to improve their oral proficiency.

The rest about (13.75%) claimed that their interest is to learn the grammatical aspects of the language which means they consider language learning as knowing the grammar features and how to use them real communication.

Item 12: How do you qualify classroom interaction as a way to improve your oral proficiency?
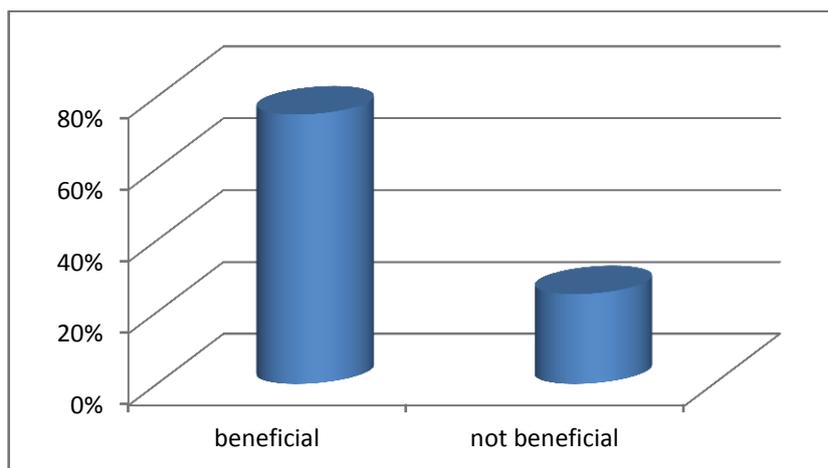
Graph 3.12: The qualification of classroom interaction

Based on this question addressed to students to see their opinions about how they find classroom interaction as a way to improve their oral proficiency. The results gathered show that (75%) of students have answered by saying 'beneficial' which denotes they have benefited from it and find it as a good way in order to be orally proficient since interaction with people is the only way to be aware about the different features of a language and how to use them appropriately in communication. However, the rest (20%) of students who have answered by saying 'not beneficial' explains that they do not find classroom interaction as beneficial and useful way to enhance their oral skills.

Item 13: Does interaction in classroom help you to be more aware about your oral weaknesses? Justify please.
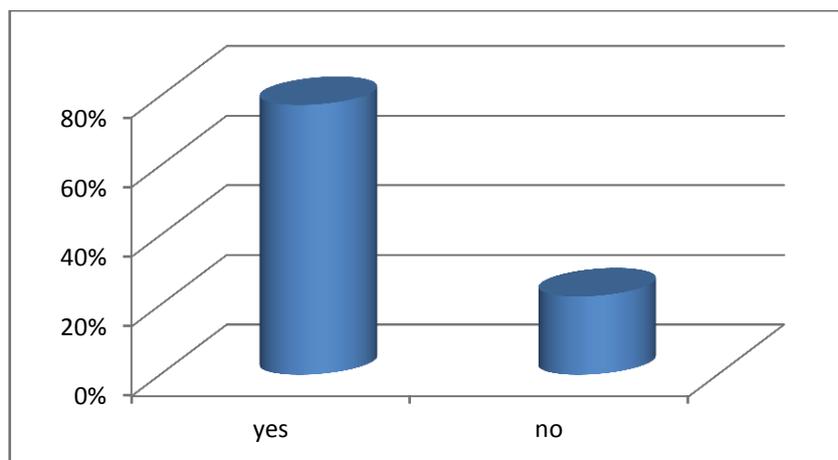
Graph 3.13: Students' awareness of their oral weaknesses

The aim of this question is to see whether classroom interaction helps students to be aware of their oral weaknesses and mistakes when they are producing the language orally, the statistics related to this item show that the majority of students (77.5%) have answered by saying 'yes' while the others answered by 'no' given their percentage of (22.5%).

Students who said 'yes' justified their answer by writing when they interact in classroom, this helps them to see and discover their mistakes at the same time they try to correct them, also through this interaction they learn to improve their oral production by reducing making mistakes in order to convey what they want to say in correct and comprehensible manner. Furthermore, they claimed through interaction they develop their self confidence and motivation to produce more the language and this will make them more encouraged to speak and practice it. On the other hand students who answered by 'no' said their classroom interaction does not help them to be aware about their oral weaknesses, because as they said the activities given by their teachers are not motivational and they do not like to interact in such activities.

