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**Enhancing EFL Learners' Speaking Skill Through Effective  
Communicative Activities and Strategies  
The Case of First Year EFL students**

**Extended Essay Submitted to the Department of English as a Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language Studies**

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# DEDICATION

I would like to express my deep recognition to Allah , for giving me determination and strength to finish this work.

I owe a debt gratitude to my affectionate parents for their understanding and endless love. To my father who taught me the value of education and supported me to realize the person I am today. To my mother who is my source of encouragement and inspiration. Thank you mom and dad.

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## **Abstract**

Speaking English is doubtless essential nowadays since it is globally recognized language in almost all fields. Thus, if we want EFL learners to be fluent and good at speaking we first should encourage them to practice with an eye towards improvement. Second, we must elevate the student's awareness and introduce them to the great importance that speaking skill has in developing their language. The purpose of this work was, then, to explore the effectiveness of using speaking communicative activities to improve speaking skill. The main threefold objectives of the work are identifying the most effective communicative activities which can promote EFL learner's speaking skill, discussing the main problems which may hinder the oral performance and providing strategies to help EFL learners overcome their difficulties ; and, lastly investigating learner's attitudes towards those activities. To reach this end, the case study research was conducted at the University of Abou Bakr Belkaid Tlemcen the department of English language, relying on a questionnaire as an instrument of research. The analysis of results reveals that first year English students are more aware and mindful about the importance of speaking activities in improving their oral proficiency. From an other perspective, EFL teachers agreed that using communicative activities is one of the most effective and beneficial tools to reinforce first year English students' speaking. Finally, this extended essay ends up by providing some fruitful and efficient suggestions for EFL learners to flourish and evolve in their learning process.

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## **List of Acronyms**

**ACTFL** : American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language.

**CLT** : Communicative Language Teaching.

**CSs** : Communication Strategies.

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

**ESL** : English as a Second Language.

**ESP** : English for Specific Purposes.

**FLL** : Foreign Language Learning.

**LMD**: License Master Doctorate.

**MA**: master/magister.

**PhD**: Doctor of Philosophy.

**RP** : Received Pronunciation.

**TEFL** : Teaching English as Foreign Language.

# *General Introduction*

## General Introduction

Over the past few decades, English is often qualified to be the "Global Language". English became a dominant language by virtue of reaching the power of being spread widely. It is also established as a lingua franca , that is the common language consistently used as a bridge in communication between people who do not share the same language. According to Karahan (2007 :1) when describing English language ‘...leading foreign language enjoying a prestigious position in many countries, including Spanish speaking countries, since the end of World War II. It is neither a national nor an official language in Latin America but it is the most widely taught foreign language at all stages of educational system . In this respect, the mastery of speaking skill has become increasingly important in FLL setting due to its preeminent rank in international communication.

Consequently, EFL learning process requires a great emphasis on teaching the speaking skill since English is considered a global language and used for interpersonal communication.

Within this context, it is the desire of many first year EFL learners to be fluent and to evolve their speaking skill in spite of the difficulties which impede a free communication.

As a matter of fact, it is necessary for teachers to help their students promote their skill through identifying the hinders during oral production and eventually suggest some of the effective communicative activities and strategies for genuine communication to occur in the language classroom. This can widely increase student's motivation and awarness to tackle oral problems.

This is in fact the inspiring idea which gave birth to this work that aims at enhancing the student's speaking skill. Likewise , to detect the most effective communicative activities that is used to improve the oral proficiency. In addition, to elicit the attitudes of EFL students towards the use of communicative activities as a tool to promote their speaking skill. Intending to this purpose; two major research questions can be raised :

- 1- Does the application of the communicative activities improve student' speaking skill and motivate them?
- 2- What are the students' attitudes towards the implementation of different communicative activities ?

Identifying the main activities which may reinforce the EFL learners' speaking skill is of great importance . If the EFL teachers were aware of the appropriate activities which would enhance the EFL learners' speaking performance, then they will certainly decrease most of the difficulties that learners face in speaking.

The present work is based on two hypotheses that shall be examined and verified through research instruments. First of all, it could be hypothesized that if teachers apply the appropriate activities they would enhance their students' speaking skill , motivate them and enrich their vocabulary. Also, if the students are given the chance to express themselves and produce , then they should be satisfied by the implementation of communicative activities which may conduct to an amelioration of the teaching of speaking.

The current work is purposefully done into two connected chapters. The first one is about the literature review on the teaching of speaking skill of English language as FL. Then, it sheds light on the factors that cause speaking difficulties to EFL learners, learners' communication strategies for EFL speaking performance and some effective classroom speaking activities. The second chapter concerns real opinions and thoughts of first year students at Tlemcen University regarding the speaking skill during EFL process. It is the practical part of the work including the research methodology, research participants, research tools, data collection and analysis . This chapter seeks also to answer the research questions by confirming or disconfirming the research hypotheses, and then concludes with the research results.

Furthermore , the work reflects the student's attitudes towards enhancing speaking skill and highlights the most effective activities that can be used for this improvement.

To conclude, some suggestions and recommendations are provided. Hopefully, this study will help educators better discover and better use speaking activities.

# *Chapter One*

## **1.1.Introduction**

The need for effective strategies and activities for the sake of reinforcing the EFL learners speaking skill is the main concern of EFL educators. Enhancing learners' speaking skill is not an easy task for many EFL teachers at all. This need leads teachers to use different strategies and activities. This first chapter is devoted to the literature review and deals with the theoretical part of this work. Several basic concepts and definitions which are related to the work are provided. This chapter aims at presenting the nature of speaking skill and the main goals of teaching it. Moreover, it sheds light on the factors that cause speaking difficulties to EFL learners. Finally, it attempts to reveal some of the strategies and activities which may tackle the problems of EFL learners in speaking skill.

## **1.2.The Nature of Speaking Skill**

Speaking is an interactive process of communication which is the basis of all human relationships within language learning. It is one of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Through the history of language teaching, speaking skill was the one which had the lion's share. The skill of speaking constitutes without doubt one of the major concepts, it seems to be the most interesting skill, especially from EFL learners. In addition, people who know a language are denoted to as speakers of that language.

As Rivers (1981) argues, speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in our communication. Many experts define speaking in different ways. Brown and Yule (1983) stated that "speaking is to express the needs-request, information, service, etc." Another definition of speaking skill "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols into a variety of context." (Chaney, 1998 : 13). Therefore, speaking is not an easy task, its mastery claim a lot of experience and practice. Luoma (2004 : 1) argues that "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop."

## **1.3. Elements of speaking**

Developing the speaking skill is not an easy task, one should be aware about some elements which are very important. Harmer (2001) mentions the elements of speaking which refer to the language features that learners should have knowledge about. In addition to the processes of language and information in the same time when an interlocutor interacts with them. (As cited in Kouicem, 2010, p.27, 28).

### 1.3.1. Language Features

For speak effectively there are some features which is very necessary to both learner and teacher in order to speak fluently. From that language feature the students could connected other speech by recognizing phonemes in addition to understand the nature of native speaker then their phonological rules. The following features are necessary for an effective speaking (Kouicem, K., 2010, p. 27-28 ) :

\_ **Connected speech:** this ability needs from the speaker of English to produce more connected sounds not only separated phonemes. These sounds may be modified, omitted, added or weakened in the connected speech.

\_ **Expressive devices:** English native speakers use effectively the phonological rules

which refer to the pitch, stress, volume, speed with the use of non verbal means. These devices help them to convey their intended meaning. Students, then need to have this ability to employing such devices if they want to be effective communicators.

\_ **Lexis and grammar:** when learners produce same language function, they often use the same lexical structure. The teacher's role then, is to provide them with different phrases which carry different functions so that they can use them in the different stages of communication with others.

\_ **Negotiation language:** learners benefit a lot from the use of negotiation language; they often ask clarification when they are listening to others' talk. So, the teachers have to provide them with the necessary expressions they need when they ask clarification from other speakers. Learners also need to well perform their utterances if they seek to be understood and clear especially when they can see the other interlocutors did not understand them.

### 1.3.2. Mental/ social Processing:

The necessary processing skills speaking are the following:

\_ **Language processing:** this refers to the ability of the learners/ speakers to process the language in their minds through putting it in a coherent order so that the other interlocutors can understand it and get the intended messages. Speakers also should be able to retrieve words and phrases from their memories to use them when they are interacting with others.

\_ **Interacting with others:** most of the speaking situations involve interaction between two or more interlocutors, that is to say an effective speaker need to be able to listen and understand others' talk then reacts through taking turns or keeping the others to do so.

\_ **Information processing:** this relates to the ability of processing the information in the mind rapidly, i.e. the time speakers get information; they should be ready to respond to the others' talk.(ibid)

#### **1.4.The Importance of Speaking**

Speaking, as Karen (1994) defines it, it is an expressive language skill in which the speaker uses verbal symbols to communicate. The traditional approaches of language learning and teaching, like the grammar Translation Method, fail to properly care for the speaking skill in the majority of classrooms where the emphasis was mainly on reading and writing. Whereas, the emphases on learning understanding and expressing meaning, which the term fluency represents, come from the philosophy of communicative language teaching (CLT). Revel (1991; p.5) realizes the importance of CLT in making a bridge between linguistic competence and communicative competence. In other words, accuracy and fluency, he claims "theories of communicative competence imply that teachers must do more than just supply learners with a number of language structure to manipulate."

The importance of speaking skills hence, is enormous for the learners of any language. It promotes communicative efficiency, teachers want students to be able to use language fluently and correctly as much as possible. Learners as well give the speaking skill priority in their learning because it is, in fact, the active use of language to express meaning. According to Widdowson (1990: 27) learning just the language system is not the appropriate way for learning how to communicate in the FL because knowledge of the language code alone does not explain the demands of communication and interaction with others in the FL. Rules and isolated terms that are learned are not what learners need outside the classroom.

It is however a very long and often tiresome process to become fluent in speaking the foreign language; "one frustration commonly voiced by learners is that they have spent years studying English, but still can't speak it." (Thornbury 2008: 208) "one of the main difficulties of course, is that speaking usually takes place spontaneously and in real time, which means that planning and production overlap. If too much attention is paid to planning, production suffers, and the effect is a loss of fluency, on the other hand, if the speaker's attention is directed solely on production, it is likely that accuracy will suffer, which could prejudice intelligibility. In order to free up attention, therefore, the speaker needs to have achieved a degree of automaticity in both planning and production." (Ibid)

Effective teaching that promotes learners' active engagement and the development of speaking skill is being a challenge to teachers of English as a

foreign language. That is , being capable to communicate orally with each other , using effectively the target language , is nowadays of the utmost importance , up to the point where learners who are not able to be fluent in using a foreign language cannot be considered effective language users. Celce- Murcia ( 2001 : 103 ) argues that for most people " the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication . "

With speaking , learners can influence their listeners , it is a means of expressing and showing social positions and moving the solidarity of societies as well. Hence , speaking is important in both inside and outside the classroom. It is a tool by which speakers of foreign languages have more opportunities to get jobs and , is also the skill whereby people be friends or separate others ; Baker and Westrup (2003 :05) support that " a student who can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion . "

### **1.5.What is Communicative Competence**

Communication is the exchange of feelings , knowledge , ideas , opinions and information among people. We use language to communicate , so we do not just communicate facts to each other , but we also convey what we feel about those facts ( Revell 1979 ).

The notion of communicative competence is to be found after the dichotomy of Chomsky competence and performance. It was first introduced by Dell Hymes in 1972 in contradistinction to the restricted chomskian concept of linguistic competence. We need linguistic competence , an adequate vocabulary and mastery of syntax to speak in another language ( Nunan , 1999 ). In contrast , Hymes explained the term communicative competence as " that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific context " ( Brown 2000 : 246 )

Communicative competence combines both the use of the linguistic system itself and the functional aspects of communication . It is a dynamic , interpersonal construct , it is relative and depends on the cooperation of all the involved participants ( Savignon , 1983 ).

In 1980, in an analysis and review of much research and literature regarding communicative competence , Canale and Swain further develop this notion , identifying four dimensions of communicative competence : grammatical competence , sociolinguistic competence , discourse competence and strategic competence.

To be communicatively competent , according to Hymes , is not only the learned capacity of knowing the rules , but also to know what to say to whom and how to say it in a specific context.

### **1.5.1. Grammatical Competence**

Brown states that the grammatical competence " encompasses knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology , syntax , sentence-grammar , semantics , and phonology " (2007 : 2019 ; Canale and Swain , 1980 , p29 ). In other words , grammatical competence supplies learners with grammatical knowledge that enable them to be knowledgeable and well informed about how words are combined into various sounds , and the specific stress of sentences.

### **1.5.2. Discourse Competence**

Discourse competence is " the ability to connect sentences [...] and to form meaningful whole out of series utterances. " ( Brown 2007 : 220 ). In other terms , discourse competence relates to how learners are able to observe the rules of cohesion and coherence in order to engage in meaningful communication ( Canale and Swain , 1980 ; Celce – Murcia , 2007 ; Uso – Juan and Martinez-Flor , 2008 ).

### **1.5.3. Sociolinguistics Competence**

Savignon stated that sociolinguistic competence has to do with " an understanding to the social context in which language is used " (1983 :37).

According to Canale and Swain , sociolinguistic competence can be broken into two different categories : Illocutionary competence ( dealing with sending and receiving intended meanings ) and sociolinguistic competence ( dealing with politeness , formality , register and their relation with a given culture ). ( Brown , 2007)

### **1.5.4. Strategic Competence**

For Canale and Swain , strategic competence is : " how to cope in an authentic communicative situation and how to keep the communicative channel open " (1980 :25 ;Hedge , 2000). It relates to the verbal and non verbal communication strategies capable of minimising communication breakdown arising from low competence.

## **1.6.The Notion of Teaching Speaking**

As cited in Rebecca Hughes makes an interesting methodological point that as far as teaching speaking skills is concerned one needs to distinguish between "teaching the spoken form of a language" and "teaching a language through speaking". She also stresses the fact that unfortunately, when compared to writing, the spoken form is under-researched and that this may be one of the reasons why teachers may feel more confident when using "stable written forms and genres" in their lessons (Hughes 2011). (As cited in Bc. Petra Šolcová , 2011 , p16 ) .

In fact , the two concepts are interconnected , they are often interchangeably used and rarely distinguished. To be more clear , teaching the spoken form of a language can be through writing or speaking. Yet , it is not very useful if it is not practised through speaking and cannot bring great results. Thus , if only the spoken form is taught through practice then it is a part of teaching speaking.

According to many language users, the speaking ability is the measure of knowing a language and that is , teaching speaking is the best way to reach the communicative proficiency and to be fluent, and being so needs tremendous efforts from both learners and teachers.

Within this process , three main phases should be taken into consideration ;

### **Phase 01: Mechanical Practice:**

It is the first phase in learning speaking which is a set of exercises that it takes place in the laboratory. In brief , learners are asked to use the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation. This activity provides learners with a training of language grammar , vocabulary and pronunciation.

### **Phase 02 : Meaningful Oral Work:**

It is considered the second phase just after the mechanical phase. It provides learners with social and cultural rules and norms.

### **Phase 03 : Free Oral Production:**

It is considered as the last phase which contains free discussions that are performed by learners. That is , in this phase , learners are ready to speak and express their opinions freely.

## **1.7.Goals of Teaching Speaking**

According to Bake and Westrup (2003 :5), teaching speaking can be beneficial for various reasons :

Firstly, it gives students the chance to use the new language they are learning. Secondly, in teaching speaking can reinforce the learning of functional language and diagnose their strengths as well as their weaknesses. Thirdly, teaching speaking lead them to speak fluently and without difficulty.

All this helps to improve students' communicative skills. In narrower sense , the rationale behind teaching speaking can be either for learning the language (MacCarthy, 1972: 9) “When people are learning to speak a language, they are concerned mainly with two things; first, knowing what to say- what words and phrases to use at any given moment, in any given situation- and second, being able to say it- able to perform the required actions, the movement necessary, for saying those words and phrases aloud.” ; or for the purpose of communication “To be more orally productive, learners would need to be more capable of responding in a relevant and socially appropriate manner to the communication of others.” (Haley and Austin 2004: 189).