Section Three: Students' Oral Proficiency in the Classroom Context

Item 14: In your opinion, being proficient speaker is:
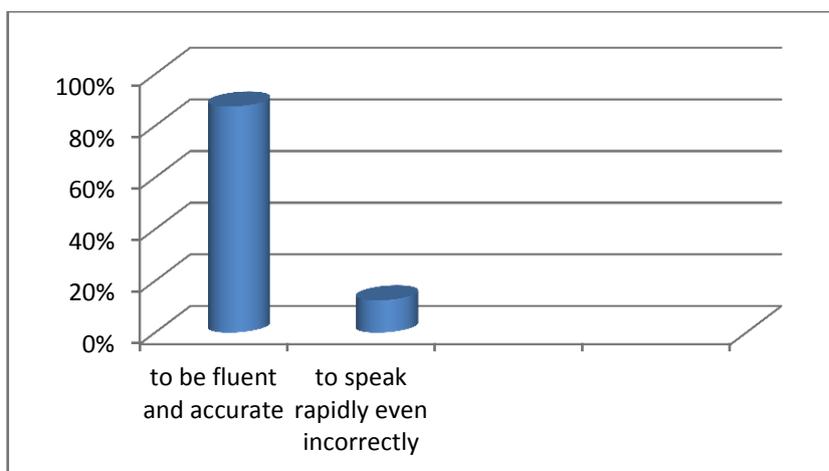
Graph 3.14: Students' opinion about a proficient speaker

Through this question we tried to know students' opinions and viewpoints concerning what would qualify a speaker as proficient. From the choices given to them the results show that (87.5%) of students see that being proficient speaker means to speak fluently and accurately that is the use of correct grammar, vocabulary, and the correct pronunciation of words besides, producing the language without hesitation and pausing.

So these students are looking to be real proficient speakers mastering the language system. The other students (12.5%) said to be proficiently speaker is to speak rapidly even incorrectly, these students are not looking to use correct language system their main goal is to speak in rapid manner and they do not care about the correct use of grammar and lexis because all these elements contributes to the understanding of the message.

Item 15: To develop your oral proficiency you need to develop you listening first:
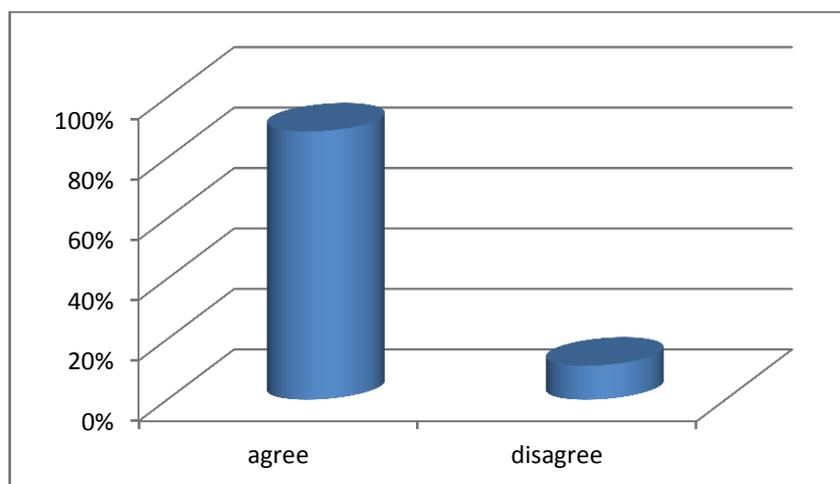
Graph 3.15: Students' opinion about developing listening skill

This question aimed to know students' opinions about the improvement of listening skill first in order to improve their oral proficiency since these two skills are interrelated and go to gather when using any language.

Based on the above gained data, a clear view can be taken from the respondents answers that mostly (90%) of students as the graph shows (88.75%) said they agree that improving their oral proficiency needs improving their listening first, they believe that a good listener is a good speaker. Others said when someone listen well to what is said he can be able to grasp the sounds of words correctly as they have been uttered, and through this he will learn new words with correct pronunciation as well. Also other students said through listening they learn how to use language aspects and features appropriately according to different situations and according to their needs as well. Concerning the rest (11.25%) of students claimed they do not need to improve their listening they want just to improve their oral production of the English language through the continuous practice and use of the language.