## **1.8.Speaking and Listening Connection**

Concerning the integration between listening and speaking , there is a huge emphasis on the role of combination between the two skills in conversations. Anderson and Lynch (1988:15) posit that:

A carefully prepared l2 utterance is only a useful aid to Communication if the speaker can deal effectively with the replies he receives. For the l2 learner in conversation, he need to be skilled as both speaker and listener.

For communication to occur, neither speaking nor listening will occur in isolation. A speaker has necessity to a listener and the listener as well must have a speech to listen to. “speaker are at the mercy of listeners”. (Redmond and Vrchota : 2007, p. 120). That is , each one relies on the other one to succeed a conversation through interacting and negotiating verbally.

## **1.9. Factors that Cause Speaking difficulties to EFL Learners**

According to the International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL) , Zhang (2009) argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. According to Ur (1996), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they are as follows:

*.Inhibition.* Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy.

*.Nothing to say.* Students have no motive to express themselves.

*.Low or uneven participation.* Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.

*.Mother-tongue use.* Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue.

## **1.10. Learners' communication Strategies for EFL speaking performance**

Strategies often help learners to avoid the failure in the oral communication and psychological aspects that obstacle their speaking performance. Hughes (2002) defines this term as the ability of the learners to manipulate a conversation in an effective way.

Selinker (1972) proposes the concept of “communication strategies” (CSs), which he defines as a by-product of a learner’s attempt to express meaning in spontaneous speech through a limited target language system. Since he first used the term, it has been the subject of much discussion but also of little consensus as to its correct definition. Earlier , language learners employed CSs to compensate for their linguistic shortcomings in order to achieve a particular communicative goal since it was regarded as language learners’ problem-solving behavior in learning foreign language.

Most literature on CSs incarnates similar and overlapping taxonomies, which may be divided into avoidance or reduction strategies and achievement or compensatory ones (e.g. Tarone, 1980; Faerch & Kasper,1983; Dornyei & Scott, 1997).

### **.1.10.1 Achievement Strategies**

According to (Bygate, 1987) , in this strategies the speakers |learners tend to use and compensate for language gap by using replacement; they try to find a way

to convey their messages without losing or changing it. Therefore, to be able to transmit the real meaning successfully, these replacement words may be: guessing work or any expression that they remember on the spot or explain their missing words by comparing them to something else. As the following example

### **Example**

“L I came down from twenty degrees --- er I don t know how you say it was twenty degrees hot you know.

NS: mm.

NS: and I came up er in Scotland to twenty degrees freezing so, I got very sick just before Christmas”. (Haastrup and Philipson 1983 , P. 149 as cited in Ibid, p.43) . As cited in ( Bachiri , 40 )

By using the achievement strategies, learners try to solve communicative problems in the planning phase due to insufficient linguistic resources.

#### **1.10.1.1. Guessing Strategies**

This type of strategies is a very widespread used in oral expression. They are used by the speakers to replace some words that they do not know or they are not sure that they are right with other ones which they think their interlocutors will get (Bygate, 1987).

There are many types of guessing strategies, the learners may borrow a word from their mother tongue and say it as it is, without any modification. For example Bialystok (1983, p. 105) “an English speaker saying "**Il y a deux candles sure le chemenee**” as cited in Ibid., p. 44).

Another type of guessing strategies, the learners may use a foreignize word from their mother tongue and pronounce it as it belongs to English foreign language in order to succeed in transmitting their speech to an English listener (Ibid).

Code-switching is considered to be also one of the guessing strategies so that there is always a switching from L2 to L1 when communicating with others in foreign languages.

The literal translation, in this strategy the speaker might translate a word form his mother tongue and says it in order to overcome difficulties of speech in foreign language. For example: a Frenchman may attempt to say "crescent" instead of "croissant" (Ibid.)

Finally, coining words that do not exist in the target language on the basis of his knowledge is also a SL speaker’s strategy to make the listener get his idea. For example: “*air ball instead of balloon*” (Torone, 1983, p. 62, as Cited in Ibid, p. 42).

### 1.10.1.2. Paraphrasing Strategies

It is broken down into two types. Lexical substitution strategy , in which the speaker can explain a concept or a word by making some sort of phrases to express his meaning , for example, its synonyms or by another word which includes the meaning of the missing word but this replacing word has a broader meaning (Torone, 1983, p. 62. as cited in Bygate, 1987 , p. 42).

A second type of paraphrasing , circumlocution strategy whereby learners compensate for a limited or imperfect linguistic knowledge and still get their message across. Circumlocution has been identified as a communication strategy or a lexical repair strategy (Liskin-Gasparro, 1996; Paribakht, 1985; Tarone, 1983), and also defined in Savignon (1983) as “the effective use of coping strategies to sustain or enhance communication” (Savignon, p. 310). That is , the learner may use the circumlocution strategy to overcome a vocabulary gap by gathering some phrases and try to explain his intended message.

### 1.10.1.3. Co-operative Strategy

Færch and Kasper (1983: 67) explain “although problems in interaction are necessarily shared problems and can be solved by joint efforts, they originate in either of the interactions, and it is up to him (the speaker) to decide whether to attempt a solution himself or to signal his problems to his interlocutor and attempt to get the problem solved on a cooperative basis”.

This strategy is a kind of cooperation between speaker and listener , that is , the speaker may ask the listener to translate a word from his mother tongue to the T. L or provide him with the exact word to in order to get his message conveyed. For example:

**S4:** You have a basket for.

**S3:** A basket for.

**S4:** For umbrella.

**S 3:**For.

**S4:** Umbrella”. (Ibid, p. 46)

In short , it is when the speaker demands from the interlocutor help.

### 1.10.2. Reduction Strategy

All communication strategies compensate for a problem of expression. Yet , reduction strategy may be the successful one when speakers feel unable to compensate through achievement strategies. Reduction strategy is used when a specific part or the whole communicating message is abandoned in order to adapt the conveyed message (utterance) according to his language competence.

Reduction strategies is often used by speaker who value accuracy over fluency , who prevent making mistakes and reluctant to produce incorrect or non fluent utterances. In other words , reduction strategies reduce the message because communicators do not manage to find words or phrases to replace the unknown vocabulary,thus they decide to change the topic or finish the conversation.

### **1.10.2.1. Avoidance Strategies**

Avoidance, which takes multiple forms, has been identified as a communication strategy. Learners of a second language may learn to avoid talking about topics for which they lack the necessary vocabulary or other language skills in the second language. Also, language learners sometimes start to try to talk about a topic, but abandon the effort in mid-utterance after discovering that they lack the language resources needed to complete their message. Tarone (1981: 285–295).

Learners face difficulties in producing certain utterances because of either the lack of vocabulary or phonological problem , therefore they try to communicate with less risk of error by resorting to other strategies in order to serve the same communicative purpose. From this point , two main categories of avoidance strategy can be distinguished , namely ‘syntactic or lexical avoidance’ and ‘phonological avoidance’.

For example a woman may say that she ate a pleasant meal instead of attempting to say that she liked the meal and failed to mention its name ( (Bygate, 1987) , as cited in ( Bachiri , 43 ). Another example can be given for the case of phonology when a learner of English who is unable of pronouncing the /l/ accurately in “ Lion ” may choose to say simply animal.

### **.1.11.Classroom Speaking Activities**

In most EFL classes, teacher- pupil exchanges have little communicative value because there is no real information being exchanged. Typically, a teacher asks a “display” question (that is, a question the teacher knows the answer to), an individual student answers, and the teacher evaluates or corrects the answer. Eventually, this is an unrealistic use of language and these questions have clear limitations in terms of how much genuine communication practice the student receives (Dinapoli, 2000: 1).

Evidently, for genuine communication to occur in the language classroom, teacher-student (and student-student) exchanges must go beyond display questions

and should be based on the gap that occurs between interlocutors when one does not know in advance what the other is going to say (Liao, 2001: 38).