Item 16: How do you evaluate your oral production during classroom interaction?
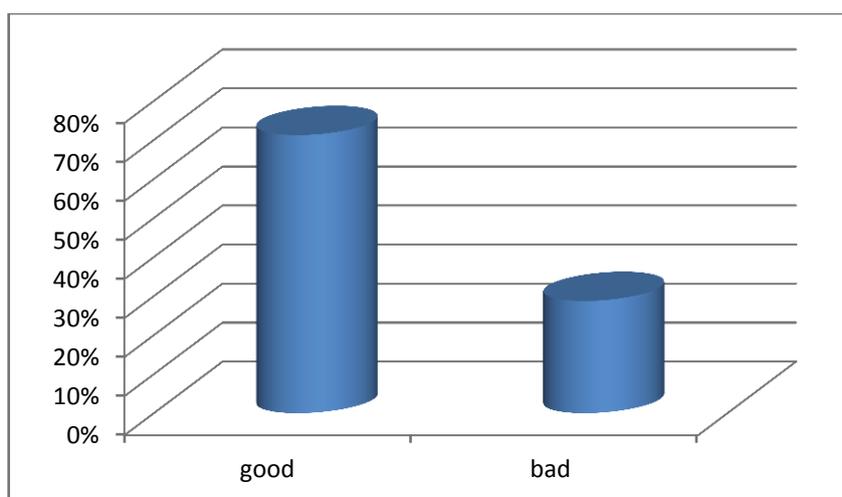
Graph 3.16: Students' evaluation of their oral production

From the data gained a number of (71.25%) of students the choice 'good' was their answer and (28.25%) of them have answered by saying 'bad'. This indicates that the highest number of students evaluated their oral production during their interaction with their teachers and classmates in the classroom as being good, which means they find it as helpful way to practice and use the English language and at the same time their oral production is developed through it maybe, because they feel more comfortable when using the language in interactive context. Whereas less than (30%) did not evaluate their oral production as being good during classroom interaction and this may be because they lack self confidence and they do not learn much more about how developing their oral capacities through interactive communications.

Item 17: How does classroom interaction affect your oral production?
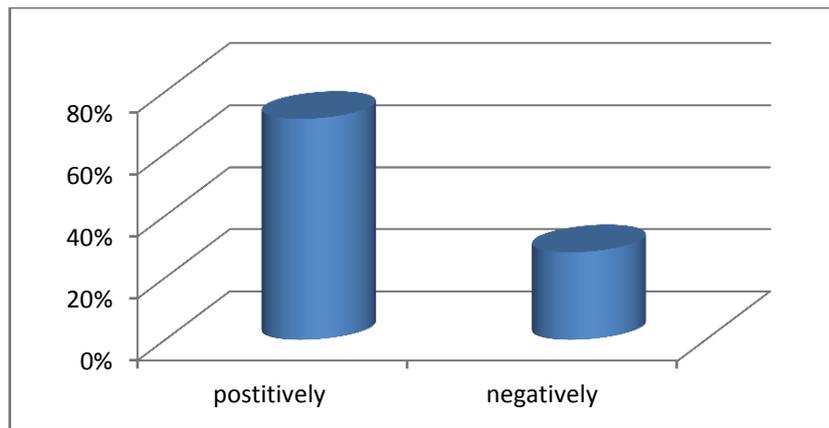
Graph 3.17: Students' attitudes towards the effect of classroom interaction

Through the results of the above question the answer (positively) have gained (71.25%) of students responses, and (28.25%) of them chose the answer (negatively). We can conclude from the answers that interaction in the classroom has a good and a positive effect on students' language development, that is they have benefited from their interaction and they have improved their language through their communication. On the other hand, the other students do not see classroom interaction has a positive effect on their oral production and this is maybe due to different reasons.

Item18: In oral classroom sessions, which of the following techniques do you enjoy most? Justify your choice please
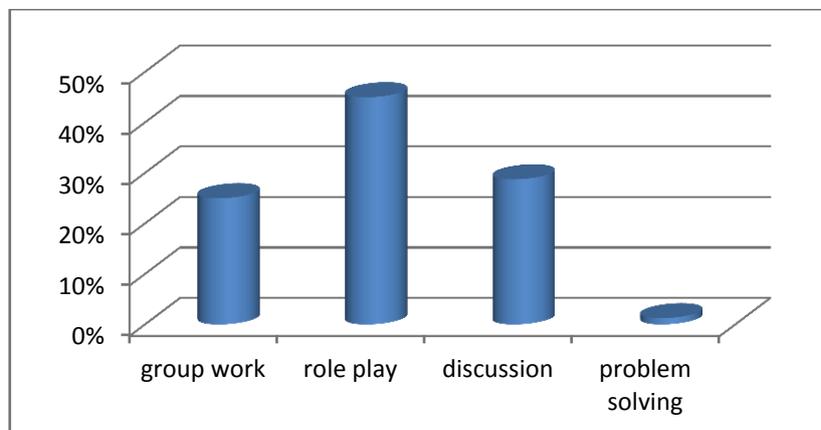
Graph 3.18: Techniques preferred by students

This question aimed at investigating which technique students enjoy more during oral classroom sessions, and giving their justification about their choice. The answers are varied according to the students' favorite technique.

The results show that (45%) of students have chosen role play they justified their choice as they said, it gives them the opportunity to express themselves orally which helps them develop their self confidence, and learn how to use language to do and express the desired needs and interests, besides they said this technique motivate them to speak more to ameliorate their oral abilities since they deal with different roles and a variety of topics. (28.75%) of other students chose discussion, this category of students prefer this kind of technique because, they said it makes them speak spontaneously and exchange ideas and thoughts between them. Also, they believe that discussions make them negotiate meaning and think about how to use language appropriately and effectively, Such as how to take turns from one person to another and, how to do different requests when asking for clarification or explanation.

The other category of students (25%) prefer group work, they see this technique as a good way to learn from each other's ideas and thoughts. And they feel more comfortable when they work cooperatively since this deduces pressure and avoid feeling afraid. The last choice problem solving unfortunately have not been chosen just by one student (1.25%) and he said he wants to be more able to solve problems of different issues using the language. From the above results we conclude, most students prefer between role-play and discussion in order to improve their oral proficiency.

Item 19: Do you see classroom interaction techniques helpful to improve your oral proficiency?
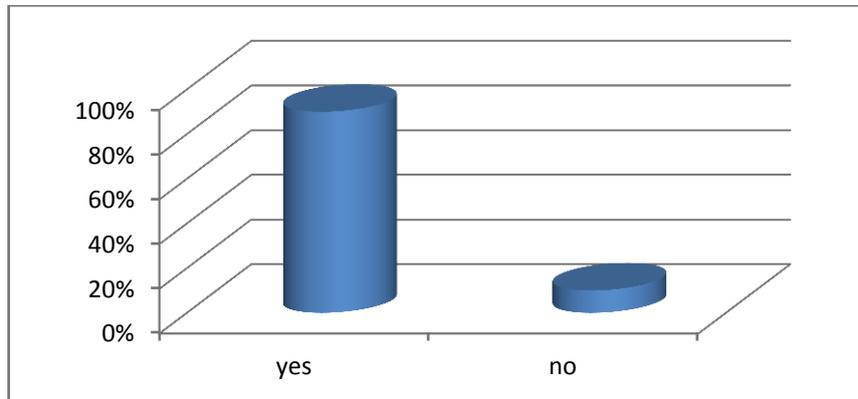
Graph 3.19: Students' attitudes towards classroom interaction technique

After the previous question which aims to discover students' favorite technique, this question seeks to know their attitudes towards using these techniques to improve their oral proficiency. It can be seen from the graph that (90%) of students said 'yes' which means they find them as helpful and useful techniques to improve their oral proficiency. On the other hand, just (10%) of students who have answered by 'no' which give us the impression that they do not see these techniques as a good way to improve their oral proficiency maybe they find other ways more helpful.

Item 20: Do you agree that in order to be proficient speaker you need to be involved in interactive situations? Justify please.
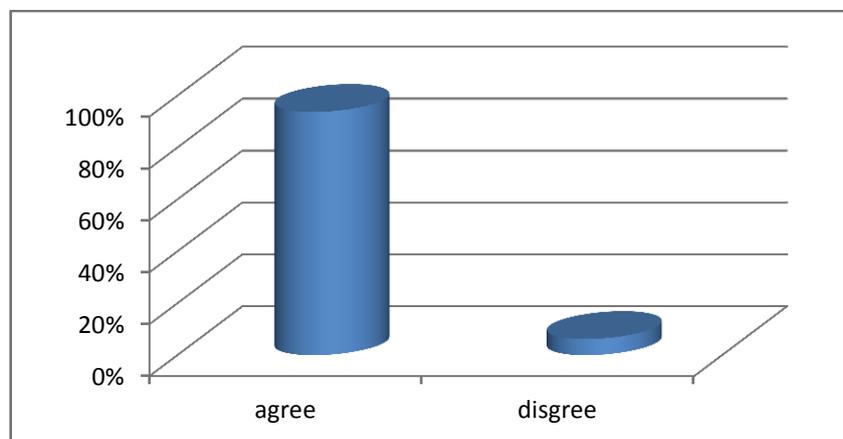
Graph 3.20: Students' opinions about being proficient as a result of interaction

This item seeks to know whether students agree or disagree that to be proficient speakers they need to be involved and practice the language in an interactive situations.