For the sake of a successful learning process, students should be comfortable to speak and explore their own thinking. They should be encouraged to employ their ideas among classroom activities, to express themselves and achieve their goals. The speaking activities are one of opportunities to practice the students' speaking skill which can highly support speaking fluency development in class. The goal is to have them learn and develop through speech and allow them to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. As Harmer (1984) reports since there were stimulations activities in the classroom for motivating the students, they were increased the self-confidence of being of part in the classroom including answering the question, sharing the idea, and also presentation. For that reason, the students may get discouraged in learning the language unless they get enough chances and activities to practice speaking skill in language classroom.

Baker and Westrup (2003 : 5) also put forward the following reasons to practice speaking during a lesson :

- Speaking activities can reinforce the learning of new vocabulary , grammar or functional language ;
- Speaking activities give students the chance to use the new language they are learning ;
- Speaking activities give more advanced students the chance to experiment with the language they already know in different situations and different topics.

Speaking activities , also promotes speaking skill by decreasing the lack of motivation in learning English which is caused by the inappropriate techniques used by the teacher in teaching speaking skill. Therefore , teaching speaking skill is an effective way to overcome this situation . The teacher should select one or numerous language teaching activities that are appropriate with the level of his students. O'Malley and Pierce (1996: 59) assert the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) suggests that "different kinds of speaking activities (and consequently assessment task) are appropriate at different levels of proficiency." Richards and Lockhart (1996) define practice activities as tasks used to perform or learn a particular item or involve the use of a given model. For example, role play may be used to practice communicating in different social contexts. Richards, Platt and Weber (1985: 289) add that "the use of variety of different tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative[...]since it provides a purpose for classroom activity" (cited in Lee, 2000:31). Consequently , one can say that these activities are not done to practice

language only but to achieve also the communication goals. According to Scriver (2005: 152)

“the aim of communicative activity in class is to get learners to use the language they are learning to interact in realistic and meaningful ways. Usually involving exchanges of information or opinion.”

Therefore, language teaching activities in the classroom should aim at making as great as possible individual language use. This claims the teacher not only to make a friendly and humanistic classroom atmosphere, but also to provide every student with a turn to speak.

### **1.11.1. Discussion / Conversation**

Byrne (1986) states that "by discussion is meant by any exchange of ideas and opinions either a basis, with you (teacher) the mediator and to some extent as the participator or within the context of group with the student talking among them" (P. 67).

In a language classroom, discussion is the most common speaking activity. It is, then, one form of communicative interaction activities. In general, it is the activity in which students talk about something and tell each other their opinions or ideas. It is an exchange of views for the sake of “the communication and of the communicative continuum” (Harmer, 2001, p. 273).

This action or process of talking and debating a topic can be under the form of a task given up by the teacher who already prepared a title for discussion with a minimum of supervision and interruption by him. Their agree or disagree with the topic will certainly lead them to express themselves with more confidence which result an ability to increase / enhance their speaking skill. Discussions, then, can be held for different causes, to find solutions of a topic problematic, share ideas, to arrive at a conclusion, and the discussion points will be relevant to what is set by the teacher. It is preferable to form groups of 4 or 5 students to work on a specific topic for a given time period. This type of discussion is called group discussion. These scheduled small groups can give every student the opportunity and time to express himself with his classmates and correct his mistakes which then motivate him to tell it loudly. Kildavatter (1996: 242) states that a small group discussion is dividing the large classroom into small groups of students to achieve specific objectives permits students to assume more responsibility for their own learning. In

the same sense, Littlewood, (1999) added that classroom discussion makes learners more able and appropriate to use FL as well as talk about their experiences.

Whereas , in order not to face this activity the failure, the teacher should motivate and encourage students to speak spontaneously without being afraid from the error risk which make them reluctant to give their opinion in front of the whole class. Consequently , most educators agree “the best discussions in class are these that arise spontaneously, either because of something personal that learners report or because a topic” (Thornbury, 2005. 102). That is , teacher should be knowledgeable enough about reducing the students concern, through designing a discussion situation that students can enjoy. According to Harmer (2001) “one of the best ways of encouraging discussion is to provide activities, which force students to reach a decision or a consensus” (P. 273). Furthermore , “it can provide some enjoyable and productive speaking in language classroom” (Ibid, 1998, p. 46).

Another example of discussion can happen after the presentation of a short exposé, students can resort to comment on the topic and express their opinions . The aim of this discussion then is to develop students' oral expression and to share also opinions and debate points of view.

On the whole , classroom discussions is not only a tool to develop learner's ability but it also help them to make quick decision and boosts their critical thinking. It makes students learn how they defend their beliefs or opinions politely and justify their answers despite their disagree with others.

For Revell (1979). Here are some advantages of discussion:

- Participants are engaged in different talks where they learn to analyze appropriately on the spur of the moment and explain their own ideas and utterances.
- There is a cooperation of information which reinforce the language development.
- Learners use their own knowledge of language into communicative use.
- There is always a scope for additional communicative use of discussion sessions especially during reports.

### **1.11.2. Role Play**

Pushing students to talk about their opinions or feelings in classroom is not an easy task at all. There are many issues which make them feel embarrassed and frustrated to talk about because they may be afraid of showing their private side of personality or ridicule. Teachers should give students permission to play and explore. Role play enables them to disclose their problems. It allows them to be spontaneous and to free their creative energy. Role playing is a holistic teaching activity that promotes the operation of critical thinking, encourages emotions and

moral / social / cultural and family values, and give authentic data. That is , role playing is another way to get students to express themselves. According to Ur (1984) “role play [...] is used to refer to all of activities where learners imagine themselves in situation outside the classroom [...], sometimes playing the role of someone themselves, and using the language appropriate to this new context” (p. 131).

Learners pretend they live in various social situations and have various roles which can be either “realistic” or “fantasy” short scenes. Klippel ( 198, 121). In this activity , students are expected to use all their knowledge about language in contexts that look like real settings. According to Revell (1979), role play is: “an individual’s spontaneous behavior reacting to others in a hypothetical situation.” There are two types of role playing: role cards and cue cards. The former , the teacher show the students their roles to act freely without giving them any speech or orders on how to act or speak, whereas in the latter students should be restricted to what was prepared from the teacher.

"Role play has become increasingly common in management courses "(Rocvers, 2007, p. 199). This creates a good ambience in the classroom that give good students the opportunity to practice their language and inspire students with lower proficiency levels to play and enhance their language. Role play is an enjoyable activity which ecourages interaction in EFL classroom. It supports realistic conversation and communication. This activity is a shift from telling a story to acting out a situation where participants have to improvise .

Hence ,various advantages of role play can be considered;

- Role play is an extremely flexible activity which leave more space for students to exercise individual differences , their imagination and initiative.
- Role plays give the opportunity for students and check out their comprehension by exploring feelings and ideas of characters in given situation. (Ur, 1984).
- Role play is a direct interactive activity which fosters spontaneous oral exchanges between students.
- Students who participate in roles plays learn the interactive skills of arguing, informing, persuading, complaining, discussing, compromising...
- Role play is a unique activity which deals with contemporary issues .
- Being a dynamic activity, participants discover constantly from each other new vocabulary or grammatical rules .
- Help students to understand that there are casual relationships between people’s behavior and the outcomes of events (Drake & Corbin, 1993).
- Role play is a challenging , funny and motivating activity.

All in all , role play is “a classroom activity which gives the students the opportunity to practice the language, the aspects of role behaviour and the actual roles he may need outside the classroom.” Livingstone (1983:3)

### **1.11.3. Information Gap-activities**

Information gap is communicative task which aims to information exchange , either teacher/learner and learner/learner. Communicative practice imposes some sorts of information gap where one student is having an information and the other does not. According to ( Davies. 2000, p. 43) " this is when one speaker knows information the other speaker does not ". Also Hedge (2000) adds that “ it involves each learner in pair or group possessing information which the other learners do not have” (p. 181). Information gap activities are interactive activities where students are supposed to be working together having different information that should be shared to get the complet and correct information. Information gap ativities are clearly defined by Gower.et al , “A situation where information is known by only one or some of those present, students use the language they have at their command to bridge the information gap, by asking question, giving information...etc.”( 1995:211).