The results gained show that almost all the students with a percentage of (93.75%) answered by saying they 'agree' they justified their answer by claiming that interaction with people and other speakers is very important to develop their oral English since the language can be developed only by interacting and communicating with others, they said also through interaction they learn how to be proficient speakers because through the consistent interaction with people they practice the language as much as they can, as they said interaction gives them more chances to be aware of how the English language should be used in various situations. The other (6.25%) of students said they disagree and they justified by saying they prefer to develop their oral proficiency by themselves using different ways such as watching videos of native speakers and listening to native speakers' conversations

3.7. Results Interpretation

After submitting and analyzing students' questionnaire, a final view maybe drawn: In general, foreign language learning is a process where students interact and express their thoughts and feelings using the target language in this case the English language through which they aim to speak and communicate effectively.

Section one was mainly about general information of our sample of the study. The results reveals that females are dominant over males, this is maybe females are more interested to learn English. Besides, the majority of students are more interested to improve their oral production that is their speaking when they were asked which language skill they want to improve the most in addition to listening as well since these two skills are

interrelated. More than a half of the students evaluate their level in speaking English between average and good.

Section two was about students' interaction in the classroom. Various questions were addressed to them starting with which course do they interact more in, and the majority of them claim they interact more in oral classes because as they said speaking opportunities are much provided in oral expression sessions than any other sessions, where they talk freely and use the language orally as much as they can. It was clear from the results that teachers do not give enough opportunities to their students to interact in the classroom as students said just sometimes. It was obvious from the student's responses they prefer to interact with their peers more than with their teachers, where they give priority to use fluent and accurate English which means they want to improve their oral language in an interactive environment.

For classroom activities, most students select communicative activities that are based more on communication and interaction which implies they attempt to have more chances to use and practice English. At the same time they see these activities useful and helpful to improve their oral abilities; they said these kinds of activities help them improve their level of speaking from different aspects such as learning how to use accurate grammar and vocabulary according to their interactive situation.

Concerning the talking time of both teachers and students in classroom, most students give priority of their talk that should be maximized because classroom is their only place where they practice the language. Furthermore, students are likely interested in learning how to communicate with the language more than learning just the grammatical aspects of the language, so they are aiming to work more on improving their oral production when they communicate with others.

Moreover, students claimed that through interaction in classroom, they became aware of their oral weaknesses as being mentioned in their responses, learning a language is due to communication and interaction, and since their goal is to develop their oral language.

Classroom then, provides them large space to discover their mistakes and weaknesses with the guidance of their teachers.

In section three which focuses on students' oral proficiency in classroom context, we started by asking students about what is a proficient speaker in their opinion and the most of them said that a proficient speaker is the one who speaks fluently and accurately. So they put fluency and accuracy as a characteristic of proficient speaker. In addition, they believe that in order to develop their oral proficiency they need to develop their listening first, they claimed good listener means good speaker and when they listen carefully they give themselves chances to learn how to use words in their appropriate context. Besides they evaluate their oral production as a result of classroom interaction as 'good' which give us an idea that their level is being developed during their interaction in the classroom, and this led them to claim that classroom interaction affects their oral language production in a positive way.

In oral classroom sessions the majority of students and enjoy more when they interact through role-plays and discussions. So, they said these are the most preferred techniques used in classroom in order to create an interactive and communicative environment where they explore their feelings, thoughts, and ideas using the language, at the same time they learn how to express their needs and messages appropriately and effectively and they see these techniques as helpful way to improve their oral proficiency.

3.2. Classroom Observation

3.2.1. Description of Classroom Observation

The researcher has employed classroom observation to obtain deeper information and live data about the current study from real life situation. The researcher has carried out the classroom observation with third year students of English department at Biskra University.

Four groups have been chosen randomly, three groups with the same teacher and one group with another teacher, the observation was for one hour and half that is the whole time. The observation sheet was divided into two sections, the first section is about general observation of the classroom, and the second section was devoted for specific aspects of classroom interaction.

Section One: General Observation of the Classroom

This section is for general observation of the physical setting of the classroom, and to see whether teachers set their objectives and goals in order to reach throughout the course, besides the relationship between students and teachers.