This activity requires students to use the knowledge which has been distributed to them to complete the task. According to Scarcella 1992, information gap activities are probably ones which serve language development than other activities and produce bigger output. The usefulness of information gap as an activity can be drawn in the process which students are involved all equally to reach its goals. Most information gap activities are strongly motivating and effective because of the nature of its tasks since it is mysterious and require students to find solution and solve problem. These tasks are done to test language competence , mastery and ability as well. The test provides teachers with tangible evidence of students' communicative competence whether they are competent or not. Several examples of gap information activities can be mentioned.

-For example ( situation : a search about films' information in a local cinema ) ; one student asks his partner questions to have more information and the other is required to answer him.

Overall, information gap activities are a widespread type of speaking skills practice which has several advantages ;

-Information gap activities prompt interaction and engage learners to exchange information and negotiate meanings.

- It boosts intrinsic motivation and creates a great atmosphere in classroom by encouraging learner-learner interaction.

- These activities push students to shift from working structured environment to a more active communicative one.
- students use more target language and discover their gaps which they wish to improve.

#### **1.11.4. Communication Games**

For Hadfield (1987) games are another type of activities which are considered as an important activity of language program in EFL classroom. A game is “activities in which people agree to abide by a set of conditions in order to achieve a desire state or end” (Shirts, 1972, cited in Sharan and Sharan, 1976: 188). It is a communicative activity, “communicative games are externally useful for variety of communicative activities” (Ibid. p. 272).

They are designed to make students learn in an enjoyable atmosphere and encourage them to enhance both their fluency and accuracy. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) claimed that games can be used as “an enjoyable change of pace while reinforcing language”. Thus, these activities teach students how to create and learn in positive ambience, they aim also at challenging the participants in a funny way by defeating their fear and being more confident when speaking in front the class. According to McCallum (1980:4) :

When one considers the importance of communicative competence in the target language, a major goal of all language acquisition, and the need for spontaneous and creative use of that language, one recognizes the significant role of word games in achieving these objectives. Students in the formal atmosphere of game play are less self-conscious and therefore more apt to experiment and freely participate in using the foreign language. In addition games automatically stimulate students’ interest a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques.

Here are some example of communicative games ;

- Spot the differences or find the differences, which is usually found in children books and newspapers, is one famous task under the form of a puzzle where students are required to find differences in two identical images. Students are likely to learn more vocabulary words. “Two students, each one have a picture; one is slightly different from the other one. Without seeing each others’ pictures, they must wrinkle out the differences” (Ibid.).

- Another example is when one student describe an image to another student who in turn will make a picture or drawing from the description. This task is called describe and draw. "one of the students describes a picture and the other one draws it" (Bygate, 1987:78).

- Learners are asked to identify / arrange objects from description and instructions by their learners.

- Learners ask each other about places marked on maps and give directions. Lindsay, C. and knight, P. (2006: 65- 66)

### **1.11.5. Storytelling**

Many scholars agree that storytelling is the original form of teaching (Pederson, 1995). Valenzuela (1999:5) stated that stories are important to people and education. Stories are how people make sense of themselves and their worlds. (cited in Khadeja Abd Al-Rahman Abo Skhela , 2010). Storytelling is one of the traditional techniques that can be used with learners at EFL classrooms to enhance their proficiency language level. It is a powerful tool in education which integrates both the art of telling stories and listening , in other words speaking and listening skills. Harmer ( 2004: 231 cited in Khadeja Abd Al-Rahman Abo Skhela , 2010 ) considered storytelling one form of the intensive listening or the live listening that provides excellent listening material; the students can predict what is coming next , and they can be asked to comment on any part of the story . Students can enhance their speaking also by summarizing the tale they heard from their teacher or classmate, and use their own style and words to tell it in their own way . Story telling fosters imagination , language ability and creative thinking of students.

Educators are not obliged to tell long stories or tales . Yet , riddles , jokes , digital storytelling which is also a good tool to help students nowadays improve their English language by telling stories in their own creative ideas.

Another example is opening the session by telling short tales or jokes in English by some students every time .

### **1.11.6. Stimulation**

Stimulation is sometimes related by some scholars to role play, "from the language teaching point of view there is little difference between embarking on a role play, a simulation, or a simulation involving role play" Livingstone (1985, 2). Stimulation, as Harmer (2001) defines "students stimulate real life encounter [...] as if they were doing, so in the real world [...] as themselves. " (p. 274) . Moreover ,

“in stimulation the individual participation speaks and react as themselves, but the group role situation and a task they are given is an imaginary one ” (Ibid. , p. 132).

Stimulation has a great benefit for students since it is a sort of entertainment, and motivate the students which will certainly affect positively their behaviors “ its purpose will usually be to lack at lower a chain of underlacking system affect behavior” (Rocvers, 2007, P. 202). Stimulation also they increase the self confidence of hesitant students. Harmer (1984).

According to Kewjomes (1982, p. 4-7 as cited in Bachiri , 2013 ) , there exist some characteristics of stimulation ;

- a- Reality of function: where act as real participants in thé situation.
- b- structure: where students are required to manifest to what extent affect this activity to be done.
- c- a simulation environment : that is the atmosphere of classroom. (as cited in Ibid).

#### **1.11.7. Interview**

Interviews are another type of classroom speaking activities. Students can conduct interviews on different forms . The most common cases are when all the class notice one student in the top of the classroom to be asked by them some questions , this Interviewee must answer to show either he got or failed what they have said. The other case is when the teacher provide students with questions to guarantee their contribution. Conducting interviews can be very beneficial for students in terms of practicing their speaking ability and helps them becoming socialized.

#### **1.11.8. Dialogue**

Dialogue is one form of communicative speaking activities in which the students exchange their thoughts or ideas about different topics. Dialogues are supposed to be done either in pairs or group work. At the beginning, the teacher provides students with a certain topic and help them a bit to start the dialogue and then he lets them managing the situation and telling whatever they believe or think without control. “The teacher can ask a volunteer student to read aloud [...],while the teacher takes the other role. This is repeated with another student, but this time the roles are reversed ” (Ibid, P. 72) , he adds “ when pairs finish their dialogue,

they can be asked to switch roles and do it again, or to change key elements in the dialogue " (P. 73). This is a sort of correction mistakes and evaluating students done at the end in order to make learners feel at ease and enjoy the dialogue.

**Conclusion :**

This chapter has focused on the importance of enhancing speaking skill for EFL learners inside the classroom, because speaking is considered as the most important productive skill in learning process. Moreover, the chapter shed light on some of the communicative activities which forsters speaking and help students communicate freely and confidently when using the foreign language. Also make them reduce their fear and difficulties among classroom speaking. The next chapter , then will be devoted to analyze teachers' students' questionnaire.

# *Chapter Two*

## 2.1.Introduction

This chapter is devoted for the practical part of this research work. It focuses on the data collection and analysis. It is a case study about an educational situation which is improving the speaking skill through effective strategies and activities. It consists of two questionnaires to investigate this case. This chapter sheds light on all of the conclusions and main results after describing the research instruments , the informant's profiles and data analysis methods.

## 2.2.Research Design

Many scholars agree that case study is neither a methodology nor a method but rather a research design . Gerring (2004) stated,

Case study is a . . . research design best defined as an intensive study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomenon. (p. 341)

A research design is likely to be research conclusions and results derived and obtained from a collection of questions which have been analyzed and interpreted (Yin, 2003). Moreover , Yin (1994) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident...[and] relies on multiple sources of evidence” (p. 13).

In order to gather information about this research, a case study is applied. it enables the researcher to link the collected data and the conclusions , that is it is beneficial for the coherence of the work. The researcher can carefully examine a situation data through case study. Generally, case studies investigate and explore contemporary phenomenon by selecting a very restricted number of people as the subjects of study. Case study , in it true essence, might defined “as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.” Stake (1994) distinguishes three types of case studies; firstly , Intrinsic , where the full interest is about the case itself because of its special features. Second, instrumental ,where examining the case is mainly to provide insight into an issue . Thus , a number of cases can be studied jointly. Finally , collective , many scholars agree that it's about instrumental study extended to various cases. Also called multiple-case study.

### **2.3. The Sample Population**

For the present study, we deal with a sample of thirty (30) EFL students and two (07) EFL teachers from Tlemcen University. The survey was conducted at the English language department in Tlemcen University. The informants have been randomly chosen to respond to the research instruments addressed to them. They represent the whole population and they are the reflection of EFL learners in Tlemcen University.

#### **2.3.1. The Learners' Profile:**

Participants in this study were first year LMD students at the English department at Tlemcen University since they have an idea about the oral expression course and are conscious of the difficulties that hamper them to promote their speaking skill. Students have been chosen randomly, they were thirty (30) students (males and females) since the variable of sex is not taken into account in this research. Their ages, approximately, varied from about nineteen (19) to twenty one (21). They have been chosen at random to answer a questionnaire about their opinion and attitudes about the use of certain strategies and communicative activities for improving the speaking skill. The reason behind choosing first year EFL students is that they are receiving basics of speaking skill and they are more excited to learn about it and become fluent. Hence, they are mindful about the difficulties in oral expression.

#### **2.3.2. The Teachers' Profile:**

In addition to first year English students, this study involves two English teachers, both of them have different degrees in teaching English. They had different specialities also, in ESP and TEFL with varying experience. These teachers have been chosen because they are completely aware about students' difficulties in speaking and they already dealt with the learners' communication strategies for EFL speaking performance and also the communicative activities.

### **2.4. The Research Instruments**

The present work was conducted through the use of questionnaire. It is addressed to both first year EFL students and EFL teachers in Tlemcen University to collect data for a deep investigation and from a great source of insight. The questionnaire is a common tool used by researchers which provide data, being the easiest one because it doesn't require much time or energy to be done. It is a collection of numerous questions which can be close, open and multiple choice questions. According to Nunan (1992:231) "a questionnaire is an instrument for the collection

of data, usually in written form consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from the subject ". Thus , it allows the researcher to collect the information concisely and precisely , and some cannot be observed.

## **2.5. Student's Questionnaire :**

The questionnaire, in this research work , is consisted of eleven questions under two rubrics designed for first year EFL students of Tlemcen University, in order to achieve the purpose of this work and reach the conclusions. Also , it gives the learners the chance to express themselves and say their opinions about enhancing their speaking skill.

### **2.5.1 Data Analysis of Student's Questionnaire :**

The results of the data collected serve to examine the impact of speaking communicative activities in enhancing oral performance of students. Here is an analysis of each rubric separately.

#### **Rubric One : General Information**

The results obtained from the answers revealed that their ages vary from (19) to (21), and the majority of participants were female ( 5 male , 25 female ). Yet , these obtained results do not affect our survey.

#### **Rubric Two : Learners' Attitudes Towards Communicative Activities**

This rubric contains 08 questions ( multiple choices , closed-ended ) by which we aim to know the attitudes of learners about the communicative activities practiced in classroom. The questions have been stated as follows :

##### **Question One : student's satisfaction about the Oral session time**

Do you think that you are satisfied about the hours devoted to study Oral Production module ?

Yes.  No, we need more hours

By this question , we aim to know if students are satisfied about the devoted time to Oral Production modules for improving their speaking.

In consequence of this question , we found that some of them (07 students) answered that the amount allocated to oral session (3 hours per week) is sufficient. Whereas the majority (23 students) mentioned that the hours devoted to Oral Production module is insufficient and that they need more attention to develop the speaking skill which is of a great importance.

<b>Question 03</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>Frequencies %</b>	23.33	76.66

Table2.1: The Student's Satisfaction About the Oral Session Time.

### **Question Two : Knowing Learner's Opinion about Learning Speaking Skill**

Do you think that you are satisfied about the hours devoted to study Oral Production module ?

to improve fluency  rules are not sufficient to be a language speaker

By this question we aim to know what is the opinion of students about learning speaking skill. In consequence of this question , we exactly found that 26 students submitted that learning the speaking skill is important in order to achieve fluency, except 4 of them who answered that rules are not enough to learn a language but rather they need the speaking skill also to be more knowledgeable about the foreign language.

<b>Question 04</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>Frequencies %</b>	86.66	13.33

Table 2.2: Knowing Learner's Opinion about Learning Speaking Skill.

### **Question Three : Student's opinion about speaking English and its relation with the learning process**

Do you agree with the saying " to learn a language you must speak it " ?

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

This question was designed on behalf of unveiling the importance of speaking skill in EFL learning process. consequently, 21 students do strongly agree that speaking is too much important in learning any foreign language. The 9 other student say state that they also agreed on the importance of speaking skill in learning a language. Whereas no one disagreed on the importance of it in a learning process. The results show that our informants merit more care to progress perfectly their speaking in classroom.

Options	Frequencies %
Strongly agree	70
Agree	30
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
Total	100

Table 2.3: Student's Opinion about Speaking English and its Relation With the Learning Process

**Question Four : Learners Point of View about the Importance of Speaking in Comparison to the Other Skills.**

According to you ,how much can the speaking skill help you to be a good user of English language in comparison to the other skills (Listening, Reading, Writing)?  
 Less than 15%       About 25%       50%       75%

Within this question , we wanted to investigate if the EFL learners give much importance to the speaking skill compared to other skills. As for the results , the majority of the participants affirmed that speaking skill is of a great importance. As 19 students estimated its importance of 75 % , and 8 others of 50 % . Whereas only 3 students estimated its importance of 25 % while no one considered to be less than 15 %.

Question 6	A	b	c	D
Frequencies %	0	10	26.66	63.33

Table 2.4: Learners Point of View about the Importance of Speaking in Comparison to the Other Skills.

**Question Five : Knowing Whether Students Prefer Fluency Activities Over Accuracy Ones or Vice Versa.**

What types of activities you prefer to practice in classroom, accuracy ( rules , drills ... ) or fluency ( information-gap activities, role-play , discussion ... ) ?

accuracy activities       fluency activities

The objective within this question is to identify the preferable activities of students in classroom. Notably , the answers implied that 19 students prefer fluency activities probably as they see it beneficial for direct communication to produce

greater understanding. The importance of fluency hence, is enormous for the learners. Whereas 11 students stated that they prefer activities of accuracy and this is probably due to their fear of errors and prevent making mistakes.

<b>Question 7</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>Frequencies %</b>	36.66	63.33

Table 2.5: Knowing Whether Students Prefer Fluency Activities Over Accuracy Ones or Vice Versa.

### Question Six : student's preferable speaking activities

What are the most activities you prefer to practice in classroom ?

Discussions / dialogues / interviews  Role play

Communication games  Information-gap activities

Storytelling  Songs  Stimulation

The purpose behind this question is to show the preferred speaking activities for learners. The big amount of answers revealed that students prefer discussions/ dialogues / interviews and songs. An equal proportion of 7 students have indicated that these activities make learners motivated to learn speaking. Storytelling is the the other activity which students prefer too, as 6 of them have chosen it among the the mentioned ones. Role plays and communication games are also of equal proportion as 4 students prefer it. Then, only 2 students have chosen information - gap activities and no one prefer stimulation.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Frequencies %</b>
Discussions/dialogues/interviews	23.33
Role plays	13.33
Communication games	13.33
Information gap-activities	6.66
Storytelling	20
Songs	23.33
Stimulation	0
Total	100

Table 2.6: student's preferable speaking activities.

### Question Seven : Knowing reactions of students when facing difficulties.

what are the main strategies would you use to avoid the language gap or failures in oral communication during interactions in classroom ?

Find solutions to achieve the meaning  Avoid to talk completely

The point from this question is to know the reactions of students when they face difficulties during classroom sessions. Consequently, more than half of the participants (23) try to find solutions to achieve the meaning such as paraphrasing or borrowing, while only 7 of them choose to avoid talking completely about topics in which they lack the necessary vocabulary and probably these learners value accuracy over fluency and they are reluctant to produce incorrect or non fluent utterances.

Question 9	A	B
Frequencies %	76.66	23.33

Table 2.7: Knowing Reactions of Students When Facing Difficulties.