Section Two: Specific Aspects in Classroom Interaction

This section attempts to discover different important points that takes place in any interactive classroom environment such as the type of the existing interaction, how students use the English language, the role of the teacher, the techniques and activities used in the classroom and other points.

3.2.2. Analysis of Classroom Observation

Section one: General Observation of the Classroom

Item 1: Is the physical settings organized?

From what we have observed, some groups study in rooms however, others study in laboratory and without necessary material normally since they study in laboratory there should be equipped with audio visual materials that help students to listen and practice the language with their peers, so for these students their setting was not so comfortable for and not conductive for oral classes learning.

Item 2: Are the teacher's objectives clear?

We have observed that most of teachers make clear what students are required to do during the whole session and this has helped them a lot in order to see what students really need. And we have seen that teachers tried to prepare what students need to do in terms of activities that are based on the oral production of the language in an interactive ways.

Item 3: Does the teacher and students have a good rapport?

Through the sessions we have attended, we have observed that teachers have a good rapport with their students and this gave students more motivation and desire to speak and interact with their teachers and we have seen that this had a positive influence on students' oral production they were comfortable when talking and negotiating with their teachers.

Section Two: Specific aspects in Classroom Interaction

Item 4: The most observed type of interaction

On the light of what the researcher have observed, student-student interaction was the dominant type of interaction, teachers want to give their students more opportunities to use

and practice the language with their peers since they like to interact with their peers more than with their teachers. So, we have noticed they practice the English language easily with a great desire to improve more their abilities because they really want to sounds like native speakers.

Item 5: The teacher motivates students to talk

During the sessions we have attended most of talk was performed by students, however, some teacher do not show their willingness to speak and participate and the teacher did not try to motivate them in way that makes them talk because they feel shy and anxious. Sometimes they want to express their ideas and thoughts but they are not able because they do not find the appropriate words and expressions and this due to the lack of language practice.

Item 6: Students have problems when using the English language

We have noticed from students' participation and interaction they have problems in terms of expressing their ideas and what they want to say in fluent and accurate manner, in addition they find difficulties when pronouncing words in correct way, but they try their best in order to ameliorate their oral production through this interactive context.

Item 7: Teachers' use of audio visual materials

Rarely teachers use audio materials in classroom to motivate students with different activities such as listening to native speakers' conversations to improve their oral proficiency in real interactive context, for getting more experience and ideas about how a proficient speaker should be.

Item 8: Students' ability to speak fluently and accurately

Students sometimes find themselves unable to speak in a fluent manner, but in general their oral proficiency is being improved in each time because they practice the English language and have more opportunities in oral classes to show their capacities and learn how to use language effectively.

Item 9: Techniques and activities used by the teacher

From our observation we have noticed that teachers give their students activities to do through the use of different techniques such as discussions and role plays, and students enjoy doing activities through these techniques in which they show their oral abilities, using the language spontaneously and they have improved their oral production because of language practice in an interactive context with their teachers and classmates.

Item10: How students' manage turn-taking and exchanges when communicating

Through what we have seen when students interact and communicate they need to improve more their oral abilities in terms of how they take turns from one student to another when they are discussing and negotiating meaning of different topics, and this because they do not practice the English language in daily life conversations.

Item 11: Teachers' versus students' talking time

We have observed that the highest amount of talk was taken by students since the oral activities were designed for them to express their views and opinions and to share their ideas with their peers and teachers, and students were able to use the language in different ways because the discussion topics were appropriate for students' desire.

Item 12: Teachers' role during classroom interaction

Through what we have seen is that teachers were most of the time acting like guiders giving opportunities to their students to act and talk and sometimes presenting the lesson in front of their classmates and this way actually helped them a lot to learn how to be more confident and the teacher himself gave them the chance to do that, because he left them taking their own responsibility to deal with the lesson in a free manner.

3.2.3. Results Interpretation

We have noticed from the attended sessions, students need more opportunities and chances to explore their oral abilities because due to this interaction we have seen that students are tend to participate freely and actively and this helped them a lot to develop and improve their oral production from different perspectives such as pronunciation, vocabulary, the use of intonation and other language forms in accurate and appropriate manner, and students find this interaction as a powerful strategy for the improvement of their language production to be more proficient speakers.

Conclusion

The main goal through this practical part is to test the validity of the research questions and hypothesis. We have noticed from students' responses of the questionnaire and our classroom observation that interaction has a positive effect and great contribution on the improvement of students' oral production. Most of the students show their willingness to learn in an interactive atmosphere since they have benefited from this learning environment, the majority of them declared they became aware about the appropriate use of the English language in communicative situations accurately and fluently.