### Question Eight : Knowing the Attitudes of Students Towards Speaking Communicative Activities.

What is your attitude towards speaking communicative activities ? Do you feel that they improve your speaking competence ?

I like and enjoy speaking activities + I feel a big improvement after the practice.

I like and enjoy speaking activities + need more practice to feel the improvement.

I do not especially like speaking activities + but feel the improvement.

I do not especially like speaking activities + I do not feel the improvement

By this question , we aim to know the attitudes of students towards the speaking activities and whether they enjoy practising it in classroom. In addition , it serves to investigate if these activities do improve the speaking skill of students. As for the results , the majority ( 13 students ) stated that they like and enjoy the speaking activities but they need more practice to improve their speaking skill which means that more time should be devoted to progress and feel self-confident when practicing speaking. Eleven students answered that like and enjoy speaking activities and feel a big improvement after the practice. Also , 3 students showed that they feel the improvement after practicing the speaking activities but do not especially like it. Whereas , about the same number of students have a negative attitude about speaking activities as they neither like it nor feel the improvement.

Question 10	A	B	C	D
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<b>Frequencies</b> %	36.66	43.33	10	10
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Table 2.8: Knowing the Attitudes of Students Towards Speaking Communicative Activities.

### **Question Nine : Ask for Learner's suggestions**

A minority of participants answered this question and mention some suggestions as that teachers should use technology aids , cooperate with them in activities like in role plays and create funny atmosphere.

### **2.5.2 Data Interpretation of Student's Questionnaire**

The analysis of the collected data from the students' questionnaire helped to draw a set of results concerning the improvement of speaking skill and the vital role of communicative activities.

According to the data analysis , the majority of First year English students who took part in providing their views to fulfil the questionnaire proposed, showed their awareness about the importance of communicative activities to enhance their speaking skill.

In this vein , the analysis of questionnaire revealed a part of their attitudes towards communicative activities , particularly, the positive attitudes. By this means, almost all students agreed on the importance of such activities in promoting their communicative speaking and that they are in need for more practice to feel the progress as these activities create a joyful atmosphere and great ambiance in the classroom which make them motivated to learn. This was mostly perceived and cannot left without comment.

In the same context , speaking skill is seen as the most important skill in comparison to the other skills (Listening, Reading, Writing) as most respondants consider it as a direction to broaden their horizon in foreign language. Hence , they agreed that fluency is necessary to be a language user.

When data are taken together, we deduce that participants have showed great interest to the speaking communicative activities and their answers took the cover on the value of these activities which can successfully lead them to reinforce their speaking skill and achieve different communicative goals.

Last but not least, we can say that the students' questionnaire results revealed that communicative strategies are indeed helpful in oral expression.

## 2.6. Teacher's Questionnaire :

In addition , there has been also a questionnaire designed for teachers which was composed of seven questions, attempting to reveal their points of view of the speaking problems of learners and which strategies and activities they use to reinforce this skill. It tries to ask for suggestions they give to a better EFL speaking performance.

### 2.6.1 Data Analysis of Teacher's Questionnaire

The data collected from the questionnaire are analysed separately as follows :

The answers of first and second questions revealed that all of the EFL teachers ( male / female ) have the degree of Doctorate and all have been teaching English language for more than 20 years.

#### **Question Three : Teachers' Point of View about the Importance of Speaking in Comparison to the Other Skills.**

How much can the speaking skill help the learner to be a good user of English language in comparison to the other skills (Listening, Reading, Writing)?

Less than 15% of importance .  About 25% of importance.   
50% of importance.  75% of importance.

Within this question , we wanted to know the point of view of teachers about the rank of speaking in teaching English compared to the other skills. All teachers answered alike , they argued that speaking occupies 50% in teaching English. From this proportion , we can understand that teachers consider speaking to be of a great importance as it is probably connected to the other skills.

#### **Question Four : Teacher's Assessment of Communicative Activities in EFL Process.**

What is the importance of communicative activities in EFL learning process ?

Concerning this question, teachers provided various answers , but all were of same meaning. They stated that communicative activities are beneficial in terms of acquiring new vocabulary, avoiding grammar mistakes, and learning the phonology of words.

### **Question Five : Identifying the Learner's Difficulties when Speaking from the View Point of Teachers.**

What are the frequent difficulties that your students face when speaking (communicating) using EFL during classroom lessons ?

This question is designed to identify the difficulties that learners encounter during speaking. Several difficulties , then , have been noted by teachers. From the results obtained , we state the following :

- Problems related to behavior and psychology such as difficulty to work in groups , anxiety , low self confidence , shyness , the fear of talking in front of audience...
- Technical problems , that is linguistic problems such as lack of vocabulary, grammar mistakes, difficulties in understanding native speakers...

### **Question Six : Teacher's Awareness about Strategic Competence of EFL Learners.**

Do you know which strategies that learners use to overcome those difficulties? If yes, please, note down those strategies.

By this question , we aim to know to what degree teachers are aware about the strategic competence about their EFL students. In other words , if they really recognize the strategies used by students to overcome their problems when speaking during the lesson. Teachers revealed that not all of the learners use positively their strategic competence and this is due to some teachers who do not employ the compensatory strategies with their students while teaching. Among the strategies which have been noticed by teachers : code switching , paraphrasing , use of mother tongue , use of synonyms , demanding the help, and avoidance of difficulty , i.e., they use almost all the strategies which are guessing strategies, paraphrasing strategies ; cooperation and avoidance strategies.

### **Question Seven : Asking Teachers for New Trends in Teaching Speaking and Some Suggestions.**

Teachers answered in different ways presenting some suggestions ; update the exercises, critical thinking, push the slow learners to participate through group works, role play activities, learning with fun (games, quiz, riddles, proverbs, idiomatic expressions), the use of technology motivates students, to negotiate the meaning with learners and reward them when necessary.

## 2.6.2 Data Interpretation of Teacher's Questionnaire

As far as the teacher's questionnaire interpretation is concerned, the answers revealed that the majority of EFL teachers agreed that speaking skill is considered to occupy the lion's part in EFL learning process. Hence, it helps the learner to be a good user of English language.

Moreover, they all stated different points which show the importance of communicative activities in EFL learning process but all responses are of the same line of thought. The assessment of teachers is based on more than 20 years in teaching English language, according to questionnaire responses.

It is considerable to state that the interpretation of this questionnaire reflects the image of teachers' awareness about difficulties of students when communicating and the deep consciousness towards the obstacles when using EFL during classroom lessons.

In addition, responses revealed also that teachers are aware to a large extent about the strategic competence of their learners. Needless to recall that the long and fruitful experience of EFL teachers provides us with precious suggestions to improve the speaking skill in EFL learning process viz: the use of technology, critical thinking...

## 2.7 Discussion of the Main Results

Since the English Language acts as a "lingua franca", much emphasis is placed on enhancing the speaking skill in EFL learning process. That enables them to function appropriately in the target situation. Therefore, educators attempt to find the most efficient ways to make this improvement happen with the knowledge needed to achieve effective communication.

On the one hand, students have shown their awareness about the importance of speaking skill according to the data collected from the questionnaire addressed to respondents. In addition, they are mindful about the prominent role of communicative activities in reinforcing their oral proficiency. In this regard, students claim that more practice should take place in Oral Production module to overcome their speaking problems by devoting more time and implementing more activities.

On the other hand, the results of the questionnaire addressed to teachers have shown also their agreement that speaking skill is of great importance in EFL learning, it is a tiresome process which requires much time. Similarly, assessing communicative activities is seen to be beneficial in enhancing the speaking skill. Yet, using new trends and techniques in teaching oral production may help both

teachers and learners to achieve the desired goal of being fluent in the English Language. Therefore, multiple activities lead to successful teaching.

All the previously mentioned findings strengthened more the background ideas of this research work. They seem to confirm the two hypothesis which assume the enhance of students' speaking skill through effective communicative activities. Also, the satisfaction and positive attitudes of EFL learners towards the implementation of these activities in learning process.

## **2.8 Suggestions and Recommendations**

Improving speaking skill of EFL students is considered to be a challenge for both teachers and learners nowadays, as it is an important way to strove communication intelligibly and achieve oral proficiency.