General Conclusion

The present study aims to improve English foreign language students' oral proficiency and the use of language appropriately through classroom interaction. The descriptive investigation was conducted following a qualitative method in the division of English at Biskra University with third year students to confirm or reject the research hypothesis that states that students' oral production will improve through classroom interaction, and this is confirmed through the analysis of data gathered. This work consists of three chapters, two theoretical chapters about the variables of the study, the first chapter is devoted for a general overview of classroom interaction, and the second chapter deals with oral proficiency and its important aspects, while the third practical chapter presents the analysis and the interpretation of gathered data from students questionnaire and classroom observation. The findings of the research confirms that classroom interaction is a significant strategy through which students practice and experience the English language in communicative context, and improve their skills mainly their oral production since all students attempt to be able to speak the language effectively in different situations, in addition to that, students enjoy learning cooperatively through the use of different techniques since they find them useful and helpful for their oral production development so, they consider classroom as a free atmosphere in which they discover how really language should be used and performed.

To conclude, the answers provided from students' questionnaire and our classroom observation fits and confirms the hypothesis stated before, to show that learners' interaction in the classroom is a successful strategy that teachers should give more attention by giving students a large space show their abilities and ameliorate their oral proficiency.

After the analysis of the collected data to see whether students' interaction in the classroom has a role and an effect to reinforce their oral production to be proficient communicators and speakers, and based on the findings of the questionnaire and what we have observed in the classrooms, some recommendations can be revealed:

➢ Teachers should consider more students' interaction in the classroom as crucial and perquisite in foreign language learning, mainly for oral skills. As, the improvement of any language needs from learners to be more in contact with other people.

➢ Teachers should encourage students' to interact in the classroom through the use of various activities which motivate them to maximize and increase their amount of talk in order to practice and use the English language as much as they can.

➢ Teachers should create a comfortable and enjoyable classroom in order to make students feel free and able to practice and show their abilities.

➢ Teachers should use authentic materials in oral classes such as the use of shadowing technique in which students listen to native speakers' conversations and repeat after them, here students will train their ears to listen very carefully to how intonation, stress, and pronunciation are used.

➢ Teachers' have to make students trust their abilities to become energetic and motivated more to show and explore their oral production and enhance their level of achievement.

➢ When it comes to students' interaction and communication teachers' role is to be much more resource providers, and prompters to give students the desire and motivation to be active participants that is practicing and using the language all the time without any problems.

➢ Students' must be aware that listening has a great contribution to the improvement of their oral production, since good listener is considered to be good speaker,

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teachers then should use audio visual materials to expose their students to listen to native speakers in order to have an idea about how speaking really should be.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of a research work on the effect of classroom interaction in improving learners' oral proficiency. Kept anonymous your contribution will be of great help to gather data on this issue under investigation. Therefore, you are kindly required to answer this questionnaire by ticking in the appropriate box or by giving full answer whenever needed.

Thank you in advance.

Section One: General Information

.1. Your gender: a. Female   ☐

b. Male   ☐

2. Which language skills do you need to improve most?

a. listening   ☐

b. speaking   ☐

c. reading   ☐

d. writing   ☐

3. How well do you speak English?

a. below average   ☐

b. average   ☐

c. good   ☐

Section Two: Students' interaction in the classroom context

4. Which course do you interact more in?

a. oral expression   ☐

b. written expression   ☐

Justify your answer

please :………………………………………………………………………………………………….

………

………..

5. Does your teacher give you the opportunity to interact in the classroom with your peers?

    a. always   ☐

    b. sometimes ☐

    c. never   ☐

6. Which type of classroom interaction do you prefer?

    a. Teacher-learner interaction ☐

    b. Learner-learner interaction ☐

7. When you interact with your peers in the classroom. Do you give priority to:

    a. Listening and try to understand   ☐

    b. Expressing your ideas even with incorrect English ☐

    c. Try to use fluent and accurate English   ☐

8. What kind of classroom activities is helpful to improve your oral production?

    a. Communicative activities ☐

    b. Grammatical activities   ☐

9. Do you think that classroom interaction activities are useful to improve your oral production?

    a. Yes ☐

    b. No ☐

Justify your answer

please………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Which amount of talk do you think should be maximized?

a. Teacher talk ☐

b. Student talk ☐

11. In the classroom context, you are interested more in:

a. Learning the grammatical aspects of the language ☐

b. Learning how to communicate using the language appropriately ☐

12. How do you qualify classroom interaction as a way to improve your oral proficiency?

a. Beneficial ☐

b. Not beneficial ☐

13. Does interaction in classroom help you to be aware more about your oral weaknesses?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Justify your answer

please……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Section Three: Students' oral proficiency in classroom context

14. In your opinion, being proficient speaker:

a. to be fluent and accurate ☐

b. to speak rapidly even inaccurately ☐

15. To develop your oral proficiency you need to develop your listening first. Do you

a. agree ☐

b. disagree ☐

Justify your choice
please :……………………………………………………………………………………………………
………
………

16. How do you evaluate your oral production ability during classroom interaction?

a. good ☐

b. bad ☐

17. How does classroom interaction affect your oral production?

a. positively ☐

b. negatively ☐

18. In oral classroom sessions, which of the following techniques do you enjoy more, and help you to improve your oral ability?

a. group work ☐   c. role play ☐

b. problem solving ☐   d. discussion ☐

Justify you answer
please…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………
………

19. Do you see that classroom interaction techniques helpful you improve your oral proficiency?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Justify your answer
please…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………
………

20. Do you agree that in order to be proficient speaker you need to be involved in interactive situations?

    a. agree   ☐

    b. disagree ☐

justify your answer

please…………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix Two: Classroom Observation

Classroom Observation Sheet

1. General Observation of the Classroom   (Ticking the right box)

	<u>**Yes**</u>	<u>**No**</u>
1. Is the physical setting organized?	☐	☐
2. Are teachers' objectives clear?	☐	☐
3. Does the teacher and students have a good rapport?	☐	☐

2. Specific aspects of Observation

4. The most observed type of interaction

 a. Teacher-Student interaction   ☐

 b. Students- Student interaction   ☐

5. The teacher motivates students to talk	☐	☐
6. Students have problems when using the English language	☐	☐
7. The teacher uses audio visual materials	☐	☐
8. Students speak fluently and accurately	☐	☐

9. The kind of techniques, and activities used by the teacher

……………………………………………………………………………………………

10. How students manage turn-taking, exchanges when communicating

……………………………………………………………………………………………

11. Teacher versus students talking time

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

12. Teachers' role during classroom interaction

………………………………………………………………………………………….

ملخص

الطلبة الذين يتعلمون اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبيةغالبا ما يطمحون إلى التحدث بطريقة متقنة و بمهارة عالية تمكنهم من التواصل بفعالية مع ألآخرين, فتفاعل الطلاب داخل القسم اعتبر من اهم المسائل التي اخذت من قبل العديد من الباحثين بعين الاعتبار كعامل رئيسي في عملية تعلم وتعليم اللغات الاجنبية. يسعى هذا البحث إلى محاولة الربط بين تفاعل الطلاب فيما بينهم ومع الأستاذ على حد سواء داخل القسم و تأثيره على قدرتهم في التكلم و التواصل بأسلوب راقي وجيد بحيث يمكنهم من التكلم بسلاسة مطلقة اخذين بعين الاعتبار النطق الصحيح للكلمات و الاختيار الدقيق للمفردات و العبارات المناسبة لمختلف المواضيع و الوضعيات التواصلية و التفاعلية بحيث ومن المتفق عليه أن الاكتساب الجيد للغة يكون عن طريق التواصل و التفاعل مع الآخرين سواء داخل القسم أو في حياتهم اليومية فالقسم يعتبر المكان الأساسي و المهم أين يكون تطوير و تحسين مهاراتهم اللغوية و الكلامية لترتقي إلى أعلى المستويات. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على طرح الفرضية بان التفاعل بين الطلاب يؤدي إلى تطوير مهاراتهم في الكلام أين يظهر دور الأستاذ في خلق الجو المناسب يمكن الطلاب من التفاعل و التواصل بالإضافة إلى استعمال الأنشطة اللغوية من خلال استراتيجيات مختلفة تمكنهم من استعمال اللغة بحرية. فللبحث في هذا الموضوع قمنا باستخدام استبيان لسنة ثالثة جامعي لغة انجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر, وزع على 80 طالب بالإضافة الى إجراء ملاحظة قسميه. فنتائج هذه الدراسة أظهرت أن التعلم التفاعلي سواء بين الطلبة أو بين الطلبة و الأستاذ له دور فعال و ايجابي في تطوير قدراتهم الشفوية و التغلب على صعوباتهم الكلامية.