The most significant findings of the research work were mainly summarized as following;

- Teachers' consciousness about the value of speaking skill and their readiness to reinforce the students' oral proficiency through communicative activities .
- Students' willingness to practice the activities for the sake of speaking skill' s amelioration.

Knowing the students' level in oral language proficiency academically is vital to be able to scaffold appropriately as not all activities are suitable for all levels of language learners.

Improving speaking skills to EFL students may not be an easy task at all but building confidence in student is the added benefit.

Students should be helped to enhance their language development in supportive and encouraging way from teachers.

Here are some recommendations for a successful EFL learning process :

- Cooperation in work , appropriate communicative activities , authentic tasks and shared knowledge make a rich environment in Oral Production which encourage students with all levels to progress .
- It is advisable for teachers to include all students in every speaking activity aiming to test different ways from students' participation.
- It is preferable for teachers to reduce their talk time in order to increase speaking time of students. This will help learners to progress and teachers to observe.

- Teachers should, as far as research is concerned, diagnose students' difficulties in expressing themselves to find then effective ways to help them overcome these problems.
- Learners are advisable to develop vocabulary over time, in different learning context.
- Practice some activities at least 30 minutes everyday and prepare others with classmates before the session to perform them in front of class.
- Self evaluation is very important so that students can know their gaps and try to progress.

This process can be a long lie journey which start at classroom where students can take a lot of practice, motivation to speak and self confidence. The readiness of students to improve and think beyond the box and the awariness of teachers about the educational environment is a good mixture which may give skilled students and achieve almost all the communicative goals.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

The chapter is a case study in which two questionnaires are used as a research tool to collect and analyse data . The current chapter provides also some recommendations how to improve students' speaking skill among first year level at English departement in Tlemcen university. It reflects the teacher's ays of teaching and assessing oral production . the data analysis clears upthe positive attitudes of students towards the speaking communicative activities too.

Though first year students face some problems in expression but they still have a full wish to overcome these difficulties with an inspiration from their teachers.

# *General Conclusion*

## General Conclusion

Algeria like the rest of the whole world witnessed a wide spread of English language especially at the educational level. Yet , EFL learners suffer from difficulties in learning English which hinder their process. These obstacles are originated from deficiency in real use of language at the level of oral performance. That is , the difficulty in oral production and lack of fluency.

Speaking skill is believed to be a difficult task since it requires special abilities to be mastered and generally success is shown through the speaking ability. That 's why psychological basics are indeed demanded in learning speaking.

Due to this facto, some prime activities were proposed on behalf of reinforcing the speaking skill inside and outside the classroom for further competence. These activities were suggested for oral expression achievement and to approach knowledge with more energetic and motivated students who will certainly trust their own abilities and become positive .

The current work was motivated by our personal desire to learn about how to teach and improve English speaking skill to first year English students. Thus, the main objective of this investigation was to exhibit adequate understanding of the importance of using communicative activities as a tool to improve English speaking skill of first year English students. In addition , the study concerns also the existing relationship between the speaking skill and successful communication.

In this vein, the work has been taped in two parts. The first part was about the literature review of teaching the speaking skill, whereas the second chapter was the practical part of this extended essay. It embodied the data collected from the questionnaires and its analysis in an attempt to provide constituents that help increasing both teacher's and student's awarness on a very important issue in the FLL process.

In addition, it is beneficial for students to enrich and update their vocabulary as well to be fluent in language through effective speaking activities. In the same light of thought, teaching speaking skill is useful in terms of promoting communicative efficiency and building total readiness for oral production success. Moreover, the research aimed at identifying some problems which may hinder the EFL learners

speaking skill and providing some ways to help them better use their strategic competence and overcome their difficulties during the oral performance. In this respect, this work aimed at investigating the effective activities of teaching the speaking skill.

Basing on effective communicative activities, learning can be maximized within a dynamic environment and engaging students in relevant tasks. Learners can be trained to use their communicative competences including not only the grammatical or discourse ones but also sociolinguistics and strategic competences. In fact, learning can be achieved with students' willingness and this was totally confirmed through data collection of questionnaire when participants agreed that communicative activities are useful tool to progress in oral production module while having fun and enjoying the session.

From another perspective, the field research in the second chapter which is contemplated as the most prominent phase embodies sample of questions that focused on student's own opinions and attitudes towards enhancing the English speaking skill through communicative activities. Moreover, it elicits the teacher's views regarding teaching speaking skill and the importance of communicative activities in EFL learning process. Thus, questionnaires transcripts were analyzed to determine similarities and differences in informant's perspectives, and issues warranting further attention. Through this latter we unveiled the real state of first year English students by which we have taken general idea on the way they view the learning of English speaking skill.

Finally, we end this dissertation by customizing the most considerable suggestions that we hope will help learners as well as teachers in the foreign oral language classroom, to better discover some of the speaking activities, namely students to be fluent. The suggestions which should be followed in all circumstances so as to motivate the learners and progress, is maintaining nice atmosphere, encouragement and giving a chance to everyone to experience their own success and achieve their best.

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# *Appendixes*

## Student's Questionnaire

Dear respondents,  
this questionnaire attempts to gather data about enhancing EFL learners' speaking skill. We would be grateful if you could answer these questions to help us in our research.

### Rubric one: General Information

1. Age: .....

2. Are you?

a. Male

b. Female

### Rubric Two : Learners' Attitudes Towards Communicative Activities

3. Do you think that you are satisfied about the hours devoted to study Oral Production module ?

c. Yes.

d. No, we need more hours.

4. In your opinion , why learning speaking skill is so important ?

a. to improve fluency .

b. rules are not sufficient to be a speaker of a language.

5. Do you agree with the saying " to learn a language you must speak it " ?

a- Strongly agree.

b- Agree

c- Disagree

d- Strongly disagree

6. According to you ,how much can the speaking skill help you to be a good user of English language in comparison to the other skills (Listening, Reading, Writing)?

- a. Less than 15%
- f. About 25%
- g. 50%
- h. 75%

7. What types of activities you prefer to practice in classroom, accuracy ( rules , drills ... ) or fluency ( information-gap activities, role-play , discussion ... ) ?

- a. accuracy activities
- b. fluency activities

8. What are the most activities you prefer to practice in classroom ?

- a. Discussions / dialogues / interviews
- b- Role play
- c- Communication games
- d- Information-gap activities
- e- Storytelling
- f- Songs
- g- Stimulation

9. what are the main strategies would you use to avoid the language gap or failures in oral communication during interactions in classroom ?

- a. Find solutions to achieve the meaning by ( use replacement words - borrow a word from the mother tongue - code switching - paraphrasing )
- b. Avoid to talk completely about the topics in which you lack the necessary vocabulary.

10. What is your attitude towards speaking communicative activities ? Do you feel that they improve your speaking competence ?

- e. I like and enjoy speaking activities + I feel a big improvement after the practice.

f. I like and enjoy speaking activities + need more practice to feel the improvement.

g. I do not especially like speaking activities + but feel the improvement.

h. I do not especially like speaking activities + I do not feel the improvement.

11. Could you please provide some suggestions to improve the speaking skill in classroom ?

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*Thank you for your collaboration.*

## Teacher's Questionnaire

**Dear teacher:**

We would like to ask you some questions concerning effective communicative activities that enhance the EFL learners' speaking skill. We are interested about your point of view as you represents the source of inquiry. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

1. What is your degree?

a. MA (master/magister).

b. PHD (doctorate).

2. For how many years have you been teaching ?

.....Years.

3. How much can the speaking skill help the learner to be a good user of English language in comparison to the other skills (Listening, Reading, Writing)?

a. Less than 15% of importance .

b. About 25% of importance.

c. 50% of importance.

d. 75% of importance.

4. What is the importance of communicative activities in EFL learning process ?

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5. What are the frequent difficulties that your students face when speaking (communicating) using EFL during classroom lessons ?

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6. Do you know which strategies that learners use to overcome those difficulties?

If yes, please, note down those strategies:

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7. We would appreciate it if you could inform us about the familiar or new trends in teaching speaking. We would like also to ask you for some other suggestions to improve the learner's speaking skill.

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**Thank You for Your Help**